

Encouragement for Newbies

Robin Young

As September draws near, it is hard to believe that I am preparing for a new year of homeschooling. Yes, I am officially a survivor – a survivor of my first year as a homeschool teacher!

I didn't come to the decision easily. It was only after months of prayer, much encouragement from my children and several clearly "closed doors", that I finally acquiesced. This time last summer I was filled with trepidation as I took the plunge as a "Newbie". If you are getting ready to enter the ranks of homeschoolers, let me encourage you – I am so glad I did! The year was certainly challenging, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. Why did I wait so long?

Although I was dragging my heels when making the decision, in hindsight I should have been embracing this opportunity. These growing up years are just a short window of time, and as a mother, isn't it my desire to make the most of that time? Homeschooling provides just that, the gift of time together.

I was encouraged by a veteran homeschool mom who said, "If God is calling you to homeschool, He will give you the creativity to get the job done. He will equip you." This brings me to my first recommendation:

When planning your busy schedule, plan time to spend with God.

Our motto is "No Bible, No Breakfast". This is helpful in making devotions a priority; however, I found that the time over breakfast wasn't sufficient for me. After all, I had a lot to ask God about – curriculum choices, character training issues, schedules, learning styles, activities, the need for patience, etc... etc...! I started feeling overwhelmed until I came up with a new plan. I now walk for 30 minutes each morning while the kids are just waking and getting dressed. I am not a morning girl, but the time for a "prayer walk" makes all the difference in my day. (And we busy homeschoolers love to multi-task, so an added benefit is that I am getting some exercise at the same time!) I begin my walk with this prayer:

Lord, guard my tongue this day. Keep my temper even, my words sweet, my spirit calm. Let my children hear as well as see Jesus in me.

Then I can come in and read my bible over breakfast with the kids. I loved what one convention speaker said, "When you find a Bible that is falling apart, you find a person that isn't." As busy as your day might be, all the more reason to make time with God a priority.

May God bless you as you embark on this new adventure. Perhaps this time next year you too will call yourself a survivor, and want to offer encouragement to fellow Newbies!

Must Reads for Newbies:

If you need encouragement on getting started:

So You're Thinking About Homeschooling by Lisa Whelchel

Managers of Their Homes by the Maxwells

The Survivor's Guide to Homeschooling by Shackelford & White

If you need to "fill your tank":

Encouragement along the Way by Bobbie Howard

A Mom Just Like You by Vickie Farris and Jayme Farris

Tune in to future newsletters for ideas on: Field Trips, Great Websites, Bargains for Homeschoolers, and highlights from Things we Wish We'd Known.