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Considering Homeschooling Blog of the Week: Virtual Schooling

<http://www.consideringhomeschooling.com/post/2008/12/06/Considering-Homeschooling-Blog-of-the-Week-Virtual-Schooling.aspx>

Each week Considering Homeschooling recognizes the faithful service of someone getting the message out about private, biblical homeschooling.Â This week we recognize "ladyofvirtue" for her blog "Virtual Schooling".Â Visit the original on the Large Family Mothering blog. Â Virtual Schooling December 2, 2008 by ladyofvirtue I live in a largely blue-collar town. There are no mansions or super affluent people that make up our community. The families that choose to be "traditional", with the daddy as the breadwinner, struggle. Lots of homeschooling families that I know here have had trouble even affording a computer. In a community like ours, virtual schooling where the government sends a family a computer, pays for internet use, and supplies all sorts of glossy, colorful curricula and even science and craft supplies, is just too much of a temptation. When our state first began to offer such programs, I can remember the glowing reports of all of the "goodies" that were sent--it was like Christmas! Everything needed was provided, including scissors and craft paper, and seeds for growing things. Mothers who before had been wringing their hands wondering how they were going to afford the Saxon Math series were now almost care-free. But there was a catch. Someone has said that nothing in life is truly "free". With all of the goodies and the ease of knowing someone else was in charge came a large price. Instead of worries over buying supplies and curricula, now the mothers had a heavy burden placed on them every day. They had to coerce and nag and bite their fingernails over getting the work done that was required--a whole boat-load of extra fact-cramming and busy-work that made it almost impossible for anyone to have a good life, especially for the mother who had even 3-4 children on different levels. Instead of having their lives simplified, they were complicated beyond comprehension, and their children were being harmed in the process and turned into drones who hated anything to do with "learning". The most unfortunate thing of all was that most mothers were convinced that this sort of government-sponsored slavery was what homeschooling was all about! Many who were already feeling overwhelmed about teaching their own children became convinced, after allowing the state to muck with things, that homeschooling was impossible and horrid. So, they gave up. But learning is not a super-complicated thing that only professionals know how to do! Our children were born to us completely helpless--they could not even hold their own heads up! Somehow, with our encouragement, they learned to walk and talk and feed themselves. Children, even in some of the most impoverished conditions, learn to do these things, unless they are ill or haven't any food to eat. Why do children learn these things? Is it because they are constantly nagged, or they have been through the right "programs"? No. Children learn these things because they want to and they need to. The parents are there to facilitate and encourage. Now here is the secret that those who run teaching colleges and publish curricula and make their living on the supposition of universal idiocy do not want you to know: TEACHING CHILDREN IS NOT DIFFICULT--THEY ALREADY WANT TO LEARN! I once checked out a magazine published for teachers from the library, thinking I could glean something of value for my own family. An article was written therein about teaching composition to middle-school students. I could not believe the amount of verbage it took--paragraph upon paragraph of evidence and studies and then the methodology that took pages to explain. What a waste! Writing is just an extension of language, another form of communication. When it is taught in this context, it no longer seems mystical or complex. Good writing is learned by reading the good writing of others--with reading aloud, discussion, and application. The same goes for the other subjects. Math is a sort of communication, it is the communication of the Creator to His creation--that there is order and care. Science is best described as the "thinking of God's thoughts after Him". The wonder of this planet and the universe is the only catalyst needed. Once the appetite has been whetted, a parent need only to watch a child take off like a rocket-ship (and be willing to enjoy the adventure). Of course, you can't enjoy the wonderful adventure of discovery with your child if every day is prescribed and written down. The time and energy you would normally have to explore and discover is all taken up by the reading of droll, dumbed-down texts, numerous questions to be answered by rote understanding, canned experiments and the like. Yes, there are times when a little rote learning can be valuable, but not as an all-encompassing program. The teaching of facts should be likened to handing out tools that a skilled craftsman, the child, can use to create and discover further. Rote learning should never become the end, but the means. We should not be so much concerned with turning out children who can win at Trivial Pursuit as much as we should be concerned with raising children who can take the information in any situation, analyze it, and come up with wise conclusions and solutions. I do not write theory here; I myself have seen the proven examples, and not just among my own children. But the public schooling industry, and it is a great part of our economy, does not want you and I to know just how simple teaching and learning really is. Just think of how many meetings and conferences would have to be canceled. Whole political committees would have to be disbanded. We would see a lot of educational phd's flipping burgers, and whole educational supply industries would go belly-up. Besides all of this, those who desire power over our population would be the saddest of all, because people of America would once again, as in the crazy times of our inception, realize just how many choices they have, and would develop the intestinal fortitude to pursue those choices. I personally believe that it would allow Christianity to return once again as the underlying foundation of our Republic, as parents would be allowed to pass on their Judeo-Christian values in a personal way to the next generation. But you won't read this in the leaflets sent out to entice you. They will act as your friend, and say how they understand that you feel unsure and intimidated. But they are not friendly. They only wish to use your own fears to convince you that you can not do it on your own. But, with God's grace and help, YOU CAN!!!!!!