TheOld Schoolhouse

Wee-book

Fall Harvest Where's the Fruit?

NINSTAL



Fall Harvest: Where's the Fruit?

Deborah Wuehler

© 2009 The Old Schoolhouse[®] Magazine, LLC P.O. Box 8426, Gray, TN 37615 Printed in the United States of America All rights reserved



Project Manager: Charlotte McKinney Cover and Text Layout: Elizabeth Brandt Cover Template Artist: Christi Gifford, <u>www.ArtDesignsbyChristi.com</u> Images ©istockphoto.com and ©dreamstime.com

Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural references contained in this E-Book are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

This published work may contain facts, views, opinions, statements, recommendations, hyperlinks, references, websites, advertisements and other content and links or references to external sources (collectively, "Content") not owned or controlled by the publisher, The Old Schoolhouse[®] Magazine, LLC ("TOS"). This Content does not necessarily reflect the views, opinions or recommendations of TOS, and any reliance upon such Content is taken at the user's sole risk. TOS and the individual contributors have made reasonable efforts to include accurate, current, "family-friendly" Content, but TOS makes no warranties or representations as to the accuracy, safety or value of Content contained, published, displayed, uploaded, downloaded or distributed through or as part of this publication and assumes no liability or responsibility for the content, and the user's experience, may change during use or over time, and are strongly advised to use discernment and wisdom when considering advice and recommendations made in this or any other published work. TOS accepts no responsibility for the actions of third parties or for Content provided, uploaded, linked or posted by third parties.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Where's the Fruit In the Very Young?	2
Overestimating	
Underestimating	3
Lazy Weeding	
Where's the Fruit In the Elementary Years?	4
Preparation of Soil to Receive Seed	
Watering the Young Plants	6
Where's the Fruit Entering the Teen Years?	
Where's the Fruit In the Higher Education Years?	8
Where's the Fruit In Us?	8
Death Brings Forth Life	9
Consider Your Ways10	0
Appendix1	1

Introduction

mpty cornucopias. In my heart and in my house, that which should be full of the fall harvest of God's goodness and righteousness is sometimes hauntingly empty. Do you ever feel that way? Where is that harvest I am supposed to have? Why doesn't my family have any of the kind of fruit I am looking for? Why do my children seem so bare?

As I ponder this season, I wonder about the harvest that will come from my children's lives. I always wonder what they are going to grow up and be or do. I wonder if they are going to follow the Lord or their own desires. I wonder if they will be great and give glory to God and just what kind of fruit

So CA

As I ponder this season, I wonder about the harvest that will come from my children's lives.

8003

they will bear. And on those extra hard days, I even wonder if they will just remain heathens forever or follow *me* to the very gates of hell! Depressing thoughts all. But by the end of this WeE-Book[™], I trust I'll show you something optimistic and hopefully even beautiful.

In each of our lives, we may go through seasons that seem like the death of winter or sometimes the heat of summer or the wonder of fall

SO CR

... by the end of this WeE-book[™], I trust I'll show you something optimistic and hopefully even beautiful.

રીજ

or even the newness of spring. Seasons change in our lives, the weather changes in our circumstances, and what grows in each season is different too—not only for us, but for our children as well.

When the children are young, it can look like there is little or no fruit on those little vines, and then—suddenly—we see very tiny sprouts. When they get a bit older, we begin to see character traits that need working in

or sin natures that need working out as our children grow like weeds. As they enter their teens, we begin to see buds of fruit and sometimes observe turbulent winds and rain, and then as they mature into adults, we will hopefully see strong stems and fruits that are becoming ripe for the picking, fruit that can be shared. Let's go through these stages together as I share where I have lacked and what I have learned, and maybe we can see a pattern of things we need to be doing (or not doing) to ensure a good harvest in our children's lives and in our own hearts.

Where's the Fruit In the Very Young?

When our children are very young, we wonder when it is that we will get to reap what we've sown into them day in and day out. When will we get to see that beautiful bounty, or will there even be any? Will it be full and beautiful, or will they end up like the fig tree that Jesus cursed when it held nothing of value to Him? We so desire that our children will eventually produce fruit, but what we often don't realize is that *today's seeds hold the key to the fruit they will produce tomorrow* and even years from tomorrow. But they will produce absolutely nothing if we do not prepare the soil and continue to sow seeds day in and day out. Don't give up! Harvest time will come!

> "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9)

In these early years, I have both overestimated and underestimated that which is required in the caretaking of my little ones' fertile ground, and lazy weeding has produced a lack of character growth.

Overestimating

ere's a little sad-but-true story to illustrate what I am talking about. We normally have all of our children with us in service at church, but after baby Jacob was born, I needed to nurse him, so I would take my two little girls (5 and 3) and the baby and we would head to the Sunday School class together. Recently, the teacher was discussing Noah's ark, and at first I thought, "What child doesn't know about Noah and that huge boat of his?" But then the teacher began to ask specific questions about how many days it rained and what the rainbow meant, and I was shocked and even embarrassed to realize that my two little girls had no idea what the answers were.

I was shocked because I knew I had taught it to all my older children and they knew all the details very well; I just thought that the younger ones knew all these things too. I overestimated their knowledge. Somehow, with my focus on my older children, my younger ones were falling through the cracks. As our family had grown, I had not maintained the same consuming focus on the Bible with these younger ones. I knew at that moment that I had better change that and change it quickly—not just so that they will know all the neat Bible stories that kids this age love, but so that they will know the God of the Bible and will love Him and love His Word, so that seeds of Scripture would be sown into their hearts. I can't leave the sowing to someone else.

Underestimating

hat I always underestimate is the fact that they are like sponges at this age. We've heard that and seen it in our own children, so why don't we take advantage of that fact? We should be pouring into our children the seeds of God's Word for memorization and for wisdom, so that as they grow, those seeds will grow and do their work in those little hearts.

My lame excuse has been busyness, but it has really proven to be laziness. I have not been *intentional* in the things I desire for them to learn. And, if I am not intentional, if I don't deliberately plan to soak them in the Word, it won't happen by accident. If I don't make time to pour into them, no one will, and I will lose for time and eternity the golden moments, those opportunities to plant seeds in that rich soil, which is so ready to receive those seeds.

> "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing." (Proverbs 20:4)

This is an age when we can start Scripture memorization with them and show them the necessity of intimate prayer. We can read the Bible aloud to them just like we read aloud other books that we love.

Lazy Weeding

azy weeding means that I am sometimes slack in disciplining and admonishing consistently. If I do not faithfully and diligently "weed" that rich soil, I just might be totally embarrassed by their behavior, and worse yet, my children may become unteachable. The weeds of self-will pop up everywhere at this age, and if they are not uprooted *each time*, they will take hold and take over and choke out anything else we try to plant. There are times when I have been humiliated by something my child said or did, and then I have to look at the root of the problem, which usually pointed to my lack of care in that area of their lives. I had let things go. I didn't stay on top of pulling that weed. I was busy and left them to themselves for too long. I didn't deal with it at home on a regular basis, so I was publicly embarrassed by it. The Scripture makes this point perfectly clear:

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Proverbs 29:15)

However, when we pour the Word into their little hearts and pull the weeds of self-will, we will see growth. The peaceable fruit of righteousness will begin to form little shoots in their hearts and lives. These precious little ones no longer will bring us to shame, but instead they will honor us and be a blessing to others, yielding good fruit.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:11)

Where's the Fruit In the Elementary Years?

I 've always greatly admired my friend Sandy. She is the mother of fourteen children, a loving and devoted wife, a homeschooler extraordinaire and, on top of all that, she has a green thumb! Before you roll your eyes and turn to the next article, let me just say this: she's not perfect and neither are her children (and she'll even admit it). The thing I most appreciate about Sandy is that she always shares with us her mistakes and what she has learned from the Scriptures to equip her to correct those mistakes.

Recently Sandy told us about the lessons she had learned from her cornfield. I had to smile at the story she told about her harvest of corn this year. Her corn patch only produced three small ears of corn. She quickly ate one cob and squirreled the other two away in the refrigerator, and they went bad. She told us about all the money, time, and energy wasted on that patch of corn, which yielded only one edible fruit.

She realized there were two things that caused this deficient harvest: lack of soil preparation and inconsistent watering. Her words were: "I

was in a hurry to get that corn planted and did not take the time to add to the soil the nutrients that corn needs to grow. I thought of how many times I have done this with my children. You know, it's the 'Quick! Let's get our Bible time done, so we can get busy with the "real" school work.' But the reality is, that when we are teaching our children out of God's Word, we are preparing the soil for everything else that goes in as well."

It takes time to prepare the soil, and it takes time to prepare the hearts of our children, but we tend to run around in circles and tire ourselves out so much that we have no time to "prepare" anything of value.

During the season when our children are no longer very young but are entering the elementary years, how do we prepare their hearts and make them soft to receive seed from us and from God? I have found, by trial and error, that the following list is especially helpful in preparing these young hearts.

Preparation of Soil to Receive Seed

- Love sincerely.
- Make relationship a priority.
- Be an example of humility and gentleness.
- Show patience.
- Stop and listen.
- Show mercy and grace.
- Be ready to forgive and ask for forgiveness.

A haughty, frustrated spirit in me only produces more haughty, frustrated children after me. I have found the Scripture to be very true, that it has been "*kindness that leads to repentance*." In other words, we need to live it in order to sow it. As Sandy says: "*When we are teaching about a God who loves them, they need to experience that love through us. We teach them their need for God's forgiveness as we forgive them. They also need to know how important it is to forgive others, so it is by us asking their forgiveness when we have been harsh, or misjudged them, or whatever the offense, that they learn how to forgive.*" "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14–15)

Returning to Sandy's pitiful cornfield, she said that besides the lack of soil preparation "was the inconsistent watering. Some days I would water in the morning and then skip it until the next evening. Sometimes I would be in a hurry and just give them a little water, and other times I would leave the hose there and flood them. This produced dwarfed plants. Some of my plants never grew bigger than 6 inches tall. A 6-inch plant does not produce corn. Many of the plants were too thin and malnourished to even support any corn on them—all because I did not take the time to consistently water those plants."

How can we make sure our children are refreshed and strengthened and that these young plants are being watered?

Watering the Young Plants

- Consistency in the Word of God
- Daily washing with the water of the Word of God
- Pointing to Jesus, who is their Living Water
- Planting close by the source of the Water

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm 1:2-3)

Here is true wisdom I gleaned from my friend that day: "Why am I so inconsistent? It's because I haven't really made knowing Christ the priority. I allow other things, less important things, to take up my time, instead of spending it with Him. In doing this, I am teaching my children to do the same." What about you? Are you taking the time to "water" your plants? With a lack of water comes a lack of fruit.

Where's the Fruit Entering the Teen Years?

o longer kids, not quite teens—these years are filled with changing ideas, attitudes, and bodies. These years can be somewhat unstable, but I think there is a purpose for the turbulence: to strengthen and sharpen these children, who are preparing for a season in which they will be given the privilege of bearing more responsibility. It is a time when they begin to start working out and walking out and living out these things that we've been sowing into them all these previous years—as their *choices*.

Does it seem like you are always rubbing each other the wrong way at this age? Maybe you're rubbing each other the right way. Let's look at this Scripture:

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17)

As we sharpen each other, we make each other stronger, more useful and more productive, for the glory of God. Why does the "sharpening" occur so frequently? Because we live together 24/7, we have ample opportunity to do some sharpening. And let's not forget what else sharpens us:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

This is also a time where our pre-teens may struggle to produce fruit. This is the season when I remind them (and myself) that it is the work of the Spirit to conform us to the image of Christ, as we give control of our flesh over to God. I teach my children that self-control really comes from putting ourselves under God's control.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22–23)

Recently I had been praying and hoping for a passion for Christ to make itself evident in my children. I wanted to see a transformation. I saw a glimpse recently as one child was quoting Scripture to me in regard to how the Lord was helping this child deal with some challenges, and I realized that although this child hadn't had some sort of outward "spiritual experience," the Word of God that I had sown over the years was bringing inward change. The sowing of seed, God's Word, into their minds *was* transforming their hearts. On the inside, where I could not observe it, metamorphosis was taking place; God's Word was doing its work.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

Where's the Fruit In the Higher Education Years?

he teen-to-adult years tend to be a delightful culmination of reaping where we have sown. Let me quote from the September issue of the Schoolhouse Support E-Newsletter:

"We trained them in respect when they were young, so are reaping blessed companionship now. We have sown discipline, so we are reaping self-control and maturity. We taught them how to learn and how to teach themselves and are reaping teens that can learn anything and excel. We have sown scripture and a biblical worldview and are reaping young people who are more interested in truth than in cultural fads and foolish friends. We have trained them in work and service and are reaping the benefits of responsible young adults. We do more than "survive" or "endure" or "live to tell about it." We are blessed to be among those who actually enjoy and are very proud of their teens."

There is bounty not only for those who labored, but also for those who just come by to share in the fruit. This teen-to-adulthood season becomes a time when they learn to share with others, to start investing themselves and their work with a perspective that is focused on eternal things.

Where's the Fruit In Us?

hat about us parents? Where's our harvest? Sometimes I feel like Sandy's corn stalks that produced so little corn. Those stalks had the appearance of corn, with their long stems and green leaves and looking bountiful from a distance, but upon closer inspection, they were found to be fruitless and useless to the planter. I remembered again the fig tree that looked so beautiful but had nothing to offer Jesus. Ouch. How many times have I put more effort in making myself look good or making my house look good or desiring that my children look good (or at least make *me* look good), yet failing to offer anything of substance to Jesus? So many times I have been fruitless and useless to the Planter. My desire is to produce fruit for Him, and I desperately want to raise my children to do the same. Let's ask the Sower to plant, water, and bear in us fruit that lasts, so that the seeds of the Word of God will go deep and the cares of the world will not choke them out. (See Matthew 13:18–23.)

Death Brings Forth Life

ne year while looking at all the fall colors, I realized that only God can make death look beautiful. Only God can create life from death. As the leaves change color and die, they provide a new beauty to behold. In the same way, we must die to ourselves in order to become beautiful, fruitful parents who will bear fruit:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die,it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

Not only can God create life from death in our own lives, but He also says He will multiply the seed that we are sowing and increase our fruit. This is a wonderful promise:

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:8–11)

Consider Your Ways

S andy asked us to consider ourselves and our families: "Is there unity or division, joy or sorrow, humility or pride? Are you washing your children with the water of the Word? May we be faithful to water our plants with Jesus, who is the Living Water, and in doing so, may we produce a harvest of much fruit."

"Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table." (Psalm 128:1–3)



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**. Appendix

How to Begin Homeschooling

- 1. **Discuss With Your Spouse:** Educating your child at home is a huge decision and should be one that is made with your spouse. Do not begin unless you are in agreement about this decision. You will need the support of your spouse not only at the beginning, but also throughout the year.
- 2. Research the Homeschool Laws Applicable in your Area: Be fully aware of the legal requirements before you begin and especially before you take a child out of public school. For the U.S., each state's legal requirements can be found on the **www.HomeschoolLegal.com** website. Internationally, refer to **www.HSLDA.org**.
- **3.** Research Styles of Home Education: There is no single right way to educate your child at home; however, there are many differing philosophies you may want to consider.
 - **Charlotte Mason:** Based on a method introduced by nineteenth-century educator Charlotte Mason, this approach includes nature studies/journaling, narration, and living books.
 - **Classical:** Based on Dorothy Sayers' *The Lost Tools of Learning*, in which child development is broken up into three "stages" of learning commonly called "the Trivium."
 - **Delight Directed:** This puts the learning in the hands of the child, based on his or her interests. Parents help facilitate this type of learning with appropriate instructional materials.
 - **Eclectic:** A mix of philosophies and curricula to accommodate each child's abilities and interests. Parents choose from any method or style only those components that fit their specific needs.
 - **The Principle Approach:** An approach based on the principles of our Founding Fathers and an emphasis on God's Word as the basis for every subject.
 - **Traditional Textbook:** Normally uses a full-range, packaged, textbook-type curriculum that also may include a scope and sequence, testing, and recordkeeping.
 - Unit Studies: All or most core subjects are covered while studying any one topic or unit of study, using a variety of resources and supplemental activities.
 - **Unschooling:** A relaxed setting where learning is directed by the child. Parts of this philosophy are based on research by John Taylor Gatto and John Holt.

4. Find Support: After finding your style of choice (or a mix of more than one choice), you may want to choose a support group that reflects that specific style or just a general homeschool support group in your area. Meeting with other home educators offers encouragement as well as knowledge and assistance with your homeschool questions. Often, organized classes or activities for your children are offered through support groups as well. For information about homeschool support groups in your area, check these listings:

U.S.:

www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com/Homeschool_Nations/State_Listings.php www.HomeschoolLegal.com

UK: http://www.home-service.org/ http://www.heas.org.uk/

New Zealand: http://www.che.org.nz/ http://hef.org.nz/ http://www.ahe.org.nz/ http://www.homeschoolers.wellington.net.nz/ http://community.library.org.nz/cgi-bin/display.pl?id=296

Guam: www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/guam http://www.tumon.com/ghsa

Australia: http://www.hea.asn.au/hea/

Canada: www.shbe.info www.machs.mb.ca www.aheaonline.com http://nshea.webcentre.ca/ http://www.eho.org/support/canada.asp

5. Gather Resources: Some families start with a complete curriculum package, while others start with a notebook and a library card. Choosing your resources depends on your style or method of education and your own interests. If you are financially burdened, there are free homeschooling resources on the web, as well as discounted, used books in abundance.

You Can Do This! Parents around the world are taking back their God-given responsibility to educate their children, and you can too. We have developed two downloads to help you get started:

- ✓ Homeschool With Confidence
- ✓ Simple Recipes for Successful Homeschooling

Disclaimer: The above information is not intended as legal advice and should not be construed as such. Please check the legal requirements in your area.



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.



If you enjoyed this Well-book ...

you might also enjoy some of the other resources provided by TOS.

The Old Schoolhouse[®] *Magazine* is the most widely read homeschooling magazine (with more than 22,000 subscribers who live in 35 different countries!). In addition, we can be found in many bookstores across the nation! *The Old Schoolhouse*[®] is packed with information and articles (approximately 200 pages per issue) that will inform, encourage, and inspire you. Save money when you <u>subscribe online</u>.

Plus, we have several free E- Newsletters that appeal to a wide variety of needs and interests.

- *The Homeschool Minute* Our main newsletter, featuring short words of encouragement and tips from favorite homeschool authors and friends, emailed every Wednesday
- Freebie Fridays The best free homeschool resources online, emailed each Friday
- *Minute to Minute* Homeschool Q & A where readers ask and answer each other's questions, emailed each Saturday
- *Special Offers* Free articles and E-Books, coupons, sales, and more from *The Old Schoolhouse*[®] and our advertisers, delivered various days throughout the week
- Schoolhouse Support Monthly homeschool support devotional newsletter
- *Teacher's Toolbox* Monthly unit study newsletter, and a free E-Book each month!

See what you've been missing. <u>Click here</u> to read our newsletter archives and <u>subscribe</u> to any (*or all*) of them!

Curious about blogging? <u>HomeschoolBlogger.com</u> is our free, online blogging community designed to bring homeschoolers around the world together. With over 22,000 users, you are sure to find new friends and share ideas with homeschooling parents just like yourself.

Finally, find even more great homeschool products and shop where the shipping is **always free** at the <u>Schoolhouse Store</u>!

www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com www.TheOldSchoolhouseStore.com www.Econobusters.com

The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC P.O. Box 8426 Gray, TN 37615 1-888-718-HOME

The Old Schoolhouse[®] Magazine Goes Digital!



Want to know why you'll want to subscribe - even if you already get the print edition?

- Instant delivery No waiting for your mail to arrive.
- Huge savings At \$16.95, our digital subscription is 32% less than our US print subscription price, 43% less than Canadian print subscription prices, and 65% less than our international print prices. If price has kept you from subscribing before, you can't go wrong with the huge savings on our digital subscription.
- Helpful links No more running to the computer to check out an advertised product or website reference. One click and you're there!
- Exciting features Print or email articles to share with up to five of your friends.
- Fun, dynamic format Flip through a real online magazine, not a pdf file.
- Never lose your magazine again Save all your TOS issues to your computer.
- More of what you love Enjoy the same high-quality content and beautiful design.

Subscribe TODAY

Homeschooling with

1.888.718.HOME

One-year Subscription

to Digital TOS

for one low price

By Land or By Se

Old Schoolho

www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com

The Magazine for Homeschool Families

Don't Miss a Single Issue!

"You'll be informed, inspired, and reminded that you're not alone."



1.888.718.HOME www.TheHomeschoolMagazine.com

HOMESCHOOL?

Learn from The Homeschooling Experts

\$12.45 each no shipping

A compilation of lessons from well-known authors such as Cindy Rushton, Christine Field, Terri Camp, and Lorrie Flem. There are over two million homeschoolers today. You can teach your own child—YES, you can?

Secrets of Successful Homeschooling You Have what it Takes to Howeschool

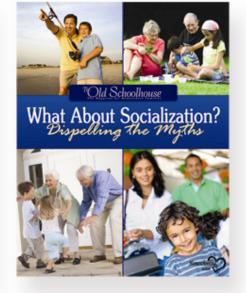
Po Barl & Cons Guerra

By Paul & Gena Suarez "Otal Schoolhouser



HomeSchooling the High Schooler From Transcripts to Graduation

Compiled by Nancy Carter, Project Edity





Get your copy of these e-books at www.TheOldSchoolhouseStore.com