

## A Day in the Life of a Homeschool Family in Los Angeles

Rhonda Gordon

The night before, my 3 yr old son, Daniel was having trouble falling asleep. He kept coming upstairs to tell me one more thing. After reading him 5 stories and singing to him for hours, he finally fell asleep at 11PM. I figured he would sleep in a little in the morning. Fat chance!

Somewhere around 8ish, my daughter woke me up saying that while my son and she were playing cars, his stomach was hurting him. I figured he might be hungry. I woke up and made a quick breakfast. In looking through my fridge, I realized that I have to go shopping and since I share a car with my husband, on this day, Tuesday is the only day I can go. In the meantime, I give them some applesauce and some cereal that I received from WIC (women, infant, and children program).

After breakfast, I tell them to play and put on Veggie-ables sing-along songs. I run upstairs and lift light weights and do a few push-ups on my knees. I used to be an aerobics instructor years ago and don't like the way my body is looking lately! I jump in the shower. I took one last night but need a second one because my hair is so kinky that if I don't put conditioner on it, I will walk around all day with what is known as an "Afro."

While my daughter, Gabriella (6) is doing art on a computer program, I quickly braid her hair (since lice is going around), get everyone dressed, and we are off to a quick run to Trader Joe's. It is 9:15 and we have to be finished shopping by 9:45 because we have to be at Community Bible Study at 10:30.

We run up and down the aisles grabbing everything we need: waffles, hash browns, yogurt, soymilk, cheese, vegetables, fruit, bread, and frozen vegetables. I quickly help the cashier bag the groceries as time is of the essence.

As we start for the car, I realize that they changed the time of "CBS" (Community Bible Study) and we don't have to be there until 10:45. Quickly, my children help me unload the groceries and organize the fridge. We live in an apartment in Los Angeles and the fridge space is very small. The freezer keeps popping open!

Finally, everything is in and I realize that I haven't eaten breakfast myself for sample oatmeal that my daughter handing me while shopping. I grab a few sugar coated almonds and an organic apple and am out the door again.

Tuesdays are our Community Bible Study day. My daughter goes to her homeschooling class where she is studying Genesis, in depth. She's studying the same passages that I am studying with the women in my core group. We have homework that we go over together and discuss questions. My son has a children's program too. He makes an art project, a small bible coloring book with the scripture "love one another" written on a heart that he

glues to the book. He has singing time, flag time, scripture memory time, story time, snack time, and playground time.

It is so nice to finally sit in my small group with other women and discuss Jacob's struggles. He is a man that many look up to, yet, he has gone through so much. Not only has his father-in-law cheated him and made him work so hard, but later, his sons will trick him into thinking his beloved Joseph is dead. In addition, the women, Rachel and Leah feel unloved by their father who sold them off. I can really relate to these biblical characters.

Next, we move into a large room where a key speaker talks more in depth about Genesis and before I know it, my short time fellowshiping with the women has come to an end. I pick up my children and while driving out the parking lot, a dear friend, Dee, hands me two large bags of clothes she thinks might fit me. My 3 year old son turns to me and says, "Mommy, that is so nice that she gave you those clothes." Times are tough in California and homeschool/stay-at-home moms are having it the roughest.

You would think my day ends there but that is just the beginning. We come home and eat lunch. For me, a yummy salad and some mushroom pizza. Then, I clock my calories into fitday.com and realize that the olive oil has too many calories and the pizza has too many carbs! Too late now. 'I'll do better at dinner,' I tell myself. I write to my two friends by e-mail and see how they are doing on their new diets. We are trying to hold each other accountable. But one of my friends called me on my cell phone before CBS to tell me she just found out she's pregnant so, so much for her diet!

After lunch, my daughter sorts the new clothes I've been given into two piles. I gather up some lentil soup, edamames and fruit that I put together from last night. I am going to bring it over to a very ill homeschool mom in the hospital. Krista English, a homeschool mother of 2 boys, in Santa Barbara has Leukemia and almost died last week. A friend of mine in Santa Barbara has been sending me her husband's blog <http://hopenotesfromkrista.blogspot.com> and I've been following it and praying for her. She is staying in Ronald Regan UCLA hospital which is right across the street from my husband's "Jews for Jesus" office. My husband only works in the office on Tuesdays and that's why I can have his "Jews for Jesus" van on Tuesdays. The rest of the week, he can be seen handing out tracts at the college campuses, Venice Beach, and farmer's markets, meeting with Jewish men one-on-one for Bible Study and speaking at churches on the Hebraic roots of the faith.

It is 2:30 PM now and still, I am rushing. I drop the children off with their dad and the secretary at the Jews for Jesus office. They love going to the office and visiting "Susan." They watch their dad work on the computer and my son brings his cars. Susan likes to chase them around the office too in the wide open space that we don't have in our apartment.

Now I am off to try to find a parking spot. The traffic in Westwood/UCLA is very congested. I pull into the hospital to find out they want 11 dollars for parking! Forget it!

I am driving around for what seems like forever when I finally find a small spot that I need to parallel park into. I am having trouble and fortunately, a young man who seems like an angel to me comes out of nowhere and helps me back it in.

Making my way up to the sixth floor, I am anxious to meet “Krista,” the young woman I have been praying for. When I enter the room, I almost think I made a mistake. This can’t possibly be the same young woman I saw pictures of? She looks so different. First of all, she lost all of her hair. Second of all, she is so fragile. She tells me how she has sores on her lips and can’t eat and she’s malnourished. She can’t even get 300 calories a day. She is forcing herself to drink an “Ensure” drink. Her mother has tears in her eyes as she tells me how they almost lost her last week. Krista tells me how she doesn’t remember last week. She tells me how they put her in a wheelchair and tried to get her to stand for the first time today and how tired she was as a result. Her spirits were so good. She said she has gotten so much support from the homeschool community in Santa Barbara. They have been driving down to Los Angeles (a two hour drive) and bringing her husband food and praying for her. I ask her how her children are doing and she points to a picture on the wall. She says they are having fun with their friends and she seems happy about that. I told her she is so blessed to have friends and she says, “Yes, the homeschool support has been amazing!” (I am a little jealous because I have to drive 45 minutes south to Redondo Beach to my homeschool support group).

Krista shows me a chart that says “1” on it. She is happy her white count is “1” and says that it is progress. I ask her what number it has to be before she starts feeling better. “100” she says with hope in her voice. She is so optimistic. She tells me how she desperately needs plasma and blood donations. Especially negative blood and especially “O-” If anyone can help her on the west side of Los Angeles, you might save her life as blood donations are low.

As I say goodbye, I find myself wanting to hug her and kiss her, but all I can offer her is a prayer. Back in the elevator, I am filled with emotions of how fragile life really is. As I walk to my car, I see a grown man in the parking lot on his cell phone with tears rolling down his face. Has he just lost a loved one? I pray for him.

Quickly, I run to the office to pick up my children and I see another missionary, Holly, there. I tell her about my experience in the hospital. We talk about how fragile life really is. Later, I will find out that she goes into the hospital, the same night for chest pains.

Now, we are off to the San Fernando Valley. Gabriella attends a Christian dancing school there and takes jazz and tap. There are many homeschoolers that attend. With no traffic, it would take 30 minutes but I’ve left after 3 PM, which means lots of traffic but the children are used to it living in Los Angeles. We arrive there at 4 PM which is 15 minutes late but I figured it worth being late, to go visit Krista. While my daughter dances, I chat with other homeschool moms and my son plays in a nursery with other siblings while I watch him. He has so much fun that he doesn’t even want to leave to go home. My daughter practices her dances for her performance. One song is by “Stephen Curtis

Chapman”, one of my favorite singers. I also use this time to catch up with friend on my cell phone.

Now at last, it is getting dark. The moon and stars are out and we are driving home. Normally, my son falls asleep on the way to dance class but tonight, he falls asleep on the way home. It is 7 PM now and my husband works late on Tuesdays because of a Jews for Jesus Bible Study at the office. I make dinner and the children are so glad to just sit on the floor to play. I check my e-mails and facebook. With all the energy left in me, I put on an aerobic video. Watching my daughter dance motivated me! I put on a dance exercise video for 45 minutes and force myself to do the moves. (While exercising, I also manage to remember to get online and renew our library videos so we don’t get a fine tomorrow.) I need the movement. I’ve been sitting in Bible studies and cars all day! A few months ago, I did “Raw Food Boot Camp” where you eat the majority of food raw and exercise for an hour a day and lost 20 pounds. But I slacked for a few weeks and put 10 back on! My short-term goal is to lose a few in time for our Purim party.

Finally, I can sit on the couch. My children have been playing cars nicely but now want to play on the computer, “Boz the Bear.” I realize its 9:30 PM already and the children aren’t in bed! I begin to read my son a book when my husband comes through the door early. The bible study was cut short because the bible study’s teacher’s wife, Holly, had to go to the hospital after having heavy chest pains. I begin to pray for her. Now, back to reading.

Daniel likes his two favorite stories read to him, *The Enormous Crocodile* and *Teeny, Tiny Mouse*. Gabriella wants to read two chapters from, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. After the stories, we brush teeth, pajamas, pray and shut the lights. My son gets out of bed one time and says I forgot to tell him “sweet dreams.” I tell him “sweet dreams” and tuck him back in. I hope it’s not going to be like the night before. I am more firm this time, “No getting out of bed now - its bedtime.” My daughter is already snoring.

Finally, I plop into my bed. Normally, I will read my Bible but it is so nice to have my head touch the pillow and finally put my feet up. My husband and I discuss the daily struggles of the day. It is nice that we are now sleeping with each other again. I recently trained my 3 yr old son to sleep in his own bed. Before long, I am drifting off to dreamland. I think my husband is snoring while I am still talking.

What about academics you ask me? I think my children learned a lot about life today. Money, weighing food, food shopping, cooking, hospitality, computer, art, keyboard practice while I was on the computer, coloring, bible studying, socializing with homeschool friends and daddy’s co-workers, dancing, reading and singing. BUT just to be sure, tomorrow is Wednesday. On Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and every other Friday (because of a homeschool co-op), we do *My Father’s World First Grade* curriculum (reading, writing, math, bible stories, and memory scripture) for Gabriella and *Rod and Staff pre-school* for Daniel. We also use *Rosetta Stone Hebrew* curriculum once a week.

## Biographical Information

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