

Hooray! It is Working!

(This is why I do this.)

Sitting in a church meeting, singing the wonderful song “America the Beautiful”, I happened to look over at my little daughter. Tears formed in my eyes as I realized she was singing along, remembering every word to the first verse. She looked back at me with a wide grin as she sang “from sea to shining sea!” Wow! She had remembered me teaching her that from a few months before from the kindergarten curriculum. I definitely want my children to have a strong sense of patriotism and this was proof that it is working! A lot of work, time, effort? Absolutely. Is it worth it? Absolutely.

There are not too many things that are more rewarding than seeing my children display the truths that I have hoped to instill in them. As they grow, have success through their struggles, develop their talents, understand new concepts and learn what life is truly about, I find real joy. Teaching my children at home has allowed me many wonderful experiences that I would not trade for anything.

When I watched my ninth grader tweaking and polishing his written work and then tweaking some more to get it just right, I was so proud of him. He had learned to desire to do his best work and he was really good at it.

One of the things I enjoy the most in schooling my children is in teaching them to read. It is so amazing when they are beginning and don't understand the idea that the shapes we call letters actually form words. When they read their very first word, it is like a light bulb turns on in their mind and they truly grasp the concept. I love that part. It is so visible on their little face.

Being on vacation this summer in Yellowstone, we passed through a section of land where Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians made a stand. My son, who claims to hate history, was excited enough to remind me that we had learned about Chief Joseph in history this past year. This was exciting to me because I keep telling him that he really doesn't hate history, that it is too vast a subject for him to not find some things about it to be appealing.

Reading has not been the easiest of subjects for one of my sons. He has days where it is emotionally draining for the both of us when reading is involved. However, it is very thrilling, enough to give me hope that he will eventually really, truly love reading, when he finds a book that is really interesting to him, or reads a difficult passage without a lot of stumbling.

Going over discussion questions from lessons has often been a great time for teaching values. Things come out of those little talks that amaze me. Sometimes the insight that the child has enlightens my mind. Sometimes I am able to correct a flaw in their logic. Sometimes we have a great laugh as we imagine different scenarios. Sometimes we

spend so much time discussing an interesting topic that it carries over to the dinner table where we enlist the views of other family members.

Wow! This is great! Just reflecting over a few of the many wonderful experiences I have had in teaching my children has been very rejuvenating. I highly recommend this exercise to everyone. While we don't have gleeful bliss every moment of our school time, the sorts of reminiscences I have just shared are such good reminders of why it is all worth doing.

Children are one of life's greatest treasures. Because I believe this, I believe that it is completely worth all the work, time and effort it takes to have them at home being taught by me. But, as I pointed out in various ways earlier, I reap rich rewards for my efforts. That said, let me leave you with a couple more stories. School can bring a lot of laughs too!

One day, I gave my son a reading assignment in the book "Frog and Toad Are Friends". He was to read aloud chapters 1 & 2. I was listening to him while doing other things in the kitchen. After a while I looked over at him. He was reading very proficiently, but something was unusual. He had the book upside down! I chuckled and asked, "Why are you reading with the book upside down?" He grinned back at me and stated, "Because I can." I suppose that is a good enough reason.

Another time, while studying history, I was trying to tell my son a good way to remember the holy book of the Muslims. So, I told him he could remember it because Qaran sounds like crayon. He thought that sounded like a good way to remember. The next day I quizzed him. I asked, "What is the holy book of the Islamic religion?" He was quick with his response, "Crayola!"

Happy schooling everyone! Enjoy it!

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