

## 10 Keys to Homeschool Success

by Beverly Whalen

Many mothers seem to struggle with homeschooling. They obviously have the desire to be a help to their husbands in this area, but as the family grows, they can't figure out how to "fit it all in." I hope these tips can help someone (1 Corinthians 14:40).

### 1. Have time with the Lord.

Lamentations 3:23

Get up at the scheduled time, before the children wake. This is an absolute necessity if you are going to have a successful day. If you examine your "good" days versus your "bad" days, you'll find that you started your "good" days communicating with the Lord. Honor the Lord first of all, and then put your first load of clothes in the washing machine.

### 2. Don't teach your children slothfulness.

Proverbs 19:15

Get the children up at the scheduled time. There is no place for "sleeping in." There may be a cause for an "hour delay" due to an unforeseen late night the night before. This should be the exception and not the rule. The earlier you start school, the earlier you finish.

### 3. Reward good behavior.

Psalm 18:20

Offer incentives for chores done promptly. We use a sticker system. Twenty-five stickers earn a tool for the boys. The girls combine theirs for a DVD that Dad and Mom approve of.

### 4. Approach school time with purpose.

Isaiah 46:11b

Start school with prayer and Bible, and work on school only at the scheduled time. Use a family-friendly curriculum. Many subjects can be taught together. Older children should be disciplined enough to do their schoolwork alone, with occasional help. When older children have a schedule to go by for chores and schoolwork, they shouldn't have to interrupt Mom while she is teaching and helping the little ones. Don't answer the phone during school time. Invest in an answering machine if you do not have one.

### 5. Bring order through discipline.

Proverbs 13:24

Keep the schooling environment orderly. Limit the activity of little ones during school time. For example, don't allow drinks except at break time. If there are two or three floors, everyone should stay on the same floor (a gate is helpful). Children should know their boundaries. Yes, little ones like to be with Mom. They can play with blocks at your feet or sit on your lap and play quietly while you teach.

### 6. Finish what you start.

Acts 20:24

On your scheduled break, you can have chore inspection and catch-up time.

- A. Unfinished chores can be completed at the loss of break time.
- B. When nursing a baby, schedule breaks at nursing time, or nurse the baby before school and after school.
- C. Many nursing babies can take a nap during school time.
- D. Provide a snack.
- E. Start back up on time.

7. Don't let household tasks interfere.

Luke 16:1

Housecleaning, cooking, folding laundry, yard work, supper preparation, and other household projects should all take place before and after school time. Many of the housekeeping tasks should be delegated to responsible children. Take time while children are young to teach housekeeping tasks one-on-one so that they can do these chores well as they become older.

8. Use school time only for school tasks.

Don't try to work in the kitchen or get laundry in during school time, and don't schedule appointments during school time. School time should only be school time. Dentists, doctors, and orthodontists want your business, and they will work with you. Our dentist will schedule our whole family in one afternoon if needed, and we have a family of ten! If you leave your place during school time, you can't expect others to stay where they should be. Have children do their instrument practice as part of their individual schedules before or after school time, not during it.

9. Enjoy your family.

Psalms 128:2

When schoolwork is caught up and chores are all finished, set aside one night a week to watch a video or DVD.

10. Reverence your husband

Ephesians 5:33<sup>b</sup>

Work at putting your husband first. The children need to know he is number one in your life. Have a time each day just to converse with him alone, with no interruptions. If your husband works at home or works irregular hours, do not schedule his time. He must oversee all that you schedule, because he will have to answer to God for how he has taught and trained his children to walk in the right paths.

Many moms don't want to be so rigid. Balance is essential in a homeschooling family, and as a whole, our weakness is not being scheduled enough. Our family, friends, and neighbors often watch us, criticize us, and laugh at us because of our lack of commitment to the very task we preach about.

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## Biographical Information

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*Beverly Whalen is the wife of David Whalen. They live with their eight children in the country near Enon Valley. Their oldest child, Jeremiah, is 20 and mentally disabled. Their oldest daughter, Susanna, is 18 and teaches a variety of stringed instruments. Twins Naomi and h are 15. They enjoy piano, violin, and harp. Jared and Nathan are 13, also twins. Uriah is 10, and Levi is 6. The boys are taking beginning music lessons and enjoy the Haflinger horses on the family farm. The family sings and plays together as a ministry in their church and likeminded churches. They have been homeschooling for 16 years.*