

Responsibilities of Mothers

by Rachel Weaver

Rachel Weaver emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance, setting priorities, and involving children in household responsibilities to effectively manage the challenges of motherhood.

Duration: 59:16

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:1-2, Psalm 32:8-9, Psalm 90:12, Proverbs 3:6, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 4:2, James 1:5

Topics: "Christian Parenting", "Discipline And Order"

Description

In this sermon transcript, Mrs. Tawake discusses the importance of teaching and organizing our lives while incorporating the word of God. She emphasizes the simplicity of teaching while going about our daily activities. Mrs. Tawake acknowledges that she is also learning and working on organizing her own household. She highlights the need for discipline in our lives and how it brings order and structure. She encourages involving children in various activities such as folding laundry, dictating stories, and learning memory work.

Transcript

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I'm a mother of seven children. The oldest is 15, the youngest is 10 months old. So I'm right in the middle of organizing a house, and I don't feel like I always know how to do it any better than any of the rest of you.

I have the topic, but that doesn't mean that I know how. I'm working at it just like everybody else is. What we want to do is not give you a lot of schedules, because my schedule might not work for you.

Your schedule might not work for me. I just want to give you some guidelines of how to get things. Is it louder? I should put it up higher.

Is this better? Okay. I want to just give you some guidelines of things that work in our household, and that I've observed other mothers that it works for others to get things done in others. I want to stop a moment to have a word of prayer first, because our Father, You are the God of order, the God of discipline, and You're the one who has planned our lives and given us our families.

I just ask You, Father, today to speak Your words, and I pray, Father, for wisdom, for understanding, and for clearness of mind. Bless each sister here as she struggles to fulfill her job. I pray, Father, that You would just, for You're the God that wisdom comes from.

We thank You for this in Jesus' name. Amen. All right.

Time is a gift from God. He is the one who is the author of all time, and we are to be stewards of our time. 1 Corinthians 4.12, 1 and 2 says, Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God.

Moreover, it is required of men and stewards that a man be found faithful. We are responsible for how we use God's time. I was impressed by the Psalm 90, verse 12.

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. When we misuse our time, we misuse God's time, and it's a spiritual problem. It's not only our problem.

I find that the first way to get organized is to seek the Lord. He will help you to find the priorities that you need to work out each day. Your priorities might not be mine.

Maybe you have a special calling. Maybe you have more little ones. Maybe you have a handicapped child.

Each of us has our own needs. Seek the Lord. Allow God to show you your needs and pray about your goals and your ambitions.

James 1.5 says, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. I find that God gives me more than I ever expected. Some days when I'm struggling, if I just stop and go and ask him for it, he just pours it out.

And some days I struggle through and forget to ask him. And it doesn't go very well. Psalm 32, 8 and 9. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go.

I will guide thee with mine eye. And then one more. Matthew 11, 28 to 30.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. God will help us organize our schedules so we can get through our days in a restful way. Nothing is too small to speak to him about.

He cares about every little one. Every little activity. Okay.

The first one is to speak to God. The second one is to set our priorities. We're going to allow God to show us what is important.

And one of the first things that is important is quiet time with him. And that is a major problem for most of us. We have babies.

Sometimes they get us up at night. Sometimes they do every night. And we're tired.

But somehow we need to find time to spend with him. Because if we don't, we don't have a cup that's full. And a cup that's not full doesn't run over.

And I find the early morning what's best for me. But sometimes I don't get it done. Maybe I was up half the night with the baby.

So what do I do? Well, I cannot say that I don't have any time. And so I stop maybe at 10 o'clock when my children are all occupied doing their math, my baby's in bed sleeping. Maybe that's my quiet time.

But God does expect us to speak to him. And we need to hear from him to make our days all right. Another thing that I think is important and a priority is an unusual one.

It's a time for rest. I think most mothers with babies and toddlers and homespun children need naps in the afternoon. Now, I know I'm a radical.

But I was raised with a mother who took a nap, with a mother-in-law who took a nap. And I find that if I take a nap, 10 minutes, 20 minutes, a half an hour, whatever I need, I last much better till evening. I'm much clearer.

Their little squabbles and needs and the interruptions, the phone calls don't irritate me half as bad. So some of you say, well, I don't have time to take a nap. I can't do it.

But you don't really have time not to if you're weary. Now, if you're full of energy, bless your heart. You just got to keep on going.

But most of us really do need to stop and have a quiet time. How do you do it? Well, we put our babies to bed. We put our toddlers to bed.

We put our young children to bed. And we get our older children occupied quietly. It's like an hour of quiet time from 1 to 2 or whatever at our house.

Maybe the older ones are studying sign language or language courses they're doing themselves. Maybe they're reading or writing letters. Everybody has to be quiet in our house.

If they are not quiet, then the next day they have to take a nap. And that pretty well settles the struggle for the 8s and the 9s who don't need to always take a nap. They sit quietly and read a book or go outside and do something so that the house is quiet.

And I really find that it refreshes my day. Okay. My third point is an organization that we need to be disciplined.

We need to learn discipline in our own lives first or we cannot teach it to our children. Discipline brings order to a hectic life. It makes a structure and a framework for you to work with.

If you don't have any discipline, if you don't have any mealtimes, if you don't have any bedtimes, if you don't have any order to your life, things don't go very well. And so, although discipline is hard, it is important. Hebrews 12, 11 says, And I like Deuteronomy 28, 1 and 2. It says, And the blessing that God says is the increase of your house, the increase of your barn, the increase of your goods, the increase of your family.

And if we talked to God and be disciplined and be orderly, He would just open His windows and pour out a blessing. Now, I think it's important to have an orderly rising time. We sort of have a set schedule that we rise at a certain time.

Our time doesn't need to be your time and I'm not even going to mention when it is. For us, it's reasonably early, except for Wednesday night, Thursday morning, it's late, so we set it back an hour and Sunday night when we have a service. And if we don't do that, well, we don't function.

So, we can do. If you have an orderly rising time, everybody knows when to get up. There's no complaining and no grouching.

It is the way it is. You get up when you're called. We have orderly mealtimes.

We, at our house, eat breakfast at 7 o'clock, lunch at 12, supper at 5, give or take a little bit. Some days, breakfast is at 7.30 because something unforeseen happened. The phone rang.

Oh, somebody came. But breakfast is at 7, lunch is at 12, and supper is at 5 for us. It doesn't matter if your supper is at 7. But have it in an orderly fashion so that everybody knows what is expected.

Your husband will come home, he will know that there will be a warm meal waiting for him, or if he's at home, he still knows it. Have an orderly school time. It doesn't have to be always on the dot, but have a semblance.

And have an orderly bedtime. You can't get up at an orderly fashion if you don't go to bed in an orderly fashion. If you don't go to bed until 11 or 12, you certainly can't hop up at 5 and 6. So have an orderly bedtime so you can get up orderly.

How do we do it all? And my answer is, we do not. We can't keep better homes than gardens, houses, cook gourmet meals, homeschool our children, and do all our own sewing, train them to be godly, and be involved in lots of ministry and creative activities all at one time. We cannot do it.

We are human. And we are limited. And that is why we need to set priorities.

And I want to stress that God has given each of us gifts. Maybe your gift is not sewing. Maybe your gift is not creatively decorating your house.

Don't go to other people's houses and look around and say, I don't know how to do this. Learn to find what your calling is and get good at that. And then God will lead you into other areas.

We dare not compare ourselves with each other. And that is one of our biggest problems that we face as mothers. We think we have to do it all.

And we can't. First, you're a wife. And second, you're a mother.

And that is one of the things you need to remember. When you set your priorities and goals down, it's not about your husband. Because if your husband is like mine, he often sees holes, pitfalls, dangers that I didn't see.

He gives me counsel. And sometimes he shows me that what I thought was really, really important isn't, after all, nearly as important as something else. And he's more objective.

So when you get your priorities, run them by your husband. That went back under the priorities. I'm sorry, I jumped it back.

In my priority list, with organized living, I suggest that you serve simple meals. We can't do everything. And simple, nourishing meals are fine.

Actually, they're better than fancy meals. I don't know if you get the general spirit. But if any of you do, take a little moment to see what Cheryl says about simple cooking.

Now, we don't have oatmeal for breakfast every day. Cheryl does. Or she did for a while.

I think now she serves whole grains sometimes. But, you know, simplicity is the key to her having the ability to have, what, 10 children, 11? And run a business, too. And then one of the next things is planning and organization.

And here we come to what our planning ahead is, my point. Okay? We only remember about 10% of what we hear. So we need to write down the things we hear and the things we read and keep them for ideas.

We need to take notes. The Chinese say the palest ink is stronger than the strongest memory. And for me, that's true.

This, the children call my brain. And if I leave it or lose it, I have a real problem because it's my, it's just simply my weekly appointment journal, and I'm just going to open it up here in just a minute, with a column for each day of the week. And what I do is I write down anything that's pressing, any appointments that I have, any phone calls I need to make.

I write down chores that are important, errands, special occasions, cards that I need to send. And then I try to look at this every morning before I start my day. I often write my menus in here.

Sometimes I don't. But besides that, I have a sparrow notebook or a ring binder that has pages in it, and I have a to-do list. And what I do is I list the things that I want to accomplish, either in the week or in the day.

You have to break it up according to your needs. Some people have really fancy, neat ideas of organizing, but I do not have enough time to go into lots and lots of detail. So I simply make a list, and we check off the jobs as we do them.

I work out. I set aside about 15 minutes to half an hour every evening before I go to bed. If I don't manage to get it done in the evening because of a fussy baby or something that I need to discuss with my husband, in the morning I get up 15 minutes to half an hour early, depending on how fast or how slow you are, how detailed you do it.

Maybe you need an hour, when the house is quiet so I can think. I don't answer the phone then. I let somebody else do that, and I plan my day sort of.

My days are rubber band days. I plan lots of things that I don't get done, but it helps still to keep me on track. I work out a simple schedule for my family for the day, from rising to setting.

I plan my menus in a greater or lesser fashion. Sometimes it gets trashed and something else takes its place because of time or failure or something. I plan my lessons, either a day ahead or a week ahead, depending on how much time I have.

I plan special times with the children and my husband. I plan daily chores. Those things all go down on my to-do book.

That is not this book. This book gets major things that I don't want to miss. This book gets anything I have to do.

It's not fancy. It's just written out so that I have a thing to go back to. Oh, I have to do this yet.

Then I can give the next child the next job. Some mothers make a list, a copy or a master list of the chores they want that child to do, and they give it to the child, and they change it by the week, some use little index cards and pockets, and they change it. We find various things.

But for me, the easiest way is to do this. Find a way to teach you and do it. It doesn't really matter what the way is.

Just have a plan that helps you. Schedules are helpers, not rulers. Some of you get very frustrated because you make a schedule and it doesn't work.

Then you go to pieces because you feel like a failure. It isn't that way. God gives us interruptions every day, and I find that when I learn to look at interruptions as divine appointments, I can handle my day a whole lot better.

Sometimes it's child training that needs to happen. Sometimes it's sharing with my daughters that needs to happen. Sometimes my husband comes up from the basement, and he just wants the honey.

We sit down and talk a little. I didn't have that plan due that hour. If we can be flexible, sweetly, we will teach our children something very, very valuable.

When my husband came home from teaching school to our house to work as a home business, there were many people that envied me. They said, wow, yeah. You don't understand.

I want him to be there. But my life just fell apart because he had started a new business, and he needed my help. And he said, honey, could you run an errand? And before, from 7 in the morning when he went off to work to 5 in the evening when he came home, I was master of mind.

And so to be organized, when you're flexible, don't allow too much time on the phone. I find that people do have no idea how much time they spend on the phone. It's a really interesting thing that I read in a book somewhere.

Someday or some week, put a pad by the phone. Every time the phone rings, mark down the time that you answer the phone. And when you're done talking, mark down the time that you quit.

At the end of the day, add up how many minutes you spent on the phone, and you will be surprised. And so some of us have gotten answering machines. Some of us have trained our children to answer the phone and sort of say that we're not available, and that is not a lie.

We are there, but we are not available until school is over. Phones are a blessing. We need them so that we don't have to travel as many miles, so that we can get in touch with somebody that's hurting.

But they can be a real pain in the neck. They really can. And they can be even an evil, I think, because we talk on the phone to the hurt of our husband because we should be spending time with him.

Instead, we're gabbing with some sister. We should be spending time with our children. I've seen mothers take their child and say, go in that room and be quiet.

I'm talking on the phone. And they do need to be quiet when you're talking on the phone. They must respect you, but you can't always shove them in another room because you're talking on the phone.

You need to remember that you're training your children, and that is first. Talking on the phone is second. In organizing the day smoothly, I find that if you can learn to do more than one thing at a time, it will help you.

My husband calls it multitasking. That's computer language. Some computers can only do one thing.

Some computers can do many jobs. And he thinks that we mothers need to be multitasking. We need to be able to stir the soup, talk to our children, and work things out.

We can't be one track because if we're totally one track, most of our husbands you will find are one track. They get to talking, and they are one track. God gave them an objectivity and a one mind so they can keep on going and they're not distracted from something.

But we mothers can't do it. Our children, our babies would fall off the couch. Our soup would burn.

If we would get talking to our husbands and not be able to think about other things, they would have a disaster in our house. And so we need to be multitasking. We need to be able to do more than one thing at a time.

Get a phone with a long cord, or get a radio phone like I have that you can walk around the house with. And if somebody does call you, pick up the toys, or fold the diapers, or stir the soup, or set the table, or comb your daughter's hair. I get a kink in my neck talking on the fence.

I hold it like this while I do things this way. But try to learn to do as many things at one time as you can. Nurse the baby, and read that book you need to read.

There's just a number of things that you can do. Okay, a couple other things right here. Now let's get into teaching your children to help you real quickly.

I think that organizing requires that you get your children to help you. They are your servants, not in a bad way, but in a good way. And you have to start very, very early.

And I think a lot of us underestimate how much our children can really do. Your 2 and 3 year olds can pick up every toy they take out. They are very capable of it.

They can do it sweetly. You need to teach them as soon as they're 18 or 19 months old. When they get a toy, they must put it back when they're done.

Now, there are times when they don't. But make it a point that if they make a mess, to help them pick that toy up and throw it away. They will, by the time they're 3, be able to sweetly pick up every toy that baby brother left out.

And that really saves a lot of time for you. Have the little ones put the spoons on the table. Put away the baby's dirty diapers.

If you include your children while you're working, it takes longer. Sure, you can whisk around the house in 10 minutes and have it all done. But when your child is 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, and you have not spent time getting him to help you when he was little, he will not want to help you then.

And if you have, by the time they're 12 and 14, they can run the house almost without you. And it is a real blessing. It frees you up.

I made it a point to teach one of our daughters to sew when she was somewhere between 10 and 12. By the time she was 12, she was making her own clothing. It took me a while.

She did not learn to sew on her own. I did not say, go sit down and sew your dress. We spent time every afternoon, or a couple of afternoons a week, sewing simple projects.

We graduated to bigger ones. And now, I don't have to sew most of the time. I can say, do it, and it gets done.

And people that thought I was unrealistic at 10 when I was teaching her to sew her own slips and nightgowns would be glad to have the same blessing now. And it didn't happen by accident. It's on purpose.

When you teach your children to work, it takes time. Some of my mother friends say, I don't have time to do it. I don't have the patience to do it.

Well, you better start getting it, because they can be such a blessing to you. If you teach them this, order and discipline, they will help bring order and discipline to your house. In fact, I find that my children surpass me in areas where I am weak.

They help to get me into shape. Mother, don't you think that area needs a little attention? And it really does. And I was bypassing it.

One older mother said, teach a child to do the job when he wants to do it, that is probably at 2 or 3 when he wants to wash the dishes, then he will know how to do it by the time he would really rather not. Always by 7 or 8 or 9, there is a space where they just don't really feel like it, and you have to make them do it anyway. And if you help them when they are little to learn to like to do it, it goes so much better later.

School quickly. School is a daily blessing, a daily battle, and a commitment. And our commitment is to train godly children.

And all the things we have discussed so far leads up to this. Discipline, good work habits, we have to do that first before they can learn any school at all. And if you want to have school, you have got to train them to obey you first.

That is the first thing. And then you have to train them to work well. Stick at it.

And if they don't know how to obey and stick at their work, you may as well forget school until you teach them that. It really doesn't work to have school with disobedient children. A lot of us have struggles with our little ones in school because we have 3 or 4 little ones and 3 or 4 in school.

How do we do it? Well, Gwen is going to tell us a little bit about the toddler part, occupying them. But I think we need not to expect too much of ourselves. We need to find a thing that works for us.

The government tells us what we must accomplish. So we need to give them honor and respect. But we can find creative ways to do it.

Maybe you can do most of the heavy schooling when the babies are napping in the morning and in the afternoon. The things that really need drill and one-on-one attention. And then maybe the reading that they do for themselves and the social studies and science that you can discuss and talk casually about can be done when the little ones are awake.

So work on getting those things stacked up. But most of all, don't worry about the fingerprints and the corners when you have mostly little ones. I promise you that they will go away.

I'm finally starting to come out of the woods. Back when everybody was 10 and under, I thought I would never, ever have seen wind. I mean, we did sometimes, but it was a hard job.

Now I can go to bed and I can get up and the floors are sparkling and the windows can shine and the children can be happy and even the first grader can have his reading lesson taught to him by one of the older ones. And so you that are struggling, hang in there. Your older daughters, older sons will someday rise up and bless you if you teach them diligence and good work habits.

It's a blessing. And I could probably say lots more, but I'm going to let Gwen talk now. And we have, write your questions down.

We're going to have a question and answer period where you can ask any questions you want to. We won't print out the answers. My topic is our responsibility to toddlers and preschoolers.

And as you probably already know, toddlers and preschoolers have a habit of disrupting homeschool faster than you can say get out your log sheet. So we're going to try and talk about some ways that you can keep them from disrupting your house. During the last 13 years that we have homeschooled, I've always had two or three preschoolers underfoot, and that's the way I felt about them for many, many years.

They're underfoot. Why don't you go do something else? Why don't you be happy? We're just not getting anything done because your children are just too naughty. You know, that was the way I felt about them.

But I think it was probably from the fact that I had taught in Christian schools for over four years, and it's so serene, you know, and lovely in the schoolroom, and you can walk out of the room and all the children are just, you know, sitting at their desks doing their work. And that's the picture I had taken along into my home, and it wasn't working out that way. So in order to gain some perspective, I had to first understand that the toddlers and preschoolers in my home are my students too.

And when I began to feel that way about them, my attitudes toward them changed. I started looking at their needs as possibilities and not as liabilities anymore. If I started to think about it, that I was given the opportunity to mold and shape these children in order to make further training a delight, then it became a challenge to do something with the children that would be interesting and fun.

And that's what got me started thinking about this whole thing. I found that if I could plan at least one project for the little children before I got the daily dogs out, you might say, get them started doing something, something that interests them. They'll play more happily for longer periods of time with much more creativity than if you just say, come on, children, let's go in the schoolroom, and you just sort of hope the little ones trail along on behind.

That doesn't work at my house. You'll find that children can be taught to play quietly. Not always do you have older brothers and sisters that have time or whatever to play with them.

And if you take a little bit of time and a lot of energy, you can teach your children to play quietly, especially if you have lots of things around for them to do, and I'll talk about that in a little bit. Often deciding what to do is half the battle. I found that over and over again, that if I just have one little thing in my head that I can suggest to the littler children, our day starts out so much better.

So I started including the little ones in my teacher plan book just to make myself accountable. And I don't write everything in, you know, but at least their names are there, and it helps me remember that they are my students too. So like Rachel said, scheduling is an important part of toddler and preschooler's life, and it's an important part of mother's lives too.

Even a small baby can be guided into a structured life, a somewhat structured life. At first the baby will sleep, and then it will wake, and then it will sleep again. Oh, you feed it in there.

I forgot that part. You sleep, he sleeps, he wakes, he feeds, he sleeps, he wakes, he feeds. That's the way a tiny baby is, and tiny babies don't make much trouble in a home school.

They work out pretty well. But after your baby starts waking up longer times, I've found that if you feed them when they wake up, let them stay awake for as long as they're happy, then when they get grouchy, rock them or sing them to sleep without feeding them. There's something about that pattern that establishes a pattern in their bodies or wherever babies establish patterns, that in several months you have a baby that has put themselves on a schedule.

Now, I must confess, I never had a colic baby, so I don't know if that would work for a colic baby or not, but I'm surmising that there is something to it about giving them a pattern, and eventually they take that pattern for themselves. Our nine-month-old baby almost always is ready to go to sleep at 10 o'clock in the morning and almost always at 2 o'clock, so we can all look forward to... She's not a bad baby, but you know that you're going to have one less underfoot at 10 and at 2, more or less. Another thing I've found that when babies are old enough to fiffen up and scream, they're ready for a little discipline in their life.

And the sooner you start that, the sooner they respond to you. My little... This is the first baby. I must confess that I believed that.

My husband believed it, and I didn't. I didn't believe you could do that with a tiny baby, teach them to obey you, but you can, and I believe that she's my best baby. I only need to do a little bit of discipline with her, and she fusses just a little bit longer, and then she cuddles up, and, you know, it's really sweet, and I appreciate that, learning that.

You're never too old to learn. Try to get the whole family up at the same time in the morning, maybe not up at the same time, but together for breakfast at the same time, because this will ensure you that your littler ones are going to take a nap in the afternoon. They're ready to go to bed after dinner.

If you get them up for breakfast, that's almost a guarantee that they're going to be ready to take a nap. So I plan a story time for the little ones right after dinner while the older ones are cleaning up the lunch. I lay down on the floor with the little ones, and they each can pick a book, and we lie there, and I read to them, and sometimes they're asleep before I get to the end of the books that they've picked out.

So that's part of the schedule that I have for the toddlers. Another time is to go outside and play. I don't do this religiously, but I think it's good for children to get outside.

So it's good to plan a time, maybe after they get up from their nap, to just let them go outside and run in the fresh air. Another thing I've found is that our little children benefit a lot from their own Bible story time. At our home, we have family worship with the whole family in the morning, and they don't think about the things that the bigger children are thinking about.

They don't even understand them. It's good for them to hear it, but it's not really their time. So before they go to bed, I usually try to read them a Bible story, and we started this year prayer diaries with all the school children started prayer diaries.

So I started a prayer diary for the little ones too, and I was rewarded with all kinds of insights and confidences that I never realized, you know, that were in there. So that's been a real blessing for this year. Now we'll talk about having lots of things on hand for children to do.

During school, it's important to have lots of raw materials around for your little children to play with. If you want them to be happy, you're going to have to have things for them to do, especially if you can't spend time with them the whole morning. So you should have things like blocks and beads and masking tape, balls, balloons, boxes, dress-up clothes, beanbags, and don't try to write it all down.

You can't. I did put them together in a little book like this, so if you're interested, I have them with me. Ropes, magnets, toys.

You can sort your toys in categories, put them in different baskets, and pull out a different basket for each day. They like things like that. Wash lines, hammers and nails, and empty grocery boxes and cartons and cups and all that kind of stuff.

Our children started collecting them this year, and they have a magnificent store in the basement, and they play and play and play in that store. Sue told me of several raw materials she uses, and she might want to talk about this more in the question and answer time. She has what she calls a felt farm, and she has a rice tub.

So you can ask her more about that later. You should have lots of things to create with. You could have art curriculum, colors, pencils, markers, scissors, glue sticks, chalk, not rubber cement.

That one's for you, Bridget. Play-doh, paint, stamps, pencils, stickers, and the pre-addressed envelopes that come in junk mail. Don't throw them away.

Your little children love them. My little children know that there's a drawer with envelopes for them, and when they write their letters and draw their pictures for their friends, those are their envelopes, and they can have as many as they want. It doesn't matter.

I also have picture drawers where I collect and throw pictures into, calendars, magazines, mail. There's lots of great pictures come in junk mail. Story papers like Wee Lambs and Story Friends, things like that.

Those are very good things to have lying around for children to play with. Not lying around, organized, but, you know, somewhere for children to play with. Equipment to learn with, things like magnifying glasses, puzzles, measuring spoons and cups, threading beads, games, workbooks, dot-to-dot books.

That teaches them to count almost without, I don't know, they just learn to count really well by using dot-to-dots. Kindergarten curriculum, I'm going to talk about that in a little bit, and word search puzzles. She sits and does word search puzzles with her grandma, and she got herself to the place that she could recognize the small letter and find the large letter.

Nobody taught her how to do that, just working with grandma. She became aware that there's a large A and a small A, and that's been really helpful to her. She learned all the ABCs just by doing word search puzzles and probably listening to what goes on, too.

Toddlers love to do projects right along with you and the other children. They love to do dishes. My first grader and four-year-old often do the breakfast dishes because the rest of us are getting started with other projects.

Another thing that you can do that's really good for them is to have them brush their teeth after every meal. They love to brush their teeth, and that's going to be so good for them in years to come that they got that habit established when they were tiny. You can let them have little pieces of dough, and they can make little mini pizzas, or they can make sticky buns or pretzels, and that will keep them occupied for a long time.

They can dust. No reason why a four-year-old can't dust. They can do exercises.

They can fold wash, put wash away. They can dictate stories to somebody. They love that, having their own storybook that they write the stories.

They can do memory work right along with your first grader. There's no reason why the four-year-old and the two-year-old and the six-year-old can't all be learning the same memory work, especially if you use big pictures and motions and sing with them. They really love that.

Simple science and social studies projects, I'll show you some help for that in just a little. They like to put away groceries. They can help you make snacks if you have a simple recipe, and they love to do that.

They can put away their own toys, as Rachel said, and their own clothes. If you have their drawers organized, there's no reason why they can't put each different kind of article of clothes on the right pile. It might take a while, but they can do it.

They love to go on field trips, and they love to talk to you. So those are some things that they like to do right along with you. Most of all, we need to teach character.

Rachel talked about this too. If they won't sit still and listen during family worship or at mealtime, they're not going to sit still and listen to you when you want to teach them something either. So, attentiveness is a character quality we can teach our toddlers.

Obedience is a character quality we can teach. If they don't obey us promptly, then that's the first lesson we need to teach. It seems like they need that lesson over and over and over again.

Unselfishness. Teach your toddlers that they can be unselfish instead of arguing and tattling on the others. And I already talked about orderliness.

And many character qualities you can pull from your Sunday church service. Review them through the week. Put a display on your bulletin board.

Make that be your theme of the week. You can use a memory verse at every mealtime that came from the Sunday morning sermon. Or you can use it as a word of counsel at an opportune time.

If your preschooler is ready, you can start teaching bits and pieces of kindergarten and get an edge on first grade. And I've been looking for a long time for a really simple kindergarten curriculum, one that you can just pick from. And I think I've found it.

This is a very simple, simply laid out book. It's called Early Education at Home. I found it at a curriculum fair in a used book section.

I thought something told me that's a book I want, but I thought I didn't have the money for it. And so I didn't come home with it. And this thing just stirred in my mind and stirred in my mind.

And I finally called the lady and said, Can you send me a stack of books? And I'd like to look at them. Well, actually it turned out that she sent me a stack of books. So I have them along.

And I'm going to tell you what she does with her children. I have about 15 of them along. So if any of you are really serious about a real simple kindergarten program that you can pick and choose from, I do have some with me and I also have order blanks for more.

So what she does is she teaches you that children can be taught as you rise and sit and walk and stand at home. First of all, she lists skills that the children, preschoolers, need to learn before they can start, before they are ready to start first grade. They need motor skills, they need social skills, they need language skills, cognitive skills, and mathematic skills before they're ready to teach first grade.

And most of us just assume the children are going to learn all this stuff, and they do. I mean, you know, I had how many children start first grade so far? Six or so. And, you know, they do.

They learn all this stuff by osmosis. But if you can put it in there before first grade, just as you live your day, you'll find that you really do have a jump on the work that you have to do in first grade. She talks about scheduling.

She lists specific ideas for teaching them, letters and numbers and shapes and colors if you need it. If you don't need it, you know, you just fly over those pages. But I had our oldest son didn't learn colors until he got to first grade.

Colors didn't make sense to him. He didn't care about it. And so it would have been nice if I would have taken some time and taught him the colors before he embarrassed himself at school and didn't know the difference between yellow and green.

Anyway, what she does after she tells you all these things that the children can learn colors and shapes and those different things, then she has a two-page spread for a week's time. It's all the more you have to do for a whole week. And she takes a letter of the alphabet starting with A, and she also sticks colors in and numbers and social studies, little social studies things you can do with them and science things you can do with them.

And she has books listed that you can get from the library, but we found out that it's just as much fun for the little children to go to the library and look for books with those numbers, those letters in the titles. And I make sure that they always pick it as a first letter. They can't, you know, if we're in Week G, which we just were in, they can't just have a G from again.

It has to be a G from the beginning of the word, like grain or game or something like that. And we start a display on Monday. That gives her something to do right away Monday morning.

We start a display of all the books in the library that are her size. And she comes with Gulliver's Travels and something like that. I say, no, that's not your age.

Just get the small ones. And then we make a display and anything around the house that the other children see that starts with whatever letter you're working on, ask for flashlights. And then they put those on the display shelf.

And slowly through the week, you're building an awareness in this child that G is the letter of the week. The lady that put this book together suggests Bible stories that go with the letters. She shows you how to teach character qualities, and we're already doing character qualities as a family, so I don't use those.

But she teaches you how to do that. She also correlates the snacks for the children with the letter of the alphabet. So I got the idea to correlate activities.

So when we were doing A, we did applesauce. When we were doing E, we did exercises. When we were doing G, we stressed games.

And I thought about it that this preschool primer is really good for that because all the activities are listed in alphabetical order. So in week G, I turned to G and thought, now what do you do that starts with G? So I looked. There's not much in here with G. But I thought, well, grooming, brushing teeth.

I'm trying to get them to brush their teeth after meals. So I taught grooming for G this week, and that was her main activity of the week. And those of you that have this book already, I would really be interested in hearing what you've put in the empty pages because with the next printing, I'd like to make it larger.

And so if you have ideas, which I'm sure you do, that aren't in the book, I'd like to hear from you because I'd like to make the book bigger if we can. The lady who wrote this book, Mrs. Stoecki, encourages and suggests that you take them on a field trip each week. Now, you know, maybe you can, maybe you can't.

But it was a good idea, and it's worth thinking about. I love the simplicity of her strategy, that you just teach this while you're coming and while you're going. And so many times during the day, I'll say to Charity, she's the one I'm working with, I'll say something like, G says, what as in girl? And then she'll think around and she'll say, good.

G says, what as in games? And the answer is good. On and on. G says, what as in grapes? Anything that you're working with, anything that you see, ask the child, what does it say? And in a week's time, it's no problem to teach them a sound in a week's time.

Verses can be memorized with that week's letter. Like, be sure your sin will find you out for week B. Songs can be taught, like count your many blessings for week C. And the week that we, one of the weeks that we were studying digging into dinosaurs happened to be week D for Charity. I think that was the week we had you over for supper.

So her activity was, for that week, was helping us get ready to dig into dinosaurs for Andy. And a thing that she came up with on her own, and like I said before, when you give your children just a little bit of something to do, it makes them more creative. Well, one of the projects that she started on her own was to write down the words that she found around the house that start with the letter.

So she's writing grape nuts and she's writing graphic. And one of them said, that's over your head. And it didn't matter.

She didn't care if it was over her head or not. She wrote graphic anyway. And then all the ones that she could, she drew pictures for.

And it got to be a family project. People would come and draw her a picture and then they would tell her how to spell the word. And so that was a real exciting step to see her do that.

Another responsibility we have to our toddlers and preschoolers is to honor the wishes of their father. Young children are very sensitive to broken relationships or even fragile relationships. Our two-year-old developed the startling habit of screaming and crying out many times during the night after we moved him into his own room.

And we tried everything we could think of to get him to stop this. We prayed with him specifically about the problem. I would lie on the floor in his bedroom so he would be secure enough to go to sleep.

And we would discipline him and nothing seemed to help. And I started hitting him and thinking he has a real problem or something. And my husband held out for being stern and I held out for being stubborn.

And so this went back and forth for weeks. And eventually it started to get a little better. But the problem wasn't exactly solved.

And I was listening to a set of tapes called Preparation for Parenting. And on one of these, oh, I forgot to tell you that in that time I did end up punishing him too for survival. I was running out of sleep and I saw that the only thing I was going to be able to do to get him to listen to me was to punish him.

And so then Dave said, I was listening to these tapes and there was a story about a little girl that was a terror during the day. And she had always been a sweet little girl before this. But when she was about two, she became a terror during the day.

And at night she couldn't sleep. She just kept going into her parents' room, going into her parents' room. And they could not figure out what was wrong.

And so the man that they counseled with said, I think that you're going at this thing the wrong way. I think that when you come home from work, instead of showering attention on this little girl, shower attention on

your wife. And the man just kind of looked at her and he said, try it.

So the next night when he came home from work, he sat down with his wife and talked with her. And this old child came bouncing over. You going to sit with him? And he said, no, this is our time.

And, you know, like success stories are, in a month the baby was sound asleep in their bed all night. Well, I don't know if that always works for everybody, but I think the principle is there that if the husband and wife do not agree that babies and children are going to play on that, I think he knew that I was holding out for him. And he still sometimes comes into our room at night, but he's not distressed like he was.

And the man who was speaking on the tape said, he believes that children need assurance that you're still together. And so they come to your room at night to see if you're together. And if you can show them during the day that you're together, they won't need to travel at night to see if you're still together.

We have a responsibility to pray for our toddlers and preschoolers. If any man lack wisdom, as Rachel already said, let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not. You have not because you ask not.

I believe that God gave us children to help us see our need of him and his grace every day. So in closing, taking the time to include your toddlers and preschoolers in your homeschool will result in your being able to say instead of, what do I do with these little ones? How can I ever do without them? Because indeed these toddlers will grow up, and if you have allowed them to work and play and learn beside you and not push them aside, they will be equipped by God's grace to fulfill any calling he would put on their lives. And God bless you all.

What do we have? Anybody have one right off for a starter? I'll fill in wherever you don't because I'm popping full of questions, but I want to give you a chance. Good. The question is this.

Is there a stage between tiny baby who sleeps peacefully and nurses nicely and two-year-old who can string beads and play with Sue's rice tub or my oatmeal box, fan box? Is there a middle ground? When do you think there is? Ideally, no. I would agree with that from my own experience. I would agree with that there sometimes is, but if you get real creative.

But I think discipline is probably more the key to it than anything else. And I think that if you have your hands tied, you're up against it. But stern.

I mean, really, really, what's the word I want to use? It means all the time the same way. Consistent. Consistent discipline.

Loving but firm is the answer to that problem. I don't, there's just, you know, my Carol is 10 months old and she's right now at the place where she's learning to go. But there are already things that she knows that she may not have or she gets her hand smacked.

And she'll go and she'll sit up there and she'll look and she'll reach. Mom, mom, reach. Mom, mom.

And that means she's not allowed. It's mama. She can't have it.

And I will smack her hands if she does it. We will take her away. But if she goes and gets it, we smack her hands.

And it's amazing how fast they learn. A hot serve. What do you do about your hot serve? Do you let them burn themselves? No.

They either burn themselves once or else you spank them so they don't. And you see to it that they don't run on the road. But the toilets are kind of in between.

All this cupboard stuff, you know. If you make guidelines and stick to it, it gives you. Correct thy son and he will give thee rest.

The proverb writer says and that is true. That's where we are. But that is, you allow them.

She says pots and pans at her house are okay. But the toilet is not. If you want to allow them pots and pans, that's fine.

You know, I don't allow my pots and pans because I can't handle that. But she does and so that's great. But no, it doesn't really matter as long as it's okay every day.

He knows what his guidelines are. But the toilet is never okay. Jackie.

That's true. The yellow one. The child left himself.

Little one gets bored. It's true. Jackie's diversity there again.

And with older ones, it's easy for us. The 13-year-old takes them out and swings them. Then about an hour later, the 10-year-old reads them a story.

And we just keep doing that. But what do you do if you're a mom and you have little ones? What do you do? The 8-year-old still can help tremendously. They can go and play blocks with him for half an hour while you teach reading to the 6-year-old.

It works. Somebody else. Okay.

For those of you who can't hear, she kept his morning nap as long as she could. Did you get him up early? Yes. Of course.

She got him up early. Then he went to sleep when you wanted him to. Okay.

I have some questions. Go ahead. And we do that, too.

And we just make our old ones get up that much earlier. And we get stuff done before the little ones wake up at 6.30 or whenever. So, you know, it works the same way.

It calls out the same. Somebody else. Okay.

I have a question. I'd like to talk about something with older children. We talked about toddlers and babies.

I'd like to ask Joanne a question here about teenagers. How do you direct the way your teenagers look at authority and the young people and the activities that the 14s and the 13s are thinking about doing? What's your family ñ I mean, how do you see parental guidance and other families interacting with your family? There's probably other older brothers. I just don't know them all here.

Yeah. Okay. Our children want to do things with other people's children.

And we have a certain way we respond to that. But I think it's good for us to share with each other. How do we establish guidelines in our family? You know, that's fine.

We'll get there. Absolutely. Well, I mean, this is great.

I'm satisfied. People are however dependable. I think that's right.

I think so.

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