

# CSTHEA quick-start guide 2020

## 1. Register with a church-related school if you homeschool in TN . Some examples:

- Aaron Academy
- Homelife Academy
- Gateway Christian Schools are three of the more popular ones.

There are three routes to legally homeschool in Tennessee. Your options include:

1. **Register with your local school district (not recommended)**
2. **Register with a church-related umbrella school**
3. **Register with an accredited online program (note these can be private or public)**

These church-related schools above will be at the Home Education Expo. You can wait to talk with their representatives to find the church-related school you prefer. The church-related schools can answer questions regarding Tennessee laws, record keeping, grading and curriculum choices. You have the option of registering with the superintendent of schools, but we don't recommend that option. Despite what you may have been told, Tennessee law does not require registering with the superintendent. The differences among the church-related schools include geographical areas they cover, local presence, cost, testing requirements and whether they offer online reporting and record keeping among others.

There are other church related schools that are not at our expo. You can find a more complete list at [MTHEA.org](http://MTHEA.org).

As for online private accredited programs, there are many nationwide. Such as Abeka Academy. Be aware that if you register with an online PUBLIC education program such as your county's K-12, you are not classified as a home schooler and thus can not participate in CSTHEA sponsored activities. If you decide to go with the third option, be sure your choice of online school **is** accredited or you will need to **also** register with a church related school. Be sure your choice of an unaccredited online program will be accepted by your church related school.

GA homeschool law requires you send a letter of intent to the Georgia DOE. This can be done online at [GaDOE.org](http://GaDOE.org)

## 2. **Visit HSLDA.org** The Home School Legal Defense Association

You can receive a nice discount via a discount code on the HSLDA membership if you are a member of THEA or registered with a church-related school in their discount group. At the HSLDA booth at the expo, you will find helpful getting-started guides. You can find them online at [hsllda.org](http://hsllda.org) – loads of helpful

resources at the quick navigation bar including special needs, pre-school, struggling learner, state laws, and even high school online classes.

**3. Find Like-minded mentors in your church or neighborhood.** You might be able to connect on one of our local FB groups.

# Different Approaches to Homeschooling

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## **Traditional Textbook/Workbook Approach**

This approach uses textbooks and workbooks. Examples of curriculum using this method would be Abeka, (booths 29-32, 41-44) Bob Jones (booths 90-93, 100-103) Rod and Staff (booths 54-55), Alpha Omega (booths 71-74), and ACE (booths 60-61). Some questions to ask before trying this approach are listed below.

Did my child perform well in a classroom?

Does my child like to complete assignments and to have defined goals?

Will my child complete assigned tasks with a minimum of prodding from me?

Am I the kind of person who will follow through with the lesson plans and pace of the course of instructions?

Does my child read well and have good comprehension skills?

Can my child work well independently?

Does my child learn without a lot of variety to the teaching materials?

## **Strengths of the Textbook/Workbook Approach**

Everything is laid out for ease of use

Follows a standardized scope and sequence

Has a definite milestone of accomplishments

Testing and assigning grades is easy to do

## **Weakness of the Textbook/Workbook Approach**

Is geared to the generic child. Does not take into account individual learning styles, strengths and weakness, or interest

Is teacher directed and seatwork oriented

Expensive when teaching multiple children

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## **Classical approach**

Based on three stages of learning called the trivium. The first stage (the Grammar Stage) covers early elementary ages and focuses on reading, writing, and spelling; the study of Latin; and developing observation, listening and memorization skills. The second stage (the Dialectic Stage) covers middle school ages and teaches logical discussion, debate, and how to draw correct conclusions and support them with facts. The final stage (the Rhetoric Stage) covers high school and seeks to produce a student who can use language, both written and spoken, eloquently and persuasively. Examples of curriculum using this method would be The Omnibus by Veritas Press, The Well Trained Mind by Susan Wise Bauer, and Teaching the Trivium: Christian Homeschooling in a Classical Style by Harvey and Laurie Bluedorn. You may want to check out local groups such as Veritas or Classical Conversations (booths 112-113). Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

Does my family like to read good literature?

Are my children intellectually oriented and comfortable with a rigorous academic approach?

Am I a learner? Am I comfortable learning alongside my children so I can teach them things I never studied?

Do I like to study and discuss ideas that have influenced civilization?

### **Strengths of the Classical Approach**

Teaches thinking skills and verbal/written expression

Creates self learners

Has produced great minds throughout history

### **Weakness of the Classical Approach**

Requires a scholarly teacher and student

May overemphasize ancient disciplines and classics

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## **The Unit Study Approach**

This approach takes a theme or topic and delves into it deeply over a period of time, integrating language arts, science, social studies, math, and fine arts as they apply. Some examples of curriculum using this method would be Amanda Bennett, Five in a Row, KONOS, and Valerie Bendt. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

Am I a creative person?

Do I like trying to make everything interesting and fun?

Do my children have a variety of interest and learning styles?

Can I live with the fact that there may be “gaps” in my children’s education?

Do I have the time and energy to be the driving, creative force behind the development of units?

### **Strengths of the Unit Study Approach**

All ages can learn together

Children can delve as deeply or as lightly into a subject as they like

The family’s interest can be pursued

Students get the whole picture

Intense study of one topic is the more natural way to learn

### **Weakness of the Unit Study Approach**

It is easy to leave educational “gaps”

Hard to assess the level of learning occurring

Record keeping may be difficult

Prepared unit study curricula can be expensive

Do it yourself unit studies require planning

Too many activity-oriented unit studies may cause burn-out of the teacher and student

Subjects that are hard to integrate into the unit may be neglected

## **Literature-based approach**

Uses study guides and classic children's literature. An example of curriculum using this method would be Sonlight, or Tapestry of Grace. Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

Does our family like to read, both alone and together through reading aloud?

Am I comfortable with more of a "free form" approach to learning?

Do I trust my children to learn on their own?

### **Strengths of the Literature-Based Approach**

Exposes children to a wide variety of books

Encourages curiosity, creative thinking, and a love of learning

3. Eliminates meaningless tasks, busywork

### **Weakness of the Literature-Based Approach**

Time consuming

Can be difficult to stick to the schedule

Sometimes hard to find books

Prepackaged curriculum including all the pre-selected books can be expensive

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## **Living book or Charlotte Mason approach**

Mason's approach to academics was to teach basic reading, writing, and math skills, then expose children to the best sources of knowledge for all other subjects. This meant giving children experience like nature walks, observing and collecting wildlife; visiting art museums; and reading real books with "living ideas." She called such books "living books" because they made the subjects "come alive" unlike textbooks that tend to be dry and dull and assume the reader cannot think for him/herself. Some examples of curriculums and resources using this method would be Amblesideonline.org, CMI's The Alveary, SimplyCharlotteMason.com, Charlotte Mason: a Study Guide by Penny Gardner, Charlotte Mason Companion by Karen Andreola, and Charlotte Mason Education by Catherine Levison. Locally there is a Charlotte Mason support group, and Chattanooga Charlotte Mason Facebook group. Exhibitors who feature this method are Simply Charlotte Mason (104-106). Some questions to ask yourself before trying this approach are listed below.

Does our family like to read both alone and together through reading aloud?

Am I comfortable with more of a "free form" approach to learning?

Will I follow through with exposing my children firsthand to nature, music, and to great art?

### **Strengths of the Living Books or Charlotte Mason Approach**

Stresses formation of good character and habits

Exposes children to real objects and books instead of interactions with distilled information

Encourages curiosity, creative thinking, and a love of learning

Eliminates meaningless tasks, busywork

### **Weakness of the Living Books or Charlotte Mason Approach**

Relies on the parent studying in depth the philosophy and the methods.

May not provide enough structure if you are geared that way

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## **Other options**

If you are not comfortable teaching a particular subject, you can seek out the assistance of groups such as online classes, private classes, co-ops or tutorials. Examples of local Tutorials are Hilger Higher Learning, Classical Conversations, Michaels Homeschool , Scriptorium and The Blessing Place. There may be others. You can ask on the fb group.

\*\*\* Much of the information in the Learning Styles section of this guide was taken from the Elijah Co. catalog. Special thanks to the Elijah Co. (now defunct) for letting us reprint the information. \*\*\*

# Helpful websites for getting started

<http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com>

Here is a great place to get started. Very comprehensive with excellent pre-school advice.

[HomeschoolingToday.com](http://HomeschoolingToday.com) – online magazine with lots of helpful articles

[TheHomeschoolMagazine-digital.com](http://TheHomeschoolMagazine-digital.com) – another online magazine with lots of helps

<http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/>

This website is comprehensive, well organized website that gives some good answers to the questions, “Why homeschool?” “How do I start homeschooling?” and “Where can I find the best homeschool resources?” She has sections on getting organized, saving money, working at home, and finding support. She also offers a free e-book

<http://www.csthea.org/>

This is the website for CSTHEA. It is a great site that will keep you up to date on what is happening in the realm of CSTHEA, which stands for Chattanooga Southeast Tennessee Home Education Association. This will include information on Events & Activities such as graduation, yearbook, Sports, and the annual Home Education Expo. It includes resources such as support group information and homeschool services.

# Helpful books

How to Homeschool: A Practical Approach, by Gayle Graham  
The Ultimate Guide To Homeschooling, by Debra Bell  
Choosing & Using Curriculum, by Joyce Herzog  
The Way They Learn, by Cynthia Tobias  
Educating the Whole Hearted Child, by Clay & Sally Clarkson  
Charlotte Mason Companion, by Karen Andreola  
100 Top Picks For Homeschooling Curriculum, by Cathy Duffy  
So You're Thinking About Homeschooling, by Lisa Whelchel  
Homeschooling the Early Years, by Linda Dobson  
Home Learning Year by Year by Rebecca Rupp  
The Ultimate Book of Homeschooling Ideas, by Linda Dobson  
The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook, by Raymond and Dorothy Moore

Homeschooling for the Rest of Us by Sonya Haskins

For the Children's Sake, by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay

Teaching from Rest by Sarah Mackenzie

A Handbook to Morning Time by Cindy Rollins

## Phonics

Simple —

Alpha Phonics, by Sam Blumenfeld  
Teach your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons  
Delightful Reading, by Sonya Shafer  
Getting Ready for the Code  
Bob books  
Phonics Pathways  
Teach a Child to Read with Children's Books by Mark Thogmartin

The Ordinary Parents Guide to Reading, by Jessie Wise Bauer

More Involved —

Sing, Spell, Read and Write  
The Writing Road to Reading by Romalda Spalding  
Phonics Museum by Veritas Press

For dyslexia — All About Reading

A more complete list and reviews are available at [cathyduffyreviews.com](http://cathyduffyreviews.com).

- 🎯 Join the CSTHEA fb page, our online community, or other local homeschool fb pages
- 🎯 Join a support group in your area if there is one. Support groups are listed on the CSTHEA website
- 🎯 To learn even more about the homeschooling method you have chosen, do a Web search on that style or that particular curriculum or fb page or group search.
- 🎯 Go through all the books and materials you purchased and get organized. There are many homeschool planners on the market.

● Chattanooga is remarkable for all the venues, clubs, organizations and attractions that cater to home educators — the zoo, aquarium, Children’s Discovery Museum, Hunter Art Museum to name a few. Look on their websites for options for homeschooling.

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