

HOMELINK HANDBOOK

2020-2021

School Year



Dear Homelink Families,

Welcome to the 2020-21 Homelink school year! Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly read the policies covered in this booklet. It is important that parents and students are familiar with the rules and policies. Students are expected to know the information in this booklet and respect all rules.

Homelink Purpose and Mission	3	Teacher Expectations	11
School Year	4	Supportive Role.....	11
Breaks.....	4	Safety.....	11
Inclement Weather.....	5	Curriculum and Materials.....	11
Organizational Structure	5	Grades.....	11
Student Expectations	5	Record Keeping.....	11
General Policies.....	5	Classroom Cleaning.....	11
Tardiness.....	7	Discipline and Standards for all	11
Dress Code Guidelines.....	7	Conflict Resolution	12
Parent Expectations	8	Younger Student Guidelines (10 & Under) ...12	
Tuition and Fees & Payment Plan.....	8	SHARE Library Information	13
Operations Fee.....	9		
Class Drop Policy.....	9		
Absenteeism.....	9		
Textbooks.....	9		
Tests/Quizzes.....	9		
Types of Courses.....	10		
Assignments and Homework.....	10		
Medical/Learning Concerns.....	10		
Drop Off Policy and After Care.....	10		

Statement of Purpose and Mission

Homelink is a SHARE sponsored, volunteer directed, university model learning center that meets in the St. Andrew Catholic School building in the South County area (309 Hoffmeister Ave., St. Louis, MO 63125). Homelink offers weekly classes, taught by qualified teachers/tutors in a tutorial setting. There are a variety of classes for all grades, but the majority are for middle and high school students.

Homelink is designed to help homeschoolers by providing

- * supplemental classes in a Christian environment.
- * classes with outside accountability for students.
- * assistance in classes which are more difficult to teach.
- * opportunities for students to work in groups.
- * an atmosphere to develop friendships among like-minded teens and families.

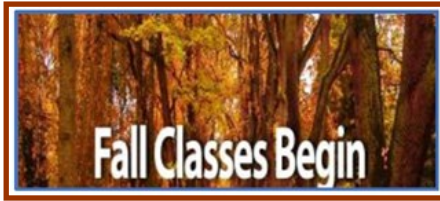
To parents we say: To attend classes at Homelink, you do not have to sign a statement of faith. Your students do not need to be Christians to take classes at Homelink. Please know that all of our teachers are professing Christians and their job is to teach their subject matter. However, there may be discussions initiated by the students in the classrooms that veer off the subject matter. Our teachers are permitted to give input based on their Christian worldview, but bring the conversation back to the topic being taught as soon as possible.

To students we say: If you are willing to abide by our rules, you are welcome to join us at Homelink.

We ask that both parents and students read this handbook so that expectations are known in advance by all.
Thanks!

2020-21 HOMELINK SCHOOL CALENDAR

First semester will go 14 weeks and
second semester will go for a total of 32 weeks!



Classes begin September 8 and 10.
After Labor Day!



Thanksgiving break, no classes Nov 24 or 26.



Last days of first semester are
December 15 and 17. Then 2 weeks off!



2nd semester classes begin January 5 and 7.



Spring break, no classes March 23 and 25.
*Please plan to attend the Great Homeschool
Convention on March 25-27, 2021.



Last day of classes May 11 and 13.



Any missed classes due to bad weather will be
done with Zoom class or other methods deemed
best by the individual teacher.

Inclement Weather Please check your email in the morning **BEFORE** you leave for class, especially if the weather is bad. We will not be following any school district's inclement weather plan but will be making the cancellation decision based on a number of factors. The decision to cancel Homelink classes will be sent out by 7:00 a.m. in a group email and on our text application. If you have an early class and need to leave your house before the weather decision email has gone out, please text, call, or email a teacher or director before leaving for Homelink.

Also, if you sign up for the **Remind App**, you will receive an immediate text about our decision.

Organizational Structure

Coordinator: Cathy Mullins is the Homelink Director. This is a VOLUNTEER position and she is available to address any questions or concerns you might have.

Cathy Mullins, Ekcmullins@gmail.com 314-769-7965

The S.H.A.R.E. Board is also involved in major decisions about Homelink.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

NOTE: Failure to adhere to the following policies may result in denial of participation of Homelink until the matter is corrected. Areas not mentioned or defined in the following statements will be left to the Director for interpretation and enforcement.

- 1. Everyone at Homelink is expected to practice the "Golden Rule"** as expressed in Matthew 7:12. *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."*
- 2. In order to enjoy continued freedom and unstructured socialization opportunities, students need to act maturely and govern their own behavior.** They are expected to obey and respect the rules and those in authority...even if they don't agree!
- 3. Students should strive to be honest, courteous, respectful, helpful, and kind to both adults and other students.** Bullying behaviors like mocking, mean-spirited teasing, gossiping, fighting, etc. will NOT be tolerated.
- 4. There is no running, unnecessary yelling, mock-fighting, shoulder rides, chair racing, gymnastics, wrestling, sports games, loud music or other disruptive behavior permitted *anywhere* in the building.** Students cannot sit on tables or stand on chairs and should avoid scratching the tile floors with furniture or crates.
- 5. Students with a break between classes must stay in the Cafeteria.** Students may not hang out in any other part of the building nor may they congregate outside without adult supervision or special permission from a Director or teacher. Students are allowed to use the Classical and Curriculum Libraries on the 2nd floor if a librarian is present. Students with an extended break between classes need to bring enough materials to keep themselves occupied (books, homework, board games, etc.). If a student cannot obey the building rules, a parent will be called to stay with their child or pick them up between classes. We also have lots of board games available for students to use.

6. Electronic devices like cell phones, MP3 players, tablets, hand-held games, and laptops are allowed in the Cafeteria as long as they do not disrupt students that are studying. They are **NOT** to be used in classrooms unless approved by the teacher for educational purposes. Speakers used to amplify music are not permitted.

Students are expected to monitor their internet use as instructed by their parents. **If a student breaks this rule or is caught watching or sharing inappropriate material, their electronic device will be confiscated and parents contacted.** Students will not be given our Wi-Fi password as this takes away usage capability from classroom use. If a parent needs the password, they will gladly be given it.

7. No student is allowed to make cell phone calls or send text messages during class unless there is an actual emergency. If they do so without permission, their cell phone will be confiscated and a parent must come and claim it from the teacher or Coordinator. Since Homelink classes are only once a week, it is vital that the students stay focused during class time and avoid distracting others.

8. For insurance and safety reasons, and to avoid the appearance of truancy, students are not allowed to leave the Homelink building and walk to the park, store, or other non-Homelink locations between classes. Students may wait outside of the building for pick-up, but they must stay inside the first set of yellow lines. No balls, roller blades, scooters, skateboards or bikes are allowed in the parking lot – or in the designated outdoor waiting area. For those students who drive themselves, this policy is altered. With parent permission a driving student may leave Homelink and/or return according to their class schedule. No student may drive another student unless we have parent approval.

9. For insurance and safety reasons, students age 10 and under must be closely monitored while in the Homelink building. Students age 10 and under should have a buddy when walking to the drinking fountain or the bathroom and they are not allowed to wait outside by themselves unsupervised.

10. No food or drink are permitted anywhere in the building except for in the specified dining area of the Cafeteria. Students cannot bring food or drink (with the exception of bottled water) into the classroom unless approved ahead of time by the teacher. Lunch may be eaten in the Cafeteria or outside with adult supervision. A microwave is available for student use. Students are not allowed in the kitchen unless it is for a class.

***STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST CLEAN UP AFTER THEMSELVES! This continues to be a problem and adults have had to stay to clean up the tables in the cafeteria. Please tell your children to throw their trash away and make sure that the table they were sitting at is empty of unwanted items, whether they items belong to them or not.**

11. Parents and student volunteers perform the custodial jobs at Homelink. St. Andrew has a part-time custodian for large jobs (mopping and cleaning bathrooms, etc.) but in our contract with the church we agreed to keep the building clean and in order. This is especially important because we share the building with the Catholic education classes and other St. Andrew programs. Before we leave each Tuesday and Thursday, everything must be cleaned and the classrooms rearranged, with many items put in storage cabinets. This job is much easier if everyone helps out and remembers to clean up after themselves before leaving the building. Any help setting up the cafeteria for the day is greatly appreciated. Please encourage your students to see the need and meet the need.

12. If a student does not have class on a particular day at Homelink, they are not allowed to come and hang out unsupervised. An exception would be if they had permission from a teacher or Director to work on a class project or a volunteer job. If a student wants to bring a visitor to Homelink, they MUST get permission from one of the Directors AHEAD OF TIME. Visitors must fill out the required paperwork and adhere to the Homelink rules at all times. The Homelink student needs to familiarize their guest with the Homelink policies and rules.

13. Appropriate language must be used at all times. Foul language will not be tolerated. Teachers, students, and other adults should bring any inappropriate language (or behavior) to the attention of the Directors. Appropriate language also applies to the topics being talked about. Students must refrain from discussing issues of the day such as homosexuality, transgenderism, and other touchy subjects that are inappropriate for younger students to hear.

14. No pairing off or public displays of affection are allowed. The main goal of Homelink is to provide homeschooled students with educational enrichment. Of course, we want the students to socialize and develop healthy relationships with each other, but no PDA (kissing, hand-holding, back rubs, sitting on laps, etc.) in or outside the building.

15. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. If a student knowingly plagiarizes in a Homelink class, the teacher will immediately notify the Directors. The student and parents will be required to attend a mandatory meeting with the teacher and Directors, where the next course of action will be decided. At the very least, the student will be expected to turn in revised work and make some type of restitution (community service hours at Homelink, etc.). There is a possibility of expulsion from Homelink without tuition refund. We want the students to be very aware of the consequences of plagiarism because it is not tolerated in colleges and universities.

16. If a student is found in possession of any type of weapon, tobacco, alcohol or drugs he or she will be asked to leave the premises immediately and will be considered for dismissal from the program. We don't anticipate this EVER happening but need to put it in writing!

Tardiness When students are late to class, it is disrespectful to the teacher, distracting to other students, and a waste of valuable time and money. It is understandable that students will occasionally be late due to traffic, siblings, illness, dentist appointments, carpools, etc. The tardiness policy was primarily established for those that are "purposefully" late to class (hanging out in the building or parking lot, etc.). The tardiness policy will remain as follows:

- *1st tardy = a warning and possible call to parents by the teacher
- *2nd tardy = a call to parents by the teacher and a Director
- *3rd tardy = student receive a zero for their work that day and parents will be notified
- *4th tardy = mandatory meeting with parents-if tardiness continues, student could be dismissed from the program

Dress Code Guidelines The Homelink Dress Code is designed to promote a serious academic atmosphere and eliminate potential distractions to learning. We do not want to stifle anyone's sense of style or limit their comfort, but are trying to help students make good decisions about their appearance in the Homelink setting. C.S. Lewis on modesty: *"A real desire to believe all the good you can of others and to make others as comfortable as you can will solve most of the problems."*

The Directors and teachers reserve the right to decide what is modest and appropriate for our atmosphere. What is allowed in the home, work or sports setting may not be the right fit for Homelink (No pun intended!). If a student's attire does not comply with the Homelink Dress Code, their parents will be contacted and asked to bring a change of clothing. If that is not possible, we have a variety of shirts, jackets, and other clothing they can borrow to wear for the day.

Here are the **Homelink Dress Code Guidelines** based on parent, student and teacher input. We also considered the dress codes of area schools, other homeschool learning centers, and several youth organizations.

Clothes must be clean.

No bare feet.

Pants, shirts, shorts, dresses and skirts should not be too tight. (Pinch the sides to make sure you can grab some fabric. If not, assume they are too tight for Homelink!)

Shorts, dresses, and skirts should not be too short. The Directors and teachers will determine what length is acceptable. Avoid short running shorts and wear longer basketball or soccer shorts.

Jeans, pants, and shorts should not have inappropriate holes or rips, and should be worn high enough so that the waistline is covered by a shirt and the underwear doesn't show. No "sagging!"

Shirts should not be too sheer, low-cut, tight, or short. tank tops, leotards, or camisoles should be worn under another shirt. No underwear or midriff showing.

All hats and caps should be removed during class, but can be worn in other parts of the building. (Some teachers may waive this rule.)

No clothing, jewelry or accessories that communicate offensive messages.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Tuition and Fees

1. Each teacher determines the cost of their classes and include materials, lab fees and other expenses (except sometimes art class asks for something to be brought from home such as a t-shirt).
2. Teachers can be paid at any time. Most of them accept Paypal; however, those who do not, say so in their course description.
3. Teacher will accept monthly payments without any interest....isn't that amazing? However, they expect payments to be made monthly with no skipped months. One half of the tuition for each class must be paid by the end of the first semester in December. The entire tuition must be paid by the last day of school. **THIS IS A VERY GENEROUS POLICY—NOT DONE BY MOST OTHER LEARNING CENTERS!**
4. If half of your tuition is not paid by the end of the semester, your student will not be allowed to return to class for second semester till it is paid.
5. If tuition is not paid by the last day of school, and you have not contacted us about payment, a \$10 charge per class, per week will be assessed.
6. We (of course!) understand that serious problems, like natural disasters, severe illness, or job loss, occur and families may not be able to make payments by the deadlines. If this happens, please contact the teacher and/or director for an amended program.

Operations Fee Because we have to pay a LARGE monthly facility fee to the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and purchase many supplies, each family is required to pay an Operations Fee. The Operations Fee pricing is as follows and is for the entire school year and can be paid in semester installments, with 1/2 being paid by the end of the semester.

This is per family, not per student. Just count up the number of classes your family is taking, and check the chart. You will invoice yourself this fee, just like you sign up for a class. The class schedule matrix has a separate area for this fee. Please click on the appropriate fee for your family and choose one of your children to represent you on the invoice.

1 class	\$30.00
2 classes.....	\$50.00
3 classes.....	\$70.00
4 classes.....	\$80.00
5 or more classes.....	\$90.00

Class Drop Policy

Class drop fees are at ultimately at the discretion of each individual teacher, but here are our guidelines:

- If a student drops prior to the first week of class, there will be a full refund, minus the \$25.00 drop fee. This assumes that the teacher has already spent money preparing a class for your student. (If a teacher feels that she has not incurred any expenses, she may choose to refund the \$25.00. also)
- If a student drops a class after the first week, it will be the teacher’s decision to determine how much to refund, if any. Many of our teachers are relying on their tuition money to help them pay for Homelink classes for their own children. Losing this money could cause a hardship on their ability to pay for their student’s classes. Other teachers have the ability to give full refunds without any loss. Therefore, refunding is at the discretion of each teacher.

Absenteeism If your child will be absent from a Homelink class, please remember to contact the teacher and/or a Director as soon as possible. It is best to let them know the night before class to allow for lesson plan and materials adjustments.

Textbooks It is the responsibility of the family to obtain the required textbook by the first day of class (including extra materials like answer keys, solution manuals, test booklets, etc.). Some teachers will be organizing a group buy for extra savings. More information about group buys will be available at Orientation or via teacher emails. Many Homelink textbooks (especially Science and Math) are often available to rent through the SHARE library for a small yearly fee. Contact librarian, **Karen Brandt, nateandkaren@gmail.com**, for more details.

Tests/Quizzes Teachers prefer to use valuable weekly class time for instruction, instead of testing. Most tests and quizzes will be sent home for the student to do under the parents’ direction. However, there may be times when a student is required to take a test during class (final exams, midterms, quizzes, etc.)

Types of classes Some of our classes are ENRICHMENT type, particularly the younger classes. They usually have no homework. However, our CORE classes definitely have home assignments that are expected to be done by the next time the student is in class. This is very important because it is difficult for a teacher to move on if many of the students do not have a good understanding of last week's studies.

Special Note: If your student is taking a highschool class at Homelink, the Department of Education expects that your student will spend at least 120 hours of instruction needed to pass that course. Just sitting in class only gives them about 48 hours. All highschool classes will have homework that will need to be done during the week and it is up to you, as the home educating parent, to see that it is done and turned in to the teachers. Please remember that we are not an accredited school. You have declared your student as being home educated and YOU are responsible to see that the education takes place. By using Homelink, it is as though you are hiring various teachers to group tutor your student. We do not keep records, we do not make transcripts. That is your job as a homeschooling parent. One of the biggest complaints from teachers is that too many students do not turn in work. If you are allowing this to happen, you are only giving your child an inferior education.

Assignments and Homework Each teacher has their own expectations of grading and turning in assignments. Some teachers will provide a detailed syllabus at the beginning of each semester. Other teachers opt to provide a weekly email detailing the assignments that week. Be sure to review the syllabus and/or class expectations for each of your child's classes. It is the parent's responsibility to be sure their child is completing work as assigned, as well as grade any assignments if directed to by the teacher. Teachers will have availability during non-Homelink hours to answer questions.

Our website has new amazing features so that teachers can post assignments, grades, etc.—it's called Classroom Dashboard and it will be explained at Orientation and through email. Not all teachers choose to use it, but many do. Parents are expected to monitor this website to make sure their student is passing the course.

Medical/Learning Concerns Before the first day of class, please be sure to notify your child's teachers and the directors of any medical issues or learning challenges, in addition to listing them on your registration form. If your child has life-threatening allergies and carries an epinephrine auto injector make sure that teachers and directors have specific instructions on how to use it in case of an emergency.

Drop Off Policy and After Care—You are welcome to drop off your students at Homelink. Students are encouraged to "socialize" and enjoy friendships during their off hours in the cafeteria. However, please show respect for those of us who are responsible for your children by picking them up as soon as possible. For example, if you get off work at 1 pm, and your child's last class is over at 2:30 pm, please do not wait till 6:00 pm to pick them up. Our latest classes end at 5:30 and we would like to go home after that class as soon as possible. We know you understand.

Teacher Expectations

Supportive Role Homeschool parents are the primary educators. Homelink teachers operate in a supportive tutorial role. Although actual classroom time is only one day a week, instructors will give assignments to be done at home throughout the other six days. Teachers are available via phone or Internet to answer any questions their students may have between class meetings. Teachers will also issue grade reports at the end of the semester. A short biography of each teacher can be found at each course description on the website— just click on their name!

Safety Each Teacher has consented to a background check. Every effort is made to ensure your child’s physical, emotional, and spiritual safety.

Curriculum and Materials Each teacher is responsible for choosing the curriculum and materials that their class will use. However, they will take into consideration any parental preferences.

Grades A suggested grade for students will be given at the end of the semester by each teacher. Teachers will give an evaluation along with a letter grade. Parents can also keep track of grades through our record keeping system, Classroom Dashboard. A tutorial can be found at: https://www.homeschool-life.com/283/admin/help_manual Click on Classroom Dashboard.

Record Keeping For the 2020-21 school year most teachers will use our website’s “Classroom Dashboard” as a means of communicating with parents about classroom performance and grades. A tutorial to help you use that system is on our website (see above link). It is the parent’ responsibility to monitor their students’ grades and progress.

Classroom Cleaning At the end of each day each classroom needs to be tidied and made useable for St. Andrew Catholic Church’s programs. Students in the last class may be asked to help with these tasks.

- * Empty trash
- * Wash chalkboard
- * Close Windows
- * Sweep floor
- * Turn off lights
- * Turn off ceiling fans
- * Remove stray belongings from desks
- * Straighten desks and chairs
- * Turn off air conditioners or heat blowers
- * Close door

DISCIPLINE AND STANDARDS POLICY (PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS)

1. Parents should monitor their children’s behavior when needed. Appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken privately. Uncooperative or disruptive children will be removed from activities.
2. Children should respect authority.
3. For minor infractions, the child will be given a verbal warning, and a written note will be given to the parent.

4. In cases of more serious disciplinary issues, the following should be considered standard procedure:
 - a. Child will be given a verbal warning by the instructor and parent will receive written notice.
 - b. If unacceptable behavior continues, the child will be taken to the parent for the rest of the day.
 - c. If this behavior continues in the class the student may be dismissed from the class, withdrawn from the program, and no fees will be refunded. Any other participation in future sessions will be for a probationary period. SHARE reserves the right to expel any student from the learning center if disruptive behavior fails to be curtailed.
5. Parent need to be willing to allow the instructors to discipline their children according to the procedures outline above and must be willing to abide by the instructor's decision to dismiss their children from the class if the instructor deems it necessary.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY (PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS)

Unfortunately, personality conflicts and misunderstandings will happen. It is important that we agree on how to deal with these situations as they arise.

Based on Matthew 18, when conflict arises, parents, teachers, and/or students should seek to resolve the issue on their own. If either party is unsatisfied or mutual agreement/understanding cannot be met, the parties then need to seek the assistance of a Homelink Director.

As a last resort, the conflict will be taken to the SHARE board. The board will make the final decision. Their decision will be binding.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AGE 10 AND UNDER AT HOMELINK

The Homelink age diversity is a reflection of what we love about homeschooling – all ages learning and working and having fun together. We feel *very* safe at Homelink even though the doors are kept unlocked and people of all ages come and go throughout the day. Many parents choose to sit in their cars while waiting for their students and are amazing at monitoring the parking lot and surrounding area.

We adhere to the “Safe from Harm” protocol that many of you know about from churches, schools, daycare, scouts, camps, etc. The rules are to insure that our younger students are safe and secure in the St. Andrew building and parking lot.

Homelink is not really a co-op where parents are required to stay in the building during class, but it is also not a staffed school where elementary aged children can be left unattended between classes. Homelink is run by volunteers that are doing many jobs at once. Unfortunately, they are not able to provide childcare for younger students.

Thank you for reading through the rules below and helping us to create a safe and healthy environment for younger students. Homelink is a wonderful place for them, but it can be chaotic before, after, and in between classes if students don't know the rules.

These guidelines are not meant to burden families that cannot stay (for a variety of reasons) and supervise their younger children at Homelink – they are to ensure a fun, educational, and safe experience for everyone. Please call us if you have a problem or conflict or special circumstance and we will try to help. *Don't forget to explain the rules to your children and instruct them about how they are dropped off and picked up.*

1. **For the first week of Homelink, parents must escort all younger students to their classes.**
2. **For the second week of classes and beyond, parents may drop their younger child off at the Homelink entrance if their child is mature enough to walk straight to class.**
3. **Younger students are not allowed to wait outside in the parking lot unsupervised.** They must wait for their ride inside the double doors or in the cafeteria.
4. **We follow the Safe From Harm “Rule of Two” with younger students in the building. Students age 10 and under are not allowed to walk to the bathrooms, drinking fountains, back door, library, or Cafeteria by themselves.** They must have a buddy to go with them. Teachers are aware of this rule and utilize a student buddy system or assistance from class volunteers when their students walk to and from the bathroom area and/or to wait at the back door.
5. **If your child is taking a class in the Gym or in Mr. Bader’s classroom (no matter what the age), they must meet the teacher or designated teaching assistant in the Homelink Cafeteria and they will be escorted over to the Gym building.** When class is over, they will again be escorted back to the Cafeteria or back door for pick up.
6. **There are quite a few parents that drive back and forth to the Salvation Army for Homeschool PE classes. We will try to connect people for carpools during the month of September.** There will be a PE carpooling interest sheet/clip board at Cathy’s office. **Do not assume that someone is driving your child to PE. You must arrange a ride for your child ahead of time.**

S.H.A.R.E. LIBRARY INFORMATION

SHARE students and their families are welcome to use the Curriculum Library (Room 10) and the Classical Library (Room 11) on the 2nd floor, but must be respectful of the library rules and classes that might be meeting in the same room. Rules will be posted on the doors of both libraries. Homelink students cannot hang out alone in the libraries unless an adult librarian is present or they have special permission from a Homelink Director.

If parents or older students are interested in becoming a library volunteer, please contact Library Supervisor, **Karen Brandt at nateandkaren@gmail.com**. Library community service teaches valuable skills along with enhancing resumes and college or job applications.

Note: Many of the textbooks used at Homelink are available for a small yearly rental fee from the SHARE libraries. Contact Karen Brandt for more information (nateandkaren@gmail.com)

Thank you for reading the Homelink Handbook!

What makes our teachers happy? 😊

1. A good number of students sign up.
2. No withdrawals
3. Prompt payment, unless emergency
4. Homework cheerfully turned in on time.

If parents/students do only these four things,
Homelink teachers will do anything for you!!!



Cathy Mullins says:

"I like to think of Homelink as a true link to your homeschooling that offers both academic and social support. Students are expected to learn when they are in the classrooms, and when they are in the cafeteria, it should be like being in Grandma's family room. There are rules to obey, but Grandma wants you to meet friends, have fun, and enjoy being there."



St. Louis
Homeschooling
Activities
Resources and
Encouragement