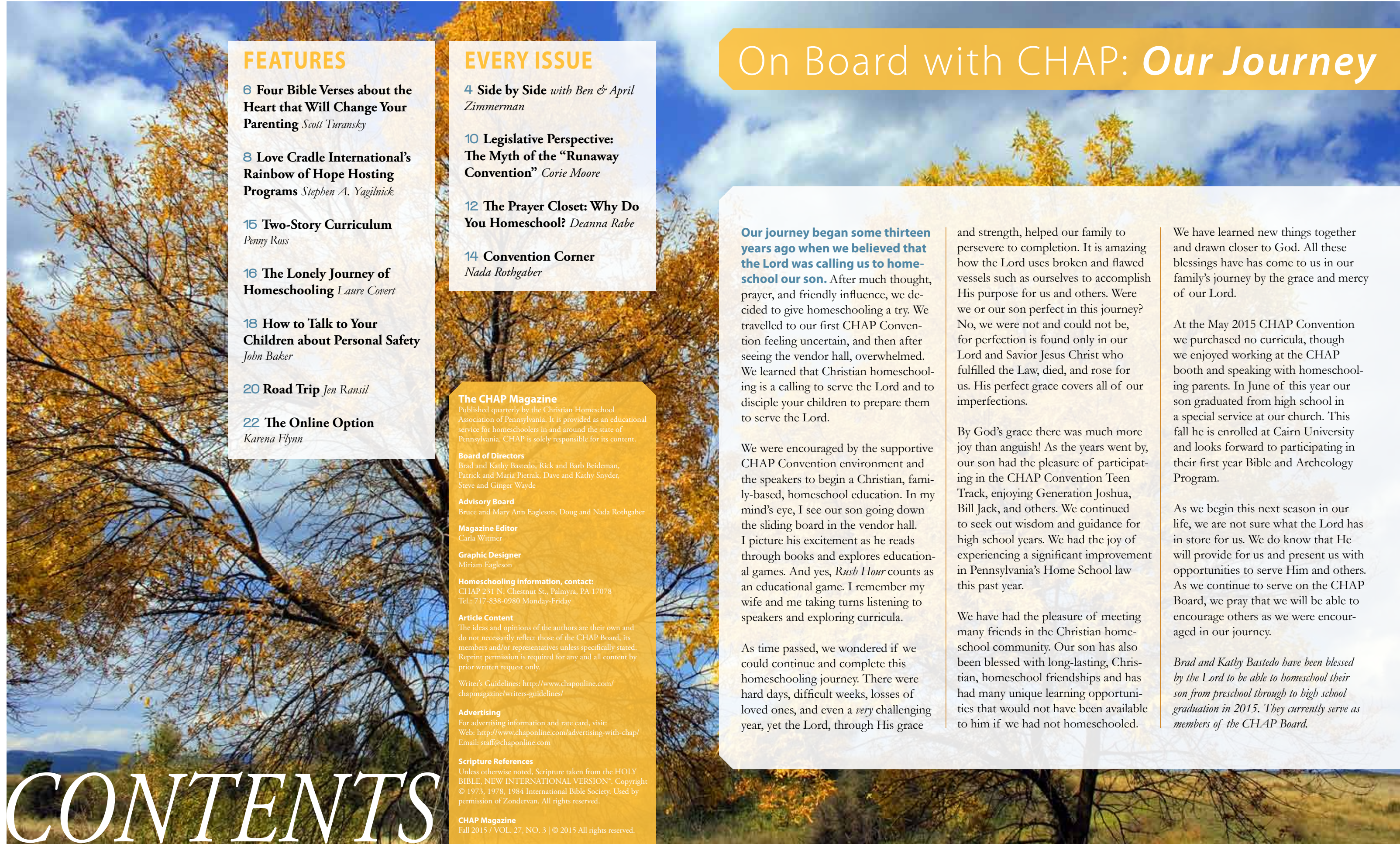


Fall 2015

CHAMP

Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania





CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 6 Four Bible Verses about the Heart that Will Change Your Parenting** *Scott Turansky*
- 8 Love Cradle International's Rainbow of Hope Hosting Programs** *Stephen A. Yagilnick*
- 15 Two-Story Curriculum** *Penny Ross*
- 16 The Lonely Journey of Homeschooling** *Laure Covert*
- 18 How to Talk to Your Children about Personal Safety** *John Baker*
- 20 Road Trip** *Jen Ransil*
- 22 The Online Option** *Karena Flynn*

EVERY ISSUE

- 4 Side by Side** *with Ben & April Zimmerman*
- 10 Legislative Perspective: The Myth of the "Runaway Convention"** *Corie Moore*
- 12 The Prayer Closet: Why Do You Homeschool?** *Deanna Rabe*
- 14 Convention Corner** *Nada Rothgaber*

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On Board with CHAP: *Our Journey*

Our journey began some thirteen years ago when we believed that the Lord was calling us to homeschool our son. After much thought, prayer, and friendly influence, we decided to give homeschooling a try. We travelled to our first CHAP Convention feeling uncertain, and then after seeing the vendor hall, overwhelmed. We learned that Christian homeschooling is a calling to serve the Lord and to disciple your children to prepare them to serve the Lord.

We were encouraged by the supportive CHAP Convention environment and the speakers to begin a Christian, family-based, homeschool education. In my mind's eye, I see our son going down the sliding board in the vendor hall. I picture his excitement as he reads through books and explores educational games. And yes, *Rush Hour* counts as an educational game. I remember my wife and me taking turns listening to speakers and exploring curricula.

As time passed, we wondered if we could continue and complete this homeschooling journey. There were hard days, difficult weeks, losses of loved ones, and even a *very* challenging year, yet the Lord, through His grace

and strength, helped our family to persevere to completion. It is amazing how the Lord uses broken and flawed vessels such as ourselves to accomplish His purpose for us and others. Were we or our son perfect in this journey? No, we were not and could not be, for perfection is found only in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who fulfilled the Law, died, and rose for us. His perfect grace covers all of our imperfections.

By God's grace there was much more joy than anguish! As the years went by, our son had the pleasure of participating in the CHAP Convention Teen Track, enjoying Generation Joshua, Bill Jack, and others. We continued to seek out wisdom and guidance for high school years. We had the joy of experiencing a significant improvement in Pennsylvania's Home School law this past year.

We have had the pleasure of meeting many friends in the Christian homeschool community. Our son has also been blessed with long-lasting, Christian, homeschool friendships and has had many unique learning opportunities that would not have been available to him if we had not homeschooled.

We have learned new things together and drawn closer to God. All these blessings have come to us in our family's journey by the grace and mercy of our Lord.

At the May 2015 CHAP Convention we purchased no curricula, though we enjoyed working at the CHAP booth and speaking with homeschooling parents. In June of this year our son graduated from high school in a special service at our church. This fall he is enrolled at Cairn University and looks forward to participating in their first year Bible and Archeology Program.

As we begin this next season in our life, we are not sure what the Lord has in store for us. We do know that He will provide for us and present us with opportunities to serve Him and others. As we continue to serve on the CHAP Board, we pray that we will be able to encourage others as we were encouraged in our journey.

Brad and Kathy Bastedo have been blessed by the Lord to be able to homeschool their son from preschool through to high school graduation in 2015. They currently serve as members of the CHAP Board.

Side by Side in Pennsylvania

Parents: Ben and April Zimmerman
Children: Cadence (9) Sarina (6)
Clayton (3) and Micah (6 months)
Hometown: Elizabethtown, PA

Tell us a little bit about your family dynamics.

We are blessed with two “big” girls who are creative, helpful, amusing, and act as little mommies to their two little brothers who are rowdy, active, and curious. We are both DVMs, doctors of veterinary medicine. We have a village approach to homeschooling. Daddy teaches science, Maw Maw participates in music appreciation, and we have spe-

cial guest instructors from time to time. Older siblings teach as well. We are in a local co-op and also get together with other homeschooling families for events.

How long have you been homeschooling?

We have been on our homeschool journey for six years.

What was one of the main reasons you chose to homeschool?

We want to instill biblical principles and worldview into our family, tailor

education to the individual learning style of each child, accommodate Daddy’s work schedule (he is off during the day or half day several times per week, but works most evenings), and maintain the freedom to travel and visit out of state family or vacation at any time of the year.

In what activities does your family participate?

Gymnastics, intramural sports, camping, crafts, scrapbooking, archery, game nights, frequenting museums, state parks and amusement parks, event planning (theme parties, holiday fundraisers)...

What have been your most helpful resources?

The public library, veteran homeschooling mommas, and blogs.

What educational philosophy/curriculum do you follow?

We use My Father’s World almost exclusively, but have dabbled in Sonlight and Five in a Row.

What has been one of the highlights for you in homeschooling your children?

Learning along with my kids (I have learned so much!), watching them develop a love of reading, working on character traits as a family, having coffee shop school mornings with my daughter last year, and celebrating various cultures through theme events with other families, such as a Jewish Seder.

What was your favorite field trip(s)?

Definitely Williamsburg. Is that too cliché? History came to life for all of us! My least favorite subject in school became a fascinating peek into the past and the birth of our great nation.

What was one of the funniest things to happen during a homeschool day?

On the first day of homeschooling preschool with my oldest child, Daddy came home and asked what she had done that day. I was waiting expectantly for her to rave about all she had learned and all the fun we had. She said, “Well, I didn’t really learn anything, but I got to cut with scissors.” This keeps me humble!

What have you found to be a challenge in homeschooling?

Balancing the busyness of life with school. Meeting the needs of children of various ages during the day. Not taking on too many activities for Mom or the kiddos.

Do you have any tips in dealing with that challenge?

Limit each child to two activities per semester, pray before taking on anything new, ask for help when we need it, and delegate tasks to the children. The girls now do all the kids’ laundry, which is a huge help to Mom.

What advice would you give to someone who has just begun homeschooling?

Stay focused! Type out a list of goals or reasons why you are homeschooling then hang it on the wall where you can see it every day. You will need to be reminded. It is normal to want to give up some days, but don’t! Also keep in mind Galatians 6:9, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Compiled by Jillian Spittle



Renewing our minds



30th CHAP Convention May 13 & 14, 2016



Most parents nod their heads in agreement when they hear that reaching a child's heart is important. But what does that mean in practical terms? Here are four scriptures that will give you greater understanding into your own child's heart.

Psalms 19:14, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD."

We say things to ourselves in our hearts. When eight-year-old Jordan says to himself, "I'm no good. No one wants to be with me. I'll never get it right," he's repeating negative things in his heart. Rebecca feels good in her heart because she refused to join those who were disrespectful to the teacher. Hugo's mom can see a heart problem because he scowls and complains whenever she asks him to do something. In each of these situations, the heart is at work.

What people meditate on is important because those thoughts take place in the heart and eventually come out in actions. If you study your child by considering the things said in the heart, you'll be able to identify specific areas to work on in your parenting.

Matthew 9:4, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?"

The heart is where we wrestle with things. When experience, teaching, and values need to be integrated into life, it happens in the workshop of the heart. Information comes into our heads on a regular basis but much of it just stays there. Only when it moves down to our hearts does it become part of our lives.

When parents use a heart-based approach they take advantage of this wrestling inside a child. They encourage right thinking, contribute praise for growing character, and comment about the helpful and unhelpful internal dialogue as it makes its way out through behavior.

When the two disciples on the road to Emmaus realized that their surprise guest was Jesus, they reflected on the experience by saying, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

Some children need to do more wrestling in their hearts. Mom told Christy that she wasn't free to play until she could think

of three ways to add energy to family life. That was hard for Christy. In fact, it took her a half hour to come up with some ideas. Christy was more inclined to get things instead of give them. So requiring her to think about others in tangible ways gave her an opportunity to ponder some new ways of processing life. That was heart work in action.

Matthew 15:8, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Be careful that you don't just focus on compliance. A bad attitude is a sign of a heart issue. Ralph was disrespectful to his dad, yelling and saying mean things when Dad refused to buy the latest computer game that Ralph's friends had.

Dad decided to correct his son but wanted more than just lip service. He wanted to touch his heart. First Dad had Ralph sit in the hall and settle down. That took over an hour as Ralph continued to seethe and pout. When Ralph finally returned, Dad explained to Ralph that the temper tantrums were unacceptable and that he, as a dad, had a responsibility to discipline his son to try to help him. Therefore Ralph would lose the privilege of the computer altogether for a while.

Of course that news threw Ralph into another bout of ranting. Dad refused to join into the anger scene and sent his son back to the hall to settle down again. This time it took a half hour before Ralph returned wanting to know when he'd get his computer privileges back. Dad calmly explained, "I've not set a time on it. I want to see some improvement in the way you handle correction and a 'no' answer. Also, I'd like to see you come to me and ask if there's any way that you can help. I'll give you some jobs. Over the next few days if you can show me that you are trying to change the way you relate to me, then we'll try going back to the computer."

Then Dad waited. Would his plan work or would it need some adjustment? Dad knew what he was looking for. He wanted to see a sense of cooperation and self-control in his son. Over the next few days he saw the heart adjustments he was looking for. Ralph volunteered to help and had a good attitude. Dad told Ralph no on a couple of occasions and Ralph, although disappointed, was obviously trying to respond better. Dad gave the computer privileges back to his son but only after they talked about the positive changes that were starting to occur. Ralph is still learning and growing and complete change will likely take several years, but Dad corrected with an eye on the heart and felt like he made significant progress in that one incident.

Proverbs 20:5, "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out."

Sarah made a nice card for her Dad for Valentine's Day. It obviously took a lot of love and care to put it together. Dad realized that it was not just a gift of a card but it was a gift of his daughter's heart. He spent some extra time enjoying the card and his daughter, further encouraging her love and compassion.

Alberto made a comment about something he learned at Sunday School. Mom asked some more questions and discussed the issue with her son, realizing that it was a heart moment. She talked further with Alberto, helping him develop the truth so that it had an even greater impact on his thinking.

Jim realized that his daughter was hurt by a friend at school. Instead of telling her to just stop crying about it, he comforted his daughter, realizing that it was a heart moment. She obviously appreciated her dad's love and care, and just his presence with her for several minutes helped her to work through the issues in her heart.

Too many parents focus only on behavior, things like getting jobs done around the house and completing homework. Although those things are important, the real work of parenting is done in the heart. Be on the lookout for heart moments. They may surprise you at times. Be ready for them because they don't come as often as you'd like.

A heart-based approach to parenting isn't easy, but it's where the significant work is done in a child's life. Every morning when you get up, pray for your kids. Ask God to reveal opportunities for heart moments with them. You'll be amazed at the difference it makes in your family.

In the book *Parenting Is Heart Work*, you'll find the results of a study that looked at 750 times the word "heart" is used in the Bible. Several conclusions of that study reveal practical applications for your parenting. Reaching the heart is strategic and it's also practical, but many parents don't know exactly what that means.

A heart-based approach isn't just about talking to your kids more. It's not mushy. Sometimes reaching the heart requires firmness as well.

Dr. Scott Turansky is a co-founder of the National Center for Biblical Parenting and author of 14 parenting books. He and his wife Carrie have five children and four grandchildren and live in New Jersey. Learn more about the whole Heart Work Curriculum at biblicalparenting.org/heartwork.





Love Cradle International's Rainbow of Hope Hosting Programs

Are Finding a Home With Homeschool Families

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

Love Cradle International (LCI) started in the country of Ukraine in the year 2000. It was the answer to a prayer prayed by Iryna, a Ukrainian national, asking the Lord, “How can I help these

abandoned, hurting, homeless children wandering the streets of Kiev?” This was the beginning of the ministry to help orphan and underprivileged children.

LCI seeks to restore God’s unique design and purpose in the lives of underprivileged and orphan children by meeting their basic needs, exposing them to possibilities beyond the orphan-

age, and empowering them to be leaders. LCI provides a bridge of hope that breaks the destructive cycle of abandonment and institutionalism and leads the children to a successful future.

LCI has seven core ministry programs with the LCI Hosting Program being one of these, and this is where the international educational opportunity for orphan children and host family children

come to life. This program can best be described as a “reverse mission trip” where the family and church community bring the mission field right to their homes by hosting an orphan child from Ukraine.

There are two important parts to the educational component. First the physical learning aspect, learning a foreign language, and learning about the country of Ukraine, as well as learning about the life of children in orphanages, customs, and culture. The second part of the educational component is the blessing of spiritual education that comes from caring and helping one less fortunate than ourselves. James 1:25 says, “But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

Why did Love Cradle Int. choose to host a booth at the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania’s Convention this past May? LCI has discovered over the past eight years that many wonderful homeschool families have participated in the hosting program and the feedback received has been positive. The physical learning, spiritual learning, and discipleship education was evident and an important part of the hosting experience.

The LCI Hosting Program can at times be challenging, but working together as a “Mission Team” we can overcome these challenges and continue to be His blessing to the orphan and underprivileged.

LCI host mom Bronwen L. from Telford, Pennsylvania, shared, “Our family has participated in the Love Cradle International’s Rainbow of Hope Hosting Program two times, once in the summer and one time for the winter program. We are already a family of six so adding one more didn’t seem too overwhelming. We were so excited to open our home to an orphan and show them what a Christian family is like. Our prayer

for both boys is that they will strive to attain what they saw in our home, a love for Christ, and respect for one another. During each of our experiences we welcomed the boys with excitement and almost a shyness of not knowing what was to come. We didn’t need to worry; each boy was handpicked from God and was right where he was supposed to be. We don’t know if we will ever see our Ukrainian boys on this earth again, but we hope and pray that we will be united one day in glory!”

If a family has the desire to serve together, the LCI Hosting Program provides a wonderful opportunity for all members to participate in a service project. You don’t need to go overseas to participate in a mission; it can happen right here at home in Pennsylvania. By opening your home to the less fortunate, you are able to share the blessings that God has given you.

This year at Franconia Mennonite’s Vacation Bible School the offering project was collecting money to buy new shoes for Ukrainian orphans. Two Ukrainian boys from the Love Cradle program shared a Q&A time with the other VBS participants. What a blessing it was to talk with some of the children who would be receiving shoes the kids had bought with their offering. The kids soon found out that they had a lot of similarities with their Ukrainian friends: same hobbies, favorite foods, and even some dislikes. The children at VBS enjoyed hearing firsthand about the boys’ life in Ukraine, and the language difference did not deter them from communicating with one another through smiles and laughter. Bronwen concluded, “It was a wonderful example of how God’s love reaches across the ocean and how we are all precious children of God no matter our family situation.”

Stephen A. Yagilnicky has been the President of Love Cradle Int. since 2006. His Grandparents immigrated to Canada from the Western Region of Ukraine (Lviv and Invano Frankivsk Oblasts in 1898 and 1931.) He



Photos 1 & 2: Orphan Children Arriving For Summer 2015 LCI Hosting Program

Photo 3: Vitalii & Igor (white collars lower far right corner) from an orphanage in Central Ukraine participating in Q&A at the Franconia Mennonite VBS.

has served as a missionary in Canada and Ukraine since the early nineties and lives with his wife Iryna in Souderton, Pennsylvania, where they continue to work and advocate for orphan children with Love Cradle Int. You can contact Stephen at syagilnicky@lovecradleint.org or call 215-723-0263.



The Myth of the "Runaway Convention"

Debunking Misinformation About the Convention of States

The term "runaway" is to the Convention of States Project what the term "socialization" is to homeschoolers. The Convention of States Project often encounters questions, myths, and out-right falsehoods about the Article V process and - like with socialization - misinformation is plentiful. The most common misinformation surrounding an Article V convention is that it is a dangerous endeavor that could result in our federal government consolidating even more power, our Constitution being re-written, and life (and our republic) as we know it coming to an end. But is this true?

Article V History

When Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death!" he was not being merely inspirational. Our nation's Founders were survivors in the aftermath of a war against tyranny and had fought for freedom even though they faced the death penalty if they were captured.

As the founders established our republic, they placed tremendous value on the

concept of checks and balances. They wanted to make every effort to ensure that the government they created would not become the controlling beast they had risked their lives to escape. But our form of self-government was an experiment.

Samuel Jones noted, "It could not be known to the Framers of the Constitution whether there was too much power given by it or too little; they therefore prescribed a mode by which Congress might procure more, if in the operation of the government it was found necessary; and they prescribed for the states a mode of restraining the powers of the government, if upon trial it should be found they had given too much."

The concept that the balance of powers is between the three branches of the federal government is familiar. What we don't often realize is that the Framers anticipated the possibility that these three branches of the federal government may collectively become too powerful. They, and George Mason

in particular, recognized the need to provide a mechanism that would enable the states to bypass Congress and propose and adopt necessary amendments to the Constitution. Article V of the Constitution outlines this power - only the states can ratify amendments to the Constitution and, as necessary, the states do not need to rely on Congress to propose amendments.

What is a Constitutional Convention vs. Article V Convention?

Understanding the differences between the types of conventions is similar to understanding the difference between homeschooling and cyber schooling. For example, cyber school families do not file affidavits or assemble portfolios. Each type of education has its own unique rules and requirements that make it different.

Article V conventions are specifically intended to address amending the Constitution, not to create a new constitution. The opponents of an Article V convention deliberately use the term

"Constitutional Convention" to describe an Article V convention. By doing this, they create fear and confusion regarding an Article V convention and attempt to prevent the use of the Constitutional process as intended by the Founders.

What are some of the unique rules for an Article V convention? There are two steps to the process of amending our Constitution: Proposal/Adoption and Ratification.

PROPOSAL STAGE

Typically Congress proposes amendments. Under the Constitutional process in Article V, Congress can propose any amendment, on any subject, for any reason, any time they are in session. They are completely unlimited in the ideas they can put forth for amendments. In fact, many amendments are proposed during each session of Congress, but they very rarely receive enough votes to be sent to the states for ratification. However, as discussed above, if Congress is unwilling or unable to adopt amendments deemed desirable by the states, the states have the right under Article V to propose amendments as well.

First, 2/3 of the states must apply for an amending convention. History shows clearly that the applications must be for the same subject matter, as over 400 applications have been submitted to Congress but never have 2/3 of the applications been for the same subject matter. The application process requires at least 34 state legislatures voting in favor of identical convention applications in both the state house and state senate. This is the first safeguard.

At the convention, the delegates are limited to discussing amendments that are germane to the convention call. Delegates who introduce or support amendments outside the scope of the instruc-

6 Ways To Get Involved:

1. Go to www.conventionofstates.com
2. Sign the petition.
3. Click "Get Involved" to volunteer
4. "Like" the PA facebook page: www.facebook.com/COSProjectPA
5. Call your Representative and ask him/her to co-sponsor and vote for HR63.
6. Call Representative Metcalfe and ask him to move HR63 thorough committee as soon as possible.

tions from their state legislatures could be subject to criminal/civil penalties and potentially face fines or jail. Additionally the state legislature has the power to immediately recall delegates who violate their instructions and replace them with an alternate. This is the second safeguard.

Even if someone was able to convince a majority of the convention delegates to ignore their instructions and vote to adopt an amendment outside of the scope of the convention, any amendments that are adopted are sent to Congress in order for the ratification process to be initiated.

RATIFICATION PROCESS

Congress has no obligation to submit amendments for ratification that are outside of the scope of the convention's call. Because a convention of states is intended to be a corrective fix-it for federal overreach, Congress can be expected to have a self-serving motive to carefully scrutinize any amendments proposed to ensure they are within the scope of the convention call. This is a third safeguard.

The final safeguard in the process is the ratification requirement. This part

of the process is familiar; as a nation we have used this process to ratify each of our Constitutional amendments.

The Constitution requires that three-fourths of the states (currently 38) ratify an amendment before the amendment becomes part of the Constitution. Assuming Congress specifies ratification by the state legislatures, each individual state legislature must vote in favor of the amendment in both the state house and the state senate for ratification to be successful in that state. This means that a minimum of 76 chambers of the legislatures must vote in favor of any proposals. Opponents of an

amendment win if they get *either* chamber in just 13 states to refuse to ratify the amendment. The Framers set the bar high intentionally in an effort to ensure that any amendments would transcend political agendas and truly enjoy widespread support of the people.

Michael Farris, Head of the Convention of States Project, has said, "The plain fact is that Washington DC poses the greatest threats to our liberty, our morality, and the very existence of our country. There is only one path available to us who want to preserve both liberty and the Constitution. We must use the power of the states to apply for an Article V convention for the limited purpose of curbing the abuse of power by Washington DC."

Corie Moore and her husband Mark served together on the CHAP Advisory Board during the last legislative session to pass HB1013. They stepped down to free up some time to focus on their family needs. Corie continues to coordinate CHAP Home Education Lobby Program (HELP) Days but prays for the Lord to call others to obey the mandate of impacting our government to protect our religious and family freedoms.

"The Founders faced the certainty of death if captured and many endured suffering for the rest of their lives to give us this republic and our Constitution. What would they say if they knew we were too afraid to have a meeting to try and avoid a collapse of our republic?" Steve Davies, COS State Director - Pennsylvania

What is empathy?

It's a noun that means "the psychological identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another." I think this is a good word to teach our kids and to have them put it into practice. Actually it's a good word for all of us to put into practice.

Here's another word – *sympathy*, meaning:

1. Harmony of or agreement in feeling, as between persons or on the part of one person with respect to another.
2. The harmony of feeling naturally existing between persons of like tastes or opinions or of congenial dispositions.
3. The fact or power of sharing the feelings of another, especially in sorrow or trouble; fellow feeling, compassion, or commiseration.

I think we can have a lot of peace and harmony in our homes, if we teach our children to have empathy and/or sympathy for one another.

All four of my girls are very different. When they were much younger, one of them was complaining about the other. I had to remind her that "just because your sister is different from you, doesn't mean she is wrong." The issue was one of personality.

Too often we fall prey to the idea that "my way" is the right way, and everyone should do what we do and how we do it. We don't always verbalize it, but that is what we think.

As we homeschool our children and live together 24/7 it is inevitable that

conflicts will occur. We will have a child who doesn't like a sibling because he doesn't think or react like she does. Perhaps we have been gifted with challenging children and their sisters and brothers don't appreciate the behaviors that make their sibling different.

What should we do? Should we allow the child to continue to complain, harbor bad feelings, and let bitterness grow? This is where learning about and practicing empathy and sympathy come into play.

First we need to check our own attitudes toward the child. How are we responding? Are we showing our frustration? Have we become unsympathetic?

God used one of my daughters to teach me a lesson that I have never forgotten. She was very challenging, and one day I had to deal with her again. I did not appreciate the behavior, and it showed. She looked at me and said, "Mommy, you don't smile at me." That broke my heart as the truth of her words hit me! She was right. I had not been doing much smiling toward her. I repented and asked the Lord to help me love her and appreciate the special gift she was to our family.

We must show sympathy in our dealings with our children. Perhaps they've done something that we would normally scold them about. We can try to understand why they, as children, may have made a certain choice. We can empathize with them and help them learn a lesson by our own understanding and kindness toward them.

Next, our children must be taught that God has placed each child in our family for our own good: to teach us, to rub the rough edges off each other, to allow us to practice sympathy for others. They cannot be allowed to continue to dislike or disdain their siblings. The sibling that rubs them so much has been given to them by God. They must be taught from an early age to love their brother or sister, to be kind to them, tenderhearted, forgiving each other (Ephesians 4:32).

If you would like to read more about this subject there is a great book by Henry Clay Trumbull entitled *Hints on Children Training*. Sally Clarkson also discusses this subject, having been influenced by Mr. Trumbull, in her book *The Mission of Motherhood*.

My husband and I were not taught to train our children this way. We have learned a lot along our path of parenting, the biggest lesson being *grace*. I love the verses that talk of how Jesus understands our humanness. Hebrews 4:15 (ESV) says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." That is sympathy in action, and it's a beautiful thing.

Deanna & Tim Rabe have been home educators for 20 years. They were involved in co-op leadership for many years, served on their county homeschool board, and have been long time CHAP Convention volunteers. A delight to Deanna's heart is in mentoring and encouraging home educating moms. She has six children, three who are homeschool graduates, and three who are still being homeschooled.



Convention Corner

You might be interested in some statistics that we gleaned from the 2015 CHAP Convention evaluations. Thirty-one percent of the 2015 Convention attendees were parents who have been home educating more than ten years. Some of these “long-termers” are the ones who fought thirty years ago to gain our freedom to home educate today. They should be commended for staying the course of discipling their children to the end.

There is also a new group of home educators coming on the scene. Some are second generation, but many are just beginning their own family history of home education. We love that there are increasingly more young families willing to sacrifice their time and resources to disciple and educate their children at home. **Seventeen percent** of 2015 CHAP Convention attendees were attending for the very first time. **Forty-five percent** had been homeschooling for five years or less. The homeschool movement continues to grow larger and larger each year.

Preparations are underway for the 30th annual 2016 CHAP Convention on May 13 & 14, 2016. (NOTE: This is **NOT** Mother’s Day weekend.) Join other homeschoolers in celebrating CHAP’s 30th Convention. It will also be the last CHAP Convention to be held at the Farm Show Complex so you will want to be there to be part of history. We will be moving to a new location in 2017. We’ll keep that a secret for now, but we are sure you will be delighted with the new venue. Don’t worry, the Convention will still be held in south central Pennsylvania!

For 2016 you will be glad to know we will have a new and simplified online registration form and process. The vendor hall layout will be modified making room for additional vendors. Lots of great speakers will bless those who attend. The Student Gallery and Student Contests will return in 2016 with Peggy Greene, a new volunteer who has stepped up, coordinating and Tami Perrin assisting her.

Be sure to check www.chaponline.com this fall and winter. More information will be posted as details are finalized. The CHAP Convention is the least expensive large convention in the country, and the funds collected for attendance provide the finances for CHAP to help Pennsylvania home educators all year long.

Speaker Suggestions

If you know of a speaker you would like to see at the CHAP Convention, please email the speaker coordinator at speakers@chaponline.com with the speaker name and any contact information you might have. Also include any special topics from this speaker that you would like to suggest.

Vendor Suggestions

If you know of a vendor you would like to see at the CHAP Convention, please email our vendor coordinator at vendorreg@chaponline.com with the name of the vendor and any contact information you might have. CHAP invites hundreds of vendors but not all of them choose to attend due to financial reasons, schedule conflicts, or travel distance.

General Convention Remarks

We value your ideas and suggestions in our planning. Even though we may not be able to implement all of your suggestions, we still appreciate your remarks and observations. Email your suggestions to the CHAP Convention Coordinator at rothgaber@chaponline.com

Make a Difference - Volunteer

The CHAP Convention could not continue without the hundreds of faithful volunteers who give of their time at the Convention and year round. Do you desire to make a difference, do something you love, and serve homeschoolers at the same time? CHAP has several volunteer openings, with various time commitments, for the 2016 CHAP Convention and its preparations. We would LOVE to have you join our volunteer CHAP Convention Team! Send an email to NadaCHAP@gmail.com and include your name, address, and contact information along with a notation of where you feel led to serve and a short summary of your experience and qualifications.

Start Planning for Graduation

Graduation registration will open in the fall for the 2016 CHAP Convention Graduation Ceremony. The graduation will take place on the evening of Friday, May 13, 2016, at the Farm Show Complex. Registration deadline will come quickly so be sure to register early. Be recognized for your achievements, hard work, and answered prayers! There will be a registration fee and guidelines for those graduates taking part in the graduation ceremony.

We look forward to honoring the 2016 graduates and their parents publicly for their accomplishments as well as giving the honor and glory to the Lord for all He has completed through us for educating our children under His authority. May God continue to give each of you (parents and graduates) the patience, diligence, and endurance to the run the race well. See you at the finish line!

More information will be available online at www.chaponline.com under “Graduation” starting in the late fall.

It’s back-to-school time! Whether your curriculum is already here with your lesson plans ready to go or if you’re just now poring over catalogs and browsing websites to order your materials, it’s hard for a homeschool mom to face this season without thoughts of school ever-present.

From my viewpoint (the 20-20 hindsight of a mom who has graduated all her children), let me remind you to keep the big picture in sight. Yes, long division is important. And yes, choosing between the full-color textbook, the black and white workbook, the manipulative tools, and the CD curriculum is important too. But let’s make sure that our homeschool looks different from the government school system in more ways than just the title on the textbook.

Francis Schaeffer, of L’Abri fame, uses a two-story house to illustrate the postmodern concept of truth. The first floor consists of knowledge, fact, and the realities of the physical world. The second floor is opinions, beliefs, and includes moral judgments and religious faith. Each story of the house has nothing to do with the other story. This analogy plays out in twenty-first century America where government schools teach the first story subjects, while religious institutions handle the second story topics. Even we Christian homeschoolers, who teach subjects from both stories, often act as if each floor should be kept isolated and separate from the other. Do we teach as if we truly believe Jesus is Lord of all? Or are we trying to compartmentalize Him? If so, we would do well to reflect on C.S. Lewis’s thoughts as stated in his book, *Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer*:

It [religion] carries the suggestion that this is one more department of life, an extra department added to the economic, the social, the intellectual, the recreational, and all the rest. But that whose claims are infinite can have no standing as a department. Either it is an illusion or else our whole life falls under it. We have no non-religious activities; only religious and irreligious. (pg. 30)

Do we teach as if our whole life (therefore, ALL subjects) falls under our faith? Or do

we have some religious subjects and some irreligious subjects in our homeschool? Christians must realize that basic assumptions and values underlie each and every academic discipline. Look at the questions below (from *Thinking Like a Christian* by David Noebel with Chuck Edwards). A thorough answer to any of them will necessitate a connection between first story and second story concepts.

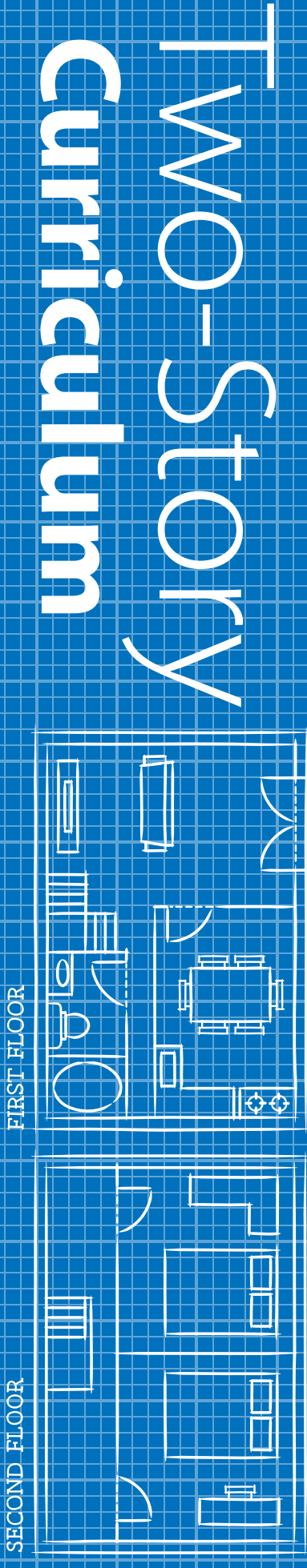
- » **Biology** – What is the origin of life?
- » **History** – How should we interpret human events?
- » **Psychology** – What is the basic nature of mankind?
- » **Politics** – What is the purpose of government?
- » **Law** – What is the basis for law?
- » **Economics** – What produces a sound economy?
- » **Sociology** – How should society be structured?

If we are truly teaching as a Christian, our faith will directly impact the basic assumptions and values that we bring to each subject.

As you begin this school year, I pray that you will teach a two-story curriculum – that God will show you stairways, escalators, and elevators between the floors of your schoolhouse so that your students will better grasp the truth stated in Psalm 97:9a, “For you, Lord, are the most high over all the earth.”

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Penny Ross runs Tools for the Home Educator in Torrance, California, selling used curriculum and providing consulting services and training to homeschool parents. Married to her college sweetheart Gregory, Penny homeschooled their three children from birth through high school graduation. With over 28 years of experience as a homeschool mom, leader, and speaker, Penny is passionate about helping others succeed in this rewarding yet demanding task of educating children at home. You can follow her blog at pennyross.wordpress.com and learn more about her business at www.toolsforthehomeeducator.com.





The Lonely Journey of Homeschooling

The Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1-2).

We have all heard God’s call to homeschool however that mandate came to us. Our certainty that the Lord desired this for our family sustained us at the begin-

ning of this crazy journey to an unknown land, but honestly, it is a lonely road. When I started homeschooling my son in 2000, I had almost no footsteps to follow – just one set, those of my childhood best friend who had three rambunctious boys and didn’t live nearby.

It was pioneer time.

My family prized higher education and claimed a legacy of Ivy League universi-

ty graduates, so their attitude toward this choice was very doubtful, which actually mirrored my own uncertainties: Could I give my kids a good enough education? How would I go about doing it?

The dynamic in my nuclear family also included hesitancy because my husband didn’t grow up with homeschooling either. And he also worried that our kids wouldn’t get a good education this way. For many years I wandered around

the CHAP Convention vendor tables secretly envying those couples who had their heads bent over the same curriculum, discussing its merits. I attended alone and reported back to my husband. Over the years, good results and God’s gracious help caused both of us to gain confidence.

I call homeschooling “the road less traveled” and echo poet Robert Frost’s iconic words, “I shall be telling this with

a sigh. Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

We feel separate because homeschoolers are in the minority; it is simply an issue of percentages. Less families educate their children this way, so we have less company. One source, the National Institute for Education Statistics, published these numbers: approximately three percent of the school-age population was homeschooled in the 2011–12 school year. I love the CHAP Convention because so many of our state’s “three percent” cram into the Farm Show Complex together, and I feel the synergy that comes from companionship.

Out in public however, many of our interactions emphasize our isolation, even those who are kind and respectful do not truly understand. Even when we are told that we are “saints” for homeschooling, which sounds complimentary, we feel the distance of being placed above others. It is so patently untrue because it confirms that they have the wrong idea about how we live our lives.

Providentially I found like-minded homeschoolers in my co-operatives and support groups that helped me feel less like a lonely pilgrim; but underneath it all, we are on our own. If I take a hard look at myself, I see that I actually want to be left alone because I definitely do not want others to interfere in my responsibility. I want to offer and receive that foundational respect that I know what is best for my own kids.

Finding “kindred spirits,” as Anne of Green Gables calls our special friends, relieves some of our loneliness, but Familyman Ministries speaker and homeschool dad Todd Wilson reminds us that we need homeschool friends who share the same central mission for our choice to homeschool. In his seminar entitled “Lies Homeschooling Moms Believe” Todd uses the example of what happens to our confidence if we are only around others who homeschool

primarily for academic excellence when we are focused on character development.

Here is the bottom line: we as parents retain complete control of our child’s education and “It’s lonely at the top” like Randy Newman sang back in the 1970s. We are in the driver’s seat, and no one can or should remove us from that leadership position. We resist even homeschoolers telling us what to do and how to do it, but nonetheless it is daunting to direct our kids’ education.

I need to revisit this call periodically. One summer I wrestled with this call to homeschool by prostrating myself on the church’s prayer room floor (with no one else to witness this very vulnerable moment). I asked the Lord if He wanted me to continue this journey with the equivalent of a “take this cup from me” beseeching prayer. The confirmation I received carried me through another year bearing the weight.

“Though none go with me still I will follow.” Obey the Lord’s call for your family and trust in His resources to help with the loneliness along the way.

Laure Covert is a freelance writer who blogs on literacy and inspiration for living: www.pine-needlesandpapertrails.com and <http://bluebirdsalwaysfly.wordpress.com>. Laure and her husband Glenn make their home in Harrisburg, PA. This year they are homeschooling just two teen girls, since their oldest has already graduated!



How to Talk to Your Children About Personal Safety



If I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times: "I don't want to talk about this with my children." I don't want to scare them." Many parents have approached me over the years with that very statement. Actually it's usually worded more like an apprehensive question. In reality they are uncomfortable thinking about someone trying to hurt their child or some disaster landing in their child's life, so they choose to do nothing in *hope* that their child's life proceeds uneventfully.

I often counter this strategy of *hope* with the suggestion that if you truly thought out this plan on how to raise your children, then there is little need to teach your child not to touch a

hot stove top or to look both ways before crossing the street. After all, can't that same hope strategy keep little fingers from being burned and cars from striking a child darting across the roadway? Life safety skills can begin to be introduced at the same age you start to teach your kids about hot stove tops and holding hands with a grown up when crossing the street.

As a Christian man, hope has a place in my life, but I also believe parents are called to instruct their children so they can make wise choices and exercise prudent behavior (Proverbs 1:5). It is in this spirit that parents need to educate their children about three basic life safety skills that will significantly

reduce their chances of becoming a victim of disaster, be it natural or man-made.

All of these strategies begin with the letter E. The first strategy is simple: **Escape**. Escape simply means that when the situation is obviously dangerous or just doesn't feel right (that "gut" feeling that God instills in us), your child needs to get out of the area and get to a safe place. The easiest way to not get burned, beat-up, raped, abused, shot, stabbed, assaulted, or overcome by fumes is simply to not be there. Have you ever talked to your kids about stranger danger? This is simply an extension of that lesson. You are not only referring to "Mr. Creepy" pulling up in his white van asking your child to help him look for his lost dog, you are telling your kids: "Whenever a situation appears dangerous you need to move out quickly. Drop whatever you're carrying and go. Run to a safe place and get help."

The second strategy you need to focus on is the idea of creating a safe place: **Enhance**. Enhance takes the place you are at and turns it into a safe place. Here is a scenario: It's two o'clock in the morning, and you hear someone breaking into your house. You call 911, and the police are on their way; soon after, you hear evil coming up the creaky steps to the second floor. Enhance teaches your child that it is time to barricade the bedroom door. But don't stop there. Not only should you barricade, but also look for a secondary way out of the room and gather things to engage the bad guy should he have the strength and fortitude to break through the door. This same strategy could also apply to a HAZMAT incident occurring in your neighborhood. You would seal off doors and windows and shut down the heating/cooling systems that may draw outside air into your home in order to prevent fumes from getting inside.

This takes us to the third strategy: **Engage**. Engage does not mean fight. In fact it means the opposite. The ultimate goal of engage is to create a distraction or take action which affords you the opportunity to either Escape or Enhance a room to

make you safe until help arrives. The goal is to diminish your exposure to getting hurt. When considering a violent intruder this may result in using a simple "chuck and run" technique.

Let's assume your child is walking home from a friend's house and a stranger approaches from behind. Your child realizes the stranger is reaching out with the intent to grab him. By teaching him to throw whatever he has or can grab at the stranger's face and then run, your child's chance of escape is significantly increased. The bad guy will automatically react to the object being thrown at his face and will momentarily delay his aggression. Another example of engaging is to quickly grab a fire extinguisher and attack the flames before the fire can hurt you.

One of the best techniques to teach young children about the concepts of Escape, Enhance or Engage is to turn it into a game. You don't need to terrify your child into learning these strategies. Think of how fire departments teach millions of children every year the simple rule of Stop, Drop, and Roll. They don't show graphic images of children on fire or with third degree burns; they turn it into a fun game. As a parent you can do the same thing with these personal safety strategies.

This article can't cover all the components of teaching children life safety skills, but it is a start. In order to gain a more complete understanding of these life-saving strategies, explore additional topics such as situational awareness and understanding the natural gift of fear. To learn more about safety related topics visit my blog at www.safetysolutions4schools.com

John Baker is a Certified Protection Professional (CPP) and has worked in the law enforcement and safety/ security industry for 28 years. John currently oversees the Safety and Security Program at Lancaster Lebanon IU13 and is a Detective on the LLIU13 Police Department. John is from Lancaster, PA, and has been married to Cindy for 29 years. John and Cindy raised three children and are active in the local church and have served in many roles over the years ranging from Sunday School teacher to elder. John has been published in several professional publications and teaches safety and security classes across the Commonwealth for schools, businesses, places of worship and civic organizations.

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Road Trip: *Twenty-one States, Ten National Parks, Five Weeks, Four Kids, Two Parents, & One Minivan*



Our five week, cross-country road trip began one Sunday morning with a whimsical idea. My husband and I were sipping coffee in the living room, enjoying the quiet of the house while our four kids, ages 14, 13, 11, & 9, were still asleep. We'd have to wake them soon to get ready for church. Then one of us posed the hypothetical question, "Wouldn't it be great to take the kids out West for a camping trip to see Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon?"

As we talked, we started listing all of the impracticalities of embarking on such an adventure: We couldn't afford to fly everyone out West for a vacation. Matt didn't have enough vacation time to drive such a distance and then have any time to relax and enjoy himself. Our family vehicle was a minivan with limited cargo space. We tabled the quirky discussion, woke the kids, and got ready for church. Just another crazy idea...

Then, in the spring of 2011, a series of unexpected events developed that crazy idea into an even crazier plan. Matt was between consulting jobs. We had promised family in Chicago that we'd visit over the summer. And I had just heard from my best friend from college that she was getting married in Dallas and wanted me to be in the wedding.

We planned an itinerary where we would head to Chicago for a few days to visit family and then venture west to Yellowstone and some of the surrounding sights. We would then travel south through Salt Lake City to see the great canyons of Utah and the northern rim of the Grand Canyon. Finally we'd sweep down to Dallas for the wedding and hightail it back to the Chesapeake Bay for a family reunion the following weekend. We'd be gone five weeks and split our time between tent camping in the national parks, hotel stays, visits with family, and renting condos along the way. My goal was to count as many of the days as field trips as possible. Now how did we pack for camping, wedding festivities, visits with family, and school – all in a minivan?

We began with the problem of "stuff management." My husband, an engineer by training and a clever guy to keep around when you have logistical problems, designed a light-weight trailer with removable sides to store our gear, tents, sleeping bags, and clothing for this extended trip. I began working through packing, managing expectations, and minimizing conflict.

One of my big gripes about traveling is the amount of time and upkeep it takes to manage everyone's clothes and personal items. We designed a packing system that stores complete outfits in separate, color-coded pouches for each family member. This significantly cut down on the hassle of a quick overnight trip. When we would need to stop for just one night, we didn't have to drag our entire luggage into the hotel or tent; instead we'd just grab a packing pouch for each person, cosmetic bags, and maybe a swimsuit for the hotel or campground pool. In the morning, dirty clothes were placed back in the pouch and stored for the next laundry day.

The next potential problem in a long road trip is managing expectations and personal conflict in tight quarters. In my profession as a marriage and family therapist, there is a saying that most conflict can be simplified to "competing agendas." Think about it. Most families have a combination of introverts and extroverts, either needing to be alone or interacting with others to recharge their energy. As an extrovert, I looked forward to all of that quality family time. For the introverts in our family, sharing a minivan and tent with five other people wiped them out.

Besides the question of space, everyone enjoys a different level of activity. In our family, we have an even split between members who prefer high levels of activity (hiking, canoeing, swimming, sports, etc.) and those preferring more passive activities (reading, watching movies, shopping). Finding a balance between high/low energy activities and together/alone time would keep everyone happy.

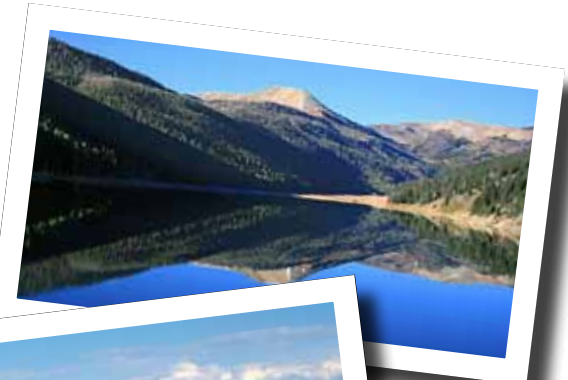
Another attempt at creating harmony was to vary the accommodations by creating blocks of time for each kind of sleeping arrangement. For example, after four nights of family camping in Yellowstone National Park in a single tent, we rented a three bedroom condo in Salt Lake City for three nights. This met a variety of needs. The kids were able to spread out a bit, sleep in a bed again, and plug back into media for a couple of days. My husband and I were able to find some alone time, which was an important consideration when planning a five week trip. It also gave me some much needed time to restock supplies, do laundry, and cook more complete meals than we usually had around a campfire.

Finally, we were able to count the trip for our school year by being creative with our travel time and itinerary. Of course experiencing the beauty and grandeur of the national parks

would be a pinnacle field trip for any student, but we enhanced it by purchasing a DVD course on geology to watch along the way. Much of the course's content focused on the natural wonders found in the US: glacier fields, geysers, mountains, sand dunes, canyons, caves, and watersheds, just to name a few. We also listened to audio books as a family. These were mostly fiction and appropriately engaging for the kids. As a bit of a bribe, we would reward the kids with a movie rental to watch as we headed to the next destination or some other local entertainment, like a marching band competition in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, or a street fair in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

At the end of the trip, we were tired and a bit travel-weary, but our road trip out West was a highlight in our family's story. We were privileged to see God's amazing creation, experience new activities, enjoy wildlife, and learn at the same time.

Jen Ransil and her husband Matt have been homeschooling together for thirteen years. They have two daughters in college and two sons still in high school. Jen is a licensed marriage and family therapist and an adjunct professor. She is passionate about traveling with her family and promoting their family business www.gagglegear.com





“How will I ever homeschool my children through high school?”

Has this thought ever crossed your mind? Does it plague you? When my oldest daughter was nearing high school, the thought certainly plagued me. I knew that I was not qualified to teach every subject she would need to take, and though I knew she could simply read the textbook for a few courses, like health, I agonized over a plan for her core academic high school classes. We had tried

using DVDs for some subjects in the past, but the lack of student interaction and accountability made me hesitant to turn to them again.

In eighth grade my daughter took part in a local Latin class that was excellent, so I considered enrolling her in other classes offered locally or through co-ops. However my investigation turned up few local classes that were both rigorous and taught by qualified instructors. Transportation was also an issue. At that time

I had four other children to homeschool and little ones besides. I could not afford to spend hours driving my oldest daughter to multiple classes. I needed a plan that would provide my daughter with a high quality high school experience without sacrificing the education of my other children.

That is when I decided to search for classes on the Internet, having no idea what I would find. I was surprised and excited by the many online options avail-

able. My husband and I decided to enroll our daughter in live, interactive online classes in biology, geometry, and great books (a combined history and English course) for her freshman year. She continued to take Latin locally. The bulk of her coursework was covered, and I was free to teach my younger children. Discovering online classes was the key that allowed our family to homeschool through high school.

That year opened my eyes to many benefits of online classes that I was not necessarily expecting. My daughter, who had never enjoyed science, found her biology class fascinating. The fact that she had to present proofs in geometry class pushed her to understand them fully and gave her experience in communicating to a group. The discussions in her great books class opened her eyes to the many varied ideas and opinions of her classmates. She learned that to debate effectively, she had to defend her position with facts.

Since her online classes only met once or twice a week, she still learned independently for the most part, a valuable aspect of the homeschooling experience in my estimation. This, however, was augmented by the interactive classes, professional feedback on written assignments, and access to a knowledgeable instructor when she had questions. My daughter enjoyed a new level of independence that year while meeting fellow students from across the country. I, on the other hand, was pleased with my new role as cheerleader rather than task master.

Now that I have had five of my children take dozens of online classes from a variety of sources, I have found that not all online classes are equal. For the most part we have been very pleased, but at times we have been disappointed. Once we enrolled two of our children in classes taught by a man who clearly did not hold the same values as our family. Though he assigned papers, he did not grade them, and students received no grade for the courses he taught. Classes

were primarily lectures, and although students could make comments in the chat box, they did not participate in actual discussions. I learned then to do my homework before enrolling my children in online classes.

When wading through the many options available, I recommend that you look for the following characteristics:

1. Live and interactive class. Seek classes that involve the student in lessons taught in real time. Students are less likely to daydream if they know they may be called on to answer a question. They cannot fast-forward part of the lesson that they think they don't need to watch, and they can ask questions if they feel lost or confused. Participating in discussions and considering the input of fellow students are vital aspects of a solid educational experience.

Discovering online classes was the key that allowed our family to homeschool through high school.

2. Qualified teacher and materials. Consider the teacher's credentials and experience. If possible, contact the teacher before signing your child up for a class. Do you get the sense that the teacher will interact with students on a personal, individual level? Does he communicate clearly and thoroughly? Will he be a positive role model for your child—someone you will want your child to emulate? Also, read reviews about the text; does it have a solid reputation?

3. Well-organized website. Take the time to navigate through the website of the organization offering the class. The website often reflects the classes offered; if the information on the

site is not logically arranged, classes may be hard to follow as well.

4. Positive Testimonials. Read testimonials of those who have taken the class before. If possible, talk to people who have taken the class you are considering. Were they pleased? Why or why not? Were the students prepared for the next step in their educational pursuits?

5. Solid Technical Aspect. Try to determine whether the teacher uses an appropriate platform for the class. Some platforms allow for intricate graphics or small group discussions, which can add to the experience when appropriate. Also, the class should not be plagued with technical issues.

6. Flexibility. Will your child have access to class recordings if he is unable to attend class? In case of a prolonged absence, either planned or unexpected, will the instructor be flexible? If you know of scheduling conflicts, ask the instructor how they will be handled.

If you have never considered using online classes for high school, I would encourage you to consider doing so. Online classes can enrich the educational experience of your students and make homeschooling through high school manageable for you. That certainly has been the case in our home!

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Karena Flynn has homeschooled all of her eight children, beginning kindergarten with the oldest in 1998. Three have graduated and made a smooth transition to college, due in large part to their participation in online classes during high school. Karena teaches online high school math classes herself through Liberty Tutorials (www.libertytutorials.com). She received a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in mathematics and minors in education and English from James Madison University, maintaining a 4.0 GPA in her math classes and graduating summa cum laude.



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