

# Be True to Your School

## By Kendra Fletcher

The funny little boy with the dark brown hair and deep blue eyes the color of sapphires sat weaving his fingers together in rapt attention on my lap as we read aloud together. One book was never enough for him, and often we curled up among the stacks of library finds and just committed our afternoons to the tales of mice on motorcycles, an owl in a family, and a very odd penguin named Tacky. The stories we heard and experienced became jumping-off points to the curious world of little boys, where giants are conquered and light sabers save the day.

Soon it wasn't enough that I was reading the words on the page; he wanted to decode the mysterious letters and become the one from whom the stories emerged. As his young mother, I could see that my tenacious firstborn son wouldn't be satisfied by my feeble attempts to brush away his desires, and I certainly couldn't imagine making him wait to learn to read until the September after his fifth birthday. It didn't matter that this was January; the boy wanted to read. So we set about learning together—I as the first-time teacher and he as the eager student.

It was terribly exciting, but it was never easy. My firstborn boy was sharp, and with his natural ability to learn quickly also came boredom, pride, and rash decisions. What would a boy who already knew how to read but who lacked self-control (he was 5, after all) do in a kindergarten classroom? I envisioned the class hamster strung up in a hammock made from fishing wire and the teacher wondering who in the world had rigged her computer to play a continuous stream of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It's an understatement to say I never wanted to homeschool, but it's an exaggeration to claim a traditional kindergarten classroom would have been the best place for my son.

And so we stayed home.

The years went quickly. My blue-eyed brunette became a high schooler and then a college student. And because God fashions our temperaments to serve Him in a glorious and unique way, my son's tenaciousness is serving him well in the real world of school, work, and love.

But there are others. Seven others. And as unique as that strong firstborn is, there isn't a matching soul in the bunch. I awaken each morning to the realization that God's glory is plainly shown on the face of each of our children, that He has fashioned them uniquely and lovingly and mightily, for His glory. It's awesome.

Our second born is a blond, blue-eyed, happy-go-lucky lifeguard with a bevy of friends and a heart for the spiritually lost. When he was the 4-year-old in the house, his grandfather would say, "Nate's always looking for the pony in the pile of poop." He's an optimist, to say the least. The funny thing about optimism, however, is that its back-sided weakness can often be discontent. Surely that school over there is better than my homeschool right here. Nate sang that song all through high school, when we finally decided we would, after all, give him the opportunity to experience a brick and mortar school.

And so on a hot summer morning in June, I drove a few miles down the road to the charter high school. I chatted with the gals in the air-conditioned office and jumped through their administrative hoops. They were amazed that I had created Nate's transcript, and I was dumbfounded that they hadn't heard of the curriculum Nate had been using (**Sonlight** and **Veritas Press**). Clearly, this was a different homeschool world than the one I had been

living in, even though Nate technically would still be homeschooled even while taking some classes on the campus.

All our bureaucratic ducks in a row, I used the remainder of the summer to plan and prepare for the five other students I would be homeschooling in the fall.

In August, just a week before he would begin his junior year at the charter high school, Nate popped into the kitchen where I was preparing dinner and said, "Mom, I want to be homeschooled this year." I whipped my head up from the lettuce I was chopping and said: "What? Are you kidding me?" After all it had taken for me to enroll him and after years of him singing the "school on campus must be better than school at home" song, he stood in my kitchen with a wonky grin on his freckled face and told me he would prefer to be home.

"Why?" I wanted to know. What had changed his mind?

"I've been thinking about it, and I realized that if I'm there most of the day, I won't be able to just get things done, you know?" Yes, I did know. We'd been trying to communicate that to him for years. "I won't be able to practice my guitar as often or go at my own pace." These were also points in our arsenal of reasons to complete high school at home. Somewhere along the line, Nate was understanding that the remaining years of high school could be a completely fruitful time in his life that would prepare him for whatever God was calling him to do. That was the Holy Spirit's gentle guidance in Nate's heart, and for that I am unutterably grateful.

Homeschooling hasn't always been a smooth and uncomplicated path for us. Amongst the eight blue-eyed blonds and brunettes here, the variables in personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and desires are uncountable. I won't sugarcoat it and tell you that it's all been a lovely holiday cruise. Some days leave me feeling like we're going down with the *Titanic*, flailing and gasping and grabbing the undersides of any lifeboats in sight. But always, always, the holiday cruise is worth the unpredictable life at sea. When it is the right choice, when it is where God wants us to be, homeschooling will always be the best place to raise, educate, love on, and grow children.

*Kendra Fletcher is the mother of eight, aged 19 down to 4. While many things could define her life in terms of how she spends her days, she prefers to find her identity in Christ alone, knowing how quickly all the other descriptors can take her focus off the One Who has redeemed her soul. She loves to encourage other moms who are beginning their homeschool journeys with little ones underfoot. Her website and blog can be found at [www.preschoolersandpeace.com](http://www.preschoolersandpeace.com) .*

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