

Encouragement for Newbies

By Robin Young

You did it, first time homeschooler! June has arrived, and you have survived! ☺ At times June may have seemed like a goal far, far away. But it is here, and I trust that as you look back over the school year, you feel thankful that you “took the plunge”. This is a time for many parents to reevaluate: their schedule, their curriculum, and for some, their decision to continue homeschooling. ENOCH (Educational Network of Christian Homeschoolers) offered an essay contest this year on the topic, “What do you like best about homeschooling and why?” When I was praying about what I should write to encourage Newbies this month, I couldn’t think of anything more encouraging than the essays my children wrote. The following are some excerpts from each essay. May they encourage you, as they did me!

Christopher – 3rd Grade (excerpts)

People ask me all the time, “What is it like to be homeschooled?” So I tell them, “It’s terrific!” Now I am writing a story about it. Homeschooling is a whole bunch of fun, and for the parents who read my story, I hope you will be inspired and maybe try homeschooling!

A neat thing about homeschooling is that we are flexible. We can do school on the days that work best with our family’s schedule. We can go on trips while other students are in a classroom. We can start early and end early if we have a field trip or sports. Homeschoolers don’t have to work at home every day. One day a week we go to Co-op where we have different classes with our friends. You can also join a homeschool sports club. Then you could be skiing every Tuesday. I love the flexibility that we have!

Mmmm. I just finished a warm jelly bagel. Just writing about this subject makes me drool. I get to have snacks all day long...during school! We have the best hot lunches, and you never have to worry about forgetting to bring your lunch box.

Special activities are a favorite part of my school year too. Homeschoolers have so many options! It is hard to decide between: swimming, skiing, art studio, tennis, co-op, drama, visiting the nursing home, soccer, softball, bagpipe, and many other choices. All of the activities make our schedule exciting.

As a homeschooler, I also get to spend a lot of time with my family. When I was not homeschooled, I barely got to see my cute little brother. Now we are together every day. You can usually find me reading a book to my brother or playing with my sister.

But the absolute best thing about homeschooling is that, even during school time, I get to learn about God and grow closer to Him. In some schools you can’t even talk about God. In our homeschool we can talk to Him whenever we like. I love getting to know God more and more each day. Some things I get to do during school that involve God are: Bible memory, Devotions, Case for Christ for Kids, God’s World News, Your Story Hour Bible course, and more.

There are so many things we do in school to learn about God, I can't even count them! I heard a story from my mom, and it's really amazing. A famous soccer player/musician was offered scholarships to go to any college. But he chose a small Christian college, because he asked himself, "When I am old and can't play soccer or sing any more, what will be important - my relationship with God, or fame?" I think what he said is right. Getting a good relationship with God and doing the things that please Him is what matters most. I love God, and that's why learning about Him is the best part of homeschooling!

Jessi – 6th Grade (excerpts)

There are so many great aspects about homeschooling. I will tell you some of my favorites. After being in a regular school, I know first hand that there are many advantages to homeschooling.

Field trips are one of the best parts of homeschooling. I love being able to visit lots of new places. We went to Gettysburg while studying about the Civil War. We also went to the Art Museum while learning about different artists. It is inspiring to go and see things in person, instead of just reading about it. I think field trips are terrific.

I love having my mom as my teacher. My mom is so amazing. She helps us become good workers and strong Christians. Mom usually has a smile on her face and she plans cool activities. It is great that she has a good attitude about everything. I love that my mom teaches me!

I also like being able to work at my own pace. I don't have to be rushed, so I can take my time on hard subjects like math or spelling. I like going through all of the easy subjects quickly and not having to wait for the rest of the class to finish. I think it is important to spend your time wisely, and you can do that with homeschooling.

Being able to spend time with my family is an aspect that I treasure....

Aren't those words encouraging? I'm so thankful to have a sixth grader who wants to hang out with me and a third grader that wants to grow closer to God. Those are some of the blessings of homeschooling! Ask your students what they like best and think on those things!! Now I don't want to give you the wrong impression. We have days where we don't feel like doing our school work; where there is arguing and complaining. We have all been there!! But when I asked my children to write a list of the things they like best about homeschooling, they had a hard time narrowing the list down to their ten personal favorites. Maybe the next time we are having a tough day, I will take out their essays and read them for encouragement. Come to think of it, I will have *them* read their essays as well!

May God bless you as you continue on this homeschooling journey. Happy Summer!

