

CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLERS OF UNION COUNTY (CHUC)

“So that in everything He might have pre-eminence” Col. 1:18

New Membership Packet

Thank you for joining Christian Homeschoolers of Union County and welcome to the group! You have taken the right step in desiring to take the education of your children into your own hands. As parents, we want what is best for our children because we love them and have a personal interest in their lives. We also know that God has given us the duty for the proper upbringing of our children, including their education. It is an awesome responsibility, but it is also a privilege.

If this is your first homeschooling experience, there's no need to worry or be in a hurry. Take time to prayerfully consider your curriculum choices, your teaching style, and the structure of your new homeschool. Methods range from traditional to relaxed. The home provides a convenient, integrated learning environment. Every day is another opportunity to instill a love for learning that will last a lifetime. Materials for home education are plentiful and varied. They include textbooks, workbooks, unit studies, correspondence courses, video lessons, and computer instruction. Items from different sources may be combined to create your own “eclectic” curriculum. The annual state convention and curriculum fair provides an opportunity to view and purchase products from many different publishers. Libraries and bookstores have many home education how-to books as well.

There are over 1.5 million homeschoolers nationwide (including about 39,000 home educated students here in New Jersey), and the figure continues to grow. Homeschooled students as a group generally exceed national norms on standardized achievement tests. They demonstrate good real-life social skills and tend to relate better to people in all age groups. Many colleges and universities welcome homeschool graduates. This may be your first year of homeschooling, but at the same time it is not. From the moment our babies are born we are on a journey to teach them. We train them to walk, to talk, to say please and thank you, etc. So why should the “school” ages be any different? Now we teach them to read, write, study, be good citizens, etc. Just as the baby phase passes quickly, so do the school years. Enjoy!

Hopefully this membership packet will answer some of your questions and provide enough information to get you off to a good start. You are welcome to contact us via email at c.h.u.c.homeschooling@gmail.com or visit our website at www.chuc.org. Feel free to ask any other questions that are not answered here.

Sincerely,
The Board of Christian Homeschoolers of Union County

Who are we:

Christian Homeschoolers of Union County aka “C.H.U.C” was founded in 1989 to provide support to homeschooling families living in the Union County, New Jersey area. We have a current membership of around 50 families, including some from other counties. C.H.U.C provides member families with support and activities to enhance home school education, as well as opportunities to develop valuable connections with other homeschool families. C.H.U.C also provides information, support, and encouragement to those in the general public who are seeking information on home schooling. This group is governed by volunteer homeschooling parents who are elected to the General Board. Throughout the year, as a homeschool support group, we work together to enhance and help each other out in “our homeschooling journey.”

What to expect at our monthly meetings:

- Please make yourself comfortable and grab some coffee or tea.
- A welcome from the host with a quick devotional (sometimes a guest speaker or a special themed meeting).
- Quick monthly announcements will be made.
- We will then separate into small groups (elementary,middle school and high school) and chat for a little while.

Advantages of joining this local support group:

- Gain assistance and guidance in your homeschooling journey.
- Great encouragement and support from other homeschooling parents.
- Get to know like-minded families- with the same values, principles, etc.
- Receive advice from “veteran” homeschool moms.
- Allows more group opportunities to exchange ideas,plan group outings, and share in the overall experience of homeschooling!
- Great group discounts for activities (bowling,ice-skating,archery),field trips (zoo,museums,theatre), lessons.
- Stay current with what is occurring in our nation and know what laws and issues are occurring which are relevant to homeschooling, families and general important information.
- Informative emails, relative to homeschooling, tips, ideas, helps and support.
- Password protected members only access to our website.
- A “forum” through the website that helps members communicate with one another.
- Classified section where you can buy and sell items (homeschool or not) and much more...

New to Homeschooling...here are some answered questions...

Where do I begin?

Pray! Homeschooling requires commitment and diligence from parents as well as student,but the rewards are priceless.

Decision made...I'm ready to homeschool:

You are now administrator,principal, and teacher of your homeschool! Rest assured that there are plenty of resources available to help you successfully educate your child(ren).Beyond the enormous responsibility of your child’s education are the joys and rewards of watching your child learn, having time to enjoy and get to know your child, and being their source of character training and maturity, to name just a few.

Do I need to notify my school district if my child has never attended the public school system?

If your child has never been in the public school system, you do not need to inform your district of your plan to home school. Home schools in the state of NJ are not regulated by the state. As a homeschool, you are required to give an “equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school,” including the home. (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25) You are required to teach reading, math, spelling, grammar. You are not required to give standardized tests although many choose to do so.

Do I need to notify my school district?

If your child has attended public school, you will need to inform the school of your intent to home school to avoid any truancy violations. A notification form is available from HSDLA (www.hsdl.org) for this purpose. If you are

contacted concerning your home school for any reason, explain your choice as one that offers your children a positive educational experience. It is best not to speak negatively about public school. Be aware that you are not required to let anyone into your home without a warrant and it is best not to do so. You are also not required to have your curriculum examined or approved by anyone in the public school system.

How to choose curriculum?

Many home schoolers say that choosing curriculum is one of the most challenging aspects of home education. Your choices are many! Most curriculum suppliers offer merchandise catalogs. A partial list of suppliers, their numbers and some websites is attached. Suppliers' catalogues are usually free. Reference books by Cathy Duffy and Mary Pride offer curriculum evaluation as well as other information that may be helpful to new home schoolers. Be sure to check out the local library for some of these books and don't forget interlibrary loan if the book is not available at your branch! The public library does not have curriculum, but has many books about how to teach some subjects and also is a great source of informative books on any subject. Talk with other home schoolers, or, if possible, attend one of the book fairs held in your area. The more you read and the more you talk with veteran home schoolers, the easier it will be to discern the best curriculum for you and your child(ren). Most curriculums have teacher guides and/or lesson plans available. For those who prefer more guidance, umbrella schools provide curriculum, teacher support, record keeping and testing.

How much does it cost to homeschool?

The cost to home school each child varies considerably and can range from \$100 to \$1,000 per year. The dollar figure is usually proportional to the preparation time needed--the more the cost, the less preparation time required. You, the parent, know your home situation best. If you have several small children at home, you may need more help. Allow plenty of time for delivery of your curriculum (up to six weeks). Unless you choose an umbrella school, know that you are not locked into a particular curriculum or lesson plan. Family life is an important variable that you will want to accommodate in a reasonable fashion. It is a learning experience in and of itself.

How do I plan a homeschool schedule?

After choosing your curriculum, plan a calendar for your school. Choose a starting date and a finishing date. Allow for holidays, sick days, teacher planning days, field trips, extracurricular activities, etc. Some home schoolers operate on a year 'round plan and choose to home school only 4 days per week with holiday breaks throughout the year. Once you make your calendar, stick to it as much as possible. Gradually you will learn what works best for your family. Be patient with yourself and your students since you are all making adjustments. And don't be afraid of what you don't know. Many veteran home schoolers can tell you of the great joy and special bond between parent and child as they learn together.

This may sound silly, but what do I say to my friends, family and neighbors?

Prepare yourself for every eventuality before you begin this new adventure. It is very likely that you have already experienced questions from friends, family and neighbors as you have considered this excellent choice of education.

How do I become a member?

Review all the forms in your membership packet, hand in your signed membership agreement form with dues and request web membership by creating a family profile at www.chuc.org

