



We Homeschool Because...

Listed below is just a sampling of some of the many and varied reasons our members choose homeschooling for their families—often through high school graduation.

History

Formal public schooling did not become widely established in the United States until the advent of the Industrial Revolution. At this time, the concept of mass public education in our country was born, shifting away from the traditional role of parents as primary educators of their children. The Vatican expressly supports the role of parents as primary educators, properly reflecting what has been the norm in education through most of human history.

The Big Two: Faith & Academics

Perhaps these are the two biggest reasons that families choose to homeschool. They are, arguably, the two issues that a truly excellent school could help satisfy, although most of us would note that we have yet to find a school that meets our standards in all aspects of both these areas.

- **Transmission of the Faith**

Faithful Catholics agree that it can be difficult to find a school that teaches the Faith in a manner which is not watered down, in a manner which is in keeping with the Magisterium, and in such a way that students are emboldened to rise up and defend their Faith to a world that will try to shake it.

- **Excellence in Academics**

Homeschoolers, on average, score significantly higher on SAT tests than do students in public schools and in religiously-affiliated private schools. Homeschooling works academically, which explains, in part, the high rate at which colleges are recruiting homeschoolers over any other group of incoming freshman.

Beyond the Big Two:

The following are the areas in which many of us believe even a spiritually- and academically-excellent school cannot compete with a good homeschool.

- **Moral Surroundings & Safety**

Homeschoolers commonly cite moral and safety reasons for their decision to homeschool. Even in excellent Catholic schools where drug and alcohol use and sexual conduct is minimal, negative peer pressure exists. No school setting is immune from this, and for many families, it is not worth the price to place their children in such an environment eight or more hours a day, in the place of the alternative nurturing home environment.

- Family-Centered Education**

Homeschooling promotes living, learning, and playing together in a seamless way. Rather than rushing to school in the morning, being separated during the day, dashing to activities after school, and then overseeing homework before bedtime at night, with little time leftover for family interaction, homeschoolers enjoy the time to develop family bonds. For homeschoolers, evening time can be reserved for family time, as school work is completed during the day. When families of children at even excellent Catholic schools report that they have to “de-program” their kids when they arrive home after school and try to get their children’s heads in “family mode” after being away with peers all day, homeschoolers nod their heads in understanding. This is part of why we homeschool—for that continuity in family learning and that seamless nurturing of family relationships, and so that we don’t have to “de-program” our children who have been with peers all day. Commitment to family is simply more difficult to nourish when students are running in different directions.
- Parental Oversight and Bonding**

Even the most diligent parent of a schooled child will not know everything that happens in the classroom during the day. Even the most in-tune parent who establishes connections with teachers will not always be on top of what his student is learning, making homework oversight challenging at times. Homeschooled parents, by contrast, know exactly what their children are learning. This close educational connection between parents and their homeschooled children fosters dynamic educational conversations and interactions that can occur at any time of the day and results also in an ability to weave complementary educational opportunities into the curriculum as they arise.
- Flexibility**

Homeschooling offers flexibility unavailable in a school setting. Homeschoolers may follow the standard school year, or they may choose to educate year-round, taking substantial breaks for vacations or liturgical seasons and then making up for those breaks by educating during the summer or at other times. Homeschoolers can take advantage of lower travel rates during the traditional school year, because they establish their own schedule, satisfying the required number of school hours in a number of different ways. Homeschoolers can take family time when a new baby arrives or a grandparent is ill, making up those hours later in the school year, all while teaching the children the value of family service. When homeschooling, education can happen at any time of the day or week, a beautifully flexible system which is especially helpful in larger families.
- Parental Influence**

Studies indicate that parents of school-age children typically have just a few minutes each day for meaningful interaction with their children. With getting the children to and from school, running them to activities, making meals, packing lunches, and overseeing homework, it is no wonder. The school year is one big rat race. Yet for homeschoolers, that rat race is minimized, while time with family is maximized. Parents have such a small window of time in which to influence the moral development of their children. Homeschooling maximizes that window to the good of the child.
- Avoidance of Age Segregation**

Placing children in age-segregated classrooms teaches children, by implication, that peers are more important than families. Indeed, students will spend far more awake-hours with peers in this setting than with parents and family. In the course of human history, the period in which children have been taught in age-segregated classrooms is but a small blip, and it is not reflective of the wider world—the world into which our students will graduate. Age-segregating children into artificial subsets can stunt them socially and academically and perhaps explains the results of studies which show that

homeschooled students are much better socialized and more mature than students who attend school. Most homeschoolers feel that one of the great benefits of homeschooling is our ability to avoid the artificial age-segregation typical in today's schools, helping our students become better socialized and comfortable with people of all ages. Helping younger siblings and being helped by older siblings is one way in which this plays out in a typical homeschool.

- **Time to Do What Matters Most**

Classroom learning is, by its very nature, inefficient. This is simply due to the numbers of students in the classroom. Homeschools with fewer students can finish school work more quickly, allowing students to work at their own pace, and opening up part of the school day for other endeavors, academic or otherwise. Homeschoolers have famously excelled in areas like spelling bees, science competitions, music performance, book authorship, and more. It's amazing what happens when education takes place efficiently, leaving time for students to practice or pursue the subject areas and hobbies that they love. When a student is not relegated to the schedule of the classroom, great things are bound to happen.

- **Spontaneous Opportunities to Learn**

Because parents are the teachers, it is easy and natural for homeschool parents to take advantage of spontaneous teaching opportunities as they arise and to weave those teaching opportunities into the curriculum. In this way, parents are able to capitalize on special interests on the part of the student and strike while the iron is hot, possibly pursuing in-depth study when a child is particularly excited about a particular topic. A teacher in a classroom of fifteen or more children cannot do this for each student.

- **Curriculum Tailored to the Individual Child**

Homeschooling allows the parent to tailor education to each specific child in a way that a teacher cannot do for a class of ten or fifteen or twenty-five. This means that struggling learners can have their special education materials researched and hand-picked by the people who love them most in the world, while the gifted learners benefit from parent-selected curriculum that reflects their specific strengths. For families with exceptional learners on one end of the spectrum or the other, the ability to pick and choose curriculum provides great motivation to homeschool. Even for the average learner, great benefit exists in a loving parent choosing the curriculum that best suits the child.

- **Independent Learners**

One of the stated reasons that colleges like (and heavily-recruit) homeschoolers is because they are independent learners and self-starters. By the nature of the homeschool environment, where the child does not have to wait for the teacher's lecture to begin his school work, homeschoolers tend to become much more independent learners.

- **Feeding the Love of Learning**

The love of learning is not so easily nurtured in a "factory model" of learning where a classroom of students learns certain things in certain grades, keeping all students in lock-step. To the contrary, homeschooling allows gifted students to advance at their own pace and allows the fire for learning to be fed, rather than stunted in a classroom where the brightest learner is often held back by the class pace.

- **Opportunities Not Available to Traditionally-Schooled Kids**

Homeschooling is unique in its ability to offer students opportunities that are not available to traditionally-schooled kids. From our own homeschool group, students have worked for senators at the Capitol, interned at Relevant Radio, attended religious rallies, worked on political campaigns, established their own businesses, engaged in mission work, taken college courses, and much more—all during school hours. Homeschoolers are able to

take advantage of school-day opportunities that are simply not available to students in a classroom during the day, offering homeschoolers a depth and breadth of education unavailable elsewhere.

- **A Vocation to Teach Our Children**

Many homeschooling parents view homeschooling as a vocation to which they are called, and they feel privileged to be home teaching their children. For many homeschoolers, giving up the daily interaction they have with their children—watching them learn to read, teaching them to write persuasively, sharing in an intellectual discussion about the Catholic doctrine, discussing the political issues of the day as viewed through the lens of history studies—would be akin to torture. For many parents, they didn't raise their children for the first five years, only to hand them over to an educational system, no matter how "excellent" that system and its teachers may be. There are some parents who simply enjoy parenting and interacting with their children too much to place them in school eight hours a day, five days a week, thirty-six weeks out of the school year. To learn right alongside our children is a gift and an honor that only homeschooling parents can truly appreciate.