

Thoughts on Charlotte Mason Studies

When I first heard about the Charlotte Mason Method, all I knew was *Charlotte Mason equals nature studies*. I actually thought that was pretty cool, but also a bit intimidating. I mean, can you remember the excitement when you were a kid in school and they "let you go outside"? That used to be my dream come true! But we didn't really get to "study" the outdoors, we were still studying our textbooks. Outside was just a change of scenery.

I guess that's why the idea of trying to teach my child with nature studies was a bit intimidating. I didn't really know how to study nature. However, as it turns out, one of the key aspects of a Charlotte Mason education is developing a love of learning, so homeschooling has provided me a second opportunity to develop my *own* love of learning alongside my children!

Although I wouldn't consider my whole approach to be Charlotte Mason, I have seen for myself how taking the time to show the boys how we figure out what kind of snake is in the yard, or how we research ways to keep deer out of the garden, pays off when they naturally just begin looking up information by themselves and applying what they read in real life!

Don't let your own school experience hold you back from experiencing the joy of learning right alongside your children.

Whatever homeschool method you use, enjoy every minute!

~Nancy Carter

Let me tell you how the Charlotte Mason style changed my teaching methods a bit.

I started out as primarily a textbook/workbook homeschool teacher. My first two boys were raised in little school desks with a teacher at the chalkboard (me) and their little textbooks and workbooks open. Then I met some ladies who loved Charlotte Mason and I decided I'd read up on it so I obtained the book called, *A Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola.

I learned some reasons why my boys were not so enthusiastic about school. I had nearly killed any love of learning in them. I started right away doing some nature studies with them and they took off in their interest level and excitement. They begged to do their nature journals and take walks and draw insects and record plant growth.

We then learned about finding books written by authors that were passionate about their subject and skip the boring ones. We learned about narration. This helped tremendously in their later writing skills as well. We learned to appreciate classics and historical heroes. I learned how to create a learning environment that was based on helpful habits.

I didn't just dump the textbooks and workbooks. I still use them for many subjects. However, I

now have a more relaxed approach and can incorporate other books that are "living" or classic or biographical and also weave God's creation into much of their learning.

If you are frustrated or tired of your teaching style, you may want to research Charlotte Mason a bit and see if this style might help you, as it did me. And if your child hates school work, it may help boost your child's interest in learning, too.

Pray for God's direction and see what works for you and your family.

~Deborah Wuehler

Charlotte Mason wrote quite a lot, so her ideas and opinions lived beyond her life. Francis Schaeffer's daughter, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, read Mason and then wrote a book in praise of her teaching methods. Several homeschool writers followed and we now have Charlotte Mason homeschooling in oodles of books, second-hand and third-hand, as well as some republished Mason original books.

This homeschooling reputation is rather remarkable, because Mason worked all her life in schools, first teaching children and later teaching teachers. She became interested in helping parents because in England in her day, the infant (primary) schools were not universal. Thus many children learned to read at home before starting school. Also, the poor had a less full education than the rich, and she thought all children should have a good education. So she began a parents' union, and her schools worked with the union to improve the home life of their pupils. She lectured to the parents, and her lectures were collected in a book for parents.

That is how she comes to be considered an early homeschool leader.

Mason saw children as persons who think and relate new knowledge to what they already know. So they needed ideas to grow by. They were not jars to pour facts into. She taught much on developing habits of attention, effort, obedience, truthfulness, cleanliness, neatness, and numerous traits that make life easier. She wrote, "*The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days; while she who lets their habits take care of themselves has a weary life and endless friction with the children.*" She suggested that training in habits should become a habit.

~Ruth Beechick

Biographical Information

Copyright, 2009. All rights reserved by authors above. Content provided by [The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC](#).

Nancy Carter is happy to call herself a relaxed homeschooler. After years of teaching in the public school system, she cherishes being able to learn together with her own children. She and her husband Tony have three sons and are learning all kinds of new things together on their farm. You can read more of her family's Lessons Learned on the Farm at www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/tn3jcarter or you can email her at tn3jcarter@wildblue.net.

Dr. Ruth Beechick is a lifelong educator who now writes mostly for homeschoolers, whom she sees as bright lights in these days before Christ returns. Dr. Ruth Beechick has taught hundreds of people to read, Her own newest books are World History Made Simple: Matching History with the Bible (www.HomeschoolingBooks.com or 1-800-421-6645. and A Biblical Home Education.

Deborah Wuehler is the senior editor for The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine. She resides in Roseville, California, with her husband Richard. They are the parents of eight children: three teenagers, three elementary, a preschooler and a baby. They have been homeschooling since the birth of their firstborn who is now graduated from high school. Many of her articles can be found on www.Crosswalk.com, and many other homeschooling sites. She is a group leader in her local homeschooling support organization and she loves digging for buried treasure in the Word, reading, writing, homeschooling, and dark chocolate! Email her at senioreditor@TheHomeschoolMagazine.com.