

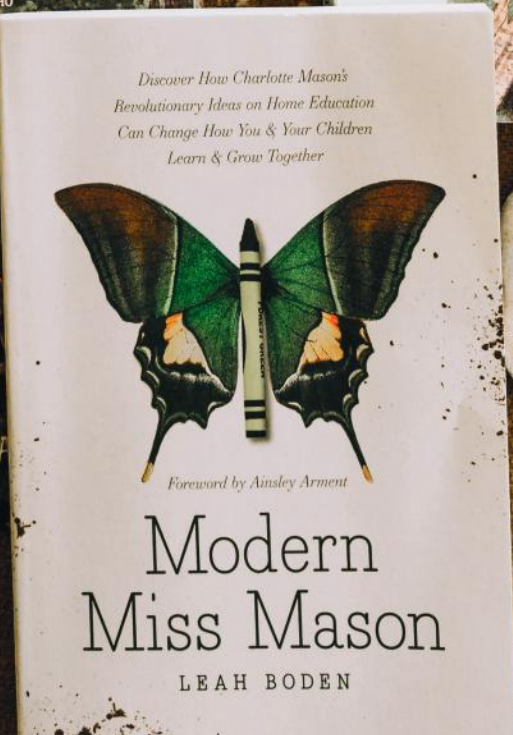
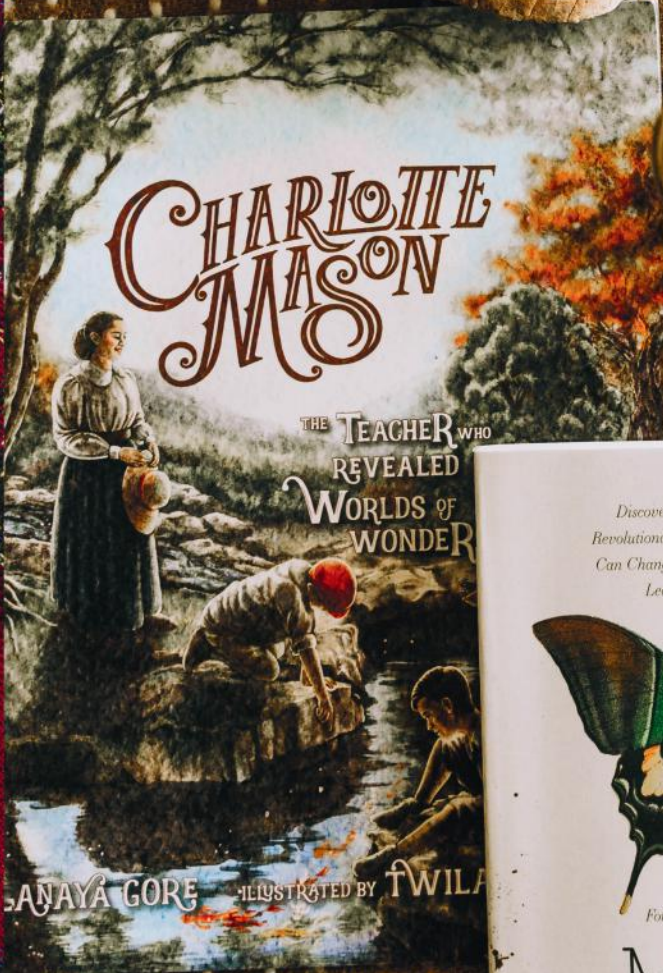
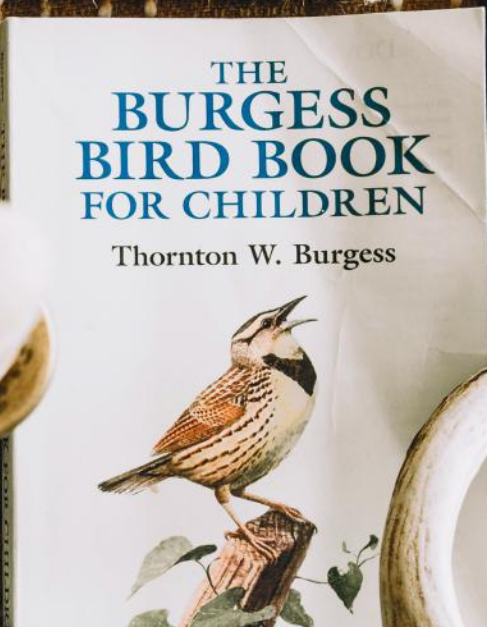
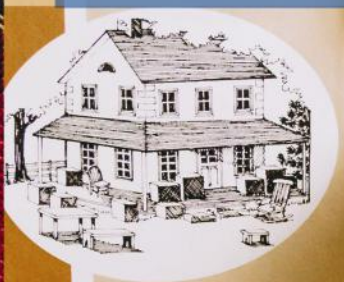
TEXAS

HOMESCHOOL MAGAZINE

BUSY
TIMES

THE CHARLOTTE MASON
ELEMENTARY ARITHMETIC
SERIES

ROO 3



WINTER 2025



Train up a
child in the
way he
should go:
and when he
is old, he will
not depart
from it.

Proverbs 22:6

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“Education, like
faith, is the evidence
of things not seen.”
- Charlotte Mason

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Winter 2025 issue of the Texas Homeschool Magazine.

I have truly enjoyed curating this edition, and I pray it brings you warmth, inspiration, and encouragement. I began planning this issue over the summer, and to be honest, it looks nothing like what I originally envisioned. As I allowed God to guide, shape, and reorganize it, the magazine slowly grew into something far richer—filled with themes that speak beautifully to this season.

As I edited articles and arranged layouts, it felt as though I was stitching together something warm and comforting. You'll notice “vintage quilts” woven throughout these pages—because quilting reminds me so much of motherhood, especially homeschool motherhood. We are the slow and steady stitchers of a masterpiece: the lives of our children. God has entrusted us to steward this time, this calling, and this work with care, knowing that one day we will release them into the world to carry His warmth wherever they go. These soft, worn quilts also signal that the cooler, quieter season has arrived in our homes.



My original plan was for this issue to focus on “birth.” Of course, the birth of Christ is central to this time of year, but as our contributors sent in their pieces, I realized this issue would become more than a traditional Christmas story. With birth comes vision—both the vision of what is being formed and the vision of how we will grow once it arrives. We often spend months imagining how things will unfold, only to discover that God’s plans are far different, far better, and far more beautiful than our own.

Because of that, a theme of vision—and the surrender required in forming it—runs deeply through this issue. The surrender to God, to His timing, and to His perfect design.

I've woven this focus on vision throughout the magazine as we step into the holidays and look toward a new year. Alongside our article on vision boards, you'll find graphics, photos, and notes of encouragement tucked into the pages to help spark your own God-led vision. I want our magazines to be used—to equip, to uplift, to be torn out and taped into journals, vision boards, and Bibles.



My prayer is that this issue wraps around you like a quilt and fills you with anticipation for the beautiful season God is preparing to birth in your life.

Melissa Ebner



A season to slow down, savor traditions, and celebrate the gift of homeschooling.

© 2025 Texas Homeschool Magazine
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We all wish you a Merry Christmas.



AN ACT OF SURRENDER

By Danica Johnson

Trust, Birth, and Becoming:
A Mama's Story of
Homeschooling, Homebirth,
and Holy Surrender

If you had told me 15 years ago that I would be a stay-at-home mother of 4 while also homeschooling, I would've laughed. There was absolutely no way I would be a mom; much less staying at home, schooling children. Fast forward to getting married, and the thought of having children became a little easier for me to accept, but certainly not homeschooling.

I would have those children, they would stay home with me until they were ready for Kindergarten, and then off to school they would go, so I could go back to work ... or so I thought. God has a funny way of rearranging our plans, doesn't he? I'll skip my life story, but to bring you up to date, I am now a devoted follower of Jesus, a stay-at-home mother/homemaker who homeschools her children, and I am enjoying every bit of it!



Peaceful Purposeful Motherhood

He will always be
constantly molding you
and refining you. Why?
Because HE loves you!



A little bit of advice from someone who has been through it: As a matter of fact, I know now that this is my purpose, as a mother, to raise up my children in the Lord for Kingdom advancement. It's yours too, mama! That surrender to becoming who I am today did not come easily. There were many battles that took place on the inside, ones that you, too, will have to walk through as well to get to the place where the Lord has you to go. These battles don't end with motherhood; they continue throughout life. I have often found myself in the trenches, holding onto things I should have released—fighting the current instead of surrendering and allowing myself to drift peacefully downstream. Releasing wants and desires that are not from Him is truly freeing.

Surrender is a lifelong process; don't fight it.



Another short, funny story, this time about birth, but also ends in surrender. My third child, who was supposed to be born in a hospital, was born at home in a birth pool. Why? Because the hospital route was not giving me peace. Peace was found in the homebirth option, not the one I would've chosen for myself, because, hello, epidural... but it was that peace that I followed, and I knew that's what he wanted me to do. Enter, surrender again, and wow! The homebirth experience was by far the best out of all of the previous births I had. Surrender can look scary, but I promise you, He has you! After our third child, we were done having children. Our family seemed to be complete. Or was it? Funny how unplanned things are always in God's plan, especially when it comes to babies. At the time of writing this, I am pregnant with our fourth child. By the time you are reading this, I will be holding that baby and a mother of four!

It's time for mothers to rise up and take hold of their calling of raising kingdom warriors, sharing the Gospel and being led by Holy Spirit in ALL areas of life.



Peaceful Purposeful
Motherhood





This was NEVER the plan! Haha! We had trips we wanted to take, projects we wanted to start and complete. Living on a homestead, there are soooo many projects. But when we found out we were pregnant again, all of those things fell by the wayside. I surrendered, once again. Surrender is a lifelong process; don't fight it.

On the subject of birth and babies, let's chat a little about home birth. It's beautiful, it's hard, it's rewarding, and it is exhausting. There are many myths surrounding it, but let me tell you, as a mother, it is one way of truly surrendering to the Lord. Trusting in Him, no matter the outcome, and leaving your expectations at the door. He designed our bodies beautifully for birth. There are always exceptions, of course, and doctors have their place, but the beauty of birth is truly a miracle from God. So, for any new mom out there, or maybe you have children but are pregnant again, if the nudge is there, go for it!

This recent pregnancy has taught me that surrendering doesn't always look how I think it should; That the Lord wasn't done with our family, even though I thought I was. Motherhood is my calling in this season. It is yours too.



The enemy will always try to make you think you should be doing “something else” or to keep you so busy that your priority and focus isn’t on your family. Even in the years to come, you, as a mother, will always have a job caring for your children and guiding them in some way. Never forget your purpose.

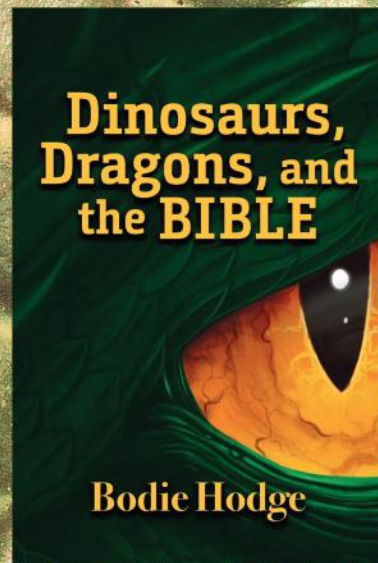
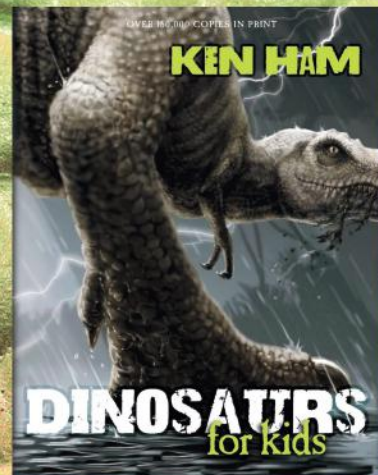
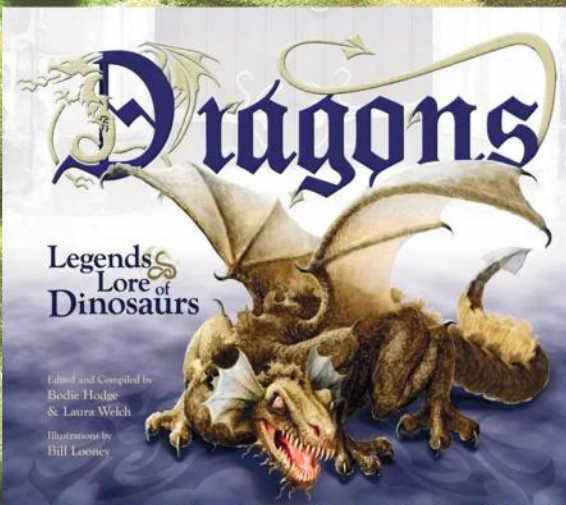
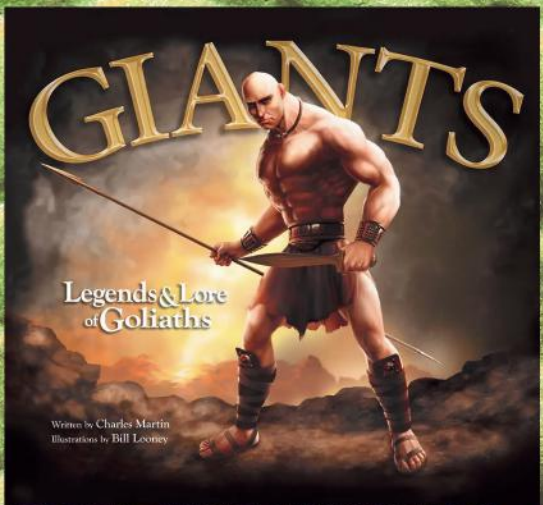
Motherhood is our true purpose and the mission field we have been given.

Motherhood is your calling in this season. In the book of Proverbs 3:5-6, it says, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” To follow Jesus is to trust in Him. There are numerous scriptures that emphasize the importance of trusting in the Lord and how He guides us because He cares for us. When we trust Him we can easily surrender our lives to Him daily because we know He is trustworthy. Although it's easier said than done, I'll be the first to admit that we have to be reminded of this simple truth. When you learn to let go and let Him lead you, you are not only going to experience His peace, but He is allowed to have His will, His way, in your life.

Trust me when I say, His will **always** comes to pass. It's up to us not to fight it. We are all here for a purpose. As mothers, our true calling is motherhood. It is a season of nursing babies, cleaning up spilled milk from toddlers on the floor, and wrangling our homeschoolers to finish their work on time each day. The mundane tasks are Kingdom work, mama! As born-again Christian mothers, we may not wear a crown for it now, but our reward will be in Heaven one day. From making disciples for Christ, correcting and rebuking unrighteous behavior, and guiding them on the path of life, this is our mission. Motherhood is our true purpose and the mission field we have been given.

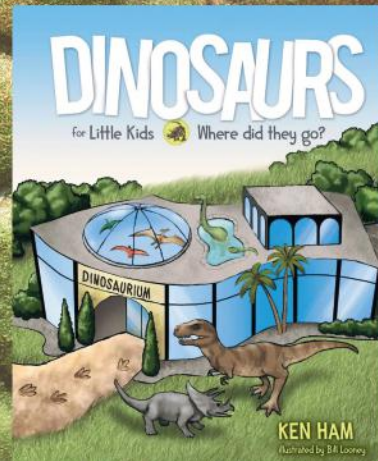
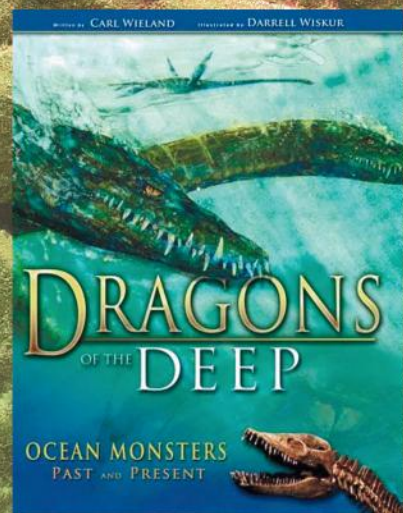
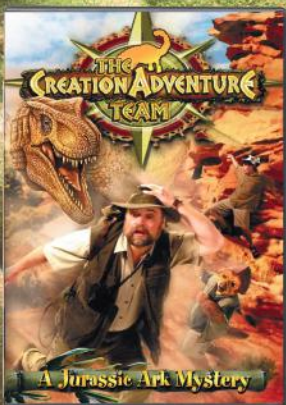


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Observe



**"AN OBSERVANT CHILD SHOULD BE PUT IN THE
WAY OF THINGS WORTH OBSERVING."
- CHARLOTTE MASON**

Meet

COWBOY

Jack



Cowboy Jack!



Howdy, I'm Cowboy Jack! Well really...I'm John Havard, but I make a show for kids and families called Cowboy Jack. No, I'm not a trained professional actor or someone with a huge budget to make a show. In reality, I'm a normal suburban dad who was frustrated with the options available for my own kids to watch. That frustration caused me to step out of my comfort zone, learn something new, and fully commit to the idea that content for kids can be so much more!



Adventure
BEGINS

**Virtual field trips
designed to
educate, spark
conversations, and
inspire curiosity**





In reality, I'm a normal suburban dad who was frustrated with the options available for my own kids to watch.

Every week, we release a new video, which is essentially a virtual field trip to a location (mostly in Texas), designed to educate, spark conversations, and inspire curiosity in our young viewers. We may learn about visiting the dentist and the tools they use, or something as fun as picking strawberries and learning how to make jam. The intention is always the same - learn something new and get moving! .

As busy parents, we can't ignore the relief a little screen time provides, but that doesn't mean it has to be "net zero" value time. We can't overlook the importance of learning from and engaging with a positive influence who stands out by being intentionally different. With a genuine speaking voice—no silly dancing, no over-the-top color-flashing animations, and no loud music—the approach is more Captain Kangaroo meets Fred Rogers: calm, authentic, and focused on real connection.

The show evolved from a simple idea to garnering sometimes as many as 40 million views in a month, and it's available on YouTube, Amazon Prime, YippeeTV, KidoodleTV, HappyKids, Tubi, and a handful of other platforms. Real-life experiences brought to the living room, classroom, car rides, or wherever you need them!



We're a husband/wife team making this thing happen - I'm the big goofy fellow in the big hat, and behind me is my beautiful wife, Andrea of 14 years, filming, editing, scheduling, and keeping me in line. Give it a shot, you won't regret it!



I LIKE BOOKS!

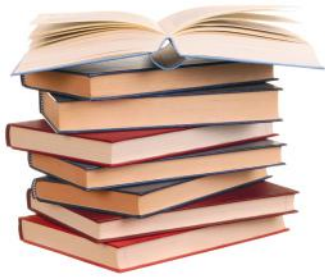


By Melissa Ebner

Over the past decade, a remarkable rise in young people writing—and even publishing—their own stories, poems, and books reveals a growing movement fueled by youth creativity. While data on “teen authors” is still emerging, broader literacy studies show today’s youth are writing more than ever. This surge is not just a statistic; it signals a meaningful shift in how the next generation engages with literature. Coupled with a projected global children’s book market of over \$10 BILLION in 2025, the potential for youth-driven literary impact has never been greater.

For homeschooling families, this movement is especially encouraging. Homeschooling often gives students the gift of time, freedom, and inspiration to write, imagine, and share their words with others. Without rigid schedules or standardized assignments, homeschooled writers can develop their voices through journaling, storytelling, and project-based learning. Many parents have found that publishing even a small story—through local print services or digital platforms—helps a child see their work as meaningful and builds confidence that lasts far beyond the lesson plan.

Commit TO Growth



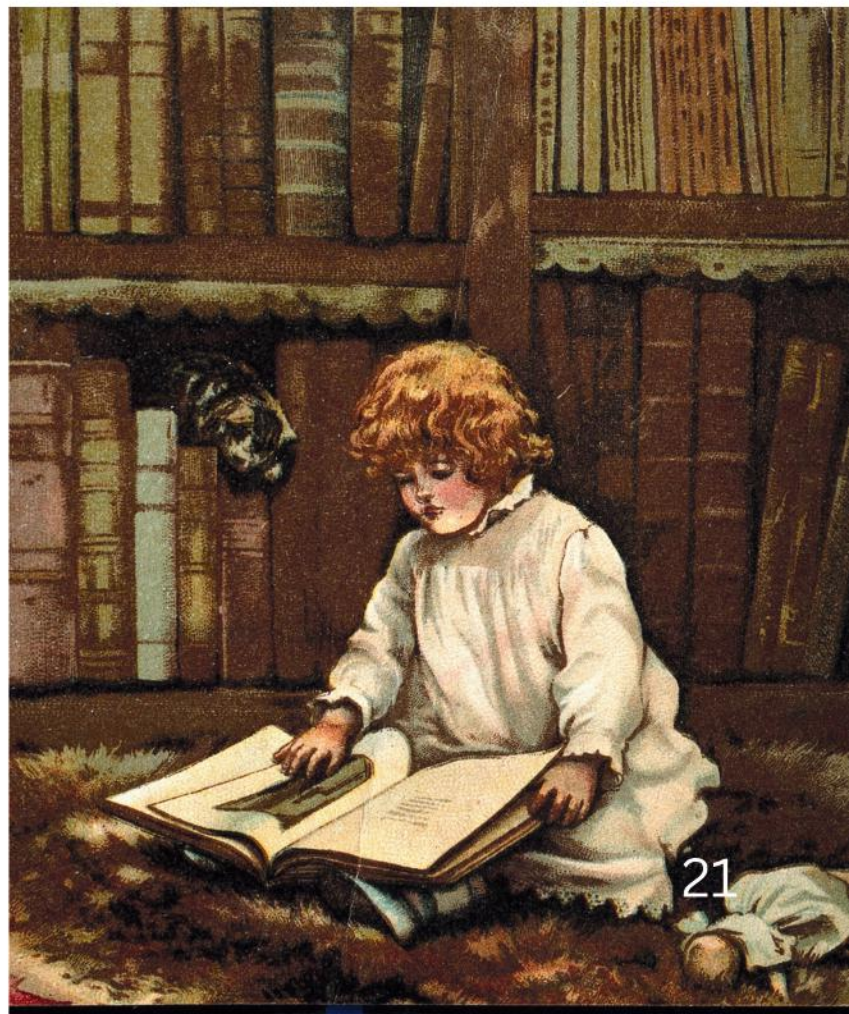
The benefits go far beyond academics. When children write, they become creators instead of consumers—learning to organize thoughts, express emotion, and observe the world through a lens of creativity and empathy. Reading and writing together build vocabulary, strengthen critical thinking, and encourage curiosity.

Yet, just as important as the act of writing is what our children are reading. The stories that fill a child’s imagination shape their worldview, their sense of right and wrong, and even how they see themselves. Books that promote courage, kindness, honesty, perseverance, and compassion have a lasting impact on character development. In a culture saturated with fast-paced media and superficial narratives, selecting quality literature—books that celebrate truth, beauty, and virtue can nurture strong minds and tender hearts.

Many educators and child psychologists agree that reading wholesome, inspiring stories has a positive impact on mental health. Characters who overcome challenges or show resilience give children emotional models to imitate.

Whether through classics, faith-based tales, or uplifting modern works, stories can anchor a young person’s inner life. For homeschool families, curating such a reading list is not just educational—it’s an act of discipleship and care for the whole child.

Ultimately, this generation of young readers and writers is more than a trend—it’s a revival of imagination. When children are encouraged to write their stories and read great ones, they develop empathy, confidence, and conviction. As homeschoolers know well, education is not only about information; it’s about formation. In that sense, every good story read and every new story written becomes a seed planted in the heart of the next generation.



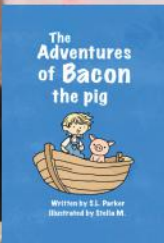


STARR Parker



**“Homeschool Teen Author
on Faith, Family, and
Finding Her Voice”**

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR



Background & Inspiration

Can you tell us a little about yourself and how you first became interested in writing?

I've loved books for as long as I can remember, and storytelling has always been a big part of my life. When I was about 13, I had to write a children's story for school. That was the first time I actually put one of my own stories onto paper, and I discovered how much I enjoyed writing.

What inspired you to start writing books at such a young age?

I wanted to create stories that could be a meaningful part of someone's childhood, just like so many books had been for me.

How has being homeschooled shaped your journey as an author?

Being homeschooled gave me the freedom to explore and focus on my interests, with my school, working with them instead of against them, allowing me to work on honing in on my craft.

Were there any particular books or authors that influenced your style or motivated you to write?

L. M. Montgomery was one of my biggest inspirations because she wrote my favorite book as a child, *Anne of Green Gables*. Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* also influenced me. I loved the sense of adventure in her stories and wanted to create my own tales with characters and storylines that reflected who I am as a writer.



About her books

You've already published two books—what was the inspiration behind each one?

My book, *The Adventures of Bacon the Pig*, was inspired by my love of imagination and the farm lifestyle. My little brother, Shadow, also inspired Wyatt's design and personality. For my newest book, *The Cocky Chicken and the Patient Mouse*, I wanted to write a story that reflects the message of Colossians 3:23, about working wholeheartedly and doing your best in everything.

In your most recent story with *Miss Chicken and Mrs. Mouse*, why did you choose animals as your main characters?

I think animals are fun and interesting to write about. Put a little outfit on them, and it adds a whimsical touch, making everything they do a little more magical.

What message do you hope readers, especially kids and teens, take away from your book?

For them to never lose their imagination and curiosity. Always wonder and explore, but most importantly, to always chase after Jesus and live their lives for Him.

Writing Process

What does your writing routine look like? Do you set aside certain times to write, or does inspiration strike randomly?

I usually set aside about an hour a day to write, and I'll go longer if I'm feeling inspired. Most of the time, though, ideas and inspiration strike randomly, and I just go with it.

How do you balance schoolwork, family, and your writing projects?

Having a simple schedule and routine makes balancing everything much easier. I wake up at 6 a.m., and my schoolwork is usually done by 1 p.m. I spend the afternoon with my family and on my hobbies, then around 5 to 6 p.m., I dedicate time to my writing.



Do you have friends or family who help with editing, illustrations, or ideas?

My whole family helped, and I honestly couldn't have done it without them. My brother, Shadow, was the inspiration for my first book. My mom helped with editing and illustrated *The Cocky Chicken and the Patient Mouse*, my dad helped with ideas and plans, and my sister, Sailor, also contributed ideas. My other sister, Stella, who is only 13, created the illustrations for *The Adventures of Bacon the Pig*.



Lessons and Advice

What advice would you give to other teens who dream about writing and publishing a book?

Your first draft doesn't have to be perfect, and your first book doesn't either. Writing is like any other skill. You will always be learning and improving, but only if you keep practicing. So never give up, never doubt yourself, and just keep writing.

Fun & Future

What do you enjoy doing when you're not writing?

I love reading, making jewelry, trying new hobbies and being outside.

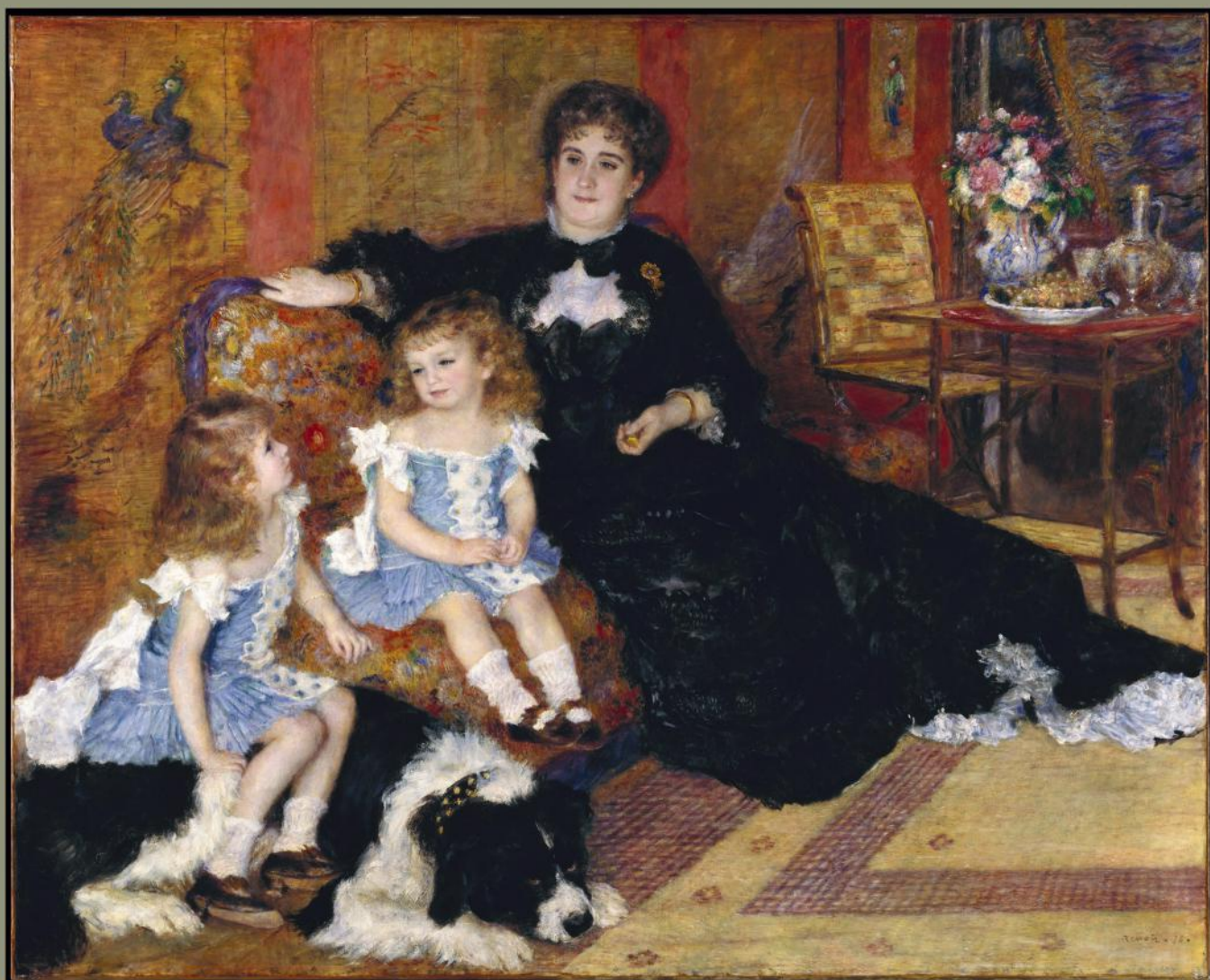


Do you see yourself pursuing writing as a lifelong career?

I hope to make writing my full-time career. Earning a living doing something I love would be a dream come true.

Are there new projects or book ideas you're excited about right now?

We're currently working on the illustrations for the second book of *The Adventures of Bacon the Pig*, which I'm very excited about. I'm also in the early stages of writing my first



Education is an
atmosphere, a
discipline, a life

- Charlotte Mason



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WE ARE HIRING

WE'RE GROWING OUR TEAM. HELP US MAKE MORE MEMORIES! SPECIALIZING IN DISNEY DESTINATIONS, UNIVERSAL PARKS & RESORTS, & MORE!

Texas Homeschool Laws

Homeschooling in Texas is accompanied by some of the most parent-friendly laws in the country. However, with that freedom comes the responsibility to understand and comply with the state's requirements. Whether you're brand new to homeschooling or just need a refresher, here's what you need to know to stay compliant and confident.

Is Homeschooling Legal in Texas? Yes! In 1994, the landmark *Leeper v. Arlington ISD* case confirmed that homeschooling is a legal form of private education in Texas. This decision gave parents the right to teach their children at home without government oversight.

Your Freedom! Your Responsibility!

Do I have to notify the state?

If your child has never been enrolled in public school, you don't have to notify anyone—you can simply begin homeschooling. If your child is currently enrolled in public school, you must send a withdrawal letter to the school. This ensures your child is not marked absent or considered truant.

Testing and Records

No standardized testing is required by the state. However, it's wise to keep records of transcripts (for high schoolers). These can be helpful for college admissions, the military, or transferring back into public or private school.



Requirements for Texas Homeschoolers

Unlike some states that require testing, registration, or home visits, Texas keeps it simple. The law considers a homeschool to be a type of private school, and it must meet three main requirements: Curriculum – Instruction must be in a bona fide (genuine) manner. This means you are sincerely teaching, not just going through the motions. Subjects – Your curriculum must cover at least the following: Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Mathematics, and Good Citizenship (which can include history, civics, community service, or lessons in responsibility). Written Format – Curriculum must be in a written form. This can be traditional textbooks, printed workbooks, or even digital/online programs.

What does good citizenship mean?

Texas law doesn't give a rigid definition, which gives parents flexibility. Many families cover "good citizenship" by including: Texas and U.S. history, Government, and civics lessons, Community service projects, Character and values education.

The beauty of homeschooling in Texas is the trust placed in parents to educate their children. You can customize your approach –whether you use a boxed curriculum, an online program, or a mix of hands-on projects and field trips.

Your Freedom!
Your Choice!



MASTERBOOKS.COM

Where Faith Grows!



Math



Science



Language Arts



Electives



History



**A former public school teacher
discovers her greatest classroom is
right at home.**

Kamika Raby

MOM. WIFE. HOMESCHOOL LIFE.





“SOMETIMES THE MUNDANE IS PURPOSEFUL. IT BUILDS CHARACTER AND DEPENDENCE ON GOD.”

In 2015, while pregnant with my oldest son, Nehemiah, the Lord began speaking to my heart about leaving the classroom as a public school teacher, being a stay-at-home mom, and eventually homeschooling him and my future children. It was NEVER my plan or my desire to stay at home. I loved working outside of the home, teaching my students, and making a positive impact in their lives. It was so hard for me to let go. Honestly, I felt like leaving the classroom was taking away from my purpose (Ha! Like I knew what was best for me). But with tears in my eyes, and an unclear vision of the future, I surrendered and trusted God in His direction & leading. Fast forward through a few years of growth, challenges, wins, and lessons; God was continuously speaking to my heart and grooming my mindset through various opportunities, events, circumstances, and conversations to understand the calling of being a homeschool mom.

My home became my classroom for my children. As a homeschool mom, I have the opportunity to have a front-row seat to my children’s education—fully knowing and learning their strengths and weaknesses and finding ways to help them accomplish feats while being successful in learning and growing in God’s Word.



Photography by - Daniel Grove
danielgrovephoto.com

Along with homeschooling my own family, I am also living a God-given dream as the Founder & Director of Imagodei Academy, a non-profit homeschool education program focused on improving education practices, serving other homeschool families, and “Redeeming Education Through a Biblical Worldview”.

IT FORCES YOU TO RELY ON GOD AND NOT YOURSELF

Now, I know that God had a purpose in calling me to serve in my home, and it's been a gift that keeps unfolding in unimaginable ways. The Lord has been faithful to me and my family along our homeschool journey. He's provided all of our needs as well as our hearts' desires.



Photography by - Daniel Grove
danielgrovephoto.com

The blessing of obedience back in 2021, Nehemiah completed his kindergarten year. One thing I wanted him to experience was a formal kindergarten graduation. Yes, I'm that mom who wants the "all-out" event photos of milestones and memories. I didn't want him to miss out on that experience, and coincidentally, neither did he. Of course, God provided once again. "Mommy," he said, "I want to have a kindergarten graduation. One wearing a hat and everything." And exactly one week later, I found a local homeschool co-op graduation event. If you're unfamiliar with the endless dynamics of homeschooling, you're probably thinking, "Wait? Homeschool kids have graduations?!" Yes, they do! Thankfully, our homeschool community at that time hosted such events to give students a full educational experience to celebrate milestones and achievements. And now, my baby has a forever memory of a kindergarten graduation. That moment represents a blessing of obedience and trusting God with my surrender to Him. Now, understand, I am not "anti-formal school settings." I am a product of a public school system. I taught in public schools and use part-time private Christian school settings within my children's homeschool routine. However, homeschooling is the best educational setting that works for our family vision and dynamics. So here I am, 10 years later, STILL a working stay-at-home mom, homeschooling 3 energetic and loving sons, Nehemiah, Malachi, and Elijah.



Photography by - Daniel Grove
danielgrovephoto.com

MOMMA, WHY DO WE HOMESCHOOL?

It hasn't been an easy road, but the journey thus far has been worth it. And I wouldn't trade it for the world. This past February, Nehemiah and I self-published our first children's book entitled "Momma, Why Do We Homeschool?" The story is about our 3 boys discovering the reasons our family decided to homeschool and the unique gifts & opportunities they gain from this educational experience. This book is a "work of heart" from our family. What's even more special is that our oldest is now a published author. You can say I'm one proud momma! Ten years of surrender this past May, I celebrated a personal milestone. Ten years of surrender. Ten years of being a stay-at-home mom and wife. Ten years of exchanging what I had in mind for my life for God's plan instead. As I reflect on this journey thus far, the biggest lesson I've learned is to stay faithful, even in the mundane. Sometimes our human nature craves new and exciting things. We get bored easily and can get off track chasing the wind, but sticking with the mundane builds character. It forces you to rely on God and not yourself. The mundane is purposeful.

So, whether you're a stay-at-home momma like me (or a mom who is working outside your home), this same principle applies — "do not get tired of doing what is right" — right is what God has asked and called YOU to do. Be and stay where God has you. Let Him make you flourish and remember that it is better to obey the Lord than to offer sacrifices to him. I am grateful for the fruit the Lord has allowed me to see in this season of my life, and I pray you're encouraged by it.



Photography by - Daniel Grove
danielgrovephoto.com

REFLECTION:

Is homeschooling an area of surrender you feel God calling you to? Take some time to seek Him about it. And I hope that what I shared encourages you towards obedience in trusting God with your surrender. He will be with you every step of the way. I am praying and rooting for you! Need help getting started with Homeschooling?

LEARN MORE ABOUT IMAGODEI ACADEMY:

Imagodei Academy is a nonprofit homeschool education program that supports families both online and in-person. We understand the unique challenges homeschooling families face, and we are passionate about helping them thrive. At Imagodei Academy, we partner with families nationwide to provide an exceptional Christian education. We prioritize individualized communication with our families through monthly check-ins and quarterly parent meetings. Additionally, we provide personalized homeschool support and resources to help families create a well-rounded and memorable homeschooling experience. Let us partner with you for your child's homeschool and home learning education. We make homeschooling & home learning easier!

Kamika Raby, M. Ed.

Kamika Raby



TRUST
THE
process

**Do not get
tired of doing
what is right
— right is
what God has
asked and
called YOU to
do.**



Education Independence



A Principled Path Forward for Christian Education

BEYOND SCHOOL CHOICE

While school choice is a popular topic, **Education Independence** offers something greater—a principled approach that strengthens families and builds communities through authentic freedom.

This paradigm shifts from *“How do we get taxpayer funding?”* to *“How do we restore education to its rightful place in God’s design?”*

OUR WORK IS FOUNDED ON FOUR PILLARS

Independent Parents

God trusts parents with their children and so should we; therefore, we affirm that parental rights come from God and should be protected from the state.

Independent Funding

Education is the responsibility of the family, with support from fellow believers; therefore, we recognize that the financial obligation remains on parents, with support from private, voluntary benefactors.

Independent Pursuit

The purpose of education is to know God and to make Him known; therefore, we uphold that the sacred pursuit of education exists outside the jurisdiction of the state.

Independent Ideas

Wrestling with Truth promotes blessing and virtue for the whole community; therefore, we conclude that a flourishing society emerges from a free market of ideas.

WHY THIS MATTERS

For Policymakers: Reduces government burden while strengthening families and communities.

For Advocates: Transcends partisan politics by focusing on timeless principles.

For Organizations: Creates mission-driven partnerships honoring religious liberty and educational excellence.

For Families: Restores authentic choice and autonomy while building sustainable, values-aligned communities.

JOIN THE NETWORK


The Education Independence Network is a growing community of advocates, policymakers, and organizations building on this shared vision.

We are committed to educating the grassroots community, partnering with like-minded organizations, and engaging in public policy conversation.

Together, we can build an education paradigm that honors God, strengthens families, and serves the common good.



Promote and protect Education Independence!



**“DO NOT LET THE
ENDLESS
SUCCESSION OF
SMALL THINGS
CROWD GREAT
IDEALS OUT OF
SIGHT OUT OF MIND”**

-Charlotte Mason

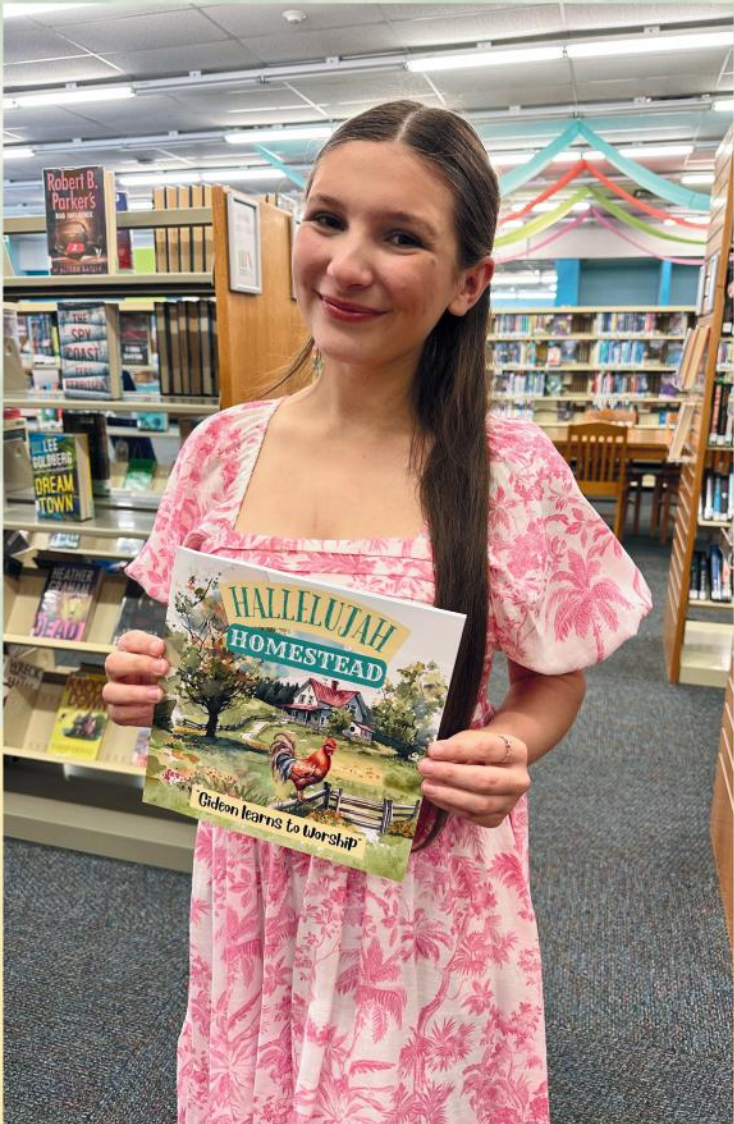
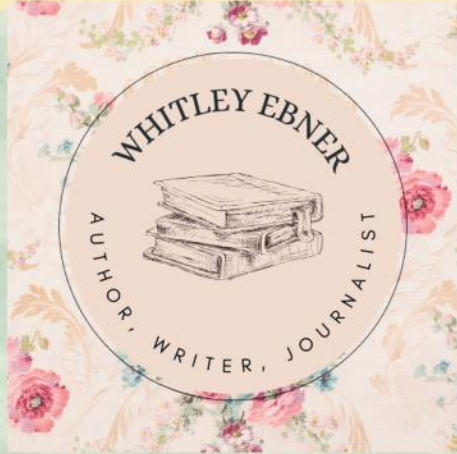


A wonderful book! It's a great resource to help children, and adults, to see what worship looks like. Totally recommend this book to be added to your library.



Great book to read to your kids to teach them about worship.

Whitley Ebner



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HALLELUJAH HOMESTEAD



“Gideon learns to worship”

Step onto the front porch of Hallelujah Homestead, where life is measured in sunsets, homegrown harvests, and God’s unfailing grace. This heartfelt book invites you to slow down, savor the seasons, and discover that everyone can worship the Lord in their own way.

From Burnout to Breakthrough

“How God Rewrote My Purpose Through Motherhood”

BY AMANDA MORALES



I've always thought that kids who were homeschooled seemed a little unusual. Like they lived in an alternate universe where “normal,” everyday kids had to go to school, while others were handpicked by God to stay home. However, I never really knew much about homeschooling or children who were homeschooled. Society often portrayed them as mutants living among us. Over time, homeschooling became increasingly taboo because of its rarity. Come to think of it, I didn't meet anyone who was homeschooled until my first year of college. I remember the first time I met them. Their mom had homeschooled them their entire lives, and she would share that fact with pride. They lived on a large piece of land in the middle of the forest in Alexandria, Louisiana. With so much space to explore and a lack of schedules, the Wells Brothers were among the most mature people I had ever met.

At the time, it was unusual to meet someone my age (18) who seemed to know so much more about life than I did. They were kind, trustworthy, and extremely intelligent young men. And more than anything, they felt like the family I needed away from home. They treated me like a younger sister, but with care. I noticed that school seemed far too simple for them. They never appeared stressed or concerned about things like studying, tests, and grades. At the university level, this was unheard of. I guess the correct term for that would be “emotionally intelligent,” since they were so much more “emotionally intelligent” than the rest of us. They were organized and well put together. If anything, it sometimes felt like they were living life in their true form, while the rest of us were consumed by societal standards and peer pressure. While the Wells boys were at peace, the rest of us were in constant war with ourselves. Their mother was a very traditional woman. She was both a wife and mother with no desire to be a career woman.

In 2014, most women I knew pursued degrees and careers, and I felt pressure to do the same. However, being in the Wells home made me question my own purpose. Mrs. Jodi Wells created a loving and peaceful environment; it was clear that her influence made a difference in her sons’ lives. After meeting her, I understood that their strength came from being homeschooled by their mother.

Spending time in Alexandria made me consider having a family, but failed relationships and rushing through college left me single and frustrated at 23. Teaching was the only job available after graduation, so I began my career.

Teaching brought me joy, and I cherished being both a mom and teacher with my first child. Managing both roles worked with one child—until I realized it wouldn’t last. My son was hospitalized and intubated two days before his first birthday. He had a severe respiratory infection that could have taken him from us. We sat and waited for 10 days. It might have been even longer than that because it sure felt like an eternity. As I sat in the hospital with my child, I prayed quietly to myself day and night. I never thought about work or my students. My son was my only worry. For the first time in a very long time, I closed my eyes to pray. In hopes that the God I had turned away from before having a child would hear me once again. “Lord, please help us.” I prayed.





“When My Principal Questioned My Priorities, God Made Mine Clear”

After being away from him for so long, I could only hope that he would respond to me and remember my name. Little did I know, he had never forgotten it; it was the start of a plan only He could initiate.

My son made a swift recovery and was released from the hospital. From that point forward, I did my best to be what I thought was a “super mom.” Instead of stepping back to reflect, I convinced myself to work smarter, harder, and more efficiently to make time for my son. I worked full-time, went to the gym, and occasionally cooked dinner, but I still knew I couldn't do it all. I wanted to continue my career and raise my children without any help, just to prove that I, too, could be “super.” However, as time passed, work became increasingly unmanageable, and administrators grew more demanding. Around this period, I also started graduate school, hoping to continue my journey of overly educating myself. I pushed myself to be likable enough to take on more responsibilities on campus, and even moved to different campuses in search of the right fit for us. Ultimately, my career took precedence over my family and my spouse.



Then my daughter was born. At five weeks postpartum, the district informed me they expected me back at 6 weeks because my students couldn't be without their teacher. When I received the notice, my heart sank. I remember ugly crying on my way to work after having dropped off my newborn. It felt so wrong. I wanted nothing more than to be with her. I yearned for days when I could be home with my children. Why was this time different? Why could I do it so easily with my first child, but not with my second? Was I blinded by my own ambition that I assumed my son wouldn't ever need me? Did I not need him? All of these questions rushed through my mind until one day, my husband sat me down in our living room.

I could see the concern on his face when I sat. He told me, "You don't have to go back." I knew exactly what he was talking about. He was talking about my job. He saw the toll that it was taking on me and my mental health. His best friend had been gone for so long that he couldn't bear to let her disappear as he stood by and watched. "But what about my career?" I said. "I've worked so hard." And that was the truth. I had worked extremely hard. I had been offered to move up and around at every single campus I worked at. I even rejected an Administrator position that gave me a significantly higher salary. But there was another truth to my reality. I didn't actually care. I didn't actually want any of it. Because no position, or salary, or title would give me what I wanted: time with my family. The school year ended, and year six began. My husband reminded me that I did not have to go back to work. I set up my classroom like I always did, took my kids to school, and continued pressing forward. My ego was my crutch, and everything was the same. I went to the gym, went to work, cooked meals when I wasn't too tired, and was "super mom". This time, completely on autopilot. October came, and my Principal requested a meeting with me. The waiting game for this meeting made watching ice melt enjoyable. For days, I felt anxious and stressed because I had no clue what I had done. All I knew was that something was wrong, and I had no control over what was about to happen. "I think that we need to discuss your priorities," he said. "I don't know that you really want to be here."



Shocked by my Principal's doubts, I questioned my own work ethic. Sharing this with my husband, I realized he was right: I no longer wanted to be a teacher. Dropping off my kids to care for others' children no longer felt right—I couldn't ignore the sense of loss for my own family.

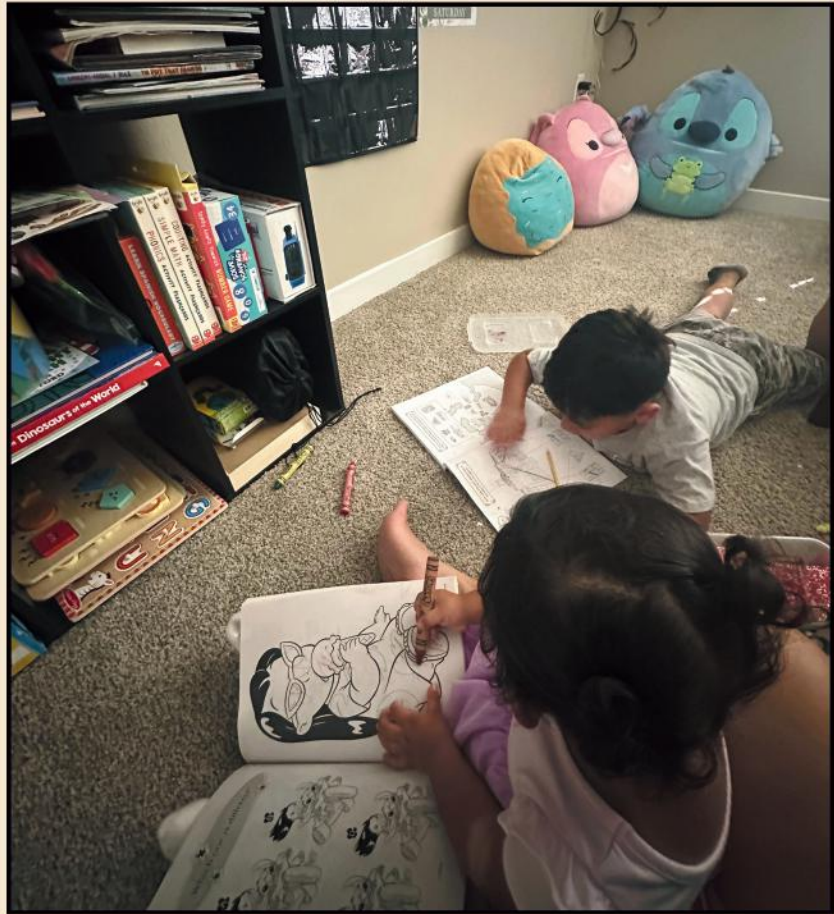
The conversation ended with my husband reassuring me, "I will take care of everything." As he hung up the phone, I sat quietly in my classroom, trying to gather myself before the next group of students arrived. Shaken and torn, I took an early leave and went home for the day. The following day passed in a blur, and soon after, I made the difficult decision to quit my job, unsure of what the next few months would hold. I agreed to finish out the fall semester, but I knew I would not be returning in January.

My classroom was packed, and the final day came. Although bittersweet, what was to come could only have been orchestrated by God. For months, I stayed home with my now one-year-old daughter. That year, my son had started Pre-K, and school definitely brought a whole new set of challenges for us. I had more time to attend events at his school. In contrast, I also now had more time for parent-teacher conferences that usually highlighted my son's behavior and unwillingness to stay seated. And even though his Teachers showed him so much love and grace, I couldn't help but notice that things still didn't feel right. Something was still out of place.



The time came to evaluate him before making a decision about whether to move him up to Kindergarten or have him repeat pre-K. My son was recommended to repeat the year because, by school standards, he lacked the maturity required for kindergarten. So I did what any educator would do with a student and agreed to abide by his teacher's recommendation. I went through the proper channels to solidify that he would be repeating the year. I even tried to convince myself that it was the right thing to do for my child. But in my heart, I knew that I was no longer an Educator. God was calling me to be a full-time Mother. He was requesting my presence in a home where I had been absent for a long time.

He was requesting my presence in a home where I had been absent for a long time.



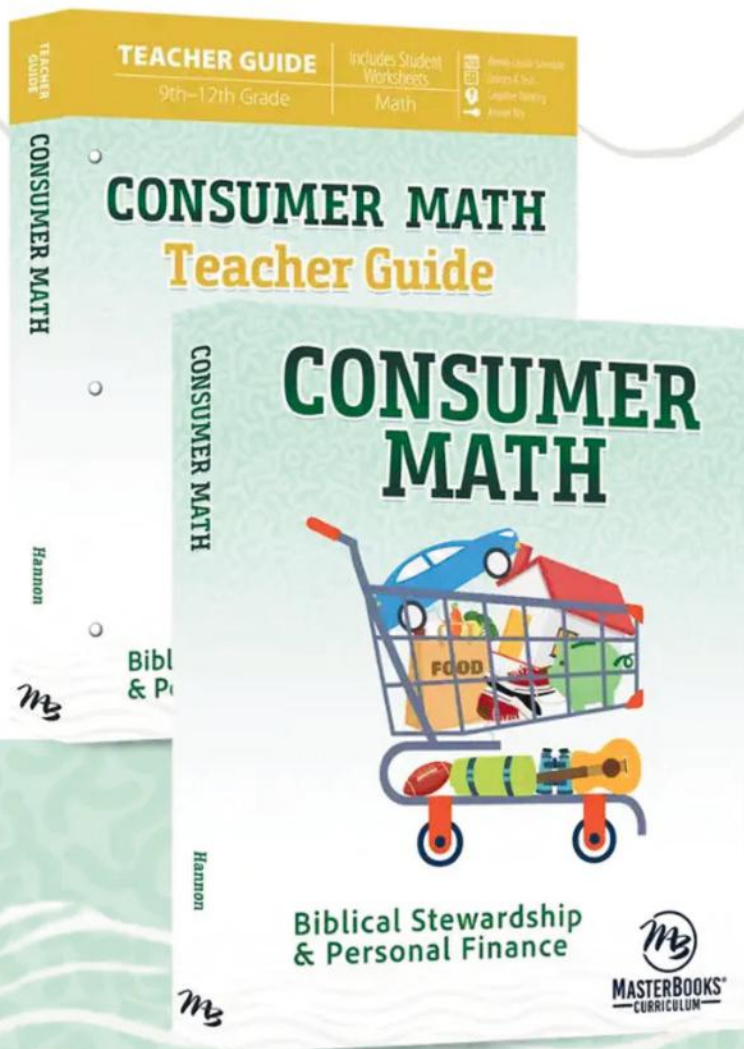
He knew that my children needed me and I needed them to fulfill my purpose in Him. My heart nudged me as I grasped God's hand and walked forward in faith.

I withdrew my son from school for the following academic year. A month later, we moved to Conroe, the capital of Texas homeschooling. Currently, we have been building our classroom, setting routines and expectations for our children, and have already started homeschooling. In the short period we have been doing this, our children have shown us that, really, we as adults are the problem.

As adults, we want to control kids. We want them to sit quietly and work diligently while we play on our phones. We desire their obedience when we aren't obedient ourselves. We strive for their excellence as we bask in mediocrity. Homeschooling provides families with the opportunity to grow and thrive. It allows us to be the best version of ourselves, but also pushes us to learn when we don't know how to be at our best. Daily, I find myself praying with my children and learning new things. They teach me so much more than I teach them. Answering the call to homeschooling is a journey that I have been on for five years. I am proud to say that I finally answered and I am now fulfilling God's purpose in my life. For that, I am humbled and grateful. Quite honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way.



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THE

CHARLOTTE MASON

Renaissance

How a 19th-Century Vision Is Shaping Modern Homeschooling

By Melissa Ebner

In a world increasingly driven by screens, standardized testing, and quick information, a growing number of parents and educators are turning to an educational philosophy that emphasizes beauty, curiosity, and the whole child. It's not new — in fact, it dates back more than a century. Yet the ideas of British educator Charlotte Mason feel more relevant today than ever.



Across the globe—and right here in Texas—the Charlotte Mason Method has quietly inspired a growing movement of families who believe education is more than a checklist. It’s a way of life. Whether you’ve jumped wholeheartedly into Charlotte Mason’s philosophy or simply woven a few of her ideas into your homeschooling rhythm, her gentle, meaningful approach to learning is becoming increasingly influential.



Who Was Charlotte Mason?

Charlotte Mason was a British educator born in 1842. After a difficult childhood marked by the loss of both parents, Mason devoted her life to studying how children learn best. In the late 1800s, she founded a teacher training college and began sharing her philosophy through a series of books and lectures.

Her revolutionary idea was simple but profound: “Children are born persons.”

At a time when education often treated children as empty vessels to be filled, Mason believed each child was already a whole, capable person — deserving of respect, inspiration, and meaningful learning. Education, in her view, wasn’t just about academics; it was about forming character, cultivating curiosity, and developing habits that last a lifetime.

Her writings went on to form the foundation of what became known as the Charlotte Mason Method, a philosophy that continues to shape classrooms and homeschools worldwide.

The Core Principles of the Charlotte Mason Method

At the heart of Mason's philosophy are a few guiding principles that remain remarkably timeless:

Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life.

Mason believed children learn from the environment around them – the attitudes, routines, and rhythms of home life. Education isn't confined to a classroom; it's woven into daily living.

Living Books, Not Dry Textbooks.

Rather than memorization, Mason advocated for "living books" – well-written, engaging works by authors passionate about their subjects. Whether it's a biography, a novel, or a nature study, these books draw readers into real ideas rather than mere facts.

Narration Over Testing.

Instead of worksheets or quizzes, students practice retelling what they've learned in their own words. This naturally develops comprehension, vocabulary, and memory, while encouraging thoughtful reflection.

Nature Study and Outdoor Time.

Mason saw nature as one of the best classrooms. She urged daily outdoor time where children could explore, observe, and appreciate the beauty of creation. "Never be within doors when you can rightly be without," she said.

Short Lessons and Habit Training.

To keep the mind fresh, Mason suggested lessons of limited duration – about 15 to 20 minutes for younger children – focusing on attention and mastery. She also emphasized the importance of forming good habits, including diligence, kindness, attention, and order.

The Arts, Poetry, and Music.

In a Charlotte Mason education, fine arts aren't extras – they're essentials. Students regularly study art, music, and poetry to cultivate appreciation and imagination.



From 19th-Century England to Modern Homeschools

Although Mason's ideas originated in Victorian England, her influence has grown steadily in the 21st century, particularly within the homeschooling community. Parents frustrated with test-driven systems have found freedom in her gentle approach.

The Charlotte Mason homeschool movement began to flourish in the U.S. in the 1980s and '90s, thanks to authors like Susan Schaeffer Macaulay (*For the Children's Sake*) and modern networks such as AmblesideOnline, a free online curriculum based directly on Mason's writings.

Today, families across Texas and the nation are rediscovering her wisdom — blending literature-rich lessons with outdoor learning, music study, journaling, and slow, intentional rhythms.





What a Charlotte Mason Day Looks Like

A typical day in a Charlotte Mason-inspired homeschool is full, but not frantic. Mornings might begin with scripture or poetry, followed by short academic lessons in reading, math, or history. Children might then spend time outdoors sketching wildflowers, journaling, or observing seasonal changes in nature.

Afternoons are often reserved for handcrafts, art, or music appreciation – studying composers like Bach or artists like Monet. Literature anchors everything: children read classics, biographies, and stories that bring history and science to life.

Rather than endless worksheets, students are encouraged to think, tell, and create – to form connections and express ideas in their own voice.



Why It Resonates Today

In an age of fast-paced schedules and digital distractions, the Charlotte Mason Method offers something countercultural: peaceful, purposeful learning rooted in truth, goodness, and beauty.

Educators say Mason's philosophy helps cultivate not only knowledge but wisdom and wonder. Children learn to slow down, to notice, to care – qualities that go beyond academic achievement.

Parents, too, often find themselves transformed by the approach. As they read alongside their children, explore outdoors, and discuss big ideas, the process becomes as much about family growth as academic progress.

“Education is a discipline,” Mason wrote, “but it is also a life.” And that life – full of books, beauty, and discovery – continues to inspire families across generations.

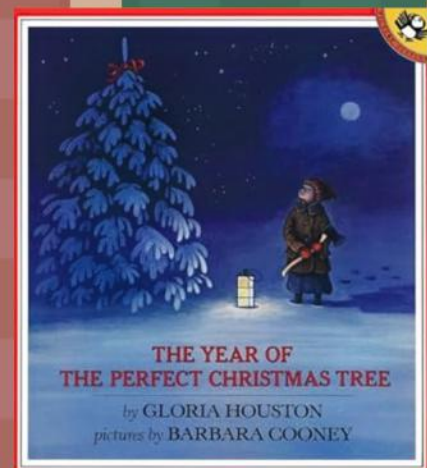
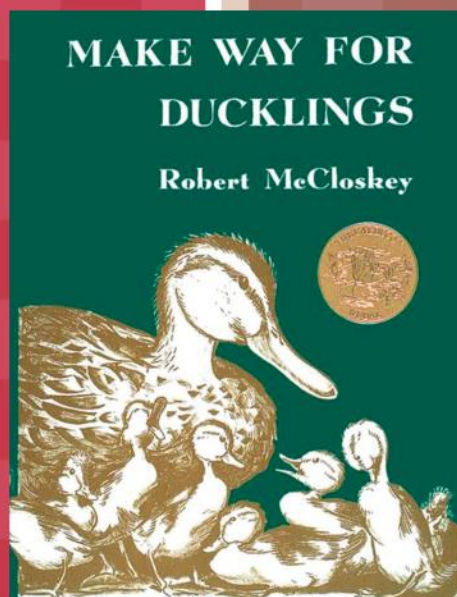
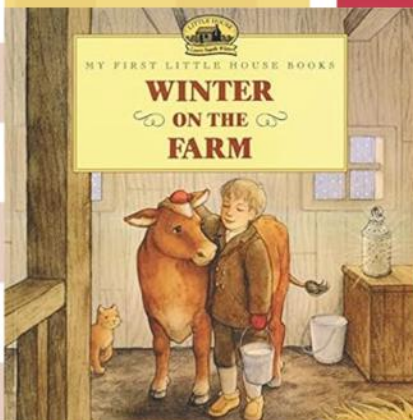
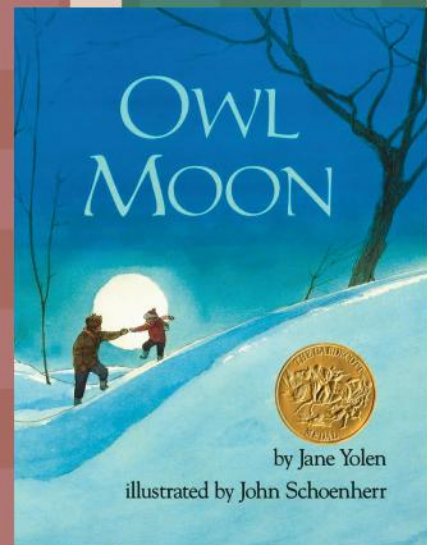
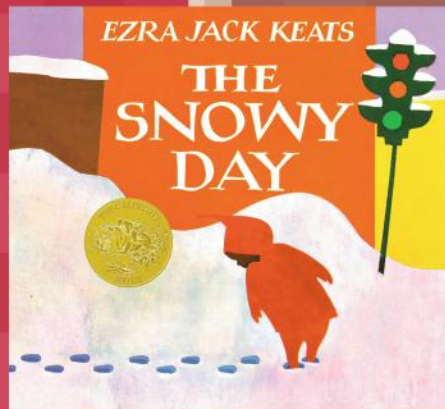
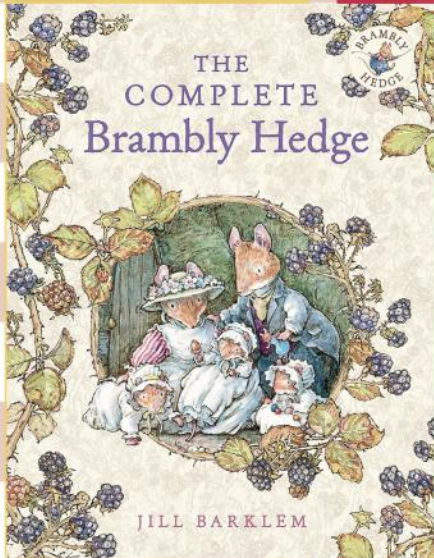
A Legacy That Lasts

More than 100 years after her death, Charlotte Mason's ideas continue to influence the way families approach education. Whether in a cozy Texas living room or a homeschool co-op across the country, her influence endures – a gentle reminder that true learning is not about keeping pace with the world, but about finding joy in understanding it.

“The question is not—how much does the youth know? when he has finished his education—but how much does he care?” - Charlotte Mason



CHARLOTTE MASON STYLE BOOKS FOR KIDS



Crazy Quilts



Crazy Quilts

Crazy quilts first gained popularity in the late 1800s, particularly during the Victorian era (roughly 1875–1900). Unlike traditional quilts that used repeating blocks and patterns, crazy quilts were made from irregular scraps of fabric—silk, velvet, taffeta, wool, cotton—stitched together in a free-form design. Their beauty came from the randomness: no two pieces alike, no predictable pattern, and no strict rules.

Why were they made?

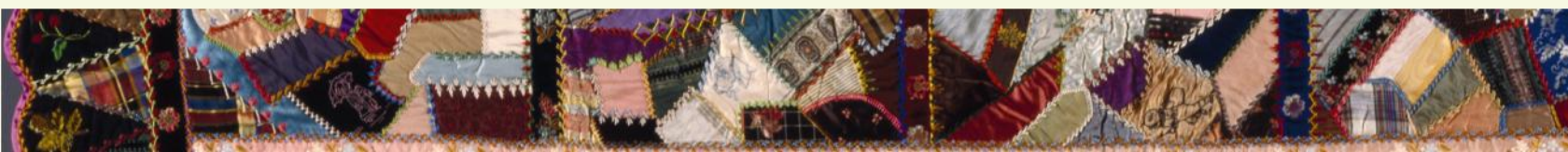
Crazy quilts reflected both creativity and resourcefulness. During the late 19th century, women often saved bits of worn-out clothing, ribbons, or fabric remnants from sewing projects. Instead of wasting them, they turned them into artful quilts that showcased their needlework skills.

Many crazy quilts also served as decorative showpieces, especially in parlors. Because they used delicate fabrics and intricate embroidery stitches—fans, flowers, initials, and motifs—they were not usually meant for everyday bed use. They were a means for women to showcase their craftsmanship, personality, and even social status.

How were they made?

The quilter layered assorted fabric scraps in a mosaic-like fashion, securing them with elaborate hand embroidery. The stitches became just as important as the fabric—feather stitches, herringbone, chain stitches, and decorative motifs covered the seams. Sometimes, sentimental fabrics were included, making each quilt a unique family story.

A crazy quilt is a fun and colorful kind of quilt made from all sorts of leftover fabric pieces—big ones, tiny ones, silky ones, velvet ones, patterned ones, you name it! Instead of fitting together like puzzle pieces in neat, matching shapes, crazy quilts resemble a patchwork of random scraps, all sewn together to form a beautiful, creative collage made from cloth.



Make Your Own “Mini Crazy Quilt”

Hands-On Homeschool Activity:

Materials

- A handful of fabric scraps (different colors/textures)
- Scissors (fabric if possible)
- A piece of felt or sturdy fabric for the backing
- Fabric glue or a needle and thread

Optional: yarn or embroidery thread for decorating the “seams”

Step-by-Step

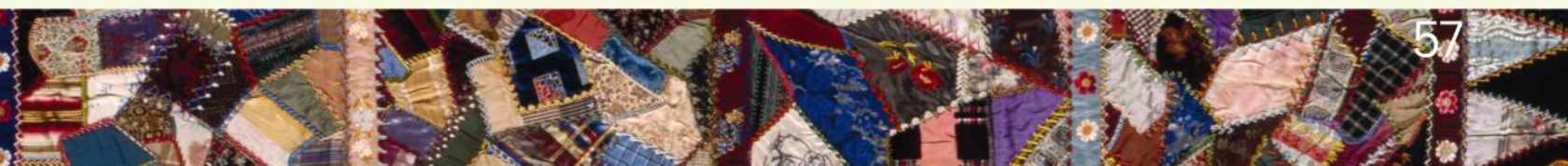
- Explore the Fabrics - Let your child feel each piece—smooth silk, fuzzy flannel, rough denim. Talk about how crazy quilters used many textures.
- Cut and Arrange the Scraps - Have your child cut shapes of any size or form. No rules! Then let them arrange the pieces like a fabric collage.
- Glue or Stitch Them Down - Younger kids: use fabric glue. Older kids: stitch around the edges or sew scraps directly onto the backing.
- Add “Decorative Stitches” - Using yarn or embroidery thread, add simple straight lines, X’s, waves, stars—anything they imagine. This mimics the Victorian embroidery that made crazy quilts so beautiful.
- Name Your Quilt - Let your child give their quilt a title, like
 - “Color Explosion Quilt”
 - “Scrap Adventure”
 - “My Memory Quilt”
- Display It! - Hang it, frame it, or bind the edges for a keepsake.

Optional Extension Ideas

- Storytelling Prompt: “Choose one fabric scrap and imagine it has a story. Where did it come from? Who wore it?”
- History Tie-In: Look at photos of real Victorian crazy quilts and compare designs.

Math Moment:

- Practice estimating how many scraps were used or sorting by shape and size.



OUT OF



THIS

WORLD

★ devotions ★

Nancy I. Sanders

NEW 21-DAY
DEVOTIONAL
FOR KIDS!



Charlotte Mason Style Picture Study:

Vincent van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (1889)



Objective: To help students quietly observe, reflect, and form a personal connection with the painting through observation, narration, and art appreciation.

1. Introduction – Quiet Observation

Display the painting (print or screen).

Ask children to look in silence for 2–3 minutes.

Then turn it face down or cover it.

Ask: • What do you remember? • What colors stood out? • What shapes, lines, or movement did you notice? • What was happening in the sky or the field? Encourage narration: have students describe the scene as if painting it for someone who can't see it.

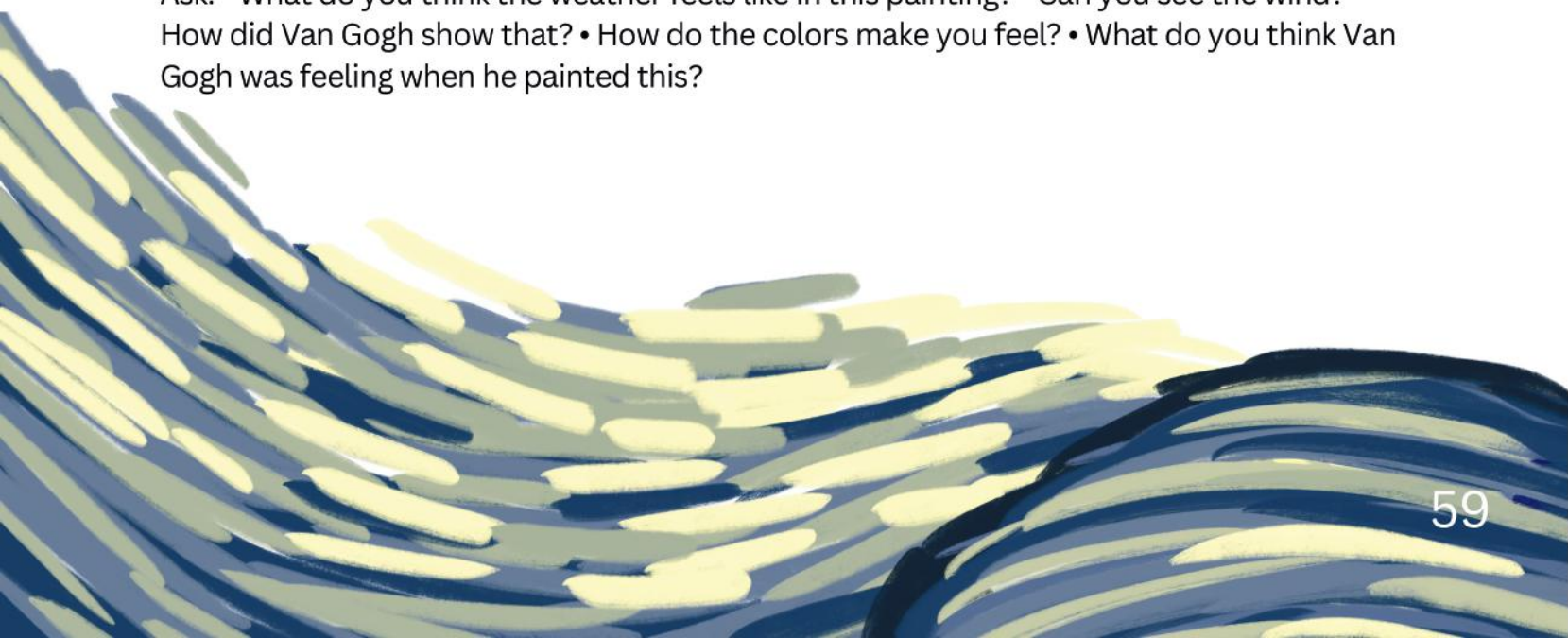


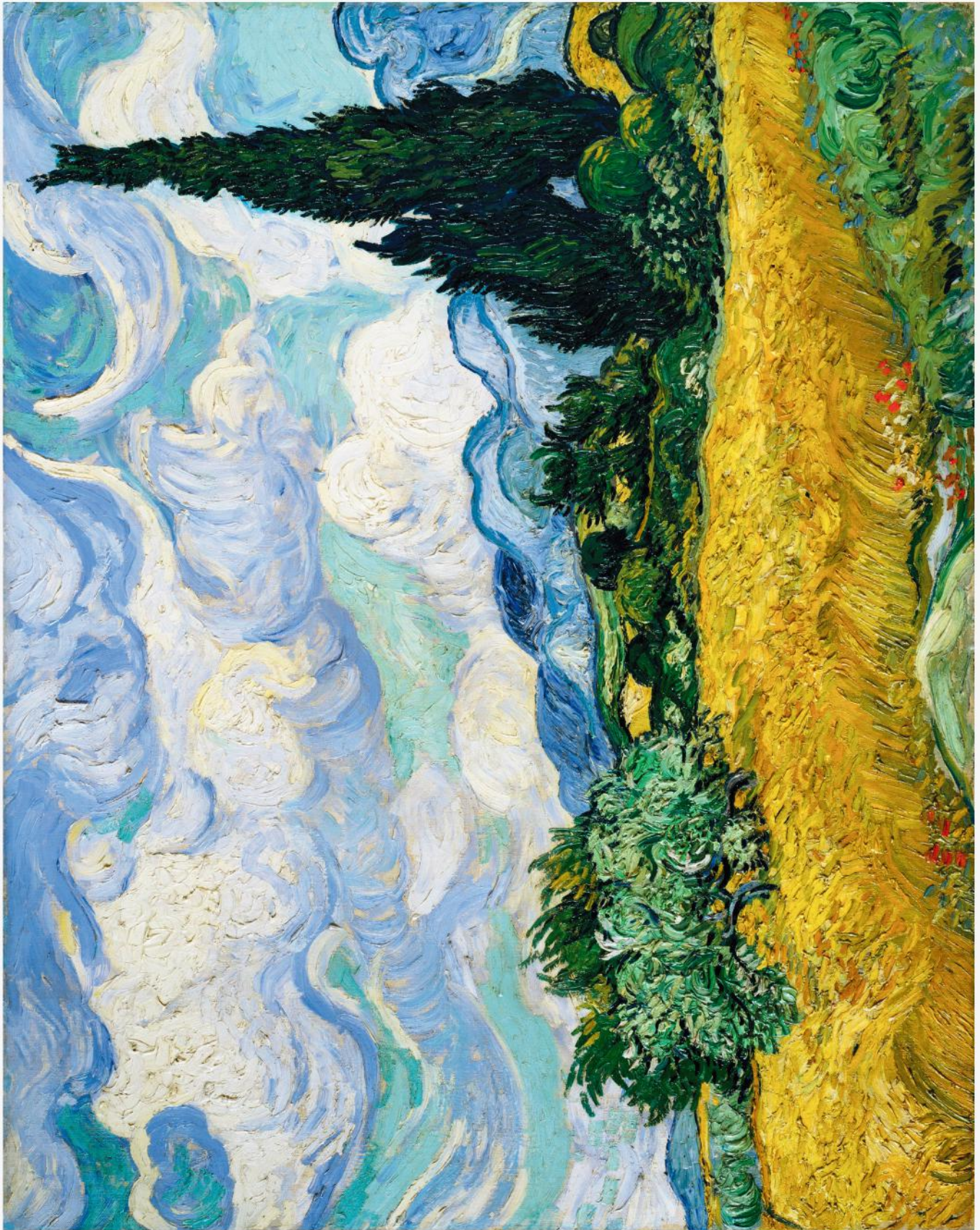
2. Artist Connection

Vincent van Gogh loved nature and light. He often painted outside, even when the wind blew. In this painting, he captured the golden wheat fields and tall cypress trees near the hospital in Saint-Rémy, France. He said he wanted to show the peace and movement of the countryside. Let students locate France on a map or view photos of the Provence region for context.

3. Gentle Discussion Prompts

Ask: • What do you think the weather feels like in this painting? • Can you see the wind? How did Van Gogh show that? • How do the colors make you feel? • What do you think Van Gogh was feeling when he painted this?





Van Gogh's Wheat Field with Cypresses 1889



Charlotte Mason Style Picture Study:

Vincent van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (1889)

Hands-On & Extension Activities

Art & Nature:

- Brushstroke Study – imitate Van Gogh's swirling lines with thick paint or oil pastels.
- Color Mixing – explore yellows, greens, and blues to create your "wheat field palette."
- Outdoor Sketching – draw what's growing nearby, observing textures and shapes.
- Sunflower Hunt – compare this work with Van Gogh's other nature paintings.

Games & Group Activities:

- Art Detective – match cropped sections of the painting to their place.
- "Wheat and Wind" Movement Game – act out swaying wheat and swirling skies to music.
- Texture Table – explore rough, smooth, and soft items inspired by the painting.

Literature & Music Pairings:

- Poem: "The Wind" by Christina Rossetti
- Book: "Katie and the Starry Night" by James Mayhew
- Music: Debussy's "La Mer" or Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony"
- Read-Aloud: "Camille and the Sunflowers" by Laurence Anholt

Charlotte Mason Style Picture Study:

Vincent van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (1889)

Science & Nature Tie-Ins

- Study the wheat growth cycle.
- Compare cypress trees to other evergreens.
- Observe wind patterns and make a simple weather vane.
- Discuss cloud types and sketch cumulus clouds.

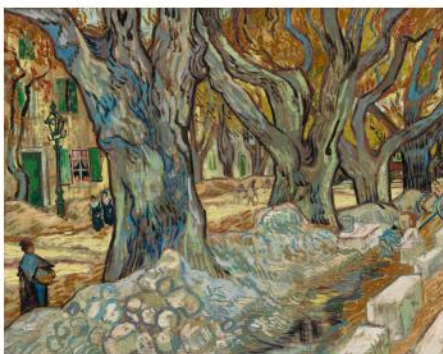


Faith or Reflection Connection

Charlotte Mason believed in nurturing wonder: "What beauty in God's world do you see in this painting?" "How does the artist show the Creator's movement in nature?"

Further Study Ideas

- Create a Van Gogh notebook page with a print, narration, and personal sketch.
- Compare this work with "The Starry Night."
- Visit the Van Gogh Museum online for a virtual gallery experience.
- Study a new Van Gogh painting each day in a week-long artist study.





Charlotte Mason Picture Study:



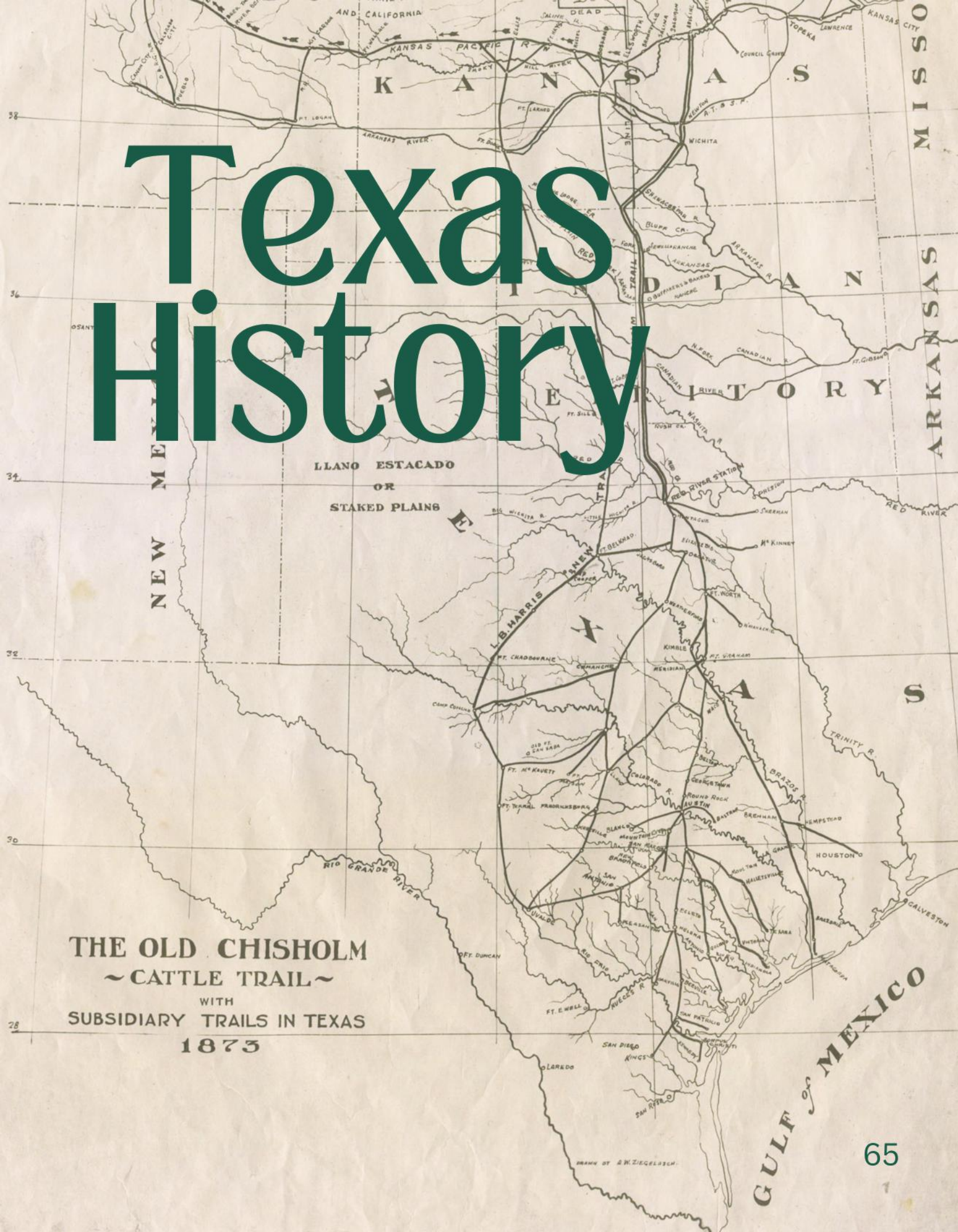
PUBLISHED BY CURRIER & IVES, ENTREE, ADJOINING TO ASTOR'S, IN THE YEAR 1860 BY CURRIER & IVES IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE U. S. FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK. 152 NASSAU ST. NEW YORK.

AMERICAN HOMESTEAD WINTER.

Texas History

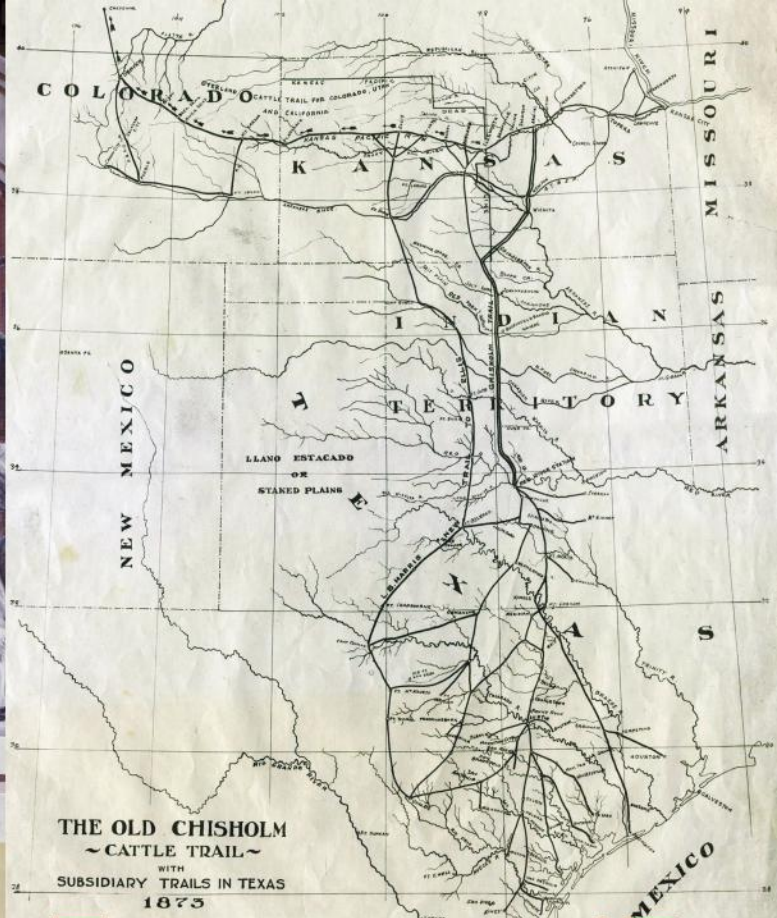
THE OLD CHISHOLM
~ CATTLE TRAIL ~
WITH
SUBSIDIARY TRAILS IN TEXAS
1873

GULF OF MEXICO





1867 CHISHOLM TRAIL 1875



The Chisolm Trail



The Chisolm Trail

What Was the Chisolm Trail?

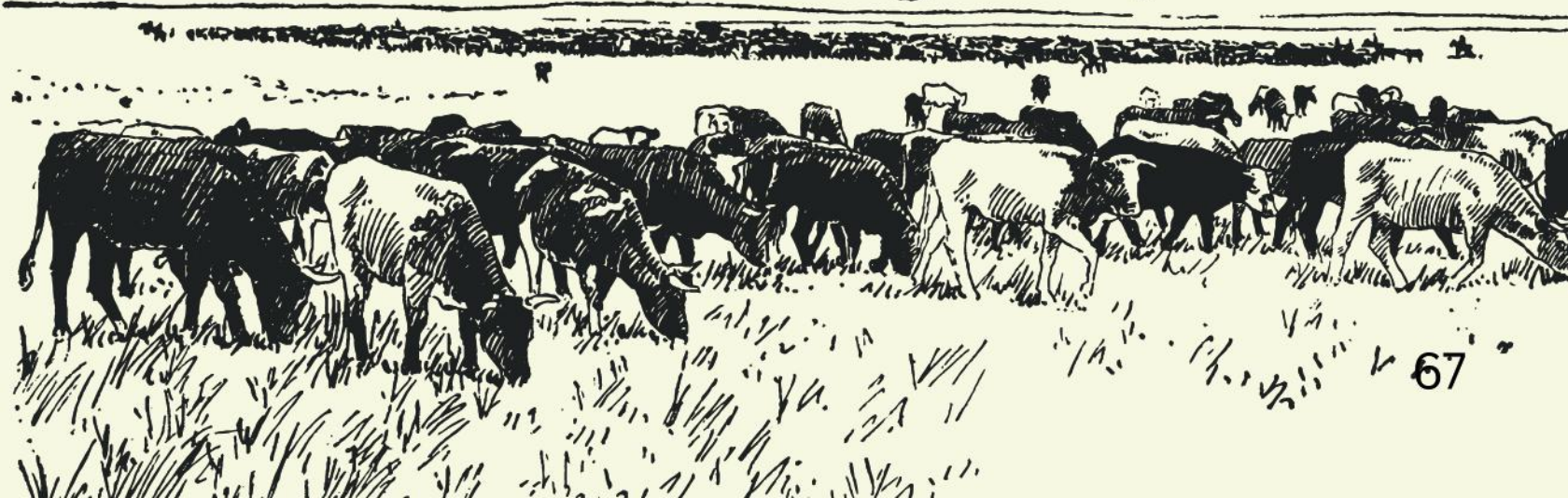
The Chisolm Trail was a major cattle-driving route used from 1867 to the mid-1880s, stretching from southern Texas to Abilene, Kansas. It allowed Texas ranchers to move their longhorn cattle to northern railheads, where beef was in high demand. The trail was named after Jesse Chisholm, a trader of Cherokee descent who established trading posts along the route in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

The trail began near San Antonio, crossed the Red River, and passed through Indian Territory before reaching Kansas. Cowboys drove herds of thousands across rivers, prairies, and plains, facing weather, stampedes, and hostile encounters. The Chisolm Trail played a crucial role in reviving the Texas economy after the Civil War and significantly shaped the image of the American cowboy.

Learn Through Video: Texas Historical Commission's YouTube Series

To make this history come alive, the Texas Historical Commission offers a compelling YouTube series that homeschool families can use as visual supplements:

Scan the QR Code to view the video series



Chisholm Trail Hands-On Activities for Elementary

1. Build a Mini Cattle Drive Diorama

Materials: shoebox, pipe cleaners, small toy cows or paper cutouts, twigs, clay, construction paper

Instructions:

- Turn a shoebox on its side to make a “prairie scene.”
- Add a river, grass, hills, and cypress-like trees (like those found in real trail scenery).
- Place “cowboys” and “cattle” traveling north.
- Kids can label landmarks such as the Brazos River, the Chisholm Trail, and Kansas Railhead.
- Learning Tie-in: Geography + map skills + creative storytelling.

2. Make a Simple Chisholm Trail Map

Give your child a blank outline of Texas and Oklahoma.

Have them draw:

- The route from South Texas to Indian Territory to Kansas
- Key cattle towns (e.g., Dodge City, Abilene)
- Rivers they would have crossed.
- Landmarks like watering holes or campsites

Let them color and decorate the map cowboy-style!

3. Cowboy Gear Exploration and Dress-Up

Provide items or pictures of cowboy gear, such as:

- Lariat (rope)
- Bandana
- Hat
- Spurs
- Saddle

Kids can:

- Try roping a chair leg or stuffed animal.
- Pretend to ride a horse.
- Identify what each tool was used for

Discussion Prompt: “Why did cowboys need each of these tools on the trail?”

Chisholm Trail Writing Prompts

Elementary School Prompts (Grades 1-5)

1. “On the Trail with the Cowboys”

Imagine you are a young helper riding along the Chisholm Trail. What do you see, hear, and smell along the dusty path?

2. “My Favorite Trail Animal”

Write about one animal you might see along the Chisholm Trail—like a longhorn steer or a horse. What would you name it? What role does it play on the journey?

3. “A Day at Camp”

Describe what life would be like when the cowboys stop to rest. What do you eat? What games might the cowboys play? What stories are told around the campfire?

4. “Stampede!”

Tell a story about what happens when the cattle suddenly start running. How do the cowboys work together to stay safe?

5. “If I Were a Trail Boss”

Write about the job of a trail boss. What rules would you make to keep everyone safe on the trail?

6. “Crossing the River”

Describe how your group gets the cattle across a dangerous river. What problems might you face? How do you solve them?

7. “A Letter Home From the Trail”

Pretend you’re writing a letter to your family from the Chisholm Trail. What do you miss? What exciting things have you seen?

Chisholm Trail Writing Prompts

Middle School Prompts (Grades 6–8)

1. “The Hardest Day on the Chisholm Trail”

Write a narrative describing a particularly challenging day on the trail—weather, terrain, cattle, or conflict. How does your character respond?

2. “Voices of the Trail”

Choose a historical perspective: a cowboy, a freedman, a Native American, a cook, or a cattle owner. Write a diary entry about their experience on the trail.

3. “Cattle, Conflict, and Courage”

Many groups crossed paths on the Chisholm Trail. Write a fictional story about two groups meeting and how they solve a disagreement.

4. “The Economics of the Chisholm Trail”

Explain why the trail was so important to Texas after the Civil War. Write a persuasive paragraph about how the cattle drives helped rebuild the economy.

5. “Trail Technology: Tools of a Cowboy”

Research and describe three essential tools or pieces of equipment a cowboy needed. Explain how each one was used and why it mattered.

6. “Geography of Survival”

Write about one major environmental challenge along the Chisholm Trail—rivers, storms, heat, or predators. Describe how cowboys prepared for and handled it.

7. “A Legacy That Lives On”

Explain how the Chisholm Trail shaped Texas history and culture. Use examples from modern Texas life to support your ideas.

8. “The Untold Stories”

Write a historical fiction story focusing on a lesser-heard voice from the trail—such as a young vaquero, a female cook, or a Black cowboy—and craft a narrative showing their daily life and struggles.

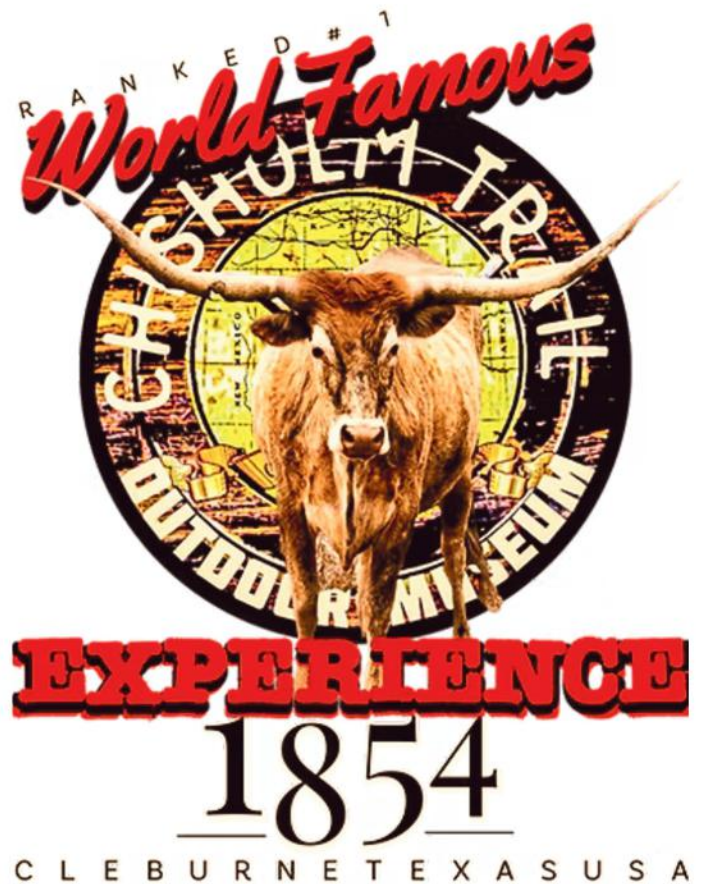


Saddle Up for Learning: A Homeschool Adventure at the Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum

If you're a Texas homeschool family looking to bring history to life, it's time to hit the trail—the Chisholm Trail, that is! Nestled on the scenic banks of Lake Pat Cleburne, the Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum in Johnson County offers an unforgettable, hands-on educational experience that blends Texas heritage, pioneer life, and Native American history into one immersive field trip.

A Trail Through Time: The History Behind the Museum

The Chisholm Trail was one of the most famous cattle-driving routes of the late 19th century, stretching from Texas to Kansas. Cowboys herded longhorns northward along this dusty path, shaping the economy and culture of the American West. The museum is situated on the historic grounds of Wardville, the first county seat of Johnson County, which was established in 1854. This location isn't just symbolic—it's authentic.



What You'll Discover at the Museum

The Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum isn't your typical indoor exhibit. Instead, it's a sprawling, open-air experience where kids and families can see, touch, and truly explore history up close. Here's what makes it a must-visit destination:

- Life-size Cattle Drive Silhouette: Walk alongside a dramatic display of longhorns and cowboys, capturing the adventurous spirit of the Chisholm Trail.
- Original 1850s Courthouse: Step inside Johnson County's very first courthouse and imagine what life was like during the earliest days of Texas law and order.
- Working Blacksmith Shop: Watch live demonstrations and discover how essential blacksmiths were to daily life on the frontier, from shoeing horses to forging tools.
- Stagecoach Station: Peek inside and see how people and goods traveled across the vast Texas landscape before highways and minivans.
- Teepees and the Big Bear Native American Museum: Explore a fascinating collection of artifacts, donated by Leonard "Big Bear" Beal, that offers a thoughtful and educational journey through Native American history—from over 13,000 years ago to the present day.

Homeschool Highlights

This museum is a goldmine for homeschoolers. Whether you're studying Texas history, U.S. expansion, Native American cultures, or pioneer life, the exhibits provide tangible connections to your curriculum. Here are a few ideas:

- History Journals: Have your kids sketch the cattle drive or write a diary entry from the perspective of a pioneer child.
- Science on the Trail: Discuss the tools used by blacksmiths or the environmental challenges of cattle drives.
- Faith & Frontier Life: Reflect on how faith sustained families during westward expansion.





Plan Your Visit

- Location: 101 Chisholm Trail, Cleburne, TX 76031
- Hours: Friday–Saturday 10 AM–5 PM, Sunday 1 PM–5 PM
- Admission: \$10 for adults, \$6 for kids, free for children 2 and under (event pricing may vary)

The museum is open from February 16 to December 20, and it's a great spot for group field trips, family outings, or even a history-themed birthday party. You can even book weddings on the trail—talk about a unique venue!

The Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum is more than a museum—it's a living classroom under the big Texas sky. It's where your kids can walk in the footsteps of cowboys, settlers, and Native peoples, and where history becomes more than just a textbook chapter.

So pack your boots, grab your journals, and get ready to blaze a trail through Texas history. Your next great homeschool adventure is waiting in Cleburne!

5th Annual Cowboy Christmas On The Trail

**PREORDER
TICKETS NOW**



**December
13-14 2025**

- Adults \$12
- Kids \$10
- 2 & Under FREE

**Live Shows
3p - 5p - 7p - 9p**

101 Chisholm Trail
Cleburne Texas 76033
(254) 998-0261

<https://www.thechisholmtrailoutdoormuseum.com>



**EXPERIENCE
1854**
CLEBURNE TEXAS USA

A photograph of two children running on a grassy path towards a pond. The girl in the foreground is wearing a pink jacket and blue jeans, and the boy is wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans. The pond is surrounded by trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The sky is blue with some clouds. The text "BACK TO NATURE" is overlaid on the top half of the image.

BACK TO NATURE

“NEVER BE WITHIN DOORS WHEN YOU
CAN RIGHTLY BE WITHOUT”

- *Charlotte Mason*



the

VISION
FORWARD



Pursue What God Reveals:

Casting Vision for Your Life,

Home, and Homeschool

By Melissa Ebner

Why Vision Matters

Vision is more than a motivational slogan—it is the compass that keeps us aligned with God’s purpose. Without it, life becomes reactive instead of intentional. We wake up each day responding to the urgent rather than pursuing the important. Proverbs 29:18 reminds us: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Vision breathes life into our routines, homes, and families

Vision Brings Clarity

When God gives vision, He gives clarity. Habakkuk 2:2–3 says, “Write the vision and make it plain.” Writing it down forces us to define what matters most. For a mother, this may mean creating a peaceful atmosphere at home: one of peace instead of chaos, and joy instead of stress. For a homeschooler, it may mean defining the purpose of your teaching—not just academics, but also discipleship, character, and curiosity.

Vision Anchors Us in God's Timing

Vision also teaches patience. Habakkuk reminds us that the vision is “for an appointed time.” God’s plans are not rushed. They unfold in His perfect timing. When we grow impatient, we risk abandoning His vision for our own. Jeremiah 29:11 reassures us that His plans are good, even if they feel delayed. Vision anchors us in hope. Waiting is not wasted—it’s a form of preparation.

Vision Creates Order in the Home

Without vision, family life can feel scattered. Laundry piles up. Lessons feel overwhelming. Emotions run high. But when you have a clear vision for your home, even small tasks take on meaning. Proverbs 16:3 says: “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” Vision transforms chores into service. Lessons become discipleship. Discipline becomes training for righteousness.

Vision Fuels Perseverance

Life brings obstacles—illness, financial strain, discouragement. Vision strengthens us to press forward. Paul writes in Philippians 3:14: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Vision keeps us focused even when the journey is hard. It reminds us that our calling as mothers and teachers is about raising children who will walk in faith tomorrow.

Vision Shapes Homeschooling

Homeschooling without vision can feel like endless worksheets and lesson plans. But with vision, homeschooling becomes a mission field. Isaiah 30:21 promises: “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it.’” God’s vision for your homeschool isn’t just about academics. It’s about shaping hearts, nurturing gifts, and preparing your children to walk in His ways.

Vision and Play Calling

Think of vision like play-calling in football. A team doesn’t play without a plan. The quarterback trusts the coach and executes. In the same way, God calls us to listen, trust, and follow His vision.

When we ignore His playbook, we end up fumbling—overwhelmed, stressed, and lost. But when we align our lives with His vision, we find strength. We also find clarity and victory.

When we grow impatient, we risk abandoning His vision for our own.

Motherhood and Homeschooling with Vision

Motherhood without vision leads to exhaustion. Homeschooling without vision leads to frustration. When we seek God's plan for our homes and families, everything changes.

Vision turns homeschooling from a checklist into a calling. It shifts our focus from finishing math lessons to raising children who love God, pursue truth, and walk in wisdom.

Jeremiah 29:11 assures us: "For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." God's vision for your family is good, purposeful, and filled with hope, even when the path feels unclear.

Scriptures to Anchor Your Vision

- Habakkuk 2:2-3 – Write the vision, make it plain.
- Proverbs 29:18 – Without vision, people perish.
- Jeremiah 29:11 – God's plans are good and full of hope.
- Philippians 3:14 – Press toward the goal.
- Proverbs 16:3 – Commit your work to the Lord.
- Isaiah 30:21 – God will guide your steps.

Homeschool Vision Checklist

Use this checklist as a guide to reflect on and write down your homeschool vision. Consider each category and answer thoughtfully to help clarify your family's goals and intentions:

- Academic Goals: What subjects and milestones matter most this year?
- Character Development: What virtues do you want to cultivate (patience, kindness, diligence)?
- Family Culture: What atmosphere do you want in your home (peace, joy, curiosity)?
- Life Skills: What practical skills should your children learn (cooking, budgeting, service)?
- Creativity & Exploration: How will you nurture art, music, and nature study?
- Flexibility: How will you adjust when plans change?

Family Vision Board Ideas

Create a vision board together as a family to make your goals visible and inspiring.

- Scripture Cards: Write verses like Habakkuk 2:2–3 or Jeremiah 29:11.
- Photos: Include family pictures, places you want to visit, or activities you want to try.
- Goals: Add words like “Faith,” “Joy,” “Learning,” “Adventure.”
- Artwork: Let kids draw their dreams and paste them on the board.
- Nature Elements: Add pressed flowers or leaves to symbolize growth and renewal.
- Symbols of Faith: Crosses, doves, or other reminders of God’s presence.

Place the board in a central location, such as your homeschool room or kitchen. Let the vision stay alive daily.

Vision Journal Ideas for Moms

A vision journal is a personal space to reflect, pray, and record God’s direction. Use these scripture prompts to guide your journaling:

- Habakkuk 2:2–3: Write down the vision God has placed on your heart.
- Proverbs 29:18: Reflect on areas of your life that lack vision.
- Jeremiah 29:11: Journal about the hope and future God promises.
- Philippians 3:14: Write about the “mark” you are pressing toward.
- Proverbs 16:3: List your current plans and commit them to God.
- Isaiah 30:21: Record moments when you felt God guiding your steps.

Journaling Exercises

- Daily Reflection: Write one sentence about how you saw God’s vision in your day.
- Creative Expression: Sketch or doodle what God’s vision looks like for your family.
- Prayer Pages: Write prayers asking God to clarify and strengthen your vision.
- Goal Tracking: Break down big visions into small, achievable steps.

Vision is not about perfection—it’s about direction. It’s about trusting God’s timing, even when the vision tarries. It’s about writing it down, making it plain, and running with it.

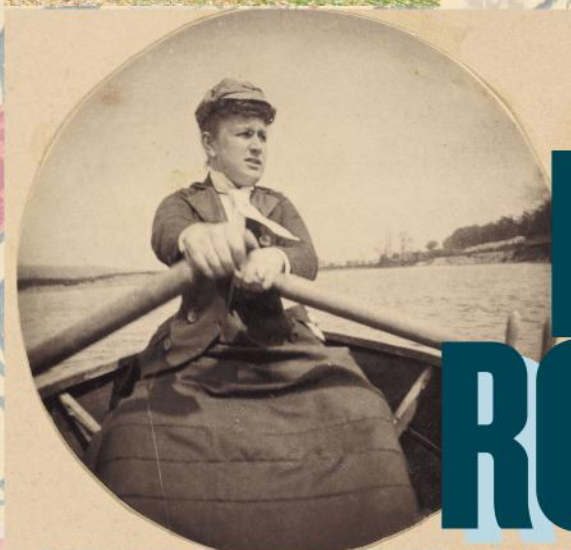
As mothers, wives, and homeschoolers, we are called to pursue what God reveals to us. When we do this, our homes become places of peace. Our families thrive in purpose. Our children learn not just academics, but also the beauty of living a life guided by God’s vision.





Rise
WITH
Purpose

PROGRESS
- NOT -
Perfection



KEEP
ROWING

Push
through
Fear

save

MONEY

brunch

Action
Creates
Change

Forgiveness
HEALS.

Eternal
Salvation

Be
Present

MAKE A

DIFFERENCE



be
still

FRIENDS

*Read
AND
Lead*



BALANCE

DISCERN

GROW **Enjoy little moments.**



pray

BIBLE STUDY

LOVE

sleep

Health

Create

Family

road
TRIP



TRUST



point of view.
Encourage
persuade them to



**PHILLIPIANS
3:14
I PRESS
TOWARD THE
MARK FOR THE
PRIZE OF THE
HIGH CALLING
OF GOD IN
CHRIST JESUS.**

Proverbs 16:3
Commit thy
works unto the
Lord, and thy
thoughts shall
be established.

**JEREMIAH 29:11-12
FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU,"
DECLARES THE LORD, "PLANS TO PROSPER
YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO
GIVE YOU HOPE AND A FUTURE. 12 THEN
YOU WILL CALL ON ME AND COME AND
PRAY TO ME, AND I WILL LISTEN TO YOU.**

**PROVERBS 29:18
WHERE THERE
IS NO VISION,
THE PEOPLE
PERISH: BUT HE
THAT KEEPETH
THE LAW, HAPPY
IS HE.**

**ISAIAH 30:21
YOUR EARS SHALL HEAR
A WORD BEHIND YOU,
SAYING,
"THIS IS THE WAY,
WALK IN IT,"
WHENEVER YOU TURN TO
THE RIGHT HAND
OR WHENEVER YOU TURN
TO THE LEFT.**



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