

Training for Triumph E-Newsletter Issue 014 January/February 2007

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*Email Kara at trainingfortrumphhomeschool@mchsi.com if you wish to be taken off this mailing list—or to add a friend. Thanks!

Section I: Training for Triumph (TFT) Events and Announcements

1. Letter From Donna—

Dear Readers,

Soon you will hear about *Character Quality Language Arts'* new pricing structure. To make a long story short, we began working with some large homeschool providers last fall to see about them carrying CQLA and discovered that our pricing for CQLA would not accommodate outside carriers. Frankly, using the formula large providers use in order to carry products from other publishers, CQLA's current retail price was the same or nearly the same as their formula said the wholesale price should be—then the retail should be thirty percent above that! We are investigating less expensive printing options and the idea of having CQLA representatives around the country. I warn you about this now, so you will not be surprised when you see it in print in our spring advertising efforts or articles; however, we want all current CQLA users to know that even as the regular retail price of CQLA increases, you will have opportunities to purchase CQLA at extremely reduced prices (over that retail price) in order to keep the cost near what it is now for our faithful "early years" CQLA families. (See the information below about friendship vouchers that you may accumulate to put towards your spring 2007 CQLA purchases and pay special attention to the March and April sales.)

Thank you to the many families who have contacted us saying how much you love Volume III—and that all of the improvements, time, and money that we have invested into Volume III over the past year have been worth it. We are currently doing the same to Volume I—and it is better than ever! The passages are richer and more content-filled, the report instructions more detailed, and Level C is more challenging. We have learned a lot over the seven years we have been writing for the Advanced Training Institute and the three years we have been designing CQLA, and we are applying what we have been learning to make better products. Watch our newsletter and website for future products, CQLA improvements, and more.

As a family, we have been taking the year off from speech and debate competitions, and it has been a welcome change. After seven years of spending literally weeks of time and more money than I would want to admit traveling to tournaments, eating out, and paying tournament fees, it has been nice to have the time to revise Volume I and watch our two oldest “school age” children pursue some other things. I keep telling the kids that after seven years of competing, this is my “year of jubilee”! (I know that I’m one year off, celebrating my jubilee the eighth year, but you get the general idea.) We wanted Kara (who has competed for four years already) and Jonathan (who has competed two years) to use the skills that they have acquired to serve others for a year, rather than just competing with those skills. We’ll probably be back to the competition circuit in the future, but this year is proving profitable already as Kara and Jonathan are involved in a ministry in which they perform plays about character and relationships in public schools and summer enrichments for elementary children. They have just had two months of rehearsals and are starting performances next month.

We received our first review for CQLA last summer from reviewer Christine Field of *The Old Schoolhouse* (TOS). (See the summer ’07 edition of TOS for an article about CQLA, along with Mrs. Field’s review.) This fall we received a review from Cathy Duffy, author of *Top 100 Picks for Homeschool Curriculum*, among many other books and articles. She was favorable about CQLA and has been an encouragement to me in our correspondences. You can see her review in full at her website. We so appreciate the time and effort Mrs. Field and Mrs. Duffy have put into reviewing CQLA and their words of affirmation and help to me personally. With all the blood, sweat, and tears (okay, maybe not blood!) that are going into CQLA last year and this year, I need all the encouragement I can get! ☺

Those of you who are planning spring and summer homeschool gatherings can check out our website for a list of nearly fifty topics that Ray, our grown children (that sounds strange!), and I are available to speak about. We would love to come and challenge and encourage the homeschool families in your area! Additionally, if you are a few hours or so from us, we would love to come and do an all-day language arts workshop (not just for CQLA or MC users). See the workshop info provided in this newsletter, too.

It is a joy to help homeschoolers! Feel free to call or email with how we can help you. And send new homeschoolers our way. We love new homeschoolers! ☺

Love,
Donna

P.S. For those of you just starting to receive our e-newsletters, I am pasting our Christmas 2006 letter below to better acquaint you with our family. Also, you may read past e-newsletters at our website.

2. Reish's Christmas Letter December 2006

Christmas Greetings 2006 from the Reishes! It's that time of year again...the most wonderful time of the year...especially with children! I won't go on about how quickly this year has gone or about how sad I am that my children are growing up. But both of those things are true!

Ray hasn't changed much over the year---the kids and I still think he is the most incredible person in the world—the most selfless, giving, diligent, caring, resourceful, gentle, kind, loving man we know. He still partners with me in homeschooling, probably more than ever as he teaches the older kids' math, driver's training, debate, economics, and much more. Some of these he teaches to small groups of homeschoolers, and our older children take part in them. Others he does in the evenings and weekends one-on-one with our kids. Of course, he still does Bible, character, and discipleship with all six of the kids at home. Ray has been busier than ever managing our small publishing business, managing our ministry to homeschoolers, managing the family newspaper delivery, managing our cottage classes for homeschooled students, being materials "manager" at Buckhorn, helping me manage the home so I can write more, and well, just managing! He and the children still deliver newspapers to businesses in the middle of the night and afternoons...our part is going to fund our small publishing business, which we hope will someday fund our ministry, Training for Triumph. He and I enjoyed speaking together at several conferences last year—and I found speaking more enjoyable than ever as we shared together in such topics as marriage in the homeschool, top twenty pieces of advice after twenty years of homeschooling, reaching the heart of your teen, and more.

Speaking of Training for Triumph (TFT), we are in our third year of "official" ministry running speech and debate in northeast Indiana (which we have actually been doing for seven years), counseling and helping homeschooling parents, speaking at conferences and support groups, teaching language arts and speech workshops, etc. It is still enormously hard work as we try to get our twenty-four language arts and composition books in the best shape possible (with outside editors, typesetters, etc) in order to be ready for reviews and vendors. Our main language arts curriculum (fourteen total books) received two excellent reviews (to be published in magazines and books in the spring) from a couple of top homeschool reviewers this year, so we hope that our publishing business will fund itself as well as our speaking/traveling soon—and we can reduce some of our work load (editing, tutoring, and newspapering) in order to focus more on helping homeschoolers. We will have published a total of twenty-eight books by

the first quarter of 2007, excluding the dozen books Kayla and I wrote for another publisher a few years ago.

I am still doing the stuff—writing several thousand pages and editing a dozen thousand pages a year of curriculum. ☺ My most important jobs, though, remain those that have to do with the kids—homeschooling, training, making memories, talking, sharing, discipling, playing, reading, and having fun. I have almost accepted Kayla and Cami both being in college and ministry and not being home like they were in high school. Notice I said *almost!* We still gather in the living room to read a Christmas story—and I make everyone wait until K and C pull in the driveway from school or church and join us. I still plan our most special and cherished times around their schedules. But I am also having fun with the four younger kids—Kara and I are the best of friends and do nearly everything together (though she always plays second fiddle to Dad, which she is glad to do); the boys and I are having so much fun doing school together, library trips, skill building (though I don't have the patience to teach them all of the skills I did the older ones! tee hee), and more. Of course, my favorite times are those when all ten of us are spending time together--having bonfires, playing table games, and playing handball and basketball all together—five on five! As for hobbies, I still enjoy scrapbooking once a month or so, but more than anything, the favorite “hobby” of me and Ray both is ballroom dancing. We started taking lessons two years ago, but didn't really get to practice much and attend lessons much until this last year. Now we take a private lesson once a month or so—and go over to the ballroom (three miles from our house) and “exercise” three or four times a week after the boys go to bed and before the girls get home from college/ministries. We have both been losing a few pounds, and neither of us knew exercise could be so fun! ☺ It is exciting trying to learn steps together, synchronizing our movements, and meeting challenging goals—the kids are glad to see us dancing as they say we need to do something fun together---something other than working and parenting! We are especially thankful to Dave, the studio's owner, for letting his students practice in the ballroom free of charge.

The highlight of the year for both of us was celebrating our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Ray and I went to Indianapolis two separate weekends (vacation days were used up with debate tournaments and homeschool conventions!) to celebrate. In addition, we did a special family night with the kids back in our hometown. We started out by going to the church in which we were born again and married to renew our vows. Imagine the pastor's surprise as all ten of us filed out of “Big Red”! We walked through the church, showing the kids our first Sunday school class, our baptismal tank, etc. (We had already done this with the older kids for one of our spiritual birthdays years ago, but the little kids had never been there.) It was an emotional, joyous time. The enclosed picture was taken that afternoon in the church. (Cami wants it known that she looked a lot better before the vows, when she “bawled her eyes out,” as she puts it—and thinks we should have taken the picture *before* the emotional moments!) After the time at the church, we showed the kids our first homes, where we each grew up, where we lived

when we were first married, etc. Finally, we ate at one of our old restaurants and went bowling at our old bowling alley. We stand in awe that God has blessed us with the opportunity to know Him and live for Him—and raise our family for Him.

Joshua and Lisa bought a house in Bluffton—and have had fun painting and getting it ready to move into. It is darling, and, of course, Lisa does such a nice job making it beautiful. Joshua left restaurant management to spend more time at home and more time working with TFT. He paints again for Yaste Painting and is a tremendous, loyal, diligent, wise help to us typesetting, editing, and helping me write. In addition, he has expanded our cottage classes this fall and taught classes for us in Fort Wayne as well as a couple hours north of here. He loves teaching classes, especially to homeschoolers since he can teach freely what he wants, and has taught elementary and middle school speech, high school speech and debate, government, US History, Shakespeare, story writing, world history, and more. Lisa also enjoys teaching art in our cottage classes—and our little boys love taking art from her! Also, Joshua, Kayla, and Cami are speaking some with us at conventions. They have loved helping homeschooling parents and encouraging young people, and we appreciate them helping us fulfill our vision for homeschool ministry.

Kayla is a junior in college working towards an RN degree. She also attends Bible college part-time. She is involved in ministry extensively in our church—helping lead the young adults (18 to 30 year olds), teaching Sunday school, leading small group, and doing any Bible teaching she can as that is her true love. Kayla's favorite week is one in which she teaches Sunday school in the morning, young adults on Sunday evenings, Apologetics to homeschoolers during the week, then How to Study the Bible to a small group later in the week. (I don't know where she got this love for teaching!) In addition to her school and ministries, Kayla spends a great deal of time attending Spanish services each week, teaching in our cottage classes, and running paper routes. (By the time she goes to English services and Spanish services, she is in church ten plus hours every Sunday—this from the girl who couldn't get her hair highlighted because it was too boring to sit for an hour in the beautician's chair!) We do make her slow down one or two evenings a week and do fun things with us though! The highlight of her year was her first “overseas” mission trip to El Salvador, where she got to do what she has always dreamed: teach in a Spanish speaking country (with an interpreter). It was an awesome time for her, whether she was building retaining walls or playing with the children. Obviously, she has had a lot of opportunity this year to practice her Spanish—though her siblings put up protests to having Spanish books and music playing since only Kayla can understand them!

Cami graduated from our homeschool in May, attended college all during her senior year, and is currently a sophomore in Bible college—and will receive the first level of ordination with the Assemblies of God in the spring. She is working towards a general church ministry degree with an emphasis in disability ministry. She divides her sixty hour weeks among attending school, studying, teaching cottage classes (elementary and middle school speech and sign language) for TFT, running paper routes, and co-directing the disability ministry at our church, called One Heart. One Heart celebrated its one year anniversary this fall and has ministered to well over a hundred different children and adults with disabilities and their family members throughout the past year. The ministry runs parents nights out for families affected by disabilities, hosts large game nights/ice cream socials for disabled young people and adults, and has many special events that are attended by up to a hundred people—and will deliver goodies and gifts to over seventy disabled people next week. Cami also teaches group home Bible studies and disabled adult Bible studies at church each week. In addition, she interprets for deaf children in Sunday school and deaf elderly at their weekly senior adult ministry luncheon. We still enjoy special closeness and mentoring relationships with her and Kayla constantly, though we often have to have “calendar meetings” to get everything on the schedule! It has been a blessing to watch Kayla and Cami minister to their own people groups. Oh, Cami’s highlight, besides seeing One Heart grow, was helping baptize the first One Heart convert and being on the leadership team of the Chicago area Joni and Friends (JAF) ministry and leading the young adults groups at the JAF family retreats in the summer.

Kara is a sophomore in high school and turned sixteen at the end of the summer. She is the most thorough, helpful, kind, submissive, responsible, sweet, studious, consistent, likeable sixteen year old I know! Kara and Jonathan are taking a year off from speech and debate competition to pursue some other things this year (and to give Mom and Dad a financial and time break from all the debate travels). It was tough for her to do, but she trusts us to always do what we see is best for her. She continues to love piano and practices constantly. She is also enjoying more in-depth Bible studies this fall with Kayla and takes voice lessons. She helped Ray with his speech and debate class this fall and continues to edit and typeset for TFT—and calls herself Mom’s personal assistant, helping me prepare for workshops, packing for travels, volunteering constantly to help, and much more. Kara still exercises forty-five minutes a day and continues (for two years now) to be a devoted no sugar-no flour dieter (going eight months between even a bite of bread or sugar!). She and Jonathan were in a play about the persecuted Russian church this fall through the FW homeschool group—and both of them had emotional, crying roles. (Should we be concerned that both of them can cry on cue?) She enjoys helping with One Heart events, going places with her sisters, being with Mom and Dad, and emailing friends. She is growing up too fast; I dread the day she starts college and finds her “people group” to minister to (for purely selfish reasons—I don’t want to be without her!). The highlight of her year was making it to the national level in duo interpretation, dramatic interpretation, and debate—and traveling to Virginia to compete.

Jonathan, age fourteen, received his Bronze Medal of Achievement in Royal Rangers and has read or listened to half the Bible this year (in large part towards his Bronze Medal). He is studious, resourceful, kind, deferential, sweet, problem-solving, clever, and fun. He loved being in the drama and continues to love school as well. He made it to the five-state regional tournament in original oratory speaking in the spring. In the summer, he attended the national Royal Rangers camp in Missouri and really enjoyed it. He continues to love legoes; playing basketball, kickball, and more with the family; going to the library; reading non-fiction (especially history); playing with his brothers; and being with his family.

Josiah, age eleven, continues to be the sweetest eleven year old around. He is helpful and thorough, picking up a lot of slack in the work around the house after Kayla and Cami started college. He studies hard, too, and also enjoys Royal Ranger activities. He participated in his first “junior” speech competition in the spring, and he, Jonathan, and Jacob were all awarded Ranger of the Year for their outpost. He and Jacob were in the elementary drama this fall. He is my diligent, scheduled child, outlining what he wants to get done for the day, setting goals for himself in school, Bible, and chores---I don’t know where he got that, either! ☺

Jacob, age eight, is a little charmer—and has his sisters wrapped around his little finger. He continues to move up in his chores—and doesn’t like the idea that there is nobody younger than him to pick up some of his chores when he continues to move into “higher leveled” chores! ☺ He is doing great learning to read this year and continues to love to be read to. He is very athletic—and loves playing any sport (including wrestling and knee football in the house!). All three boys enjoy helping with One Heart. Cami takes them with her whenever she can and they are available.

In closing, we want to encourage you to enjoy your kids while they’re young! Take the time it requires to get into their hearts and lives. You won’t regret it! Merry Christmas and have a blessed new year.

3. Calendar of Events for TFT

Saturday, February 17th, Donna spoke at a Mom's Day out in Miami County Ohio about Prioritizing, Organizing, and Scheduling Your School, Life, and Home.

March 23rd and 24th—Ray and Donna will be speaking and vending at the Cincinnati homeschool conference in Cincinnati, Ohio on several topics. They will also present vendor workshops and have a TFT booth.

April 21st and 22nd—Ray, Donna, Kayla, and Joshua will be speaking in Grove City, Ohio at the 2007 Home Educators Conference. Ray and Donna's topics include: (1) Top 20 From 20—Pieces of Homeschool Advice; (2) The Successful Homeschooling Father; (3) How to Teach Language Arts; (4) Reaching the Heart of Your Teen; (5) . Joshua will share about teaching history with excitement and passion; teaching study skills; and teaching literature. Kayla will share about dyslexia; teaching a biblical world view; and writing a research paper.

April—Donna will be sharing at a Mom's Day Out in Howe, Indiana about character training.

May 19th—Ray and Donna will be sharing a vendor workshop and vending at the Fort Wayne Area Homeschoolers Convention. We will speak about CQLA.

June-- Donna will be speaking at the CHEO (Christian Home Educators of Ohio) convention and Ray and Donna will be doing vendor presentations and vending. Their topics for this convention will be as follows: (1) Teaching Reading; (2) Training Children to Be Diligent Workers; (3) Homeschooling Through High Schooler; (4) CQLA; (5) Top 20 Products Used in 20 Years.

All day language arts workshops—Location and dates are pending. Contact us to set up one in your area. Parents will learn (1) how to's of teaching reading; (2) language arts at all levels; (3) how to edit and revise with your student; (4) writing with a directed writing approach; (5) choosing and teaching outlining and prewriting strategies (appropriate to various types of writing);and much more!

4. New Pricing Structure and Discounts for CQLA

After several months of trying to work with large distributors to get CQLA out in the homeschool market, it has been brought to our attention that CQLA was way under-priced. (Actually, according to the formulas used by homeschool

distributors, the retail price of CQLA was nearly the same price as the *wholesale price* to distributors was supposed to be!) We had been trying to keep our price as low as possible, so many families could benefit from CQLA, but we didn't consider the fact that distributors cannot carry our products without a certain percentage increase, especially with shipping, buying, and storing the books.

So...here we are working towards getting CQLA into the market with other carriers only to find out that it cannot be done with the prices we have charged. Short of doubling the price of CQLA in order to accommodate distributors, we frankly did not know what to do. We have made some pricing/distribution decisions that we hope will meet both of our goals: (1) Keep CQLA affordable to the families who are already using it; (2) Get CQLA out in the homeschool marketplace via distributors and representatives (and eventually bring in enough income to pay our editors and typesetters and cover our travel expenses when speaking). See the details for CQLA Representatives if you think you would like to become a representative for CQLA in your area. We will need dozens eventually and would love to have you join our low-commitment program!

We look at Training for Triumph as both a business and a ministry. We hear your testimonies on how the ministry has helped your students--and even the parents. Your comments are encouraging, and we give God all the glory for the great things He does. We would love to provide CQLA to as many people as possible, but we need to make enough money so that the business can continue and grow. To date, we have continually put all profits of CQLA back into the business to make it better. (even supplementing the business with other sources of income (like newspaper delivery jobs and tutoring) just to get CQLA to market as quickly as possible in the improved format. We must expand our distribution in order to further both the business and the ministry. Thus, we have tried to be creative in developing ways to expand both. Please hear our hearts; we are not raising prices to make a lot of money. We feel this is the best way to meet our goals.

In that end, we hope that CQLA will become more available in places where people have not discovered it yet. However, we also do not want to have past loyal CQLA users--many of whom have braved through less-than-perfect books in order to test the program for us--to have to pay so much more for their books. So, check out the options for getting CQLA at reduced prices. Mark your calendars now for those sale dates, tell some friends about CQLA and earn Friendship Vouchers, or become a CQLA Representative.

5. NEW CQLA Pricing Information:

(1) The new suggested retail price for CQLA is \$79.00, beginning January 1st. This is a significant jump from where it has been, but there is no reason that a somewhat savvy homeschooler should ever have to pay retail for CQLA! (Read on!)

(2) March and April will yield significant savings for CQLA users through Training for Triumph. In March of 2007, you may purchase any CQLA book for \$59 rather than the regular retail price of \$79. In April of 2007, you may still get savings on any CQLA book by purchasing it at \$69 rather than \$79. (This applies to email, phone, or postal mail orders only; convention specials will differ according to location, travel expenses, etc.) You must place your order and pay for your order. If you are ordering Volume 1, it will not ship until May – July time frame.

(3) You may purchase CQLA from a representative in your area for any sales she may offer. (Watch our website for representative lists and their contact information in the future.)

(4) You may purchase CQLA from a distributor, as we begin getting them. They will offer sales periodically and may offer a continual lower price than TFT even does at times! (Our first distributor is *The Old Schoolhouse* web store; watch their website for its inclusion.)

(5) You may purchase your CQLA for as low as \$0.00 by accumulating "Friendship Vouchers." (See below.)

(6) You may become a distributor of CQLA and MC (*Meaningful Composition*) yourself (via a no-inventory, no shipping Representative Program). Find out more about this option below.

(7) Members of Wells County Indiana's WACHE, Adams County Indiana's SACHE, 1st Assembly of FW's LEAH, or Fort Wayne, Indiana's FWAHS may purchase CQLA for \$59 year round from Training for Triumph. (And CQLA Friendship Vouchers will still apply.) Let us know you are one of them when ordering!

6. Become a CQLA Representative

CQLA fans may now help spread the word about CQLA formally--and make money doing so! Training for Triumph announces its CQLA Representative Program, which will begin in full on January 1, 2007:

(1) A CQLA representative must sign an agreement saying that she will represent CQLA in a positive light, professional manner, and with godly character.

(2) A CQLA representative must order at least ten CQLA books per year. This might only be three or four families besides her own, in many cases.

(3) A CQLA representative may present CQLA at support group meetings, conventions, living room presentations, one-on-one, or any other opportunity that arises after first contacting TFT to be sure another representative (a TFT family member or other rep) is not already planning to present at that event.

(4) A CQLA representative will pay all of her own expenses for traveling, speaking about CQLA, preparing handouts and samples, etc.

(5) A CQLA representative will take orders and postal mail those orders (along with payment and shipping costs) to TFT. TFT will fill the orders from our warehouse (rather than the representative having to carry CQLA herself) and ship directly to the customers, as indicated in the orders sent to us by the representative.

(6) A CQLA representative may buy CQLA books ahead of time for events or to have in stock to fill orders on the spot. In that case, she would pay shipping then charge shipping to her customers in order to recoup that expense.

(7) A CQLA representative may return CQLA books after an event or at any time for a full refund of her purchase price as long as the books are still shrink-wrapped and unused. The representative will be responsible for the shipping - both directions.

(8) A CQLA representative may develop her own website using information about CQLA or MC from the TFT website, including samples to be downloaded and printed off.

(9) A CQLA representative may use our videos or cassettes in teaching about CQLA as long as she purchases these for herself. (She may lend these out, host events using them, etc.)

(10) A CQLA representative may not distribute or redeem "Friendship Vouchers" at any time. (This would be a TFT nightmare!)

(12) If becoming a CQLA Representative seems overwhelming to you, but you would like to tell your friends about CQLA and earn free curriculum, check out our CQLA Friendship Voucher Program.

(13) For complete details about the CQLA Representative Program, including profit margin and agreement forms, contact TFT.

7. CQLA Friendship Vouchers—Start Collecting Today!

CQLA users are excited about CQLA! They are telling their friends, neighbors, and relatives, and we appreciate that! As a way to offset the price increase that CQLA will undergo beginning January 1st, 2007, Training for Triumph is offering

CQLA users "friendship vouchers" for simply sharing CQLA with friends, resulting in purchases of CQLA. Read the details below to find out how you can get all of your CQLA for \$0.00--doing nothing more than what many of you are already doing--sharing the good news of CQLA:

- (1) CQLA Friendship Vouchers will be distributed beginning January 1st, 2007.
- (2) A CQLA user (or future user!) may earn CQLA Friendship Vouchers by simply telling a friend about CQLA, resulting in that friend purchasing CQLA for herself.
- (3) Each time someone orders CQLA from TFT and tells us that "my friend told me about CQLA," and gives us that person's name and email address, the friend who told the buyer about CQLA will receive a voucher via email worth \$10 toward her future CQLA purchases.
- (4) A CQLA "Friend" may accumulate as many vouchers as desired, up to the total price (less shipping) of her CQLA order. For example, if Rosie tells three of her friends about CQLA and each of those friends orders two CQLA from TFT and tells us about Rosie, Rosie will receive six \$10 vouchers towards her next CQLA purchase.
- (5) CQLA Friendship Vouchers may be earned from January 1st, 2007 through June 1st, 2007.
- (6) CQLA Friendship Vouchers may be earned via email sales, phone sales, postal mail sales, or convention sales--any sales directly from TFT.
- (7) CQLA Friendship Vouchers must be redeemed by including them in a postal mailing with your payment for CQLA. For example, if your CQLA order totaled \$160 (excluding shipping and other character materials you may order), you may pay for it by sending ten vouchers and a check, money order, or credit card number for the remaining \$60.
- (8) CQLA Friendship Vouchers may be earned and redeemed regardless of the current selling price. (For example, if one of Rosie's friends buys her CQLA during our March sale for \$59 each; and three of them buy during our April \$69 sale; and two of them buy theirs at a convention special (from TFT, not another distributor); and three of them buy during the summer at full price, she will still get a ten dollar voucher from each sale, regardless of the selling prices her friends paid.)
- (9) The CQLA Friend must have an email address in which to receive vouchers (her email or a friend or relative's email). We will not be able to postal mail vouchers. She then must print them off and save them to mail to TFT in order to use them.
- (10) CQLA Friendship Vouchers may only be earned until June 1st, but they may be redeemed anytime through March 1st, 2008. Since we are unsure of how long

the Friendship Voucher Program will be in place, we want CQLA users to have the opportunity to earn vouchers for their fall 2007 CQLA *and* even for their fall 2008 CQLA (if purchased by March 1st, 2008). Some of our CQLA users have talked multiple friends into ordering multiple books of CQLA, so purchasing that number of CQLA with vouchers--or even for free--is a distinct possibility for many.

(11) A CQLA Friendship Voucher earner may tell her friends about CQLA one-on-one, in a small group, at a support group, at a curriculum share, etc.--as long as the person who orders gives us the Friend's name and email address to send the vouchers to.

(12) CQLA Friendship Vouchers are earned from and applied to CQLA book purchases only, not Spelling Notebook, Teacher's Guides, videos, cassettes, or other TFT products.

(13) For those CQLA users who desire to get even more CQLA for free or who desire to vend and sell CQLA themselves, look into our CQLA Representative Program.

8. Updated TFT Cottage Class Schedule—

Our fall cottage class schedule for 2007/2008 will be posted at our website by May 1st. We hope to be in Fort Wayne, Indiana and our Craigville location at least. Joshua may return to La Grange; we are uncertain of a FW north location at this time. If you would like to see about a TFT teacher coming to your area to teach classes, parent workshops, writing workshops for students, debate and speech workshops for students, etc., contact us, and we'll see what we can work out!

II. Method to Our Madness— Why CQLA is the way it is....

Sometimes when new CQLA users open our books, they are overwhelmed by the vast amount of information therein. As Cathy Duffy states in her CQLA review, CQLA does have enough graphic elements (shading, text boxes, etc.) to keep it from being too overwhelming, but parents still wonder if all of that information is really necessary. So...another method to our madness!

It was our desire from the beginning that CQLA users have the opportunity to use the content in CQLA (character based and Bible material) as springboards for other studies. We even envisioned families using the content in CQLA as the basis for their history, science, health, and Bible unit studies—or at the very least as the basis for daily Bible and character studies as a family and/or with Mom and students.

I am including information below to help you see how you can use the CQLA sidebars and content as the basis for other studies. Happy schooling!

How to Connect Character Studies and Bible to Your Language Arts Using CQLA

1. Sidebars Throughout CQLA

After perusing the CQLA samples, you will notice sidebars scattered throughout the program indicating many different things: Teacher's Tips, additional spelling practice, penmanship practice, and more. These "more" sidebars include "Character Connections" and "Further Study." "Character Connections" are little snippets of information that teach about the character qualities. They might be definitions, Scriptures, or other sayings and tidbits to solidify that month's character quality---and connect the passage and writing assignments to the character quality. The "Further Study" sidebars are for those families who want to either (1) study the Bible and character while they do their language arts or (2) want to make CQLA their language arts and their unit study program.

2. Using the Further Study Sidebars for Bible and Character Studies

To use the "Further Study" sidebars for Bible and character studies, it will help if you do two things: (1) Be sure that all of your students are in the same volume of CQLA at the same time (not the same level—Pre A, A, B, or C---but the same volume---the same set of eight units all studying the same character qualities); (2) Plan ahead.

People are often confused about Levels and Volumes. The levels (Pre A, A, B, and C) indicate how difficult the language arts materials are. C is harder than B; B is harder than A; A is harder than Pre A. The volumes (I, II, and III) simply indicate which set of eight units (and which set of eight character qualities) you will study that year. Volume I contains units 1-8; Volume II contains units 9-16; Volume III contains units 17-24. Each of these volumes has eight different units with eight different character qualities. Volume III is **not** harder than Volume II---just different character focuses and lessons. CQLA was designed this way so a Level B student could do Volume I, Level B his sixth grade year, Volume II, Level B his seventh grade year, and Volume III, Level B his eighth grade year. Once he is in ninth grade, he will go back to Volume I---but he will be doing Level C then, so he will not have had that particular material yet.

Do not think of volumes as increasing in difficulty! Simply put all of your students in the same volume—at their own levels—Pre A, A, B, or C. The key is to be sure they are all doing the same volume at the same time, so they will all be studying the same character quality together. Thus, dinner time conversation goes

something like this: “So, what did you learn about obedience in your language arts today?” And everyone learned something about obedience (through the sentences, editing paragraphs, essays written, etc.) because everyone is studying obedience while doing language arts at his or her own level.

Now, the second tip to help you connect character and Bible using CQLA is to plan ahead! If you get your CQLA early enough, you can go through and read the sidebars to determine what types of activities you would like to do for your Bible and character studies from the sidebars (i.e. learn a hymn for the month, read the book of Genesis together, read character stories from the Coriell’s book, use the Character Sketches for dinner time reading, etc.). Then you can be sure you have these materials available for you and your children and that you have the time in your schedule for these devotional activities. If you do not have your CQLA ahead of time, you can use the “Character Quality and Content Overview” chart found at this website or in the back of the new *Teacher’s Guide* to help plan your monthly devotions and read alouds. These one page per unit overviews list the character studies, books, Bible passages, and songs that can be studied in conjunction with each unit. (These are actually taken from the “Further Study” sidebars for each unit.)

3. Using the Further Study Sidebars for Unit Studies

Many of the “Further Study” sidebars throughout CQLA are not necessarily Bible or character related, but rather historical or scientific in nature (i.e. study the difference between palm trees and hardwood trees and which one has more flexibility; study about the obedience of our founding fathers by reading *The Light and the Glory*, etc.). Because of this, some families choose to use the CQLA “Further Study” sidebars as their unit study basis---their “assignments” in science and social studies. We have done this for years and years, and it is a great way for children to learn as all of their school areas (except for math) are connected to character and biblical principles. Obviously, this takes extra work on the parents’ part to have the materials on hand, read aloud more often, oversee projects, etc. as compared to assigning a science text, but students usually love this approach—and it is fun!

To do this for all levels, you need to do the two tips from above: (1) Keep all children in the same volume and (2) Plan ahead. You will also need to have discernment to pick what each student will work on for the month and what you will skip. There's simply not enough time in a month to "do everything."

The beauty of this approach to language arts and content areas (science, social studies, health, etc.) is that there are many things you can do all together, thus, eliminating the need for so many different lessons for children of many levels. The family is learning together instead of each student studying many subjects individually. It is also generally more interesting than text books.

You might try a combination of using text books for science and doing the history from the sidebars or vice versa. Do whatever works for your family! The sidebars are there to give you more options in implementing a Scripture and character based program for all subjects, but you need to decide what works best for your family in all area. Most of all, have fun learning---and be sure that learning is taking place for all the children!

4. Below is a list of each unit and its corresponding character quality.

See also "Content Area and Character Quality Overview" link at our web site for more details about suggested studies for each character quality/unit (www.trainingfortriumphhomeschool.com).

| Volume | Unit | Character Trait |
|--------|------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1 | peacemaking |
| 1 | 2 | boldness |
| 1 | 3 | endurance |
| 1 | 4 | joyfulness |
| 1 | 5 | initiative |

| | | |
|---|----|----------------|
| 1 | 6 | thoroughness |
| 1 | 7 | truthfulness |
| 1 | 8 | compassion |
| | | |
| 2 | 9 | creativity |
| 2 | 10 | obedience |
| 2 | 11 | orderliness |
| 2 | 12 | virtue |
| 2 | 13 | love |
| 2 | 14 | responsibility |
| 2 | 15 | wisdom |
| 2 | 16 | decisiveness |
| | | |
| 3 | 17 | alertness |
| 3 | 18 | self control |
| 3 | 19 | gratefulness |
| 3 | 20 | humility |
| 3 | 21 | meekness |
| 3 | 22 | diligence |
| 3 | 23 | gentleness |
| 3 | 24 | sincerity |

5. A last bit of advice from Training for Triumph concerning doing all of the wonderful things with your kids that you want to do.

You might want to implement our family's "more often than not rule" for devotions, read alouds, etc. We have found through the years that we have more success completing all of the wonderful things we want to do if we follow the guideline that "if it is important to us, we'll do it more often than we do not do it." Thus, family worship four times a week is our goal. Bible talk with Dad and the boys four times a week is our goal. If we think something should be done four times a week, we try to be sure we do it more often than we do not do it, according to our goal. We have used this approach for nearly twenty years, and we have slowly, but surely, achieved most of the goals we have had for our family. Don't beat yourself up---build your family up!

III. Article from TFT

Ten Tips for a Great School Year Part II of ?

By Donna Reish

I made the mistake, in the fall, of starting a ten point article about having a good school year—only to discover that my ten points will take pages and pages to make—at least to explain some of the details the way I desire to. So, if you will bear with me, this article will focus on only one—albeit lengthy and important—tip for having a great school year (and being a successful homeschooler overall).

This month I will begin with what I should have begun the first part with: **put God first in your homeschool**. Obviously, there are many ways to do this, but there are three main areas I would like to focus on that we have found to be vital in our homeschool: 1) teaching **God's Word and principles**; 2) teaching **godly character**; and 3) teaching a **Christian worldview**.

Many homeschooling parents have an incorrect concept of teaching God's Word to their children. We are trying to remedy this through Ray's presentations about the successful homeschooling father, offering character and biblical principled books and materials, and sharing some simple ways we have found to do this whenever we can; however, in a nutshell, you do not have to have a Bible degree or Bible background to be sure that **your homeschool is filled with Bible learning**. One of the simplest ways to have "family devotions" or "family altar" is to choose a version that you can easily understand yourself, open the Bible (start with Bible stories or the Gospels, which are familiar to most Sunday school children, if unsure of yourself), read a passage, and discuss it. Ray does this all the time with our little guys—they call it "Bible talk," and it takes no preparation, special books, or understanding of Greek or Hebrew! Simply read a few verses and talk about them. Our children remember more from these "devotional" times than they do our "official" Bible teaching.

In addition to simply opening the Bible and reading it/discussing it, there are numerous Bible study and Bible-related books available to simply read with and/or to your children. It doesn't have to be a massive curriculum or in-depth program. Just start somewhere! There are family devotional books in which everything you are to say/read is spelled out for you. With younger children, reading from *The Family Bible Library* or *Leading Little Ones to God* is a great way to teach them God's Word and principles. We are not skipping Bible in our

homeschools for lack of materials! If we skip Bible, it is because it is not a priority in our lives.

Through the years, we have coined our Bible learning “interval training.” Just like interval training in exercise is switching from easier to more challenging exercises (not that I would know much about that! 😊), Bible interval training for us has come to mean that we would begin our day with the Bible, end our day with the Bible, and have Bible training and teaching throughout the day, at various intervals—with us and independently for those students who are able to do so. This might sound overwhelming, but it isn’t at all when it becomes a way of life for you; once it becomes part of your day, it is just like washing dishes three times a day (or more!); you just do it.

Let me give you a sample of this—and show you how painless it is to accomplish once God’s Word and Scripture-focused teaching are central parts of your homeschool. (I should say here that we have a “more often than not” rule for everything we think is important. We don’t beat ourselves up when we don’t do something everyday—we have a goal to do everything we think is important more often than not; thus, each of the things listed below occurs at least three or four times a week (though some are five or six).)

Early am (but not too early; we stay up and work or talk to the girls late at night!): Kids’ private devotions; little kids Bible on tape or Bible story and tape set; Mom and Dad prayer time individually; Mom and Dad read devotionals independently/listen to devotional materials while driving

AM: AM reading with Mom, including a book teaching Bible principles; a character book that teaches character with Scriptures; a short biographical sketch about a godly hero—a mainstay of our homeschool for many, many years

(fulfilling Bible, character, and possibly worldview training!); a nature devotional; and a fun chapter book (Christian or secular)

Mid-morning chores: Bible on cassette while working

Late morning: Littlest ones listen to Bible story cassettes while playing or doing other simpler work like penmanship; older ones do Bible curriculum of some sort on their own—Bible paces from Alpha Omega, read from *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, *Case for Christianity*, *What the Bible Is All About*, etc.

Lunch time: Mom reads history to kids from secular and Christian history sources

After lunch: Kids listen to character stories while playing or doing another chore session (depending on ages)

Afternoon: Two youngest listen to Bible quiz tape while doing an extra job or two; youngest two read Family Bible Library together; older ones do independent work with Bible-based curricula, such as CQLA, Apologia Science, etc.

Late afternoon: Mom reads creation science book, Christian poetry, and character stories to the younger ones

Early evening: Kids listen to character story tapes while either fixing dinner, doing a load of laundry, or setting the table

Evening: Bible talk with Dad; older kids' discipleship meetings with Mom and/or Dad; family worship a couple of times a week; family read aloud a couple of times a week from a Christian novel or "fun book" like *95 Animals of the Bible* or *It Couldn't Just Happen*

Late evening: Mom and Dad read Bible together and/or Christian discipleship type or parenting/homeschooling book; children reading biographies, Bible books, etc. or listen to character or Bible tapes

This has changed over the years (sometimes more worship type activities, sometimes more Bible memory, sometimes more focus on creation science, etc.), but the same structure is there: one of our primary reasons for homeschooling is to teach our children God's Word and God's Ways, so our day should be filled with it.

A funny thing happened when Kayla was in her freshman year of ministry school last year. She was taking a class called hermeneutics in which they learned how to study the Bible. Now Kayla is a Bible scholar-in-training on her own, having read over a thousand Christian books during her school years and studying the Bible extensively herself. (She is studying to be a missionary/evangelist/Bible teacher, after all.) But when she was in this class, she already knew most of what was taught—either through our homeschooling or her own studies. At the end of the semester when she met with her professor, he asked her if she learned much in any of the four Bible classes that year, and she humbly said that she did learn some things, but her parents had already taught her most of it (which I think is hysterical considering she knows ten times more about the Bible than I do, at least, and I didn't even know what the word hermeneutics meant when she began the course!). Anyway, he went on to say that he understood how that could be in Old Testament and New Testament, but she probably didn't already know the information in hermeneutics, right? She said that we had studied that, too, and that her parents taught her how to study the Bible using charts, graphs, concordances, dictionaries, root word studies, etc. He was shocked to say the least. (I was especially proud of Kayla for *not* telling him that one of the books used in hermeneutics in their Bible college (that another teacher used for this class) was one of her sixth grade Bible study books! By the way, that book was Kay Arthur's book, *How to Study the Bible*.)

The point to this lengthy discourse is that the Bible and its teachings must be central to our homeschools; otherwise, we are not following the admonition in Deuteronomy to teach these things all throughout the day and night any better than families whose kids go to school all day. We have to make it a commitment that academics or busy-ness will not crowd out the teaching of God's Word and ways.

The second aspect of keeping God's Word and ways central to our homeschool is character training. When people think of character training, they often think of studying character materials, which is only a small part of

character training—probably the least important part, actually. We have found that excellent character training involves several key things:

- I. Modeling godly character for our children
- II. Studying godly character in books, focusing on how we are to have the mind of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit, emphasizing that as Christians we have obligations to live out those characteristics we are reading about
- III. Expecting and reinforcing godly character at home with those closest to us before other privileges are earned with those outside our home
- IV. Discussing character and a biblical lifestyle constantly---and I do mean constantly
- V. Punishing (when appropriate) and giving consequences for poor character
- VI. Keeping our children away from situations that would thwart character training in their lives—until readiness for those situations has been achieved (which, we feel, is much later than most of us think!)
- VII. Giving children opportunity to practice godly character—thoroughness in household work, resourcefulness in serving, diligence in schoolwork, deference to siblings, etc.
- VIII. All of the above again and again

Modeling godly character for our children. The first way to teach godly character is, of course, the most challenging one--but probably the most vital one. We simply cannot expect anything of our children that we ourselves do not have in our lives. Period. Children can spot hypocrisy a mile away. How many times have we told our children to do something that we are not able or willing to do ourselves? How many times have we told our children to stop a certain behavior that we do? If adults in their lives cannot have self-control, reliability, diligence, perseverance, etc., how can they, as children, have those?

Study godly character in books, focusing on how we are to have the mind of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit, emphasizing that as Christians we have an obligation to live out those characteristics we are reading about. CQLA, *Character Sketches*, *The Power for True Success*, KONOS, and other character-based materials are excellent for studying character—seeing what God has to say about a quality, observing how it is or is not displayed in someone’s life (especially Bible characters and godly heroes), studying the presence of or lack of the quality in the lives of animals and the physical world, discovering ways to apply the virtue in our lives and homes, and much more. Reading character materials should provide the “why” for godly living and character training—teaching our children that we try to exhibit the fruit of the spirit and have godly character because we are born again—and God calls us to. The “how” is developed, in part, by studying the quality as described above, but this is just the beginning. Seeing that Moses demonstrated great loyalty is important, but understanding how loyalty can be played out in our lives and our relationships with others is even more important. Yes, knowing that Moses was loyal (and the story surrounding that) is a start—we can build from that start in explaining how we can be loyal, but character study in books cannot be replaced by discussing character right where we are (see below).

Expect and reinforce godly character at home with those closest to us before other privileges are earned with those outside our home. We are doing our children a grave disservice when we assume that when they grow older, they will be kinder, more attentive, more responsible, etc.—and then let them have privileges that should be reserved for those who show godly character to those closest to them first. If a child cannot be kind to his siblings, he has no right to play with friends. If a child is not diligent at home in his work, he has no business serving outside of the home. Character begins at home. I am not suggesting that our children have to be perfect in order to leave the house, but they should be known for their good character at home—which will qualify them to have outside friendships, serve others, etc. We see this rooted in the verses that explain that we should begin our service in our hometown, then expand from there. Or the ones that say *he who is faithful in little will be given more.*

Discuss character and a biblical lifestyle constantly---and I do mean constantly. After modeling godly character for our children (not perfectionism, but being “characterized” by Christian character) and teaching them about the attributes, we must talk about character (as well as all of the Bible and biblical principles) all the time. Following are some tips we have found for this, but we must develop open lines of communication with our children in all areas in order for them to listen to our instruction in godly living.

1. Talk about how a character quality can be lived in your home with your children after studying a certain quality in a book. “Okay, we can see how the men who lowered their friend through the roof to be healed were resourceful, let’s see how we can be resourceful right here at home.” Then extend that to being resourceful in other situations, as well. (Many families have a character quality of the week or month that they are studying, trying to practice, and reporting on at the evening meal.)
2. Discuss how godly character was displayed or wasn’t displayed by others. Your children must understand that when you do this, this is family talk, but we have found it to be extremely effective. You are not trying to put others down by doing this. You are recognizing both negative and positive character—and using it for a teaching tool. Another advantage in doing this is helping our children discern the types of people they should or should not befriend. To do this, we usually ask our children when we leave an event, “How did someone show good character while we were there?” And they will quickly point out that someone was kind to a younger sibling, obeyed a parent immediately, helped clean up after the meal, etc. We continue with, “How did someone not show good character while we were there?” And again, they quickly point out that someone excluded a younger sibling, rolled his eyes at his mom, behaved inappropriately towards someone of the opposite gender, etc. We then discuss why these behaviors are good and why they are bad—what the Bible says about them, what proper responses would be, etc.
3. Talk about good character and behavior during non-conflict times. We have a tendency to wait until there is a problem, then begin giving a long list of bad

character that this child is having. Our training will go a lot further if we talk about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior when a child is not behaving poorly. Now, obviously, when negative character is being displayed, it must be dealt with (see below); however, when we discuss and train during non-conflict time, we avoid confrontations—and have a prior teaching time to refer to when discussing good or bad character later—“Do you remember when I was telling you about the new guy at work who works so diligently? Well, he doesn’t have anything on you, Mr. Diligent!” Or, unfortunately, “Do you remember how we were discussing the importance of being counted on the other day? When you do not follow through on moving the laundry around, I can’t count on you. I want you to be the type of person who can be counted on—in little things like moving the laundry—and then later in big things when you are a dad yourself.”

4. Talk about expectations ahead of time. This is especially important in younger children, but all children can benefit from knowing what is expected of them. Tell your children what you expect behavior-wise in any given day. (“Today is a busy day with piano lessons this afternoon and company tonight, so we all need to be especially diligent and prompt in all of our jobs.”) Tell them what is expected when you are doing anything out of the ordinary—using this as a teaching time to teach deference (“Since there will be many elderly people at the Christmas dinner, you need to move slowly (no running!) so you don’t run into one of them”); resourcefulness (“Look for ways to bless the people who prepared the food for us, even if it is just warm words.”); self-control (“Do not take more than a spoonful of each food until everyone fills his plate”); selflessness (“We should let others go first in the line during the dessert night as others should get the biggest and best pieces; remember, that is what Jesus would do.”), etc. When our older children were younger, every time we got in the van to go to something and every time we were having company, we would have the same routine: “Who are the most important people who will be there tonight?” Ray or I would ask. The children would answer: “My brothers and sisters!” “Who should you guard and look after?” “My brothers and sisters!” “Who should you defend and help?” “My brothers and my sisters!” “Who are your best friends tonight and every where you go?” “My brothers and my sisters!” We always told the children that if they could not show godly character to their family, they could not grow up to be godly husbands and wives. A funny thing just happened the other day that reminded me of these times. I was asking one of the girls what she thought of a certain young man. (With three girls, ages twenty, nineteen, and sixteen, a lot of our discussions end up being about the character or lack of character of young men! ☺) Anyway, I asked her where she thought this young man would fall on the “marriageable meter”—a family joke we have about potential future husbands having to “make the grade on Mom and Dad’s marriage meter.” Anyway, she said that she used to think this guy had potential as a good husband (not necessarily hers, but in general) until she heard him talking disrespectfully to his mother, then she knew he wouldn’t. See, all of those character discussions are paying off! ☺

5. Discuss what the Bible says about certain behaviors and character traits. The mantra “What would Jesus do?” has more truth than we realize—in our lives and our children’s lives. Everything our children do should be viewed through the lenses of God’s Word.

6. Discuss cause and effect of good character and bad character. Sometimes our children will learn these on their own—but preparing them for them will a) help them learn some of these lessons without having to go through them (!) and b) give them a frame of reference when a negative effect results from their wrong choices. This just happened the other day with our youngest, who came to me in tears and said, “Mommy, it’s just like you said when you told me that nobody wants to be around someone who is selfish and that nobody will want to be my friend if I don’t quit being selfish. It’s true, Mommy, it’s true. Josiah just told me that I couldn’t play with him because I keep wanting the best for myself all of the time.” He had a point of reference on which to base the effect of his negative behavior.

7. Talk about the blessings of following God’s Word and ways. Sometimes we don’t have what I would call “character lessons”; we just talk—we talk about how God is blessing one of them for their good choices, how they are paying for their lack of wisdom in staying up too late the night before an early test; how much their dad and I want God’s best for them—and the only hope they have of seeing that is in following God—and living out his character in their lives.

Punish (when appropriate) and give consequences for poor character. Sometimes “talk is cheap,” so to speak. We have gone over and over a certain expectation recently in one of our children. We’ve done everything in that list above, and we still have a lingering negative character trait that is affecting the entire family. This particular quality must be turned around in order for this child to follow God’s will in his/her life. (How was that for discretion? 😊) He/she will never accomplish much in life for God or for his/her family without these important qualities of thoroughness and dependability. It is up to us as parents to guide and direct this child’s behavior. We must use consequences (and probably drastic ones like taking away something dear, which I hate doing as I turn into a softy when it comes to leaving a child out of something fun the family is doing!) in order to help this child learn these character qualities. It is quite possible it will result in punishment (rather than just consequences) as it is quickly leaving the “childishness” category and moving into direct disobedience. Poor character and behavior must be dealt with.

Keep our children away from situations that would thwart character training in their lives—until readiness for those situations has been achieved. In this “hurry-up-and grow up” culture we live in, we put our children in situations with other children, non-family adults, and others long before they are ready to handle them. We keep our children home from school in order to avoid negative socialization, then we drop that good discernment in choosing our children’s activities (ten second graders staying overnight together, unsupervised most of the time?). A “good” friend in children (one in which children pledge their loyalty to and confide in) can be the literal undoing of much character training. I don’t have the time or space to go into this in the detail it needs right now, but I admonish you to carefully guard your children for longer than you think you need to!

Give children opportunity to practice godly character—thoroughness in household work, resourcefulness in serving others, deference in sibling relationships, diligence in schoolwork, etc. As our children have opportunity to practice godly character, we have opportunity to reinforce, add to, and direct that character. They see the fruit of good character in a home in which love is spoken and good character is appreciated. They will desire to please their parents. They will want to make their siblings happy by helping and encouraging—as they do the right thing and receive affirmation and encouragement for it. Not all of the time; we don’t expect our children to be little robots. But we should instill character in them in such a way that they desire to do what is right. When our older children were little and we had family meetings, Ray would tell the children that he was going to do what the Lord did to the churches in Revelation—tell them the good things the church was doing followed by something the Lord saw that needed improvement. Ray would then point out many of the ways they practiced good character—the things he and I saw them do in their housework, relationships to others, schoolwork, etc., then he would give the one thing to work on. (It was a bit more dramatic than this!) It was through their daily ins and outs and the opportunities they had to show responsibility, loyalty, kindness, resourcefulness, diligence, etc. that we could train them in even more character.

I hope I haven’t made this whole process sound simplistic; it isn’t. It is a day by day, hour by hour process. I hope I haven’t given the impression that we are experts at it with no difficulties. That is far from the truth. I have called Ray at work crying because of a child’s bad behavior/poor character twice in the past month. A child has called Ray at work even more often than that to “talk.” Raising children for the Lord is the most challenging job we will ever have—it lasts for years and years and involves so much emotional and spiritual energy. But it is what we are called to do; we cannot shirk our responsibilities—or we are not modeling the character of Christ. Over and over again in Scripture, parents are admonished to train their children in God’s ways—including godly character.

The final way of making God and His Word central to our homeschools is to teach our children a Christian worldview. It sounds like it should be easy if we're doing the first two—teach them the Bible and teach them godly character, and they will have a Christian worldview—but it doesn't quite happen like that. I like to think of teaching children a Christian worldview as the *application* of the first two on a much grander scale—applying the Bible teaching and character training to our world. However, application, as we adults who try and try to apply what we learn at church, in our reading, and at seminars well know, is the most challenging part of learning.

For instance, a Christian worldview, in my opinion, would teach children to see the sanctity of life. We teach them when life begins, according to the Bible and the basics of conception. Then we teach them that abortion is murder because of when a baby becomes a “human.” However, if we stop at that—and we have untempered, prophet-like children—we can end up with a child who thinks it is okay, for instance, to bomb an abortion clinic because they are committing murder there. We have not taken the worldview teaching and combined it with our Bible teaching and character training on the large scale that is needed.

Teaching children a Christian worldview involves learning the how's and why's of what we believe. It involves taking that Bible teaching and character training and going one step further. It involves sociology, history, science, current events, and much more. It involves seeing what the world says about sociology (marriage, homosexuality, friendship, etc.), history (beginning of the world, treatment of people groups throughout history, policy decisions, wars, etc.), science (creationism, age of the earth, proof that there is a divine creator and a literal seven days of creation, etc.), current events (abortion, ending life ourselves, political persuasions, etc.)—and comparing that to what God's Word says.

Thankfully, there are people around the world today who work tirelessly to help us teach these things to our children. There are Christian scientists, researchers, historians, and more who are out there doing the legwork to prove that God's Word is true and lines up with the way the world really came into being, etc. These people are available to help us help our children have a Christian worldview and be able to defend their faith.

I have never felt qualified to teach Christian worldview. For one thing, for years and years, I stayed home four days a week teaching and training my children; rarely saw non-Christians; never watched television, read the newspaper, or listened to the radio; and much more. I didn't have a good education in history and science when I was in school (but am getting better as I teach these things to and learn these things with my children; by the time we graduate Jacob I should finally be well-educated!). I'm not saying that it was bad to be so consumed in my home—it was the way it was. Ray worked sixty to seventy hours a week in the business world, and we had many small children. It was what I was supposed to be doing at the time. However, because of my isolation, so to speak, and my lack of training, I didn't feel like I could teach these important things to my children at all, since I had no grasp on them myself.

Then we met Ken Ham. I will never forget the convention in Indianapolis, Indiana in which Ken Ham, this incredible Australian, Christian apologetics scientist and researcher spoke. We drank it all in. We had no idea how to teach our children that God really created everything in seven days, that the earth is only a few thousand years old, that dinosaurs and animals lived together, that dating methods used by worldly scientists are often absurdly inaccurate, etc. etc. We bought tapes of every one of his sessions and loaded our basket with creation science books. That convention was the beginning of many conventions in which Ray would come home and get the children out of bed at midnight (on a church night!) and show them new books, tell them what he learned, and read to them from some of the books. (Last year, I had the opportunity to speak at a convention in which the two keynote speakers were Gregg Harris and Ken Ham, two people who have been instrumental in our homeschool success. I teared up every time I walked by one of them. It was such an honor to be speaking at the same convention with two people who played vital roles in life changing aspects of our family.)

Anyway, thus began our worldview teaching. That was followed closely by our attendance at a worldview conference, then debate training, etc. etc. Here is a list of some of the resources/helps/methods we have used in teaching our children a Christian worldview:

1. Ask them questions. (Is this a common theme in teaching? I guess it must be since Jesus, the master Teacher, modeled it for us over and over!) We like to ask the kids what they think of something and why. What proof do they have? What does the Bible say? etc. etc. This leads to discussion, which is the next point. (Now our children—of all ages—ask us questions to start discussions. On the way home from church the other day, one of the little boys asked what everyone in the van’s definition of hero was; an interesting, God-filled discussion followed that. And the “teachers” didn’t even start it!)
2. As I have pointed out (repeatedly!) in earlier sections, one of the best ways to teach our children is to discuss everything with them. We have made this a way of life in our family, to the point that there is no peace around here! Everyone is constantly discussing everything. (Side note here: Joshua (first born, 24 year old, married, lives nearby) is at our house this evening working on his taxes with Ray. He took Josiah’s (age 11, fifth grade, sixth of seven children) root beer and started drinking it after telling Josiah that if Josiah gave him part of his root beer, he would answer any questions he had about President Garfield and John Browne (which Josiah had been bugging him about the entire time Joshua was trying to do his taxes!).) Discussion is an important aspect of teaching and should be implemented especially in worldview teaching. This is very true of question, then discussion, question, then discussion, etc., causing the children to answer questions and arrive at their conclusions as everyone responds and interacts.
3. Reading aloud followed by discussion (or interrupted with discussion around here!). Ray and I realized early on that we knew very little about these important subjects that we needed to teach our children. We constantly took them to museums and just told them that the signs were lies and they shouldn’t believe them. We told them that those things are against the Bible—not what God teaches. However, we didn’t know why; we didn’t know there was proof corroborating what God’s Word says. Books by many of the authors and sources below have helped us to teach those important answers. We have been reading aloud to the children

from those (and other spiritual and discipleship type books) for many years. (As a matter of fact, Kayla told me just recently that she first knew that she could not live her life for herself but should devote her life to full time Christian service when we were reading aloud from a book by Philip Yancey when she was eleven years old. I don't even remember reading that book! I can't stress enough how important these teaching times are—worldview, Bible-training, character, etc.!)

4. Tapes and dvds—We began collecting cassette tapes of speakers we heard at conventions and seminars and bringing them home to listen to while we worked all together or while the kids played with legoes, etc. The older kids got a taste early on for listening to speakers and learning from oral input only. They loved Ken Ham, SM Davis, Diana Waring, Duane Gish, and many more. Even my less academic child couldn't get enough of Ken Ham's Australian accent! In the past five years or so, we began collecting worldview and apologetic dvd's (from sources below also). We need help teaching these things, and we're not too proud to get it.
5. Likemindedness—Whatever kind of people we surround our children with determines, to a large extent, the worldview they will develop. If they are in groups of young adults who are devoted to Christ and ministry, they will more likely catch the fire for that. If they are around kids with poor character, that will often be part of who they become. The same thing is true with worldview teaching. Children are so impressionable. If they are with children who are receiving the same type of teaching at home, they will grow in their worldview. I love to hear our son, who is taking Apologia Biology, discuss it with other students taking the same course. Iron sharpens iron! However, it has also been our experience that many students who are more "heady" and well-versed in critical thinking and apologetics often lack the godly character to go with those excellent minds. They can be puffed up, lacking the intimacy and relationship that being a Christian really means. Those types of attitudes need focused on in character training in the same way that laziness or unkindness does. We have a tendency to overlook poor character in the form of pride, arrogance, and condescension when it is coupled with something good—like a strong Christian worldview or deep critical thinking skills.
6. Debate and apologetic speaking training—Eight years ago, our sixteen year old son (first born, Joshua) heard of something called homeschool debate. We started out slowly, and within a year we were teaching our own children, others' children, classes, and parent seminars about teaching and coaching homeschool speech and debate. A couple of years into our speech and debate journey, I heard Christy (Farris) Shipely (Mike Farris' daughter) speak at the national homeschool speech and debate tournament. She said something that stopped me in my tracks—and made me realize that I must, and I must teach my children to, have a strong faith—and to base that faith on the total of God's Word, not on my preference, peer pressure, or my circle of friends. In summary, she told the students there that they must have an answer for the hope that is within them—and their answer should not be one in which they choose a view or persuasion, then randomly choose Scripture

to go with that view or persuasion. That is exactly what I had done my entire Christian life! I heard something that I agreed with, then I picked the verses or biblical principles that went with that belief. This is what the world does! How often do we hear non-Christians quoting “judge not and be not judged” in defense of homosexuality? How often do we hear the world quoting “we are free indeed” in defense of choosing to be involved in immorality or promiscuity? Debate training has taught us (and helped us teach our children) to base our convictions on the whole of God’s Word and His principles instead of creating our convictions and finding isolated verses to back up our convictions.

We must be careful, however, that in pursuing group activities, like homeschool speech and debate (or any group activity for our young people—youth group, Teenpact, Sunday school, etc.) that the teaching there definitely outweighs any negatives of peer interaction and peer influence. Even seemingly “good kids” in homeschool speech and debate or other activities can lack character training and godly convictions (thus negating our training, as mentioned in “likemindedness” above). This is one of the reasons that we have poured so much of ourselves into speech and debate over the past several years. We wanted this for our children—and most things that are good that we want for our children require us—our time, sacrifice, money, and effort (especially if you are trying to be the primary influencers of your children, rather than having other young people be the primary influencers).

7. Seminars and conventions---We began with worldview seminars and worldview weekends, followed by creation weekends, and went from there. (Yes, we spend a lot of our money on books, school, training, and family. Both of our vehicles have close to or more than 200,000 miles on them; our only couch cost \$40 (no joke!); and most of our clothes come from thrift stores—because our money, right now, is better spent on our children’s training.) Nowadays, there are worldview weekends and conferences all around the country. There are numerous websites by those who sponsor these training opportunities that can help us train our children. (I even saw recently where Worldview Weekend has their conference on dvd for a very affordable price for the entire set.)
8. Sources: I will list several of our favorite speakers/books, etc. below. This is not an exhaustive list, by any means, but hopefully, it will help you get started. Also, we are a little out of touch with “who’s who” out there now as we are enjoying the “trickle down effect” that comes from training older children in these things and allowing that training and teaching to “trickle down” onto younger ones. (Two of our middle children just completed a one semester apologetics class that Kayla taught!) Thus, we aren’t out there attending as many things as we did ten years ago.

a. Children's books—When we first heard Ken Ham, we picked up a stack of children's picture books that helped us teach our children (and secretly to learn ourselves!) about dinosaurs, cave men, the ice age, the age of the earth, proof for literal creation, etc.). They have boatloads of them now. I'm sure you can do a search of "children's creation books" and get a list. There is usually at least one creation based ministry at large homeschool conventions, and often more than that. I would start with these books as early as age three or four. Some of them have more text than others, so it is good to be able to leaf through the books in person to find what is age appropriate for preschoolers. Here are some children's book titles from books on our shelves to get you started. (Note: TFT does not carry any of these children's books (we don't have the space or the funds to carry many non-TFT materials); some of the creation science providers/web sites listed later in this article do carry these books.)

- i. *Noah's Ark and the Ararat Adventure* by John D. Morris
- ii. *Dinosaurs and the Bible* by David Unfred
- iii. *The Caring Creator* by Carine Mackenzie
- iv. Wonders of Creation series by Master Books; these are Usborne-looking Christian science books (*The Astronomy Book*, for example)
- v. *What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs* by John Morris and Ken Ham
- vi. *Life Before Birth* by Gary Parker
- vii. *D Is for Dinosaur* by Ken and Mally Ham (good preschool book)
- viii. *Skeletons in Your Closet* by Gary Parker
- ix. *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible* by Paul S. Taylor (excellent to read to elementary age students)

- x. *Daddy, Is There Really a God?* By John Morris
- xi. *Life in the Great Ice Age* by Michael and Beverly Oard (my personal favorite; I got such an education from this book about cave men, Noah, the ice age, and much more!)

- b. Non-children's books—Our first non-children's creation book is the one we carry: *Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation*. It is like a "young adult and adult Christian Usborne book"! It is incredibly user friendly and quite informative. However, this is only one of literally hundreds available. Nearly all of the authors from the children's book list above also write books for older children and adults. Check out the providers and websites in the website list below. (I still remember vividly ten years ago when Joshua and Kayla were fourteen and eleven and saved all of their money for weeks and weeks and weeks and placed a four hundred dollar order from Answers in Genesis. They were like kids in a candy store when their boxes of books arrived!)
- c. Christian textbooks—For many homeschoolers, Christian textbooks are a given, but in case you haven't been using truly, literal seven day creation sources to teach your child, you need to switch! We don't personally use science textbooks for our younger children, but our middle school and high school students have been enjoying Apologia science textbooks.
- d. Apologetic material providers and websites—Some of these are more "worldview-oriented" in terms of applying Christianity to our current world, and some of these are more creation science oriented. Either way, they will help us to teach our children to be "ready to give an answer."

- i. Answers in Genesis (AIG)—Ken Ham’s ministry; awesome monthly mailings, magazines, hundreds of books, dozens of video courses for all ages and groups (get some for Sunday school!), cassettes and cd’s, children’s books, and a catalog to drool over. (We do carry a dvd set by Ken Ham, though they have dozens and dozens of others besides the basic set that we offer.)
- ii. Institute for Creation Research (ICR)—similar to AIG; many, many books, including *Unlocking the Mystery of Creation*
- iii. Summit Ministries---worldview training for upper level teens (two week training camps); home study courses, and much more (David Nobel)
- iv. Master Books—many creation science books available from this publisher; they’re lovely and user-friendly
- v. Worldview Weekend—family and teen weekend seminars all over the country, as well as longer, more detailed seminars in certain locations; this is what we started with years ago; they have dvd’s and cd’s of their seminars; these would be excellent to do as a family for devotions or with a group of young people
- vi. Jeff Myers—teacher/speaker at worldview conferences; has excellent weekly e-newsletters (Getting Ready to Lead)
- vii. Josh McDowell---Older students should all read his *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*; he has many, many apologetics/faith defending materials for all ages
- viii. Lee Stroebel—Has multiple strong, faith building and faith defending books, some of which Joshua and Kayla are using in their Apologetics cottage classes; we just got *A Case for Faith* on cd for one of the kids for Christmas, and it is fantastic; some titles include *A Case for Christ*; *A Case for Faith*; *A Case for Christmas*

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