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Considering Homeschooling: Incubating Souls

<http://www.consideringhomeschooling.com/post/2009/04/22/Considering-Homeschooling-Incubating-Souls.aspx>

Kathy Lowers, Founder of Considering Homeschooling This week we are hoping to hear some happy cheeping from the chicken eggs we are incubating. Homeschooling is ideal for do-it-yourself living creature projects and the butterfly, lady bug, praying mantis, silk worm projects -- to name a few -- that we have done were easy and yet so valuable. How wondrous it is to view the metamorphosis of one of God's creatures, right in your own home. A public school classroom might have a fish tank with some leaves and a chrysalis or an incubator with some eggs; the students may or may not see the butterfly or chicks emerge during school hours. Their teacher might teach the life cycle of a butterfly or chicken, but no credit to the Creator could be given. In contrast, Christian parents who teach their children at home find that such a project rises to an infinitely higher dimension. At home, there is a bonding between parents and children and among siblings as they experience a living miracle -- and there is a resulting acknowledgement and awe of the One who designed it. So, I jumped at the chance when a homeschooling 4-H mom offered her incubator and a clutch of chicken eggs. Never having incubated eggs before, I assumed it would be a cinch, just like a cocoon. Just pop the eggs in the incubator and after a while, you would get your chicks, right? After some web sites, books and experience regarding this subject, the children and I discovered that incubating can be a complicated and risky process. For one, the incubator we have is not the expensive, digital kind that controls its own temperature and humidity. It is the old-fashioned version where you have to keep checking the temperature, which seems to meander up and down on a whim. A few times it got below or above the instructed 99.5 degrees, and we panicked, tweaking it back to the proper temperature, but wondering did the fluctuation affect the chicks? Chicks cannot survive extreme temperature deviations. And then you have to keep the humidity at the ideal level, which varies according to where you are in the 21 day cycle. You have to add water into special wells in the incubator. If there is not enough water, the chicks will stick to the shells. If too much humidity is present, the chicks will drown. Eggs in an incubator must also be turned several times a day. A hen instinctively turns her eggs to keep the developing embryos from sticking to the sides of the shell. One of more interesting aspects of the incubator project is "candling" the eggs. You shine a light through the eggs to see if you can determine if there is life in them; sometimes you see a beating heart or movement -- very cool. What you usually find is that some eggs were never fertile while others started growing but "quit" -- either because the environment was not right or just because they were not meant to make it. You have to remove the non-living ones because they could explode. Out of fourteen eggs we had five infertile ones, two rotten ones, and seven that may or may not make it -- we'll know in about three days. I have to admit I have felt pretty incompetent and stressed when I thought the humidity or temperature was off. But, we tried our very best to give these eggs the cleanest, safest, most conducive environment possible for coming out healthy. That, along with prayer, gives us some optimism. I could not help realizing there is a strong analogy here between incubating eggs and raising up children. While at the beginning all the eggs appear the same, all children start out with such potential, such seeming innocence before some are destroyed by the way of the world. But some Christian parents think that they can place the fragile soul of a child in any old environment, like the extreme anti-God environment of government schools, believing that child will come out just fine through going to Sunday school 45 minutes each week. These naïve parents imagine their child being a great evangelist to all the other youngsters there, not realizing their child is being evangelized more smoothly and intensely, by humanist teachers and curriculum. By the time the process is nearing the end, some have really become rotten, both eggs and children. While sometimes there was no preventing a bad egg, Christian parents putting their children in the perverted incubators of the public schools is by far the biggest contributor to failed children. If you are a loving parent who really knows Jesus and adheres to His Word in all you do, if you can create an uplifting, safe, inspiring Christian environment for children in your home -- and I am convinced most real Believers are more than capable of this -- then you should be homeschooling. Don't let the world incubate the souls of your children; God gave that job to you!

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