

## Homeschool Styles, Schedules, & Planning

In this document you will find examples of what homeschooling looks inside several different households. This document has been organized by five approaches (philosophies/styles) of homeschooling:

1. Charlotte Mason (p.2)
2. Classical (p.8)
3. Traditional (p.14)
4. Unit Studies (p.16)
5. Unschooling (p.18)
6. Blended Approach (a mix of any of the above approaches) (p.20)

Each approach is briefly explained and then followed by some examples kindly provided by real homeschool families. Every family's response is organized into these categories:

1. Philosophy/Style of Homeschool
2. Number and Ages of Children
3. Number of Years Homeschooling
4. Daily/Weekly Schedule
5. Managing Chores/Household Duties
6. Planning – How you do it

At the end of the document, there is a list of resources that may help you plan your day or manage your house.

## Charlotte Mason Style

“Based on the educational writings of Charlotte Mason, a turn-of-the-century British educator. Uses “living books” rather than textbooks or twaddle. Respects children as persons and gives them a broad education. Presents a generous curriculum, including nature study, picture study, music study, and handicrafts, as well as the usual academic subjects. Seeks to “spread a feast” before the child and let him digest what is appropriate for him at that time. Uses methods that will nurture a love for learning, not just present a body of information.” (Taken from *Getting Started in Homeschooling*, a free e-book available at [SimplyCharlotteMason.com](http://SimplyCharlotteMason.com))

### Charlotte Mason Style - Family 1

#### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

Eclectic with a strong Charlotte Mason flair. Her approach resonates with our family with her focus on lots of outside time/ nature hikes, short lessons, laying out a feast of ideas- not just the basics (but also music/art/poetry/Shakespeare), character training, and reading/ discussing 'living" books. For our family we have found it is best for us to have a variety of things as part of our school day; read-alouds, 1-1 skill work with me, independent bookwork/ reading, physical work (chores) and time for playing/creating and individual interests.

The longer we homeschool the more flexible we are about dropping our "formal bookwork" and taking advantage of real life moments. We are learning to embrace “life is learning”.

#### **Number and Ages of Children:**

5 children; ages 11(boy), 9(girl), 7(boy), 5(girl), and 3(girl)

#### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

6 years

#### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

We have more of a routine but I gave some approximate times.

6ish-- I get up and have my quiet time; Bible reading, drink tea, plan for the day, work on a project, etc... This is the first year I have got up before the kids because after almost 12 years I no longer have a nursing baby or am pregnant.

7:00-8:00-- kids waking up and playing quietly in our living room while other kids sleep. They watch t.v., read, play games, draw/color... any quiet activity

8:00-9:00-- chores (animals, personal devotions, and zone cleaning) and breakfast. The kids have to do all their chores before they can eat.

9:00-9:30-- family devotions; read a chapter in the Bible/discuss, book with character stories and we learn/practice a hymn each month.

9:30-11:00- math, reading, and language arts focus; some is independent work and some 1-1 with me- rotating. My husband will help occasionally for a few minutes once our family devotions are over; listen to a new reader practice, start a child on a math lesson, etc.. but he is usually busy with projects- woodworking, yard work, and household projects. This is more of his free time and the kids want to get finished with their bookwork so they can get into whatever project Dad is working on or play outside.

11:00--- we wrap up the bookwork portion of our day. Whatever 1-1 work we didn't get to is set aside for the next day and independent work is to be finished later in the day during "quiet time".

11:00-12:00 kids free time- inside or outside depending on the weather; I prepare lunch, which is our big family meal together each day.

12:00-1:00 lunch, clean-up; quick spot house tidy if needed

1:00-1:45 kids electronic time with Dad. This is my "break"- read, take a walk. hop on the computer, catch up on house projects, cleaning, finally get a shower ;- ) etc..

1:45-2:00 kids get settled in their beds for "quiet time". Dad tucks them in.

2:00--Dad leaves for work.

2:00-3:00 Little ones rest/nap and older ones finish up any independent work they didn't do in the morning, and can draw or read quietly. I am usually working on household chores (cleaning, bills, grocery list, mending) etc.. but try to sit down for a few minutes and read too for enjoyment and as an example.

3:00-4:00 Read- Aloud time; history and science everyday and alternate/loop schedule (see details on loop scheduling below) poetry, music, artist study, Shakespeare, literature, a little bit of memory work, etc.. I usually read a bit in several books and when we finish one I just rotate a new one in. The kids draw, play Legos, etc.. during this time. I don't plan history projects or science experiments. I check out books or have books in our personal library that have ideas that go along with what we are studying and let the kids look through them. If they want to do something I let them run with it; they chose how they want to internalize the learning- acting it out through play, cooking a recipe appropriate to the region/time, acting out a battle with Legos, drawing a picture, etc.. This happens during their free time and I document it for our portfolio. We check out library books/DVD's on topics that they want to learn in greater depth. Ex: my son usually is interested in the weapons/battles of the time and my daughter is interested in cooking recipes and learning more about daily life during that period. She likes to dress up in period appropriate costumes and put on plays. We also have Mystery of History and Story of the World audiobooks on repeat in the van.

4:00 official "end" to formal learning for the day

4:00-8:00-- dinner, free time (play outside, play Legos, watch educational DVD, work on a personal project, puzzles, read, play board games, etc... If the weather is nice I have them go outside everyday.

8:00-9:00-- basic house pick-up, personal bedtime prep, and end the day with evening devotions/prayer.

9:00-10:00 little ones fall asleep pretty quick and older ones can stay up with a flashlight and read.

10:00- lights out

\*Loop Scheduling – For more information on loop scheduling there is an almost hour video on YouTube called, "Quickstart Guide to Loop Scheduling for Homeschoolers" by Sarah Mackenzie with Pam Barnhill. If you search for that video on YouTube there are some other videos on loop scheduling that I haven't seen yet. They might be shorter, yet still explain the concept. You can also look up [amongstlovelythings.com](http://amongstlovelythings.com) to find Sarah Mackenzie's blog. She has a post called, "Looping: Task Management System for the (Recovering) Type A Mom" that introduced me to the idea of loop scheduling.

### **Managing Chores/ Household Duties:**

The kids have their daily chores, which must be done before breakfast. The two bathrooms are spot cleaned everyday (trash taken out, mirror, sink/faucets and toilets wiped off) and they dust, Windex windows/mirrors and sweep the floor in one room in our house. We loop the rooms so the next day they work on the next room/zone. We try every day (after lunch and in the evening) to straighten up the house as needed.

I have my own daily chores- keeping up with dishes, laundry, a cleaning task or two in a room/zone, clear off "hot spots" (trying to implement FlyLady)

For zone cleaning I use some of [flylady.net](http://flylady.net) principles. She has cleaning zones that she describes on the website. At the bottom is a FAQ that lists a lot of her info. I used her principle and adapted it for our needs. My kids all have one chore that is done in a certain room one day and then we move to another room the next day and so on. Something I've learned about myself though is that I always think I have to have this detailed plan before I can begin.....flylady taught me "baby steps" and just to get moving and let go of my perfectionism. Lately, my cleaning plan for myself is simple- set the timer for 20 minutes and clean something daily...maybe in the room the kids worked on that day during their chores but if there is somewhere else in the house that needs extra attention I don't hesitate to do that instead. I also try daily to keep my home's "hot spots" (another flylady term)/ flat surfaces that accumulate clutter/papers etc... cleared off. For me that is my dining table, the dresser our t.v. is on, the top of a bookcase, and my nightstand. If I do it daily then it only takes a few minutes.

On Saturday, in addition to morning chores, the kids have to deep clean their bedrooms. The 2 boys share a room and the 3 girls share a room so they work together to dust, vacuum, steam mop, clear off flat surfaces, Windex, and re-organize anything that needs done. I try to focus on an area or two of the house that needs extra attention for about an hour. We aim to do this every Sat. but in reality it happens 2-3xs a month but every little bit helps.

Sunday- day off/rest, no chores except take care of animals

In the past I felt completely overwhelmed with the house and last year we implemented these routines and this is the first time I feel we have something that is working. Our house is rarely clean all at once but if we are faithful with our cleaning routines it keeps things decent.

### **Planning – How you do it:**

We have schooled year round for a few years and love how flexible it is. We tend to 'hit the books" hard in the summer and winter and then take long breaks or cut back on bookwork in favor of nature walks/outside time in the spring and fall to enjoy the weather.

I do my planning for the next school year in March and start ordering our curriculum. We end our school year in April to take advantage of the spring and start the next school year mid- May (after Mother's Day). During this break our daily schedule stays pretty much the same- chores, family devotions, quiet time and we still do an afternoon read-aloud. We just take a break from formal bookwork. History is our spine (1/2 year World and 1/2 American) and we bring in art, music, literature, poetry and even science to go along with what we are studying. I come up with a general outline for the year, not a detailed daily lesson plan. I have a list of books to read, activities to complete, audiobooks to listen to, field trip ideas, etc. and I just reference the list. We never complete all I set out to do so toward the end of our study I zero in on the few 'must do's' and let go of the rest. We study history in a 4-year cycle so I figure we will eventually have another opportunity.

When I plan in March I use history as our spine subject that I try to bring as many other subjects in as possible. We use Mystery of History and Story of the World audiobooks and then check out a lot of library books and then try to find some good read-alouds. As for how I find the books from the library and for our read-alouds..... I have a book that is a great resource called, All Through the Ages: History through Literature Guide by Christine Miller. Miller gathered her book lists from Beautiful Feet, Sonlight and many other sources. She lists about 25 places she pulled her book lists from. Her lists are broke down into various history periods, ex: Ancient Rome, Exploration, Civil War etc... and she has it further divided into various grades; 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12. It is a great resource. [www.nothingnewpress.com](http://www.nothingnewpress.com) will show you the table of contents, and some sample pages. It is \$31 and I feel w-e-l-l worth the \$ for me.

The previous school year (2015-2016) we took on too much. We were very heavy on the academic bookwork but the house was slipping, most of the time my husband was home was spent on schoolwork and we were all drained. At the end of the school year we took

a long break and re-evaluated. After one year with this new schedule I feel (finally after 6 years of homeschooling) that we have found the balance between academics, family life, household needs, free time for kids/adults and spiritual growth for our family.

## Charlotte Mason Style – Family 2

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

I have used Charlotte Mason's educational philosophies for several years, almost since I first began homeschooling. For the first couple of years, I used a boxed curriculum that, while meeting our basic needs, felt exceptionally restrictive to my rather rebellious mind. As my children grew older and I became more confident in my own ability to determine what they needed, I began adding books to the curriculum until I realized that what we ended up with looked nothing like the original (for which I had paid quite a lot). I was determined that someone somewhere had felt the same way I did and had been organized enough to create some sort of plan (I didn't want to have to reinvent the wheel here). This search led me to AmblesideOnline (<https://www.amblesideonline.org>) and we've never looked back.

### **Number and Ages of Children:**

I have 5 children, ages 16, 12, 10, 9, and 6. I will be graduating my oldest son next year (SQUEEEEE!!!!!!).

### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

We are wrapping up our 5th year of homeschooling.

### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

If my scattered ramblings heretofore have not indicated thus, plans and schedules tend to represent themselves as suggestions and hesitant propositions in my brain, which can easily be ignored or rejected outright. A very general outline of our day would be me up before the horde descends so that I can have a few moments to have coffee and read from my ever-increasing pile of books (I attempt to read for 10 minutes per book each day...sometimes that even happens). Children filter down randomly so I'll send them to start independent work (handwriting, typing, math etc.) while I make breakfast. After breakfast, we begin our AO readings. I read to my younger three every day, usually from 3-4 books. I work on phonics with my little guy during his reading time. I'm attempting to begin a Gathering Time (as opposed to a Morning Time since our mornings tend to be too random) after lunch. This will be when we partake of the 'riches' as Charlotte Mason calls them: art and composer study, poetry, Shakespeare, nature study etc. as well as foreign language. Whatever is left of independent work or help with math will happen after Gathering Time. Our schedule changes yearly (monthly even) as we adapt to the changing needs and desires of our children).

### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

Our home remains a scene of barely controlled chaos as a matter of course. Thankfully, we have a main floor plus bedrooms upstairs and a family room in the basement. We are

pretty good about keeping the main floor presentable. Depending on the day, I mostly choose to close my eyes when I look into my boys' rooms. A general cleanup happens at least once a day. We spend 15-20 minutes scrambling to put living areas back in order. There really isn't a set schedule for this...it mostly depends upon my whim though my older kids have started cracking that whip for me. Which is nice.

**Planning – How you do it:**

Planning our year takes no great effort on my part. It mainly consists of ordering all of the assigned books or printing off essays/speeches from the public domain and printing off the grid for each year directly from the AO site. We cross off each assigned reading as we finish it. It's laid out in weeks as opposed to days so we have the liberty to choose what we want to read each day.

## Classical Style

“Children are taught in three stages, called the Trivium. The Grammar Stage (ages 6-10) focuses on absorbing information and memorizing the rules of phonics, spelling, grammar, foreign language, history, science, math, etc. The Dialectic Stage (ages 10-12) emphasizes logical discussion, debate, drawing correct conclusions, Algebra, thesis writing, and determining the why’s behind the information. The Rhetoric Stage (ages 13-18) continues the systematic, rigorous studies and seeks to develop a clear, forceful, and persuasive use of language.” (Taken from *Getting Started in Homeschooling*, a free e-book available at SimplyCharlotteMason.com)

### Classical Style – Family 1

**Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

Classical

**Number and Ages of Children:**

Three children, ages are six (in first grade), nine (in third grade), and 12 (in sixth grade)

**Number of Years Homeschooling:**

2 years

**Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

My typical homeschool schedule:

Let me start by saying it doesn't always go according to schedule. Life happens and we do what we can. Sometimes school gets done in the car orally, sometimes in a doctor's waiting room, and sometimes at night or weekend instead of typical school time.

We do use a separate room for school just to keep everything in one central location and to feel like we are actually "going" to school.

I'm not much of an early person so we don't get up too, too early. I usually wake up at 7:00...about 30 minutes before the children, as to have some quiet time for showering, getting dressed, and reading the Bible. Any planning for that day I try to do the evening before. Sometimes I plan out 2-3 weeks at a time in one sitting because I enjoy having my evenings free to go to the gym, spend with my husband, etc...

The children wake up about 7:30, do their morning chores, eat breakfast, get dressed, and then we try to start school by 8:30...not later than 9.

Since we do Classical Conversations (<https://www.classicalconversations.com>) there is a lot that we can do together even though my children vary in ages. Their ages are six (in first grade), nine (in third grade), and 12 (in sixth grade). We usually start off with a Bible scripture or devotional of some sort. Then we review all the new grammar that we

have learned for the week in classical conversations. I usually allow about 45 minutes for us to work together.

I also use a science curriculum that is designed to be used with all ages; it's called Apologia. This we also do together. Journals come with this, so you can do them according to their age and level.

After everything that we do together then we start to work independently. I will work with one child while the other two do work that they understand and know how to do on their own. Once I am finished working with one child I will move on to the next child while the first child I worked with is now working on his or her own. I continue that until I worked with each child on their own and their schoolwork is completed.

We typically break for lunch around 12 o'clock and after we eat we usually have a book that I read aloud to them while they eat. They then have a little bit of time to play before we go back to finish any school that we have not yet finished.

Outside of our Classical Conversations curriculum my children do math, handwriting, and phonics/spelling. My oldest gets enough language arts in writing in Classical Conversations, so I only have language arts for my younger two. I use First Language Lessons for them and also Explode the Code for Phonics for my youngest since he is still learning to read. The math we use is Saxon and Math-U-See. Spelling curriculum is Spelling-U-See. We utilize our local library for just about any other subject you can think of. Depending on the age of the child depends on how long I spend in each subject. I also love showing them ways each subject is related back to another subject and how it relates to Bible and everyday life.

In using Classical Conversations (CC) there isn't much else that we need to add to our curriculum, but I do make each child do different things each day for CC at home. My oldest, for example, I may have her do a little research on the science or history topic that we are learning. My third-grader, I may have him do a fill in the blank paper on things that we have learned during CC, rewrite out our new sentences in his neatest handwriting, or even trace/draw a map. And my youngest I may have him do some copywork of our new grammar sentences or a coloring page that has to do with our new grammar.

### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

All of my children are assigned daily chores that they do after school as well so it puts a lot less on what all I have to do each day. My husband is also very helpful with chores that are left over when he gets home from work. I use the crockpot often for meals too so I can throw everything in and not worry about it during school or sometimes make multiple meals on the weekend (with husband help) for the week. Simpler is better for me.

### **Planning – How you do it:**

I am just finishing up my second year of homeschooling...still a bit of a newbie lol.

I tend to take a couple days in the summer time to look over everything in all the books I have for next year and try to plan out the first couple weeks and then I try to tweak it after we actually start school. Then once we get into a groove, I plan a week or 2 in advance at a time. I don't like to plan much more than a week or 2 in advance only because I have found when I do that seems to be the time when life happens and we have to alter my plans so much, or it is when a child needs extra help on a subject and we spend extra days working on it.

This year for our Classical Conversations curriculum I am attempting to search out ahead of time books to go along with what we are learning and make a list so that we aren't searching the library week by week and scrambling around.

I am also trying a notebooking approach for this coming school year where I have papers printed up all ahead of time for my children to do to go along with what we are learning as well as having them do journal pages with it. I think that will be helpful when it comes time to turn in our portfolio at the end of the year as well.

## Classical Style – Family 2

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

Classical with a hint of Charlotte Mason

### **Number and Ages of Children:**

2 children, 6 year old boy (1<sup>st</sup> grade) & 4 year old girl (Kindergarten)

### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

2 years

### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

We school year-round, lighter in the summer. We keep lessons short and productive, typically around 20 minutes each.

#### Boy, Age 6

Time	Subject	Explanation
8:20-9:00	Morning Circle Time & Recitation (Daily)	Bible (Hymns, Scripture, etc.), Classical Conversations Memory work – Both Children
9:00-9:20	Latin Vocab & Songs	Song School Latin; Declension recitation; He will move into Prima Latina shortly
9:20-9:40	Phonics/Reading Workbook	Christian Light Education (CLE)
9:40-9:50	Break	Kids usually run in circles, go play or we do an active song like Fr. Abraham to shake it all out

9:50-10:10	Language Arts	CLE
10:10-10:20	Copywork	Currently learning cursive, may have sentences to write out w/vocab words
10:20-10:40	Math	CLE Math and/or Math games & flashcards
10:40-10:50	Break	
10:50-11:00	History or Geography	Living books, following Tapestry of Grace (Ancient History), also lots of black line map work and geography memory songs
11:00-11:20	Science	Discovery Science online or hands on experiment or living book
11:20-11:30	Art or Music Apprec./Handicraft	Art projects or listening to a composer (lasts during lunch prep); Handicraft 1x's-2x's per week, currently embroidery.
12:00-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-3:00	Free Time	Mom cleaning chores/Kids help some or occupy themselves
1:00-3:00	Nature Study	Depending on weather we may use this time for nature study 2x's/week
3:00-4:00	Tea Time	Poetry and/or Storytime
Evenings	Music Lesson w/Dad	Once per week my husband does a music lesson

Girl, Age 4

8:20-9:00	Morning Time & Recitation	See above schedule for details
9:00-9:20	Latin Vocab & Songs	See above schedule for details
9:20-9:40	CLE Kindergarten book	Completes about 3-4 pages
9:40-10:50	Education.com or ABC Mouse	Completes lessons while I work with her brother, she enjoys it
9:40-10:50	Playtime	Allowed to play but no television as a distraction to her brother
10:50-11:00	History & Geography	Listens to living book and completes map work
11:00-11:20	Science	Participates in science lesson
11:20-11:40	Art & Music Appreciation/Handicraft	Learns about different composers or picture study. Handicraft once per week.
1:00-3:00	Free Time	Mom cleaning/Kids help some or occupy themselves
1:00-3:00	Nature Study	Depending on weather we may use this time for nature study 2x's/week
3:00-4:00	Tea Time	Poetry and/or Storytime
Evenings	Music Lesson w/Dad	Once per week my husband does a music lesson

### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

Rotation schedule for cleaning

### **Planning – How you do it:**

We do not follow this rigid with the times everyday BUT we do manage to keep this general schedule. We also use resources like games, puppets, and play to break up the monotony. Routine and predictability work well particularly for my son, so this schedule is posted on the wall for him to keep track. I use my phone timer to keep lessons short. I have subscriptions to several online sites like ABCMouse, Discovery Science, and Explode the Code and Education.com to keep one student busy if I need to concentrate heavily with another.

We participated in Classical Conversations on Tuesdays this past year and will continue to do the recitation/memory work throughout the summer and the next school year in the morning. Recitations include geography, math, science, history, latin, english grammar, bible and the World History Timeline song.

Every Friday we have “Field Trip Friday” and have done so since my son was a toddler. We do a hands-on learning activity to locations including trails, zoo, train museum, local historical sites and Carnegie Museums in Pittsburgh. (Membership to Carnegie is only \$12/mo if you are tight on a budget and is reciprocal to many different places)

We school year round, I haven’t quite drawn out our summer schedule rotation yet.

## Classical Style – Family 3

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

I use a gentle classical approach, using classical conversations as a base.

### **Number and Ages of Children:**

3 girls ages 8, 5, and 2....soon to be 9, 6, and 2

### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

I’m wrapping up my second year.

### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

I call our schedule more of a routine, because we don’t follow it to the minute, it is just how our day generally goes. I try not to spend more than 30 minutes segments “doing school.” Morning Time is an hour, but the kids love it because it isn’t “doing school” so we go straight into math afterwards.

Our Family Routine (M/W/F\*):

7:00 am	Mama Wakes Up, Devotions, Get Ready
7:30 am	Kids Wake Up, Make Beds, Get Dressed
8:00 am	Breakfast and cleanup/morning chores for kids
8:30 am	Morning Time (Bible Reading/Prayer, Read Aloud, CC, Memory Work)
9:30 am	Math
10:00 am	School Break: Playtime for kids, Chores for mom
10:30 am	Language Arts (Copywork, Reading, Spelling, Writing)
11:00 am	School Break: Playtime for kids, Chores for mom
11:15 am	Geography: Copying or Coloring Maps
11:25 am	Focus Time: Expand on Memory Work from the week, usually science or history
11:45 am	Playtime for kids, Mom Preps Lunch
12:00 pm	Lunchtime, Cleanup
12:30 pm	Read Aloud
1:00 pm	Nap time for toddler (and sometimes all), rest time for anyone not sleeping (usually spent reading or listening to an audio book, sometimes watching TV); Mom uses this time to do chores, catch up on emails, etc.
1:45 pm	Nap time continues, Anyone “resting” can now play quietly inside or play outside
3:00 pm	Generally Nap Concludes around this time...and our day varies after this point

\*\*Our day varies highly after this point, depending on the day of the week. The kids may just continue in play until dinnertime. Or, we may have some extracurricular activity to go to. We eat dinner around 5pm. I workout in the evenings (6:30 pm) during the school year. We have another read aloud time again in the evening before bedtime, which is generally between 8 and 9pm.

During the summer, we continue in our math and language arts 2-3 days per week. We also continue our read aloud times throughout the day. However, in the summer, I workout in the mornings (9am) vs. in the evenings, but am able to bring the kids along. We also spend a lot of time at the pool in the summer, so that changes our afternoon schedule, but I still plan time for nap/rest each day, even if it is only a brief period. The children still go to bed between 8 and 9pm most summer nights and rise by 7:30am.

\*Tuesday, we rise very early and are at CC from 8am-3pm

\*\*Thursdays, we shorten our Morning Time and Complete both Math and Language Arts by 10am so that we can leave for co-op.

**Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

No extra comments.

**Planning – How you do it:**

No extra comments.

## Traditional Style

“Uses textbooks for the various subjects. Assigns a chapter in the textbook to be read and questions to answer from the content. Uses workbooks with fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions.” (Taken from *Getting Started in Homeschooling*, a free e-book available at [SimplyCharlotteMason.com](http://SimplyCharlotteMason.com))

### Traditional Style – Family 1

#### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

I don't fit neatly into any category. We live on a farm so life is a nature study, so I never make time for those during school, just let them happen naturally. My son had to help pull his first calf a couple weeks ago. That's real nature!!

#### **Number and Ages of Children:**

Two children - ages 10 (girl) and 13 (boy)

#### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

Second year of homeschooling, following years in the public school

#### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

I do use some regular textbooks - for our son especially. He uses apologia science and notgrass history, along with beautiful feet. Math is pretty traditional for both with teaching textbooks (boy) and math-U-see (girl). I make the kids both do math first (their least favorite) and then they pick the order for the rest.

We start with opening at 8:30 and go until 10:30, when we break for about 30 min and get a snack.

Lunch is usually 12 or 12:30. Then 45 min off or so. Then go until done. Usually 2:30 at the latest.

#### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

Well.....my best days I have supper planned before I start school. I am trying to lay out supper plans a week at a time, but this is new for me. I like it!!

Household chores - the kids totally help! They do best if I make a list that they can pick and choose from, and cross off when accomplished. It also helps me get that info out of my brain and be able to think about other things. I know this and still don't always do it. I still text my husband every time I clean a bathroom. It makes me so happy. I don't keep up like I would like. One workshop I attended said to ask your husband what his priorities are for the household. This will help you let some other things go. I did this and our priorities are about opposite. Oh well! It might work for someone!

**Planning – How you do it:**

I try to plan every Sunday evening. I only plan one week at a time because I change too much in a week to plan more. When my kids get "the look" with the glazed-over eyes, I stop for the day, change something, or take a break.

## Unit Studies Style

“Takes a theme or topic and incorporates all the school subjects (Language Arts, History, Science, Music, Art, etc.) into that topic. For example, when you study Ancient Egypt, you read books about Egypt (history), make a salt dough map of Egypt (geography), explore how they irrigated their farm land from the Nile (science), read a historical fiction book set in Ancient Egypt (literature), build sugar cube pyramids (art), learn how to spell “pyramid” (language arts), etc.” (Taken from *Getting Started in Homeschooling*, a free e-book available at [SimplyCharlotteMason.com](http://SimplyCharlotteMason.com))

## Unit Study Style – Family 1

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

I don't really have or follow a specific philosophy other than move at the child's ability.

### **Number and Ages of Children:**

I homeschool my 11yo daughter.

### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

We have been homeschooling for 3 1/2 years.

### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

Our typical school week is Monday-Thursday from 9am-3pm.

We work in a typical book/workbook style of schoolwork in the morning. The subjects that we use curriculum book/workbooks in are Math, Grammar and Spelling.

- Math: Singapore Math - Math in Focus
- Grammar: IEW Fix it Grammar
- Spelling: Spelling Workout (This is just our current curriculum I have yet to find something that we actually love. We are planning to use Simply Charlotte Mason spelling Wisdom next year.)

After lunch we work on our unit studies. My daughter loves unit studies and retains so much more when we are able to focus on one subject and really dive into it. We do blocks of unit studies and do not to work on more than 2 unit topics at a time. I really try to not overlap them if possible. We cover science, health, history, geography, art and social studies. This year my daughter has focused on two topics The Human Body and Egypt. The human body covered health and science. She has read several books, completed some science experiments, and worked some reading comprehension selections. Ancient Egypt covered science, history, social studies, geography, and art. She has read many books, we used picture reading comprehension cards, Simply Charlotte Mason picture studies, made a lapbook, completed science experiments, created several Egyptian art projects, and visited the Egyptian exhibit at the Pittsburgh Natural History Museum. She has also used this study for the OVCHE History and Science Fairs.

Some of the sites that we use for unit studies are:

[www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com)

[www.homeschoolshare.com](http://www.homeschoolshare.com)

[www.teacherpayteachers.com](http://www.teacherpayteachers.com)

[www.simplycharlottesmason.com](http://www.simplycharlottesmason.com) (This is where I purchase the picture studies)

[www.education.com](http://www.education.com)

Summer:

We homeschool through the summer and I gain my son who is 8yo and attends public school during the academic year. We will be working on US presidents and states and capitals unit studies completing lapbooks, some memorization, reading books covering different states and presidents and taking a few field trips. My children both work on math skills and are encouraged to read over the summer as well.

Reading:

As you may have noticed I have not listed any specific reading programs and that's because we no longer use a reading program. Other than the material and books that we read on topics that are currently being taught my children are encouraged and given time each day to read books that interest them. I also read books above their reading level to them.

Writing:

Our daughter's writing is completed at OVCHE Co-op IEW class. We complete her homework for this class in the morning along with our IEW Fix it Grammar program.

#### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

I do not do a lot of housework during the school day. Occasionally I might fold a load of laundry or vacuum a floor but to be honest my daughter requires a lot of one on one direction and is distracted easily so I try to do housework in the evenings.

#### **Planning – How you do it:**

My daughter thrives on structure so I keep our day the same for the most part. We always do book work in the morning and unit studies in the afternoons. She always has lunch at 12 and gets a full hour. If we have a drs appointment or we are going on a field trip she knows ahead of time and I remind her several times. I do keep all of our activities logged into my schedule planner from Plum Paper.

## Unschooling

“Basically goes with the interests of the children. No set curriculum. If a child is interested in butterflies, you research and learn about them until the child is satisfied. If he develops an interest in race cars, you give him information on race cars.” (Taken from *Getting Started in Homeschooling*, a free e-book available at [SimplyCharlotteMason.com](http://SimplyCharlotteMason.com))

### Unschooling Style – Family 1

#### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

We aren't technically unschoolers, but more what some people call "relaxed homeschoolers". We do use a math curriculum, although at a relaxed pace, and guitar practice with a book, which I know from my experience is worth pushing through, even when you're bored with it. I also insist on writing but the subject matter is up to the student.

I arrived at this place after realizing that I couldn't afford to experiment with different curriculum and that I found a lot of it dry, and hard to know if it would work for my kids (websites selling curriculum don't make it easy to get a great sense of what it's all about and they all claim it's the best). Aside from that, we have access to an urban library network, and there are plenty of books to choose from on an array of subjects.

My older child is an avid reader, and it felt strange to make him stop reading to move on to a lesson on something else. He was always the type who would get engrossed in something, and this worried me about sending him to school. I didn't know how he would transition from one subject to the next in 50-minute chunks. My other child is preschool age so she still mostly plays. But she has lots of great questions so the process is already started.

So with that said...

Philosophy/Style - Relaxed, eclectic, bordering on unschooling

#### **Number and Ages of Children:**

2 children, 11 and 5

#### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

5 years

#### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

We have some regular activities and standing play dates that help keep us grounded in a loose schedule. Our community offers lots of classes for homeschoolers, but they are often expensive and we also end up feeling too busy if we are committed to too many things. My older child knows how to request books from the library and so we often

make trips to return/pick up books and browse the catalogs during the week. I subscribe to the concept of strewing, and so I often pick books outside of my children's comfort zones to see if it might pique their interests. Also, we visit local museums, historical places, and parks. The flexibility of our lives allows us to take part in events and travel at our whim, take advantage of a beautiful day, and spend rich, quality time with friends. The math, guitar, and writing that we keep steady in our lives occur at our pace, which is perhaps slow in our current culture but I think will build a firm foundation. My kids are not into organized sports (another money saver!), but we spend a lot of time outside and play at parks with friends quite often.

Examples:

My son comes up with his own projects at this point. I often spend a lot of time worrying if I'm doing the right thing or not doing enough, and then he'll show me a project he's been working on that surprises me about his motivation, dedication and interest. For example, in the past he's made books about poisonous animals, illustrating them (art), recording the locations of each creature's habitat (geography), and writing up blurbs or details about them (writing/grammar), the whole project being scientific. This year he decided to illustrate dinosaurs, in order of time period (Triassic/Jurassic/Cretaceous). I had no idea until he was about 150 illustrations in. He's written the names and his illustrations have grown in sophistication. And orally he can tell you details that scientists know about each one and where the fossils were found. This is a major passion for him and he never seems to run out of books to request or project ideas.

One year, he decided that Australia is unfairly underrepresented in our atlas. He began learning about their mythology and aboriginal culture. He learned a lot about the native reptiles and made a book on that. We borrowed CDs of aboriginal music. We visited a local museum that had an art exhibit by contemporary aboriginal artists, and he was able to tell me about myths that inspired the artwork.

Don't get me wrong; this kid plays A LOT of minecraft too. (Often with homeschool friends!)

### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

When my daughter was born, we decided to hire someone to come every other week to clean the house. We are a single income family in a very expensive city, so this was not an easy decision. It was an investment in my sanity! Until more recently, I couldn't send my kids outside unattended (it's not that dangerous here; I don't want to give the wrong impression, but we have no backyard and just a driveway bordering the sidewalk and street), so I couldn't let them outside and go pick up the house like my mom used to. Having someone come and clean regularly has been great to discipline us all to work together regularly to get the house picked up and ready for the cleaner to scrub. I don't want to have to pay her to pick up stuff off the floor. It's ready to sweep, mop and wash. Aside from this, chores are assigned and expected to be done. They are age appropriate and added to as the kids get older.

### **Planning: How you do it:**

I follow the interests of my kids.

## Blended Approach

A blend of any of the 5 approaches (Charlotte Mason, Classical, Traditional, Unit Studies, Unschooling). Most families are probably more of a blend than a purist in any one category.

## Blended Approach – Family 1

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

We are a blend of Charlotte Mason and a Classical approach with a strong Christian focus.

### **Number and Ages of Children:**

I am a homeschooling mom to my 2 kids, ages 12 (girl) and 10 (boy).

### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

I have been homeschooling for 6 years.

### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

As far as our daily schedule, here is what I use as a loose outline:

7:30-8:30- personal hygiene (i.e. Shower, brush teeth, get dressed, make beds) and then breakfast

8:30-9:00- morning chores (chickens, load of laundry, unload dishwasher, etc.)

9:00-10:45-devotions, morning time activities, schoolwork

10:45-11:00- break

11:00-12:30- schoolwork

12:30-1:00-lunch/meal prep for dinner (if I didn't start it at breakfast)

1:00-2:30-schoolwork

2:30-3:00- piano practice (12 year old girl)

4:00-6:00-family activities (other chores, dinner prep/dinner, errands, prepare for evening activities like church or sports both practices/games)

6:00-8:00- church/sports

8:30-9:30-showers (as needed) bedtime routine (which includes read alouds, telling stories, assuring things are ready for the next day)

9:30- bedtime

### **Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

In general, there are chores both kids are automatically expected to do like make their beds, bring down their laundry/sort by color, change sheets weekly, clean their room/clean up after themselves if they make a mess, and load/unload dishwasher.

In addition to those chores, they rotate on some chores and always do some other chores: For example, our daughter usually always helps me sweep, switch clothes from washer to dryer and hang up clothes/fold clothes after they are dry. They each put their own clean clothes away. Our son likes to dust so he will usually dust the rooms for me. They rotate in chicken duty (collecting eggs, getting water, cleaning coop), trash (both collecting/taking the bin to the road), cleaning mirrors, helping me keep kitchen floor mopped, shredding paperwork that needs destroyed, helping me load recycling items for drop off, and general tidiness.

I use some of the Flylady.com house cleaning schedules to stay on track. I tend to be a bit OCD so, I like things neat and organized. I also want them to be responsible and contribute to our home and to be prepared to manage/contribute to their home some day.

I was raised by my grandparents. They taught me everything from my love for God's Word to how to sew, paint, repair things, change tires, etc. They encouraged my desire to learn from education to everyday basics. My husband and I are trying to do the same with our kids. All kids are capable....we just have to show them and give them the opportunity to learn it or to fail and try it again and most importantly, to never give up.

### **Planning – How you do it:**

We have a small family meeting on Sunday nights to plan for the week's activities. It helps us all stay on track with what types of things are going on during the week and to assure all the bases are covered especially since my husband travels some during the week. I also plan school only about one week in advance. That way if I need to make changes, it doesn't take a ton of my time. I am a "have a plan kind of gal" in general.

I use Rebecca Keliher's Well-Planned Day for my homeschool planner. I use Amy Knapp's Family Organizer for my everyday life planner. When my kids were younger, I loved using Accountable [kids.com](http://kids.com)'s program or even a chore chart to keep them on track with their jobs within our family each week.

As a basic guide for how my kids spend their school time, it would look something like this:

- Math - 45 minutes(daily)

- Reading - 45 minutes(daily).....we read A LOT(we often have multiple books going on at once)
- Grammar/spelling - 45 minutes(daily)
- Science - 45 minutes (3-4 days a week)
- History/social studies/geography - 45 minutes(3 days a week)
- Foreign language(Latin) - 30 minutes(1-2 days a week)

Morning time - includes devotions/prayer time, read alouds, art cards, composers, family workout (led by our daughter), Bible verse memorization or poetry memorization/reading.

In addition, we listen to audiobooks every time we are in the car. I firmly believe that reading lots of good books and listening to quality literature has a significant impact on a child's writing/vocabulary/communication skills.

We also include their personal interests in our school day. For example, our daughter loves to sew/crochet/knit and she will often use her down time for these types of things. Our son loves to build Lego sets and K'Nex sets. They are also both in 4H, which requires them to complete project books for judging. We also attend a number of OVCHS's field trips depending on how they fit in our schedule. I also do Dave Ramsey Finance "classes" with my kids because I want them to learn how to manage money/make decisions at an earlier age.

Lastly, sometimes I set theme days for the days of the week. I change it each school year. This year, here are our weekday themes:

- Monday - Music( we study a composer/listen to music in Monday's morning time)
- Tuesday - Tea (we have Tea and study etiquette and proper manners for boys & girls)
- Wednesday and The Word - (I have a 1:1 Bible study with each kid specific to their age's needs to include those tough talks as they get older)
- Thursday - Co-op(co-op or we plug 4H project books in when we are not in co-op)
- Friday - Field Trips (if there are no scheduled field trips, then we shift whatever we missed for the week into that spot).

## Blended Approach – Family 2

### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

Philosophy: “The end of all learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love and imitate him.” John Milton

Style/Methods: Charlotte Mason/Classical/Flexible...although I will not “die” on any ideological hill ☺

**Number and Ages of Children:**

5 children: 2 homeschool graduates (girl & boy), 3 current students (all girls, ages 17, 15, &11)

**Number of Years Homeschooling:**

17 years (119 in dog years)

**Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

Student	Morning Routine	Afternoon Routine	Misc. Comments
Girl Aged 17	Personal devotions  Breakfast/chores  Geometry (online live class)  Chemistry (online live class)  College classes: Psychology-Fall, Human Geography-Spring	Lunch Jog Co-op homework Read *Play piano ACT Prep in Spring (online course from Mr. D Math)  Homework: Chemistry, Geometry, college class	Co-op classes Fall/Winter: Speech, Mock Trial, Personal Finance, Lost Tools of Writing  Summer 2017: American History (unable to complete during school year) *Music time=relaxation time, not a chore ☺
Girl Aged 15	Chores Breakfast Pre-Algebra Morning Time (usually knits or draws during MT) French Biology	Lunch History Co-op homework Read Aloud SSR (silent sustained reading) Audio book *Guitar/ukulele/keyboard/voice practice Work with horse	Co-op classes Fall/Winter: Speech, Mock Trial, Personal Finance, Lost Tools of Writing *Music time=relaxation time, not a chore ☺

Girl Aged 11	Chores Breakfast/audio book Language Arts Morning Time (usually draws during MT) Math Latin Play	Lunch Play Piano SSR (silent sustained reading) History Geography Science Read Aloud Work with horse *Writes books	Co-op classes Fall/Winter: IEW, Fun Physics, Government, Art, Basketball *Writing books=relaxation time, not a chore ☺
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**Managing Chores/Household duties:**

Dishes rotated by meal (B, L or D) and week. As children reach about 16 y/o, household chores reduced and passed on to younger sibs (or now back to me). Each child assigned one night/week for dinner meal prep. Other cleaning jobs assigned weekly or as needed.

**Planning – How you do it:**

It is laughable for me to give advice about planning since I’m not very strategic about it but here’s the lowdown:

Every year since 2000 I have attended a homeschool conference of some sort. I see it as mandatory “professional development hours” to sustain me. Ideas from these workshops (and other sources, usually friends) percolate in my brain as I plan for the coming year. Welcoming a new baby to the family, scheduling a surgery, or preparing to do “educational therapy” for a dyslexic child entered the equation year by year.

In June, I take the feedback I receive from my (awesome!) homeschool mom/portfolio reviewer, an armful of my favorite hs catalogs (now an iPad), and a spiral notebook, and spend a day in the library or coffee shop writing out my goals for each child and creating a weekly schedule. Some subjects loop, some are daily. I keep a separate Morning Time template, planning just one 12- week term at a time. (More than that would give me hives.)

Because I’ve homeschooled so many years, I own a lot of curriculum so I scan my shelves as I’m planning to see what might “work” for another child. Also, I spend a few hours in the spring considering online class options for my teens, and making sure I meet the early-bird deadlines.

When new workbooks/textbooks arrive, I look over the table of contents and pencil in (yes . . . in the margin!) projected dates of completion i.e.; 32 chapters=1 chapter/week:/4 chapters/month.

I have varied through the years from keeping a strict Excel spreadsheet scheduling every 30-minutes (gasp!) when I had 5 kids under 12, to a looser AM and PM “routine” now with 3 older students. Only once did I purchase a pre-made planner. Creating my own

weekly checklist serves me better, listing subjects on the vertical axis and the day of the week on the horizontal.

During the weekend, I spend about an hour filling in my two younger student's weekly planner sheets, thumbing through their workbooks, etc. and considering (with their input—especially the 15 y/o) what pages/tasks I want them to complete in each “subject” the coming week.

I touch base with my 17 y/o randomly throughout the week to assess how she's doing. She keeps her own schedule in a bullet journal and comes to me for help as needed.

**The Last Word on Planning:** This is an endless process and every single year is reinvention. You'll never set the cruise control and sail down the homeschool highway. But you will become more and more comfortable tweaking, and becoming an expert tweaker will bring you peace. Give yourself permission to reinvent your homeschool each year. You do not owe allegiance to Charlotte Mason, or Abeka, or Sonlight, or Classical Conversations, or IEW. YOU get to curate the tailor-made homeschool YOU know is best for your family. Enjoy the liberating satisfaction from this privilege.

### Blended Approach – Family 3

#### **Philosophy/Style of Homeschool:**

We are probably a blend but I strive to be Charlotte Mason style.

#### **Number and Ages of Children:**

3 girls ages 8, 7, & 5

#### **Number of Years Homeschooling:**

4 years

#### **Daily/Weekly Schedule:**

Loop 1

Morning

- Breakfast
- Bible Devotional
- Music or Art
- Poem
- Calendar
- Skip counting

Afternoon

- History
- Geography

8 year old girl

- Morning Chores

- Reading 20 min
- Language Arts Lesson
- Spelling Teach new/review old
- Math Lesson

7 year old girl

- Moring Chores
- Reading Lesson & Questions
- Spelling teach new/review old
- Math Lesson

5 year old girl

- Moring Chores
- Letter Activity
- Math Lesson

Loop 2

Morning

- Breakfast
- Bible Devotional
- Music or Art
- Poem
- Calendar
- Recite Latin

Afternoon

- Science
- State Cooking

8 year old girl

- Moring Chores
- Reading 20 min
- Language Arts Lesson
- Latin ½ lesson
- Math Lesson
- Xtra math

7 year old girl

- Moring Chores
- Reading Lesson & Questions
- Spelling 2<sup>nd</sup> half of lesson
- Math Lesson
- Xtra math

5 year old girl

- Moring Chores
- Letter Activity
- Math Lesson

**Managing Chores/Household Duties:**

I have no routine and just try and fit it in. I cook a lot of crockpot meals and try to go to bed with an empty sink. My kids are getting older so they are helping to pitch in. They unload the dishwasher, dust, and sweep. The biggest help is my husband does the laundry. Floors and baths get scrubbed when I get around too it and my house is far from spotless. During our breaks I usually work on a project around the house. I work part time so some days it's a struggle to get it all done but each year I learn and try something new and each year it gets better.

**Planning – How you do it:**  
academic calendar

2016 to 2017

July 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Aug 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sept 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Oct 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

Nov 2016						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Dec 2016						
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		1	2	3	4	5
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Jan 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Feb 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mar 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Apr 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

May 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Jun 2017						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

4x a week 120 lessons 36 weeks  
76 lessons ½ point

Holidays Vacation

Coop Field Trips

Scheduled Break First Day/Last Summer Term

## Additional Resources:

- [www.raisingarrows.net/podcast](http://www.raisingarrows.net/podcast) has two podcasts that might be helpful #1 Creating a Simple Schedule and #4 Making Homeschool Planning Easy
- <http://simplehomeschool.net/creating-a-homeschool-schedule> has several ideas for how to plan a school year
- A Delectable Education (Charlotte Mason), <http://www.adelectableeducation.com>
- Sabbath Mood Homeschool (Charlotte Mason), <http://sabbathmoodhomeschool.com/preparing-a-cm-schedule/>
- Well Trained Mind Forums (Classical), <http://forums.welltrainedmind.com>
- Planning Your Charlotte Mason Education by: Sonya Shafer, <https://simplycharlottesmason.com/store/planning-your-charlotte-mason-education/>
- Simply Charlotte Mason also has a free curriculum guide, <https://simplycharlottesmason.com/planning/curriculum-guide/>
- Managers of Their Chores by: Steve and Teri Maxwell, <http://www.titus2.com/managers-of-their-chores.html>