



## A Word of Encouragement From our Coordinator and his Wife

If you're just starting out as a new homeschooler of a high-school student, or you are already a homeschooler but making the transition to high school, don't be intimidated!

If you have had homeschool experience with Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, remember that you can still have fun with homeschooling in the high-school years by continuing to make it real, relevant, and hands-on. Or, if you're just starting out, you need to know that high-school does not have to be dull and boring (regardless of what your own high-school experience may have been).

While high-school learning can be exciting and stimulating, it's important to ensure that your student's high-school education is accomplishing the appropriate credits and progressing towards a high-school diploma. A key matter is choosing curriculum.

Some homeschool curriculum publishers have everything (or almost everything) you need to accomplish all high-school credits. Other curriculum publishers are focused on a particular subject area such as math or science. You may find that a comprehensive curriculum covering all subjects works best for you and your student. Or you may want to pick and choose from different publishers and put together a program that fits your needs.

We are here to help. Please see our Curriculum Finder page for some good suggestions. Also, our website is full of helpful information about high-school requirements and high school in general. You may want to print out our High-School Planning Sheet, which will help you sketch out your plan for all four years of high school. In addition, we have a staff of experienced high-school counselors, all of whom homeschooled their own children. They will be reviewing your student's education plans, grades, etc., to ensure that he/she is progressing towards a high-school diploma. Bear in mind that a diploma from Gateway is considered by the state of Tennessee to be equivalent to a public-school diploma.

Once you have in place a solid curriculum worthy of high-school credit, there is still plenty of room to make learning fun, real, and relevant. Feel free to be creative. Trips to the library and historical sites can make high-school subjects come alive. Biology and Chemistry labs can be quite stimulating. As students progress through high school, you can help them pursue their personal interests or future careers through electives like computer programming, welding, home ec, vocal music, etc. The list is endless. You can incorporate career exploration into your education plan, as well. There is a credit called "Distributive Education" for working a job. Also, dual enrollment at a college (by which students earn both high-school and college credits) is popular with many homeschoolers. Again, consult our website.



Even in high school, you are free to seize educational opportunities and explore new and unanticipated fields of study. Suppose, for example, that a visiting missionary from Peru speaks at your church. Research on the internet or a trip to the library can access a wealth of facts and figures regarding that country and South America in general. Your highschooler could study the cultures, languages, industries, and agriculture of that country, and write a paper on what these people are like and what they do. Armed with such information, a highschooler could begin a prayer journal in order to better pray for the missionaries there and the people they are trying to reach with the gospel of Christ. Such a “unit study” would be quite easily incorporated into a larger world history or geography course. Obviously, a globe is an invaluable asset to a homeschooling family.

So, even though you may be using a very standard curriculum as the framework of your homeschooling endeavor; nevertheless, you should feel free to include interesting and creative add-ons. Don't limit yourself. The more real, hands-on, and stimulating you make homeschooling, the more your highschooler will be eager to learn. Cultivating a love of learning, reading, and the joy of discovery is half the battle won.

The bottom line is: you should take heart. Do not be intimidated by the responsibility of teaching your children. God arranged the family so that children learn from their parents. Some parents teach their children good things, others bad; but you are already your child's teacher.

Still, you may think, “It's been a long time since I had Spanish, Algebra 2, or Chemistry. How can I teach high-school foreign languages, math, and science?” First of all, you should consider that some of the best homeschooling is a learning experience for both parent and child. You may be surprised at how much you recall as you go through these subjects with your student. Also, there are helpful, online tutorials such as [khanacademy.com](https://www.khanacademy.com). In addition, there are many homeschool coops and in-person tutorials where homeschoolers band together and parents who are more knowledgeable in those difficult subjects conduct once-a-week classes and send the students home with their assignments for the week. And there is always the option of hiring a personal tutor. Perhaps someone in your church is proficient in those areas and would be willing to help. Homeschooling affords a wide variety of ways to approach challenging subjects.



Mothers sometimes think that the responsibilities of teaching high school will stress their already busy schedule to the breaking point. But you may be surprised at how freeing it can be. Not having to deal with the day-to-day drama of an institutional school can be a great stress reliever for your household. Having a teenager in the typical, institutional school can cause many burdens, stresses, and strains in the home. Among these are the loss of control over what your child will be doing, what he/she will be taught, and whom he/she will be associating with for most of the day for the next four years. Untold difficulties come into a family's life when children are taught non-Christian ideas or develop bad (or even immoral) associations. Also, a student in this sort of institution must deal with other students who are not friends, but hostile and cruel to others. Homeschooling can put you, the parent, back in the driver's seat (as you were in your child's earlier years). Your child can be fully socialized, but you can be in control of this vital area of his/her life.

Some mothers wonder how they will keep up with housework while teaching teenagers. One important principle is not to do for your children what you can teach/train them to do for themselves. An essential aspect of their development as functional human beings, and therefore an essential part of their homeschooling, is to teach them to participate in the life of a home, taking responsibility for themselves, and helping with household duties. Moreover, teaching Christian character is of greater importance than (for instance) memorizing (then later forgetting) all fifty states and their capitals. To function in life, a homeschool student must learn such character traits as obeying authority, being a self-starter, following through and completing unpleasant but needful tasks, and doing what he/she is supposed to be doing—even when no one is looking. Most important, all Christian families should always be teaching their children the Bible. Never forget that the revelation of God in Scripture is a sure foundation for all learning.