

February 1992

From the Heart— Don't be discouraged

My heart is grieved by the struggles that some of you are having in teaching your children. Some parents get discouraged, assuming home-schooling doesn't work, and place their children into public school, knowing that is not the solution.

Part of the burden comes from comparing home-school with the classroom. Learning *why* schools teach as they do can help free home-school parents. Classroom education is a system designed to eliminate the need for special attention. The teaching materials repeat year after year to accommodate those who missed something the preceding year. It is mass production of education.

In contrast, home-schooling allows craftsmanship in education. A home schooler needs only to be taught specific material once. Where remediation is necessary for the home-schooler, parents can zero-in on those areas and then continue with new material.

The home school parent has the opportunity to tailor teaching materials to each unique student. The key word is *sensitivity*, as opposed to having the 'perfect curriculum'. The essence of learning is linking. Relate new material to what you know the child already knows and his personal life experiences. You can adjust your curriculum to fit your child. If he excels in an area, get materials which interest and challenge him. If he has difficulty with an area, pinpoint the problem. Teach the specific material again from a different point of view. A wise teacher once said, "The key to teaching is being able to explain the same subject five different ways." In math, look for household examples demonstrating the material at hand. Learn scientific laws and principles by doing experiments and demonstrations.

I would like to challenge you to the best that home-schooling has to offer. The goal is understanding. Understanding answers the question, "WHY?" This is not easily taught in the classroom. The teacher of 30 students does not have the time to answer thousands of questions which might lead to understanding. So, class proceeds; teacher talks, students are trained to be quiet, don't ask questions, don't rock the boat. Tests focus on mastering trivial details. And "memorize and regurgitate" reigns in the classroom.

But what is your goal? Are you content for your children to know endless facts? The most important thing a student can learn is how the pieces of life fit together. For example, how was the technological development of the cannon responsible for the end of the medieval castles? You have the opportunity to teach your children to be wise, by preparing them for their future in the *real* world. Academics are just one

aspect of this preparation. Please take the opportunity to teach your children to know the truth. Utilize student's motivation and relevance to daily life as keys to comprehension and retention of material.

To help parents with curriculum choices we have set up a Home Education Center at Gateway. Now we can offer you more than a list of phone numbers to request a pile of catalogs. This center allows parents to see curriculum material year round. This center is open Friday afternoons and all day Saturday.

Sincerely,

Greg Stablein