



# Vision Planner

## & Vision Planner Guide



Danielle Papageorgiou



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# LIFESCHOOLING

## Vision Planner and Vision Planner Guide

### INTRODUCTION

**T**his resource is based on Christian principles. It is impossible for me to separate my Christianity from other aspects of my life as it informs and influences everything I do. If you are a Christian, I know you understand. If you are not a Christian, I pray that you will become one! But in the meantime, feel free to use this book and adjust it to meet your own needs.

***“Lifeschooling is the individualized process of discovering your child’s God-given gifts and talents, through real life experience that happens within the context of your family’s unique situations and missions.”***

Lifeschooling is about freedom. God wants His people to be free! But yet, we still need to seek Him for direction and a plan.

My goal with the **Lifeschooling Vision Planner** is to give parents (myself included) a concrete tool to help us seek the Lord’s direction for the lives of our children. But this planner is just as much for our children! We must never forget that ultimately, these are their lives we are helping to direct. We must involve them in the process and in so doing, we not only can pour into their lives, but also have an incredible opportunity for the relationship to grow as we share our hearts in reciprocal manner.

I pray that it is a blessing to you and your family! If you have comments or ideas on how I can make it even better, please don’t hesitate to reach out at [info@lifeschoolingconference.com](mailto:info@lifeschoolingconference.com).



*Danielle*

# Recognizing Who We Are

***“Where there is no vision, the people perish,” Proverbs 29:18***

***“My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” 2 Corinthians 12:9***

**I** begin this planner with those two verses with a very intentional reason. And that is because...

*I am a failure.*

I admit it freely. Visionary? Yes. Leader? No. Planner? No. Not at all. I should never be writing a book about organization or planning! It is utterly laughable and at times, I truly struggle with the Lord about the calling He chose for me in leading and organizing the Lifeschooling Conference and writing a book about planning. How am I to help others or be an example when I myself can't seem to get my own act together?

I am a girl who...

- Daydreamed her way through elementary school.
- Had to stay after school with her teacher every day during fifth grade to make sure her homework got done.
- Ditched her best friend in Junior High because she was no longer cool to hang out with.
- Was extremely insecure and constantly looked for approval from others.
- Was the youngest child and a “follower,” not a leader.
- Procrastinated her way through high school.
- Got “fired” from leading a high school group because she never got things done on time.
- Has failed in countless other ways and other times which are too humiliating to put in a book.

Great potential there, huh?

But have you happened to notice just how many failures God has used throughout history? What we need to understand and embrace is the fact that God uses failures. Need a list for proof? Just go read Hebrews 11 and recognize that this list, commonly known as the “Hall of Heroes” chapter, is filled with failures! No, I mean it! Go grab your Bible right now and read Hebrews 11 and think about the fact that God used drunkards, liars and deceivers, cowards, and rebellious men and women, and He still uses such people today! And when He remembers them, “He remembers their sins no more” (Hebrews 8:12), but instead remembers them as men and women of faith, “of whom the world was not worthy.”

So what can we learn about failures? Well, they tend to be His best vessels because they hold no illusions that they are fine Wedgwood porcelain vases. They are just humble stoneware mugs that get the job done without the stumbling block of pride that so easily comes to those who are skilled in a particular area. And in the process of getting the job done, God accomplishes His own work not only through that humble mug, but within it, as well.

And so as I write this guide, I want you, my reader, to understand that I am writing and sharing from a place of weakness in myself and strength in Him! God may be working through me, but I assure you that He is also working in me. I am learning right along with you. We need to have vision and attempt to plan and organize as we are able, and help others along the way... but God's grace is truly sufficient. And in our days of running late, forgetting appointments, dealing with sick kids, disobedient kids, drama of various negative kinds, failing to be a good example to others, i.e. plain old weakness, God is there in that mess, too, and His strength is made perfect in all of that weakness!

You are His vessel. His humble mug. And He will raise up more humble mugs through your weakness to amaze the world with their gifts. They will get the job done, pursuing and accomplishing His unique purpose for them. In some areas, they may turn out to be fine Wedgwood vases, but I would guess, knowing what I know about God and life, that in the areas where God uses them most as a display to the world of His glory, they will be simple humble mugs. It will be those very "holes" and "gaps" you feared that God will use for His glory to reassure you that all along it was His strength, not yours, that will create those success stories you strived to see one day.

I don't have it all figured out. I mess up continually. I don't always successfully practice what I preach. But then again, lifeschooling is mainly a message of freedom and hope for those who, like me, don't have a perfect homeschool and are "organizationally challenged." Lifeschooling is for imperfect mugs.

So I hope this guide will serve as an encouragement to do your best, and as an encouragement that even if you fail, God's strength is made perfect in all of that weakness. Never forget that it is the Lord who is in charge of each day. We can't know what tomorrow may bring. Vision is important and necessary. Planning is good. But God has the final word on what the day's lessons will be... whether academic, practical, or spiritual. He knows what we need, but we must trust when He directs because it will often pull us outside of our familiar comfort zone (schedule) which we have so meticulously planned.

Ultimately, I hope you will recognize that God is the teacher of your children and you are just a teacher's assistant. Listen to the Great Teacher and follow His Master Plan. And teach your children to do the same. Therein lies your success.

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*God* is the  
teacher of your  
children and  
you are just  
the teacher's  
assistant.  
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***"A man plans his ways, but the Lord directs His steps," Proverbs 16:9***

# Preliminary Mental Work

If we want to change, we have to first recognize that outward change will first happen in the heart.

***“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life,” Proverbs 4:23.***

***“Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law”  
Proverbs 29:18***

What happens in our minds and hearts is what will ultimately direct us. That is why it is so important to first seek the Lord to help us reform the mind. Then He can direct us in laying a vision that will give us a framework to follow.

So first of all, I want you to mentally release the “supposed to’s” that have crept into your psyche thanks to our own upbringing and societal expectations. It is important that we stop and consider what has been labeled today as “traditional education” is really the alternative. So-called “traditional” education is, in fact, very radical. I love the following quote by educational reformist, John Taylor Gatto:

***“Is there an idea more radical in the history of the human race than turning your children over to total strangers whom you know nothing about, and having those strangers work on your child’s mind, out of your sight, for a period of twelve years? Could there be a more radical idea than that? Back in Colonial days in America, if you proposed that kind of idea, they’d burn you at the stake, you mad person! It’s a mad idea!”***

We often don’t think in these terms, but when you we confront the reality of what “traditional” education is, it really is madness! So, why should we allow such a radical system to determine what we teach our own children? Let’s rethink what we’re doing and get rid of those “supposed-to’s” right now. If it helps, take a copy of your schedule, scope and sequence or whatever you call it, and read it out loud to your children.

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Remember, the scope and sequence was not written on stone tablets by the finger of educational gods. It is time to listen to God’s wisdom, not man’s, and discover what His plan is for your children and family. He has given you and your children gifts for a very specific purpose in glorifying Him, glory through service to others.

***“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men,” (1 Corinthians 1:25)***

***“Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men,” (Proverbs 22:29)***



It may look similar to the Scope and Sequence or it may look completely different (which, given the uniqueness of each child, is what I suspect), but the point of this vision planner is to help you recognize and let go of your preconceived ideas in planning your lifeschooling vision. The goal is to start fresh with no agendas except to figure out God's plan for your lifeschooling path. Children, families, goals, and gifts are unique...so why should everyone's path look the same? That just doesn't make sense, does it?

If we are going to rebuild our idea of education, then we must tear down before we can build up. If I were going to replace carpeting in my home with wood flooring, it would not be sufficient to simply start laying the new flooring over the carpet. We would quickly run into problems and the new flooring would eventually be ripped up and seen as a mistake. It wasn't the wood flooring that was a mistake. The mistake was putting it down before ripping the carpet up. The mistake was a wrong foundation.

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Education is simply a natural result of the process and comes about organically as a child pursues his or her interests. The end goal for each child is finding their God-given purpose(s) and developing the character and skills necessary to accomplish them.

Here are a couple books that I would highly recommend in this process of reforming your thoughts on education. There are many more good books on the topic, but these four are fast reads and I don't want to overwhelm you. I would strongly suggest you go buy at least a couple of them now and get reading!

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"Education"  
should not be  
about "schooling"  
but finding our  
children's  
*God-Given  
purposes.*  
.....

# Book Recommendations

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## Gifted: Raising Children Intentionally by Chris Davis

Chris Davis has had the biggest influence on my homeschooling philosophy. Years ago, I stumbled upon his blog and felt like I had struck gold! And truly, “How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver,” (Proverbs 16:16).

This book will help you learn to look at your children “not as buckets to be filled, but as gifts to be opened,” as Chris would say. Each child is a gift from God, with specific gifts designed to be used for God. Our job as parents is to help them discover those gifts and to encourage them to pursue their gifts.

## Dumbing Us Down by John Taylor Gatto

John Taylor Gatto has become a hero to many homeschoolers. As a former New York Teacher of the Year, Gatto saw the true nature of the public education system and, in giving his acceptance speech for the honor, he very pointedly spoke out against the system that he had worked in for years. When he resigned, he said it was because he was “no longer willing to hurt children.”

This book gives the history of modern public schooling (which the majority of Americans were staunchly against in the early days) and clearly shows why it was doomed from the beginning. If the foundation is weak, the building will not last. Gatto was not a Christian, to my knowledge, but his books speak truth with a prophet-like boldness that is refreshing.

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Durenda Wilson is a friend of mine and spoke at our 2019 Lifeschooling Conference. She lifeschooled all eight of her children and even in the high school years, her children never spent more than 4 hours a day on formal academics. I love her heart for relationships and putting God first in every pursuit. This book is a refreshment for any mother struggling with burnout.

favorite interviewees on my podcast, Life as a Lifeschooler, is Karen Campbell. Karen is a pioneer homeschooler who saw the primary importance of homeschooling as being building relationships with her children. In this book, she discusses and applies all the “one another” passages – Love one another. Encourage one another. Pray for one another. Be kind to one another. Serve one another. – to homeschooling relationships.



To further help you with this “tearing down, ripping out” process of reforming your thinking about education, let’s try a little exercise. Take a few minutes to print and fill out the “To NOT Do List” to get an idea of what your children do NOT need to know this year to be well educated. Take your Scope and Sequence (*if you haven’t already burned it*) and draw a line through the items you consider irrelevant to your child at this time, given his or her particular gifts and given his or her current developmental readiness.

You can also use the blanks to write down what subjects or lessons you do not consider important at this time. This does not mean that you won’t eventually study them or that you will go out of your way to avoid them, but it does give you the freedom to tailor your child’s education.

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examples. The same very material can be learned as much in much more meaningful ways when given ample time to imagine, explore, and create! “The trick,” says Gatto, “is to wait until someone asks and then move fast while the mood is on. Millions of people teach themselves these things – it really isn’t very hard.”

In my own home, I have seen my youngest (age 7) advance with math concepts quickly without any consistent use of formal curriculum. We set it aside for a while for freer learning, and when we come back to it we find that he has advanced beyond the concepts that were “next” in the book for him! Basic concepts like addition and subtraction (and even advanced concepts when it gets down to it), are all around us and he is picking up on them naturally. When we do take time out for formal learning, it goes much more smoothly because of the natural learning he has been able to experience and internalize.

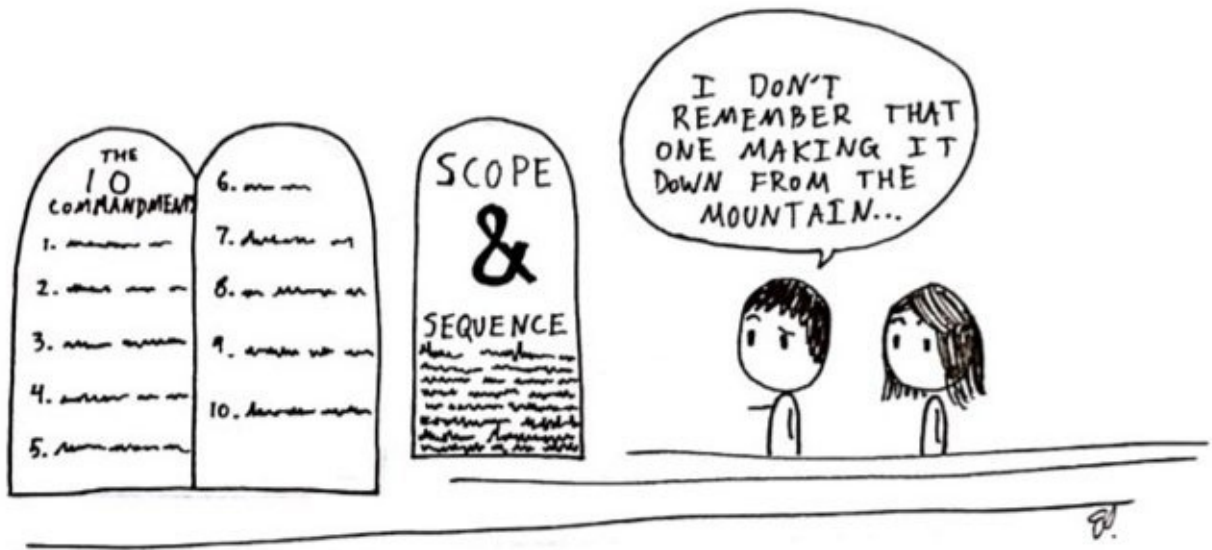
I often hear concerned mothers talk about their children who are not yet reading at ages 8, 9, 10, or even older. It can make us feel panicky and nervous when they don’t seem to be keeping up with what is considered “normal,” but take heart! Many children learn later, and I know of several examples of brilliant people who did not learn to read until age 11 or 12! Once it clicked, they were moving on to chapter books within a matter of weeks. We must learn to relax and trust God’s timing!

Remember, the standards for what children need to learn and when, were written by “an expert” you have never met, who doesn’t know your child or what God has for him or her. The “expert” may not even be a Christian or care at all what God thinks about the issue. God is more concerned with matters of the heart and will reward those who “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” by adding “all these things” in His time (Matthew 6:33).



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Now, this exercise may be a little more difficult with a younger child or with a child who has not shown a clear interest in anything in particular yet. You may end up with very few items on this list. That's okay! The main goal is just to get you thinking in a direction that allows for more freedom to follow a unique path. You can fill this out and make tweaks to it every year for each child.



by Elleina Papageorgiou



Now, let's take this a step further and pull some of you Type A moms way out of your comfort zone!

## *Are you ready?*

Now I want you to give this same exercise to your children. "Oh, but they don't know what's best! They will cross off all the math subjects and all the handwriting!" Really? Moms (and Dads... because I know you are involved, too), remember that it is our job as parents to train our children to seek the Lord and hear His voice! Yes, "a wise son listens to his father's instruction (Proverbs 13:1)," but in order to train our children to listen and heed what we have to say, it is good to set an example of listening.

As we listen to their hearts and then listen closely to the Lord, we are setting an example for them to follow in our steps. If we listen to them (and notice I didn't say that we have to "obey" them), then we might be surprised to find them listening a lot more to us! We should model what we want our children to become... good listeners. We should "be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger," (James 1:19).

In the words of Solomon, "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13). I am afraid we have a lot of parents today who are acting shamefully with regard to listening to their children's hearts.

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We need to remember that our children are not just our children, but if we are all in God's family, they are also our brothers and sisters in the Lord!  
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Here is what I recommend you do with each of your children at this point...

1. Tell them that you value their opinions and desires. (If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame," Proverbs 18:13.)
2. Then ask them to have a time of prayer and Bible reading, asking the Lord for wisdom. ("If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him," James 1:5.)
3. After they have done that and been honest with the Lord, then they can fill out the sheet. ("I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings," Jeremiah 17:10.)

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Big question to help them learn to think through math questions.

That being said, you may decide to put it off a while longer and see how much is picked up on naturally. One of the worst things you can do is put too many expectations on your child at too early an age. There is no rush! And the damage you can do to their confidence far outweighs the advantage of early learning. Often our own insecurities and fears cause us to make unnecessary requirements that damage our children in the long run.

If they are older, then certainly their opinions and desires will have more weight because if you have trained them well, they have the maturity to understand what is good for them and won't put math on the list. But overall, I think your children may surprise you with their answers. And even if some things on the list seem crazy, use it as an opportunity to talk through their reasoning for including them. You may have your own thinking challenged!





# Creating a Vision

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You've done the preliminary mental work (You did do that, right?), so now it's time to get started! You will notice that this book is based on a firm foundation of prayer. If God is the one directing our paths, then we would be wise to seek Him, not the wisdom of man, to reveal it to us!

***“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,” (Proverbs 3:5-6).***

So, how do you cast a vision? Where do you start?

Of course, you start by asking! God does not want to hide His will from you and your children. He wants you to seek it diligently and He will be faithful to reveal it to you...maybe not all at once, but He will reward your patient faithfulness as you pursue Him.

This starts first and foremost with prayer, and I would suggest even fasting. Fasting is not exactly an exciting thing to do, but it is a powerful way to draw closer to God and to seek His will for your life.

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God moved. We have no room to fret and complain if we are not willing to step out in faith and do that hard work!

Of course, if you have medical issues, you should talk with a knowledgeable doctor before starting a fast, and don't forget there are other ways to fast besides denying yourself food. My own husband struggles with some health issues that make fasting more harmful for him. But his goal is to someday be able to fast in the traditional sense.

Okay, preaching over.

After prayer and fasting, there are, of course, some general guidelines we can follow. I believe that when He called you to lifeschool, it was not just you that He called. And it was not just about education! Lifeschooling is about the whole family. It is about discipleship. It is about relationship. It is about figuring out how to integrate every aspect of your life with learning. And in order to do that, we must take a closer look at those areas.

# Vision Planner

## Notebook



NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Too Many Interests

Remember, this planner is as much a work in progress as your children are! They will change and grow, and this planner, too, should be flexible...a “living document.” This is no more a “stone tablet” than the Scope and Sequence you burned earlier. And for some children, that flexibility is especially important! There are those who seem to have no interests whatsoever, and other children, on the other hand, who never have an end to their hobbies and pursuits!

This may lead us to feel as though our children are flighty and can’t stick with one thing. But keep in mind that this is the time in their lives when they should have the freedom to discover who they are! Do you want them to be on that search when they have a family and pressing life responsibilities, or do you want them to so deeply experience their interests now, when they can afford to change their minds if it ends up being something they don’t truly love?

Invest in your children. We often don’t have any problem forking out money for expensive curriculum, but when it comes to our children’s gifts and passions, do we provide them with the necessary resources and material?

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The creator who put that gift in us!

My own children have gone through many different experiences and hobbies in their short lives.

My daughter has at one time or another been interested in:

- Sewing
- Embroidery
- Starting a business
- Archery
- Knife throwing
- Writing
- Acting
- Drawing
- Paper quilting
- Origami

Some of these interests remain. Some have dwindled. And some have completely disappeared! I cannot honestly say that it hasn’t sometimes annoyed or frustrated me to invest in some new passion, only to see it laid down

When they find their passion and what God put into them to do, they **WILL** stick to it!

and forgotten in a few months. (Sidenote: I will also admit that some of those passions may have been my own visions of what I thought she wanted to do rather than her true interests. Our children want to please us and sometimes they will take up hobbies simply because we think those activities are something they should find interesting. Those hobbies will prove to be short-lived).

But how wonderful that I can give my children the chance to learn something that, even if not pursued for life, has given them valuable experiences and learning opportunities! It is just as important that they learn what they do not want to do as it is to figure out what they do want to do. Sometimes we have to utilize the process of elimination!

Remember that these are the “real life experiences” from which they learn, not just about that particular field itself, but also those standard subject areas that are so often detached from anything “real.” For example, my son has learned all he needs to know about algebra from his experience in computer programming, something he already loved to do. Instead of algebra being an abstract concept with little real life meaning, it was given context, making the learning real and valuable.

He also learned about the global economy by creating a predictive economic model for investing through a wonderful online course called Econopolicy offered by Frontier Christian Academy. I am not a big fan of the classroom experience and generally avoid anything that looks too much like school, but this experience was different. The courses are specifically designed to provide the child with a tangible, adult-level project at the end through real world learning experience.

That is the kind of learning that lasts! And the projects created through the process are also valuable and lasting! And studies confirm the value of this kind of learning. One study by Edward Deci (see his book, *Why We Do What We Do*) found that the two components of autonomy and authenticity are crucial for long-term learning. Simply put, when children are given facts to memorize, the learning does not stay with them long-term, whereas when they are given meaningful experiences that interest them, they will remember the lessons long after.

Are there times for requiring our children to continue a certain pursuit or hobby? Absolutely. That is one aspect where lifeschooling differs from the philosophy of unshooling. You may have a child who is constantly trying something new and is too impatient to persevere in the learning curve before getting bored or frustrated and moving on. This is where you must pray for wisdom and discernment to know when to put your foot (lovingly) down and require a certain level of mastery or success. They must learn to have enough character to persevere and not give up, even when they run into roadblocks.

Children must also learn that they need to be wise stewards of your money as well as your time. Investing in their talents and interests can get expensive! But sometimes we don't realize just how responsible they have become. I remember the time I encouraged my daughter, Elleina, to draw more and not be so afraid to mess up. “At the time, I required her to buy all her own art materials (along with any other personal items). We want our children to grow up to be financially responsible, so we give them jobs so they can earn this extra money.

“You can always start over,” I said. “But Mommy,” she said, “then I'll have to buy more paper! And it's expensive!” That was the moment I realized I needed to be willing to invest in her art more and show her how important her talent is to us. But it also showed me that she understands the value of art materials, so I didn't need to worry that she would take that investment for granted!

# A Few (Controversial) Thoughts on High School

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I have some thoughts on high school that I want to share with those of you who are outside-the-box thinkers. If you've made it this far, that is probably you!

I'm going to propose something that is not popular and may sound a bit like heresy. But I'm going to do it anyway because I believe it's the truth. And if it's not actual heresy, then we should be open-minded enough to consider it.

You don't necessarily have to prepare your child for college, meaning... you don't necessarily have to do high school like everyone else.

What exactly do I mean? Well, I mean that once your child hits high school, he or she should not automatically be treated as if he or she is going to college.

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The fact is, most millionaire entrepreneurs did not attend college, and many were high school dropouts. It's simply not *necessary* to become an entrepreneur and, in fact, may hinder someone headed that route. Ask yourself why someone would be *teaching* entrepreneurship rather than *doing* it and you have to wonder about their qualifications. We are in a different world today with far more opportunities for those without a college degree. You can set up a business online in a few weeks and be making money right away.

Or what about the trades? Shortly after my neighbor's son graduated high school, he was making almost \$25 an hour operating an earth mover on a construction site. Welders make quite a high income these days, also, and there are many other trade jobs that can provide a very decent living for those who enjoy such honest—dare I say manly?—work. Not everyone is made to sit at a desk all day.

We need to get rid of the stigma of not going to college and the elitist attitude of those who consider it the best route for all...or at least those who are "smart enough." With these "smart enough" kids ending up in college debt in exchange for desk jobs that only earn them a modest living, while forever paying off that debt that blessed them with a red-tape-filled job they detest, perhaps "smart enough" is a label that needs some serious reexamination!

**REAL LIFE EXAMPLE #1:** My son is brilliant. Throughout his teen years, he learned more than a handful of computer coding languages and became very proficient in IT. He knew what he wanted to do with his life and began pursuing his goals. When he got to high school, it seemed silly to require him to jump through someone else's hoops just so he could be "prepared" for college when that was not what he felt God wanted for him.

Our law in North Carolina happens to be very relaxed. It is up to the parent to decide what their child needs in order to graduate. I knew what he had learned and how much he still loves learning. I knew all the books he had read on his own time, simply because he wants to acquire knowledge. I knew the thousands of hours he had spent learning and doing computer coding and related activities. I knew how proficient he is at communicating with the written word. I knew how mathematically-minded he is from learning coding. I heard the discussions he would have with my husband and wonder where all that knowledge came from. I knew that he spent hours in prayer and Bible reading daily (because he had time); that he has impeccable character; that others compliment us on our parenting because of him. I knew the character development I had seen in him and how ready he was to enter the adult world. I knew what he needed professionally in order to do that, and it was not hours upon hours of biology, chemistry, and British literature...precious time that he could be using for becoming an expert in his field.

If he has met these requirements, should that not be enough to call him "graduated"? I think it is. And I don't think there's anything wrong or unbiblical about that at all. I don't think he needs to have so-called "core courses" if he has what he needs for his life and career. Tell me when British Literature is going to be important to someone in the field of IT, although, in his defense, he has read more than 1000 books by British authors.

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years ago, she taught herself to play the piano and would she had been struggling with her health in various ways,



Rigorous academics were impossible. In fact, non-rigorous academics were impossible! The extent of her reading comprehension was limited to a few Bible verses a day. Her brain was simply too tired to handle anything more than that. Should we have required this child to push through, knowing the negative effect stress can have on the adrenals, making them even more exhausted and risking complete burnout? Should we have forced her to take Algebra classes so she could feel the full weight of frustration at having “lost” her once-amazing ability in math?

We believed that the best thing we could do for her was to allow her to pursue her art and music with complete abandon. Those are a couple of gifts she could still do without mental exhaustion and they brought her joy and a sense of accomplishment. According to a study in the 90s by psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, it takes 10,000 hours to become a “world-class expert” at any skill (read the book *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell). Elleina spent (conservatively) over 1,000 hours on her art alone in just one year. Was that path for her individualized high school experience, plus learning contentment and joy in the Lord through her trial, a failed high school career undeserving of a diploma? Were those four years of dedicated time to truly become a “world-class expert” by graduation a failure because she didn’t finish up her math courses?

I’m sorry, but I think not. Do you?

She rarely complains and sees God’s hand in her suffering. She’s mature beyond her years and puts me to shame with her faith. Does that mean she should go to college? Or not?

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What if you get a job that goes right down to you, is a college going to reject a world-class expert because they are missing a few credits?

Again, I am not against college. I know that for some, college is necessary and can truly be a wonderful experience. If you’re studying to be a doctor, I am all for that four-year degree. I’m not going under the knife if said knife is being operated by a high school graduate, thank you very much. And in most states, you can’t take the bar exam without a college degree and law school. And, some kids just feel truly called to go to a particular institution and learn there (Or find a spouse!). Fine. Go to college if that is where you are called! I’m not about to argue with God’s leading in your life.

But I tend to think that for most people, college, and subsequently a traditional form of high school, is just one of those unmovable fixtures of life that you leave alone and don’t question. Well, I just did. So there you go. I hope it makes you think.

If nothing else, it may make you think I've absolutely lost my mind. But that's okay! ;) If you're still open to challenging the paradigm, then let me give you a few practical suggestions for rethinking high school (and college):

**1. Plan and pray early.** When your child is nearing middle school, it would be good to have a sense of direction regarding whether or not college is part of God's plan. Some kids know what they want to do from an early age and it's pretty easy to figure out the path. Others need to have a lot of experiences learning about and getting a taste of different fields.

**2. Find out your state's requirements.** This is very important because you don't want to break

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**4. If your child already seems to have a direction and it doesn't require college, why stop him/her from pursuing a passion God put there? Let your child continue with his/her interests** and just track everything so you can divide it into subjects, especially if he/she did not complete the core courses in middle school. You may be surprised what subjects get covered!

Above all, trust in the Lord to guide you! Don't worry. He doesn't want to hide His will from you or your child. But sometimes we do have to patiently and prayerfully wait for Him to reveal things to us.

# Vision Plan Notebook

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## Now comes the fun part!

We get to create each child's Vision Plan notebook! Before we go through each page individually, you should prepare each child's notebook. Print out a cover sheet for each one and fill in their name so you can keep track. This notebook is meant to be used each year as a reference. It is a "living document" for each child as they grow and as you learn more about who they are and adjust the vision as life progresses. Each year, you will print out new pages and transfer relevant information to them. This will give you a good record of how each child is changing and developing!

In each child's notebook for each year, you will keep:

- NOT-To-Do List
- Child Profile Page
- My Profile page (the one they fill out for themselves)
- Long Term Vision page
- Short-Term Vision page

Not sure what to do with your personal "My Profile" page and the "Family Profile" page? Those extra sheets can be kept in your own folder or notebook to keep as a reference. You can also keep the Resources Log in the same notebook.

# Profile Pages

---

As such, it's important to consider each member of the family and how the whole unit functions together. That means you need to take into account your own gifts and talents, mama! Don't forget that God gave you to your children to be their teacher. They can learn from you as you pursue some of your own gifts with balance. So it is time to do some self-examination. This form is for each member of the family to fill out...including you, mom! ;)

Moms need to be using and developing their own gifts rather than burying them like the worthless servant described in Matthew 25. But I know that is not always easy. If you are an entrepreneurial mom like I am, you may sometimes feel like serving everyone else takes you away from working on your own goals and pursuing your gifts. Take heart! I have written articles in my head and come up with some of my best ideas when I am busy with repetitive tasks like doing dishes or laundry. (In fact, this book idea is the result of running errands!)

God will bless us when we prioritize our families. (Seek first the kingdom... Matthew 6:33.) Put the Lord first in your hearts and watch your circumstances change!

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1. Go ahead and fill out the My Profile page now. And once again, we are going to let our kids give us input on what they enjoy and want to learn more about by filling one out for themselves.

2. Now it is time to think about each child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as their interests, individually. If you haven't already done so, print out a copy of Child Profile page for each child. The questions here are the same as on the My Profile form you and your children just filled out, so it will be a good test of how well you know your child to compare their My Profile answers with the ones you put on the Child Profile page!

3. Finally, we are going to fill in the Family Profile page. Every family and child has issues and circumstances that may make the learning process trickier (chronic illness, learning challenges, both parents working, tight living quarters, etc.). These should not be viewed as hindrances, but as challenges to be conquered and worked through. With God, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!

We want to take a look at not only the strengths of the family unit, but also some of the weaknesses. Taking into account the whole family functions together will give us grace as we plan for each individual need within the family and for how all our strengths can work together in ministering to others.

God created us to serve and bring Him glory! Here are some examples of types of ministries families can be involved in. What ministries would connect well with your family's gifts and passions? (For more ideas, see the 77 Ways Your Family Can Make a Difference book.) Prayerfully keep these in mind as you fill out this last profile page.

- Volunteer at soup kitchen
- Volunteer at nursing home
- [LoveLife.org ministry](http://LoveLife.org)
- Pregnancy resource center
- Church ministries
- Letters to missionaries
- Volunteer at animal shelter
- Cook meals for others
- Visit the sick
- Run errands for elderly
- College outreach ministry
- Short-term missions
- Tutoring for disadvantaged kids
- Visit shut-ins
- Card sending ministry
- Bake treats for church leaders
- Donate blood
- Encouragement blog or vlog
- Neighborhood cookout
- Street evangelism
- Music ministry in public areas
- Children's Bible club
- VBS
- Bake for firefighters, police, etc.
- Volunteer at food pantry
- Mentorship program
- Yard work for elderly
- Inner city ministry

# My Profile

---

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Who am I? (Write down a list of every word that comes to mind when thinking about yourself.)

What are some topics I am passionate about?

What are some of my best thoughts?

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What are some ministries my gifts could be used for?

What are some projects or tasks (possibly related to family businesses, ministries, and other endeavors) that fit well with my gifts and talents?



# Child Profile

---

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Who is this child? (Write down a list of every word that comes to mind when describing your child)

What are some topics your child is passionate about?

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What are some ministries your child's gifts could be used for?

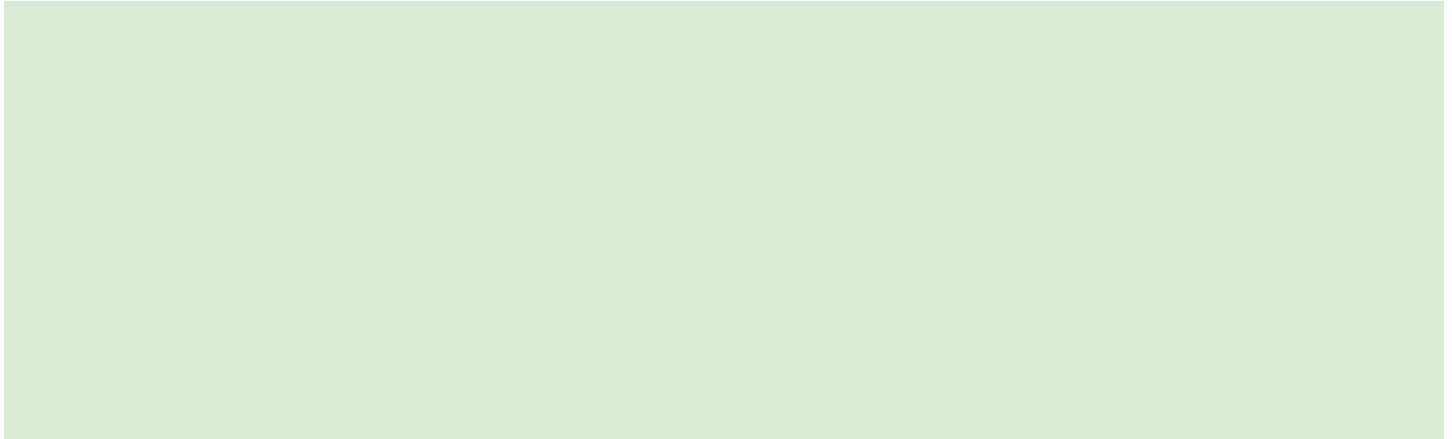
What are some projects or tasks (possibly related to family businesses, ministries, and other endeavors) that fit well with your child's gifts and talents?

# Family Profile

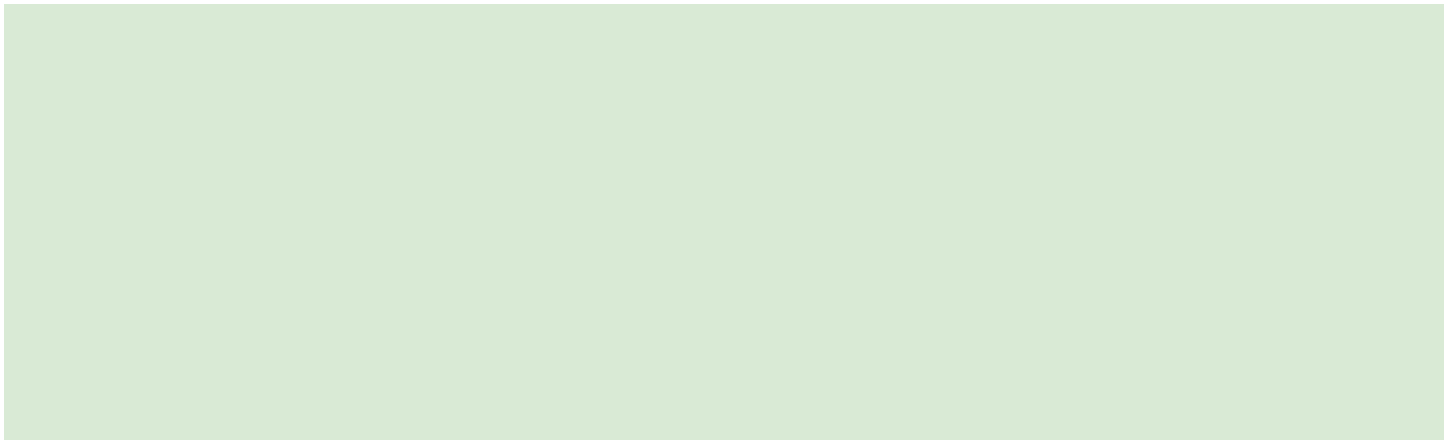
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Year: \_\_\_\_\_

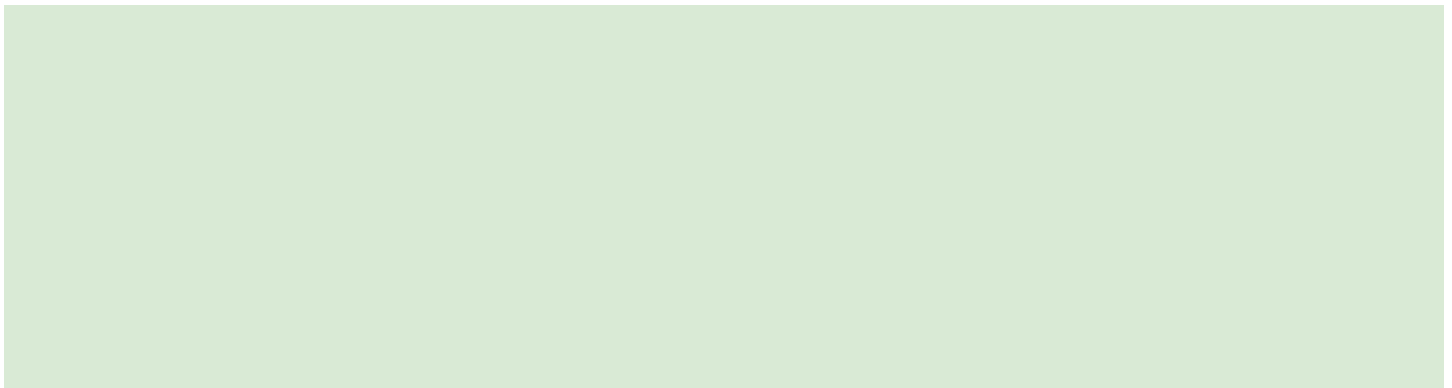
What are some of the circumstances in your family that challenge you? What are some unique strengths or advantages your family has? What gifts and talents or special circumstances might create unique educational opportunities?



“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” We’ve all heard that saying and know it’s true. Who are some people you respect and trust who may be willing to spend time with your child teaching him or her about what they do?



What are some topics your family is drawn to or passionate about? What ministries may fit well with these passions?



# Vision Sessions

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Now we want to cast a long-term vision and a short-term vision just for this year, making sure we put our focus where God wants it. Praying through the Personal, Child, and Family Profiles, use those answers to help you answer the questions about each child (print one per child) in the next section. Remember to take into account the real life learning opportunities that integrate with your unique

circumstances. For example, if you have a health condition that keeps you in bed sometimes, your children can learn how to serve by cooking meals and cleaning for you. You can incorporate science by studying about the disease and the human body. If your children are interested in art, they can draw you while you sleep!

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goals, even if they are general, will help keep you focused. Take a look at it periodically to make sure you are staying on track. For those of you who tend to plan as you go, looking at your vision and goals on a weekly or even daily basis is important.

# Long -Term Vision.....

What my child must know to be “educated” (Examples: Basic math skills, strong grasp of grammar, ability to cook a family meal, good understanding of human behavior, etc.) Be specific, based on his/her Child Profile, and remember this will likely change over time:

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## Short -Term Vision.....

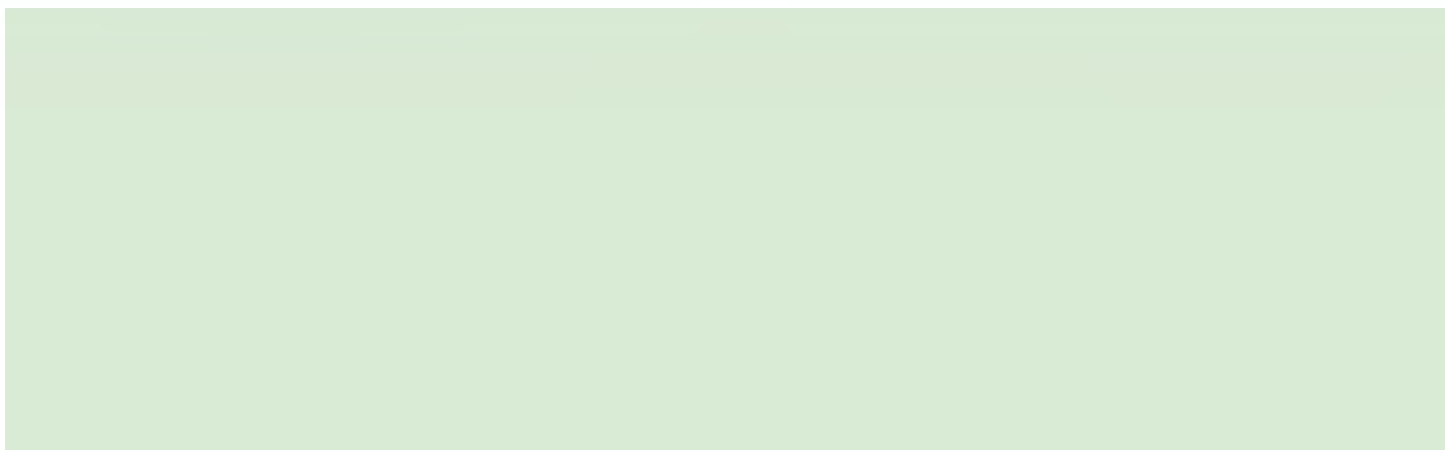
Considering the long-term view, what educational goals do you have for each subject/area of study this year? (Feel free to adjust these throughout the year.)



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What areas of weakness (academic, spiritual/character, life skills) should he/she focus on this year?



# Resources Log/ Weekly Planner

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It's time to think through what resources you want to use for lifeschooling this year, but before we purchase things we don't need or have money for, it's a good idea to make a log of the relevant resources we already own.

I have broken down these sheets into subject areas (math, science, etc.) with different resource options (books, DVDs, websites, etc.) under each. For high school, you may be customizing some of the course titles to match your child's interests and everyday life experiences. I have included a sheet with a blank for you to fill in with the name (or general subject area) of the course.

If you would like more detailed information on how to customize courses for your high schooler, the book [More Than Credits](#) by Cheryl Bastian is an excellent resource! She approaches it in a very lifeschooling manner, taking their interests and activities and working backwards to see what courses they can fit under.

An alternate way to use the resources log is as a weekly planner. Print out the pages with the subjects you plan to cover that week and then fill in the resources you want to incorporate. You can also use this for your children to pick from during times when you can't be as involved or have as detailed a schedule. If you want a planner that was specifically designed for this, check out the ["One Subject a Day Planner"](#) at LifeschoolingShop.com.

If you find documentation on paper a little too labor intensive and cluttered, check out the [Resource Library Tracker Spreadsheet!](#) This spreadsheet allows you to easily add new resources and edit the ones you own from anywhere you have an internet connection!

# Math

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	



# Science

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# History

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Reading

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Writing

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Grammar

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Geography

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Creative Arts

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Life Skills

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	



# Bible / Discipleship

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

# Entrepreneurship

<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
<b>Books (Biographies, Historical Fiction, curricula)</b>	
<b>Board/Video Games</b>	
<b>Printables</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	
<b>Field Trip Ideas</b>	
<b>Crafts/Hands-on Activities</b>	
<b>Audio</b>	

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<b>Recorded TV/Roku</b>	
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<b>Audio</b>	

# Routine and Journal Forms

## (for each child/parent)

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Now that we have a better vision for who God has created our children to be, it is time to create a routine; start tracking their daily tasks; and planning based on the projects and activities that were successful. Personally, I prefer a routine rather than a strict schedule with set times. When you fill out this routine, think in general bullet points rather than time frames. You each may also have to “live your routine” for a while, tweaking it until it’s just right for your lifestyle.

You can read about my routine in this blog post, [Schedules vs. Routines: A Day in Our Lifeschooling Life](#), to get an idea of what I mean. Having a routine allows me to easily adjust and gives more flexibility for my children to pursue their interests, particularly newly discovered ones that were not planned as part of the schedule. I can then record in the Daily Journal what was actually accomplished...or better yet, have them record what they learn!

The following pages may be used by you, your children, or both. You can print out one copy of the Daily Routine sheet for yourself and each child and laminate and hang it somewhere it will be seen daily.

For the journal pages, print out separate cover sheets and enough pages for each child to have their own notebook for the year. I would highly encourage you to allow each child to complete the Daily and Weekly Journal on his/her own as much as possible, since the goal should always be to help your children become more responsible and independent with their learning, eventually tracking and planning on their own. Even if they need a little oversight from you, it is important that they “own” their education and learn to self-evaluate.

At the end of the week, using the Daily Journal and Who Is This Child Journal as guides, have your child jot down some ideas for topics he/she would like to study more in the following week. You can get detailed with planning an in-depth study on each topic using the One Subject a Day Planner.

With lifeschooling, you will usually find many different subjects within one activity. In those cases, I recommend you/they record that activity under multiple subjects and color code them with different colored highlighters. This will allow you to go back and create “courses” in different subject areas, depending on what is needed. You can split the total time spent on the project into different subject areas and adjust it according to need. See the sample to get a better idea what I mean.

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If you don’t yet have a good vision of your child, then you need to take some time to become a student of your child by keeping a journal. You can use the [Who Is This Child?](#) journal that I’ve created for you. (Use the code journal50off to receive 50% off the planner!)

SAMPLE

# Daily Routine

## Morning

	<b>Take Vitamins</b>
	<b>Chores</b>
	<b>Exercise</b>
	<b>School</b>

## Afternoon

	<b>Help mom with tasks</b>
	<b>Draw for 2 hours</b>
	<b>Read for 1 hour</b>

## Evening

	<b>Read with family</b>
	<b>Family devotions</b>
	<b>Bedtime routine</b>
	<b>Journal</b>

## Daily Must-Do's (Devotions, Chores, Laundry, etc)

	<b>Drink 8 glasses of water</b>
	<b>Clean up school room</b>
	<b>Devotions</b>

# Daily Routine

---

## Morning


## Afternoon


## Evening


## Daily Must-Do's (Devotions, Chores, Laundry, etc)


SAMPLE

# Daily Journal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT	WHAT DID I LEARN TODAY?	TIME SPENT
Math	Computer programing (algebra)	
Science		
History	A Tale of Two Cities (French Revolution)	
Geography		
Reading	A Tale of Two Cities (British Literature)	
Writing	Wrote "Thank You" letters	
Grammar	Wrote "Thank You" letters	
Art		
Life Skills	Computer programing (patience, logic)	
Bible/ Discipleship		
PE	Walked and trained the dogs	
Other		



# Daily Journal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

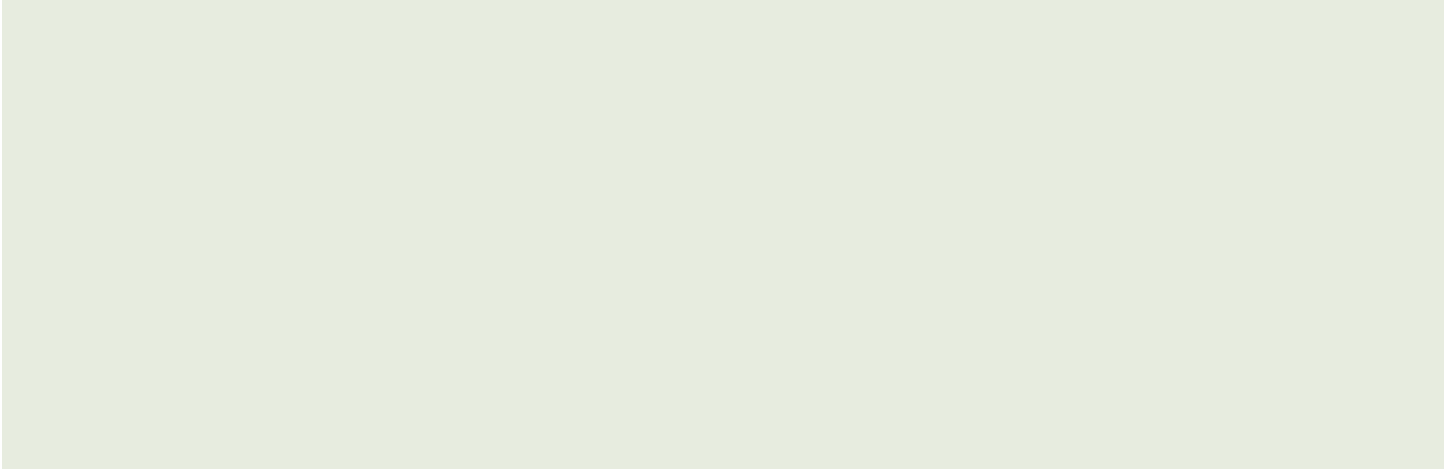
SUBJECT	WHAT DID I LEARN TODAY?	TIME SPENT
Math		
Grammar		
Art		
Life Skills		
Bible/ Discipleship		
PE		
Other		

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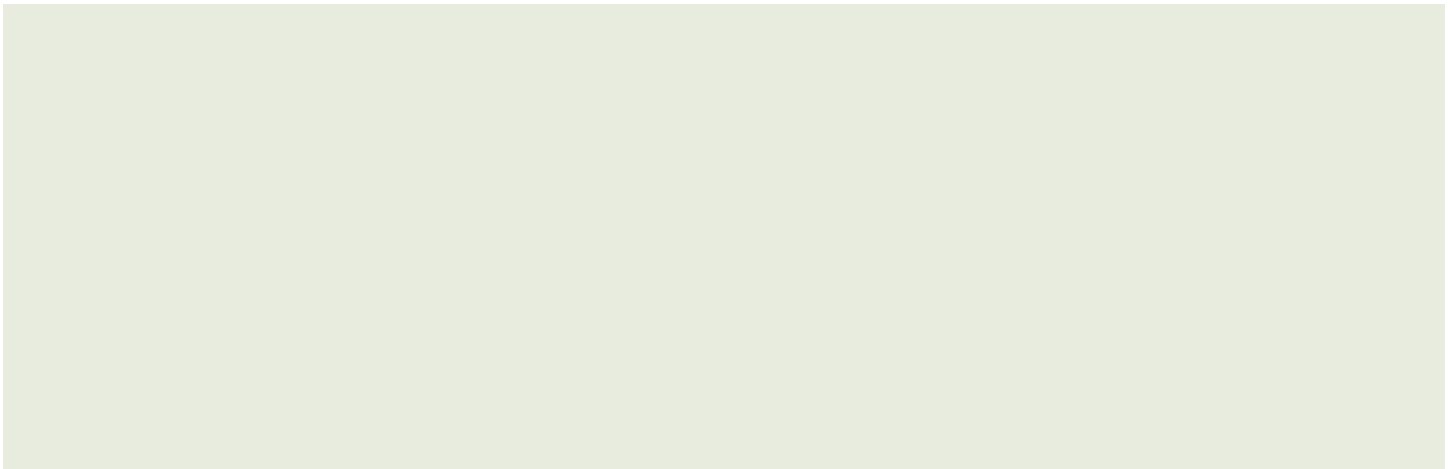
# Daily Journal

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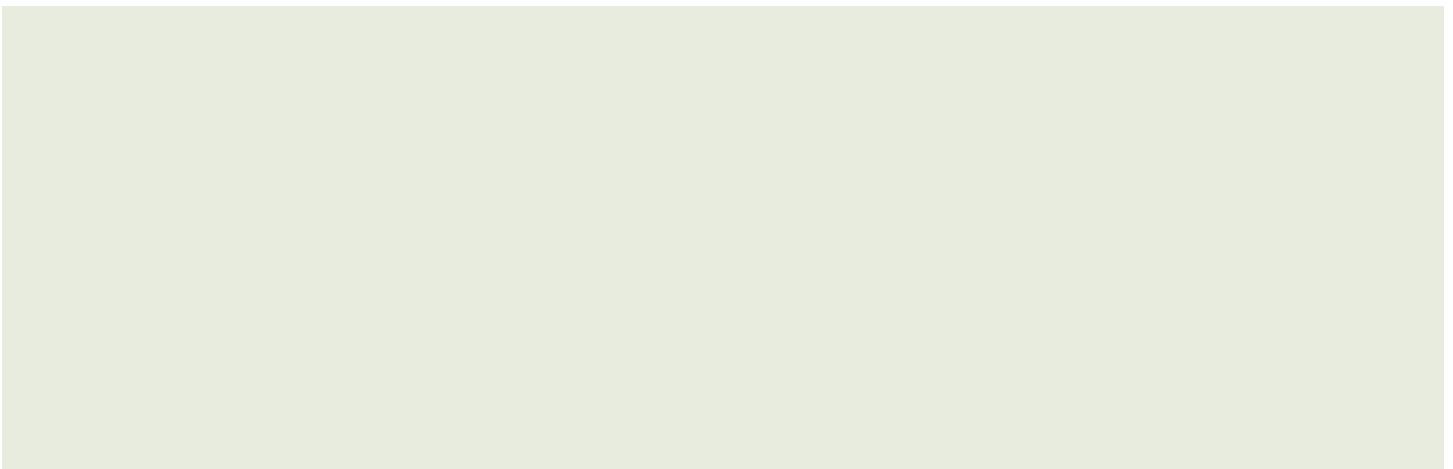
What did I do today that was successful?



What did I do today that I can improve next time? (See Resources for a helpful printable).



What topics came up today that I'd like to study more? (Be sure to add them to your Weekly Plan!)



# Weekly Journal

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Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

# Lifeschooling Resources

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Throughout this planner, I've mentioned some of the other helpful resources I've created for you. I wanted to include them all in one list for easy reference. Some of these are free and available to our subscribers, and some are paid products. As mentioned in the book, I have included some special discount codes for the paid resources, as well.

For a list of, and links to, all the books and resources referenced in this document, see my blog post, [“Top Book Recommendations for Starting Lifeschooling.”](#)

[Learning from Mistakes](#) – This is a great worksheet for your child to use in conjunction with the Daily Journal when they think through the “What did I do today that I can improve next time” question. Available for free to all my subscribers!

[Fasting for Focus Journal](#) – I hope this 38-page planner and journal will give you the guidance you need to be successful. Be sure to check out the preview images. I have not included every planning page, but this is just a little taste (no pun intended)! Whether it's your first or fifty-first fast, or a fast to plan your year or seek God for a different reason altogether, it is my goal to encourage you and help make your fasting experiences as simple as possible!

**Use the code `fastingfocus50` to receive 50% off the planner!**

[Who Is This Child? Journal](#) – If your child is given plenty of time to explore, but simply doesn't seem interested in anything, then it is time to do some deeper exploring. Children are students of their world and surroundings, and as lifeschooling parents, we need to be students of our students! That is why I created the Who Is This Child? Journal. I want you to become a student of your children! I want you to use this journal to study their interests, and I hope it will be a tool that will help you and your children in this process!

**Use the code `journal50off` to receive 50% off the planner!**

# About the Author

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Danielle Papageorgiou is married to her high school sweetheart, Jon, and they have been lifeschooling for 22 years (if you count day one)! They have three children: Konur, who's 22, Elleina, 19, and Korban, 11 (plus one baby in heaven), and live on a little homestead (of sorts) in Rockwell, NC. God put a burden on Danielle's heart many years ago for homeschoolers who were doing "school" in a way that was not working with real life. Following a rigid school-at-home model was causing them to burn out and send their kids back into the school system.

In 2016, the Lord called her to start the Lifeschooling Conference in Charlotte, NC, which then became a virtual event in 2019, with the goal of helping homeschoolers learn how to "merge life with homeschooling." She then pivoted her focus to a blog, [www.LifeAsALifeschooler.com](http://www.LifeAsALifeschooler.com), and online store, [www.LifeschoolingShop.com](http://www.LifeschoolingShop.com), selling printable resources for lifeschoolers.

This "new" method of homeschooling helps address the issue of homeschool burnout and gives homeschoolers the freedom to "life school" and pursue an individualized path. But actually, this new path is not really new at all. This is the "ancient path" (Jeremiah 6:16) that she believes is more in line with what has been done throughout all of history and it is more in line with what many of the homeschool pioneers were doing very early in the homeschooling movement.

**"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls'" (Jeremiah 6:16).**