

Curriculum Thoughts

Written by Corinne

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How in the world do you go about choosing and evaluating a curriculum? I never really considered myself an expert on this area, but as time has passed and I find my opinion asked frequently about these things, I thought it merited an entry here. There are several different methods of approaching homeschooling and if you want a more exhaustive treatment, please check the local library for a book as I'm sure you're not here for that!

We are using what I call a "salad bar" approach - a little of this and that to make up a final product that suits our family, educational goals, personality and budget. Loosely following Jessie Wise Bauer's "Well Trained Mind" approach, the following is a list of curriculum we use.

Math: Horizons (<http://www.aophomeschooling.com/horizons/overview.php>) Grammar:
Rod & Staff (<http://www.rodandstaffbooks.com>)
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Reading: Victory Drill & other misc. like A Beka readers... (<http://www.victorydrillbook.com>)
)

Spelling: Spelling Power (<http://www.spellingpower.com>)
Penmanship/Handwriting: A reason for Handwriting (<http://www.areasonfor.com>) and for Alethia
(5th grade+) the Horizons Handwriting (same link as math)

History: Story of the World (<http://www.welltrainedmind.com/store>)
)

Science: God's Design for Science (<http://www.answersingenesis.org>)
)

I usually purchase from rainbow resource (<http://www.rainbowresource.com>) as I can get my books for slightly cheaper and sometimes even free shipping. They also have a great deal of supplementary items as well as excellent reviews which can be very helpful when wading through the great volume of resources and curriculums out there.

Some of the key issues for our family has been the looking at curriculums that answer the

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following questions:

1. Can I understand, logically follow and translate the material to my children? (that is, can I teach this?)
2. Is it accomplishing our goals? (Does it reinforce the educational philosophy I've adopted and our family values or is it at odds with this)
3. Is it do-able in a reasonable time frame? (i.e. will it exasperate the kids OR me, can it be done with multiple age levels, etc.)
4. What is the objective of the lessons? (many have a lot of "seat work" which helps in the classroom environment, but frustrates at home)
5. Is the curriculum affordable? (not just in my current budget, but can I re-use it with other children, does it have resale value, can I use it multiple years or with multiple ages, etc.)

Well, these are some initial thoughts and I'm sure more will come to me in the future so as time progresses I'll let you know any changes or additional thoughts.

{comments on}