

The Right Curriculum Differs From Child to Child

Folks ask us all the time, “So, what curriculum do *you* use?”

Let me begin to answer by telling you a story. Many years ago, one of my dear friends asked me the same thing as she began homeschooling her children. I was happy to tell her because I believed I’d found the very best curricula in each subject.

It was only when she called, utterly frustrated months later, that I realized my error. Her children hated the programs we loved and so did she! What could be the problem? As we talked more, it became obvious to me: Her children were as quiet as mine were outgoing, as cautious as mine were bold. They could hardly be more different. That curriculum, which required learning crazy songs, was meat to my guys, but poison to hers!

“Okay,” I thought, “each family’s different. What works for one family won’t necessarily work for another.” I became a lot more careful about recommendations. Then I learned another lesson.

When I started teaching our oldest child Latin, I did a lot of research and chose what looked like the best elementary Latin curriculum out there. Never mind that it was the only one. He took to it like a duck to water, so when other programs came out, I wasn’t even tempted.

Then his younger brother got to be that age. He just couldn’t get it. He hated it and I finally started looking for something else. I found another program he just loved and I thought, “Wow, that first program really fooled me. This one is so much better!”

Then the third son came along. He hated that program, then hated the first, and neither seemed effective with him. I

began looking for another program and found one he loved. This time, though, I was finally beginning to get a bit of wisdom, “Oh ... each child is different!” I know, it took me awhile. Know what? I also figured out some of our guys really weren’t ready for Latin in elementary school, either!

So, I’m just not comfortable telling other families what is best for their children. Every family, every child, and every year is different.

Some years, we’ve needed simpler things because we are struggling with health or business issues. Some children need more hands-on, or more audio, or more reading. Look around a lot, try different things, keep what works. That’s the important part.

Don’t let it make you uneasy if “everyone” is using something different than you are. If everyone is using the same thing, probably half or even three-quarters or more would do better to use something else. Besides, next year “everyone” will be off on another fad.

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