

What Do I Teach

One of the most daunting tasks of homeschooling is deciding which curriculum to use. Again, I want to point you back to knowing your “why” for homeschooling. With that picture in mind, you can look at materials and see if they effectively meet the goals you have for homeschooling.

To reach these goals, we must:

Build the Team

The Coach, The Teacher, You

Take a look at your homeschool “team.” Who are you as a teacher? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Knowing this helps you to find curriculum that you can use effectively. If you do not understand or enjoy the layout, your student will feel that, and you will not achieve the results you desire.



Also, don't be afraid to ask for help in areas that you do not feel confident. Every professional coach has advisors that handle certain aspects of the game, and you want to make sure you use the “advisors” available. Many curriculums offer online support, teacher manuals, DVD teachers, etc.



The Players, Your Students

Secondly, look at your team players, your students. As a parent, you know their strengths and weaknesses better than anyone else. As you look at curriculum, stay away from things that will frustrate, but also look at ways you can help them overcome their weaknesses. Try to avoid only focusing on catering to their strengths and help them to grow as learners.

If your child is a very hands-on learner, then introduce new ideas in a hands-on way. Then, follow up with something verbal or written; this teaches them to process concepts in different ways. When a student can process through multiple avenues, they should be able to learn something from anyone!

Cover the Bases

In baseball, it is important to develop a good system of defense, and the first method of defense is making sure all the bases are covered. When homeschooling, these “bases” are the basics and foundations of learning. So, before you worry about whether to teach them Spanish or Latin, make sure they know how to read!

Here are your “bases”:

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Arithmetic

If you will make sure these bases are covered, then a student will have the tools to explore whatever other area of study he desires. Without these tools, your student will lack independence in his studies and will be limited to only what another person exposes to him.



Make sure your first curriculum choices cover these three essential areas.



Play the Games

Once you have the team built and you have your bases covered, you can now schedule and play some games. For homeschoolers, these games include history, science, art, foreign language, vocabulary, music, and much more! You will be so excited to see all the resources available. For many students, these are the parts of homeschooling that make learning

fun. This is a great time to cater to your student's interests and make their work at reading, writing, or arithmetic feel worth it. Don't forget to play! All work and no play really is ALL work.

Evaluate the Season

Every team keeps records of their players stats, and when you are homeschooling, you want to have a clear path for evaluation of student's educational growth.



Look for curriculum which directs you or gives you a clear method of evaluation. For example, if you do not have math problems for your child to do independently, then you may never know if they really understand how to add those numbers. Evaluation doesn't always need to be a written test or activity though. Evaluating your child's understanding can be as simple as a dialogue

or asking them to teach the concept back to you.

Just like a team needs to evaluate whether they need to switch positions or try a different defense tactic, you need to keep your eyes open for when you need to stop and make sure a concept is concrete. Don't feel like you must keep moving even without mastery in order to finish a book or curriculum. Keep that "why" in front of you. Mastery is more important than completion. Your team will be stronger for the next year, and your student will feel confident to move on when the time comes.

Curriculum Choices

It can be difficult to choose curriculum, especially with the enormous wealth of resources available. Remember to measure your choices with these three "p"reliminaries:

- Purpose—Make sure your choices reflect your "why"
- Prayer—"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Proverbs 16:3
- Planning—Trust your inner feelings about a curriculum and know that God will direct you even in the plan. Proverbs 16:9

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