

Training for Triumph E-Newsletter Issue 002 November 15, 2004

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1. Training for Triumph Events and Announcements

*Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP) materials now available from TFT

Training for Triumph (TFT) is now offering IBLP materials through our catalog, phone orders, and at conventions. We are carrying mostly character materials that will nicely supplement anyone's homeschool curriculum, but especially those using our language arts programs---Character Quality Language Arts and Wisdom Booklet Language Arts. The following items are now available from us directly. (Watch future e-catalogs and e-newsletters for product reviews and descriptions.)

Character Quality Materials from IBLP and TFT

Life of Adoniram Judson Biography \$15.00

George Mueller of Bristol Biography \$15.00

Character Booklet 1-Attentiveness \$4.00
Character Booklet 2---Obedience \$4.00
Character Booklet 3---Gratefulness \$4.00
Character Booklet 4---Truthfulness \$4.00
Character Booklet 5---Orderliness \$4.00
Character Booklet 6---Diligence \$4.00

Heroes of Faith 1- Adoniram Judson \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 2-Joseph Merrick \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 3-Gladys Aylward \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 4-John Newton \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 5-D. L. Moody \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 6- Oswald Chambers \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 7-Susanna Wesley \$4.00
Heroes of Faith 8-Fanny Crosby \$4.00

Character Sketches Set \$105.00
Character Sketches I \$39.00
Character Sketches II \$39.00
Character Sketches III \$39.00

Character Sketch I Coloring Book \$4.00
Character Sketch II Coloring Book \$4.00
Character Sketch III Coloring Book \$4.00

Women of Wisdom Coloring Book \$4.50
Creation Corner Coloring Book \$4.50

Wedding Covenant \$.50
Power for True Success \$25.00
Sovereign in the Affairs of Man (historical devotional) \$7.00
Eagle Story \$8.00
Pineapple Story Book \$6.00

Pineapple Story Cassette Tapes \$29.00
Helps for Homeschool Moms 3-Tape Set (Donna Reish) \$12.00
Father and Family 3-Tape Set (Ray and Donna Reish) \$12.00
Teaching Children to Be Diligent tape (Donna Reish) \$5.00
Making God Real 3-Tape by teen for girls (Cami Reish) \$12
History Tapes/ Children (teaching history to children by Kayla Reish) 3-Tapes \$12

*About Our E-Mail Address List

We are very new in the areas of publishing our own materials and speaking to home schoolers outside of ATI. Thus, we have a small email list. If you have been sent something from us and would rather not, please either delete it, or email us asking to be removed from our list. If you receive duplicate emails, please be patient with us as we grow. ☺ Please consider helping us

spread the news about Training for Triumph and our materials by forwarding our E-Catalog or one of our E-Newsletters onto a few people who might like our products or services.

*Cottage Classes

Our cottage classes for the fall are coming to an end. We had a great semester with exciting results as students learned to speak and write better! We are working on our class offerings for the second semester, so watch your newsletter for upcoming events.

2. Spotlight on Our “Helps for Home School Moms” Tape Series

*Helps for Home school Moms Workshops Tapes

There are some topics the Reishes just can't keep quiet about. The first one is home schooling! I like to consider myself a “home school cheerleader.” We first learned of home schooling twenty-one years ago when our oldest child was a baby. Once I read Dr. Moore's books, compared them to what I was learning as a senior in “teacher's college” (I was learning the same thing at school about readiness, boys vs. girls, etc.!), I was sold. Ray and I began an aggressive campaign to get everyone we knew to home school. (I'm really kind of embarrassed about this now; we were so zealous, we must have driven everyone we knew crazy!)

Anyway, we began hosting Saturday brunches in which we would feed parents brunch then give them handouts, excerpts, etc. to try to convert them to home schooling! I spoke for an hour or so (and knew so little twenty-one years ago!), then we answered questions. What does this have to do with our “Helps for Home School Moms” tapes? Well, I feel a similar zeal and urgency to help families learn to prioritize, choose the best over the good, teach children to be responsible and diligent, and more. Much of this is covered in my three-cassette series entitled “Helps for Home School Moms.”

This tape set consists of three cassettes that build upon each other: Prioritizing Your Life, School, and Home; Organizing Your Life, School, and Home; and Scheduling Your Life, School, and Home. They are jam packed (I can talk really fast when I have something important to say!) with tips and techniques we have used in our twenty years of home schooling. Even more importantly than those helps, they are jam-packed with philosophies of parenting, home management, child training, home schooling, and more.

Prioritizing Your Life, School, and Home deals with determining priorities, utilizing your skills and talents fully, being consistent in maintaining your priorities, learning to say “yes” to the best things and “no” to the good, and more. In it, I explain our long journey to seeking God's priorities for our family—and how each couple can and should do this to be effective for the Lord and in our families.

Organizing Your Life, School, and Home deals with more than just “Better Homes and Garden” storage tips. It continues the prioritizing message by helping you teach your children to be responsible, working together as a family, the importance of chore times and schedules, and more.

Scheduling Your Life, School, and Home helps you put it all together. Once you have prioritized and organized, how do you keep on track to fulfill God's calling for you and your family? By scheduling and organizing your days! This tape deals specifically with scheduling your school day to get the most out of it. Whether you have seven children twelve and under or three teens, “scheduling” gives many tips and solutions that have worked for us throughout the years.

“Helps for Home School Moms” tapes are available from Training for Triumph in a three-cassette holder for \$12.00 or individually for \$5.00 each. Email us to receive our E-Catalog if you do not have one.

3. Frequently Asked Questions About WBLA and CQLA

**Are we really supposed to get all of the WBLA/CQLA weekly lesson done in only one week?*

The weekly lesson looks overwhelming at first. Especially if you start to count the number of “lesson items” that a student is to complete in one week---often as many as twelve items. I always remind moms the total number of pages they would be doing in a week if they had a vocabulary program, spelling program, grammar program, and composition program. It would look overwhelming too!

All of those four grammar components (and more, including comprehension of material) are woven throughout the weekly WBLA/CQLA lesson. Thus, it looks like a lot of work at first. If you follow the weekly lesson plan given at the back of each WBLA/CQLA monthly unit, you will have no trouble completing all of the assignments within the week, allowing the following timetables to complete everything:

- a. Level Pre A (second and third grades; CQLA only):
 - *Twenty to thirty minutes per day
 - *Nearly all with his teacher
 - *He may copy passages and write some sentences on his own, but for the most part, this level is pretty teacher-intensive.
- b. Level A (third through fifth grade for WBLA; fourth and fifth grade for CQLA):
 - *Thirty to forty minutes per day
 - *Half or more of that time with his teacher; up to half of that time may be independent, depending on his skill level.
- c. Level B (fifth through eighth grade WBLA; sixth through eighth grade CQLA):
 - *Forty-five to sixty minutes per day
 - *Teacher assistance for two or three of those sessions, depending on skill level, for Checklist Challenge (CC) help, editing his essay, spelling test, dictation quiz, etc.).
- d. Level C (high school level):
 - *Sixty to seventy minutes a day

*Teacher assistance for one or two of those sessions, depending on how independently this student checks his assignments, completes his CC, etc.

**Can I really drop my other language arts programs if using WBLA/CQLA?*

I get asked this question a lot! It is often shocking for a mom to think of her various English programs---and the time (and number of books!) being replaced by one, albeit large, book (or in the case of WBLA, eight (forty to eighty page) booklets). The answer to this question is not cut and dry.

Yes, you can do WBLA/CQLA with no other language arts programs in elementary and junior high---except for reading. I feel like children who are still learning to read at higher and higher levels should read aloud to Mom until all phonetic skills are mastered for decoding (reading). This may be through third, fourth, or fifth grade. Then, I have my children at least do silent reading from then on. This could be a reader, a devotional, a content area book (social studies, science, health), or one of each. Of course, the student is also supposed to read the entire passage (all copy boxes) each day too.

In high school, language arts gets trickier. You have a myriad of language arts courses to choose from: Grammar and Composition (WBLA or CQLA), composition only (like IEW, Writing Strands, or our soon-to-be published book *Meaningful Essays*), grammar only, (I don't recommend this unless it is for college preparatory, such as SAT/ACT prep, etc. as it does not help them in real life much without being connected to writing.) literature, specialty writing (fiction, poetry, technical, editing, etc.), speech, debate, and more.

When using WBLA or CQLA for many years, students will probably get done with their "Grammar and Composition" portion of high school English early. Then, of course, you should take into consideration their interests (fiction writing, love of literature, etc.) as well as their future studies (speech and debate for college preparation, SAT preparation, etc.).

We have had students finish their "Grammar and Composition" for high school as early as eighth grade (due to doing two years of English in one for a few years to help us test our programs), then take research paper class for a semester, story writing class for one semester, two semesters worth of speech and advanced speech, two semesters worth of speech and advanced debate, and a couple of semesters of literature (according to their interests).

It would also be possible to simply do WBLA/CQLA for all four years of high school English, add a literature course, and be done. This would probably not

prepare a student for college, however, since the student will have no speech background at all.

The point of this is that, yes, WBLA/CQLA can be your sole language arts for second through eighth grade, along with reading. Then, you need to figure out what language arts your high school student will do for his four years (eight semesters) of high school English. Certainly, WBLA/CQLA can be a big part of this too and will be a great help in preparing your student for college or whatever is ahead for him.

4. Tips for Homeschool Moms

*Organizational Strategies for the Busy Homeschool Family—chores, efficiency, and more!

When Moms learn that we teach speech and debate, homeschool six children, write curriculum, and more, they always ask the same question: “How do you get it all done?” One thing is for sure—we **never** get it all done. We have, however, found some ways to achieve efficiency, organization, and completion around here. This section will detail some of our favorite “get it done” tips through the years. It should be noted that we don’t do all the ideas listed at the same time! Some of them are more useful with younger children, some with older children, some for extra busy times, and some for maintenance times.

It should also be noted that my ideas are not designed for perfectionists! I definitely have lower standards as to wrinkliness of clothing, how clean a refrigerator has to be, how frequently the shower gets cleaned, and more! However, my daughters have been able to make complete meals (including homemade bread and desserts), clean entire rooms, organize closets, update file cabinets, babysit for many children (and teach and entertain them at the same time!), and more by the age of twelve, so I don’t regret all the training I’ve put into them in household areas—and my lower standards in many “domestic” areas!

a. Room to Room—Room to room time is a time we call out when things get out of control—as well as a time we call right before everyone disperses to do their “jurisdictions” or “cleaning chores.” We use it before chore times to ensure that when a person goes into vacuum, he can vacuum the room without it being an obstacle course! We use it before Dad gets home, so he doesn’t give extra chores for things left out! We use it when we’re in a pinch, and we just want to get a handle on things. Room to room time works! In room to room time, we set the timer for a certain amount of time, and each person is supposed to go through the main rooms, putting away anything that is his or hers—or that he or she had out.

b. Blitz time---When we are in the middle of hosting a big tournament or meeting deadlines for publishing materials, we often incorporate “blitzes.” A blitz is a time

in which we again set the timer for a fixed period of time, start in one room (all together), and “blitz” through the main rooms decluttering and organizing. (We seldom get to real cleaning in this time!) We usually state a goal at the beginning (depending on how bad things have gotten, our goal may be as miniscule as making a path through the downstairs or as grandiose as scrubbing as many surfaces as possible), so everyone knows what to focus on. Blitzes are usually fifteen to sixty minutes in length, and we all work as fast as we can. I prefer to work with the children during blitz time to keep everyone on task and give instructions as we go.

c. Morning routines---Ever since our first born was just a baby, we have had a time each morning called “morning routines.” As its name suggests, morning routine time is a routine of activities done in the morning. We have had it just before morning devotions, just after breakfast, before morning chores, etc. according to everyone’s morning schedules and the ages of the children. One thing has never changed—we still do morning routines every morning. Sometime during the first hour or two of every day, each child completes his morning routine list. This list is different for each child according to ages and hygiene needs, but it usually consists of dressing, grooming, putting away everything from bed (pj’s, books, tapes, etc.), devotions, and room to room time. Little kids have “morning routine charts” and older kids have their morning routine items listed on their daily charts (although they don’t need them anymore). Morning routines ensure that children are ready for school with real clothes on and teeth brushed. They also develop good habits that last a lifetime. I believe a morning routine is one of the biggest factors in our daughters’ disciplined lives. Sometimes I wish I had been made to have a “morning routine” when I was little!

d. Family cleaning time—As the girls have gotten older and are gone more and more for special classes (Spanish, piano, sign language, college classes, etc.) and we have gotten busier and busier teaching, we have instituted family cleaning time. Those two to three hour cleaning sessions we used to have each week (the children and I) just do not seem to come around anymore. I tried passing out individual jobs (i.e. vacuuming, mopping, bathroom cleaning, refrigerator cleaning, etc.), but it just didn’t seem like everything was ever done all at the same time. Thus, we began family cleaning times. We were amazed when we began how much we could get done when all eight of us were going full steam. We run family cleaning times as follows: we set the timer for thirty minutes, pair off in teams of two, and assign each pair a room. I give instruction as to what needs focused on (windows, washing the registers, cleaning the rugs, etc.), and we get out the cleaning basket and go. I shout out the remaining time in five minute increments, and in thirty minutes, Ray, the children, and I have a big majority of weekly cleaning done. It should be noted that we do not declutter or pick up during this time. The children have to have everything up and put away before we begin as we are focusing on *cleaning* during this time, not picking up.

e. Jurisdictions—Jurisdictions teach children responsibility and make it easy to see who has done their “jurisdictions” and who has not! In jurisdictions, a child is assigned a room for the week (or month—or in our case, indefinitely!) that he is to straighten up two or three times per day. The more difficult rooms (main ones, like living room, dining room, and kitchen) are given to the older or more responsible children (however, the meal prep person for the day has to clean up his cooking messes and the little boys always do dishes—I don’t like to “waste” all the girls’ skills on dishes and laundry!). We have jurisdictions two times a day right now---after morning routines/breakfast/ morning chores and in the afternoon before the little kids have “free time.” Thus, our morning schedules are: 1) morning routines (including personal devotion time and the girls’ exercise times); 2) morning chores (little boys do laundry and dishes and another person fixes breakfast); 3) room to room time 4) jurisdictions. Then we’re ready to start school! We start school later than a lot of people do right now do to late night editing and writing and trying to get some of the household things out of the way first thing, but it is nice to have laundry, dishes, and other daily things out of the way before we officially “start school”---though those of you who know me well know that I consider all of our life “school”! Jurisdiction time is not necessarily “cleaning time,” but if the living room needs vacuumed, the dining room swept, etc., the person does that quickly during one of his or her jurisdiction times. Also, the bathroom person does wipe down both bathrooms each day during jurisdiction times. (See Don Aslett’s *Clean in a Minute* for more about the five minute bathroom cleaning!)

Watch this space next month for more ideas on meal preparation time, daily chores, mega cooking, servant day, school charts, and more!

5. Book Review Just for You

**Make a Mix Cookery* (review for Mom!)

One book I have had almost as long as Raymond Moore’s *Better Late Than Early*—and used even more often---is *Make a Mix* (my original copy fourteen years ago was called *Make a Mix Cookery*). This book is a gem that I cannot speak highly enough of. It is the only cookbook that I keep out on a shelf.

Make a Mix was my introduction to “once a month” or “mega cooking” when I was expecting my fourth child fourteen years ago. Though it doesn’t mention either of these terms in it, this volume was where I began cooking ahead, freezing entrees and “starters,” and more. It truly aided me in years of joyful hospitality that I will always fondly remember—and long for in our lives again!

The authors, Karine Eliason, Nevada Harward, and Madeline Westover, have devised over sixty-seven mixes to use in 306 recipes for the do it yourself cook. For most mix recipes given, they have at least a half dozen recipes in which to use that mix—some have even a dozen recipes to use the mix in!

These gals start out with master mixes, those mixes that we often rely on the supermarket for—such as brownie mixes, cake mixes, bread mixes, muffin mixes, cookie mixes, and more. Also in their master mixes, they include unique mixes like flavored oatmeals, onion seasoning (to replace dry onion soup packets), “shake and bake” coating mixes, and more.

Next, they move into “freezer mixes”—where the beginning of my “mega cooking” experiences evolved. They have all purpose ground meat and chicken mixes in which you precook meats with seasonings, vegetables, sauces, etc, then freeze them for use in dozens of entrees (recipes also given, of course). These freezer mixes include my personal favorite—braised beef cube mix, which I have made several times a year for over a dozen years as a starter for beef stew, stroganoff, etc. (This is my personal favorite to give to new moms!)

Of course, those are just the basics. They have freezer pie crust mixes, slice and bake cookies, salad dressing starters, gravy starters, and drink mixes. I just can’t say enough about this exciting book.

I have used it probably every month of my life since I got it—though some months I use it to simply pull out a quick dessert recipe and other months we are “make a mix” maniacs! I have used it as a springboard for devising healthy mixes for my son with allergies as well as gifts for people at Christmas time.

It is published by Fisher Books and has sold over a million copies. I’m sure it’s available online at any major book distributor. I hope you enjoy it as much as we have!

Oh, by the way, did I mention that I’m on my third copy of it?? 😊

6. In the Kitchen

*Apple recipes we love! Also, watch this spot next month for more Christmas goody recipes than you could make in a month!

Fall means apples, and apples mean yummy treats. Of course, we love apple slices drizzled with melted caramels, dipped in apple dip, with popcorn and cheese, and out of hand, but two of our favorite apple recipes just must be shared!

Apple Crisp

This wonderful apple recipe is the best apple crisp recipe I have ever had. It was given to me from a German Baptist friend back home (Union City, Indiana many, many years ago) and is especially yummy because it adds another step that

most apple crisp recipes omit—that of a syrup over the apples before the topping is added. It takes extra time, but it is SO worth it!

6 cups finely diced apples

Syrup:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
2 TBSP corn starch or quick tapioca
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla

1 cup water

Topping:

1 cup flour
1 cup brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup melted butter

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup quick oatmeal

1 tsp cinnamon

1. Place apples in greased 9x12 baking dish.
2. Combine syrup ingredients (except vanilla) in sauce pan, and cook on medium heat, stirring often, until thick and clear. Remove syrup from heat and stir in vanilla. (I prefer the tapioca for thickening this sauce.)
3. Pour syrup over the apples in the baking dish.
4. Combine all topping ingredients in bowl, cutting in melted butter with fork or pastry cutter until mixture is crumbly.
5. Sprinkle topping over apples and syrup until evenly distributed. (Note: You may also use $\frac{1}{3}$ of the topping in the bottom of the baking dish, beneath the apples, if desired.)
6. Bake at 350° preheated oven for 45-60 minutes until apples are cooked and the crisp is bubbly and browned. (Convection oven: 30-45 minutes.)
7. Serves 8-10.

Apple Dumplings

This recipe was given to me by Ray's Grandma Rager. She always made these in a little toaster oven (so she didn't heat up her kitchen with her big oven!) when we went to visit her in Florida when Ray and I were first married. We only visited her once a year, but she taught me more about cooking and baking in our short visits than anyone else, showing me how to make white sauce, apple dumplings, swiss steak, apple salad, meatloaf, and more.

Crust mix:

2 cups flour
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups plus 1 TBSP shortening

2 tsp salt

1/3 cup plus up to 1 TBSP more cold water

8 large baking apples, cored and cut in half
cinnamon and sugar to sprinkle on apple halves when wrapping crust

Syrup:

½ cup margarine

3 cups sugar

4 cups water

¼ tsp cinnamon

Crust instructions:

1. Combine flour and salt.
2. With pastry blender or mixer/processor, cut in shortening until mixture resembles cornmeal in texture.
3. Add the 1/3 cup cold water all at once and mix lightly with a fork until water is absorbed and mixture forms a ball. Add extra water as needed.

Prepare apples:

1. Peel, core, and half large apples.
2. Make a cinnamon/sugar mixture to suit (around a cup or two).

Syrup instructions:

1. Bring all syrup ingredients to a boil in saucepan.
2. Let boil for three minutes, stirring often.
3. Allow syrup to cool while wrapping apples and placing them in baking dish.

Final instructions:

1. Roll out pie dough into two separate pieces (for easier handling).
2. Cut all pie dough into sixteen separate squares that are large enough to wrap an apple half and seal completely.
3. Place each apple half in center of a dough piece, sprinkle apple with cinnamon-sugar mixture, pull dough up around apple half and seal at top by pinching dough together with fingers.
4. Place dumplings in two oiled 9 x 13 pan.

5. Pour syrup over apples.
6. Bake in preheated 375° oven for 35-45 minutes until crust is golden and apples are cooked. (Convection oven: 25-30 minutes.)

7. Get Connected: Internet Site Review

This link has free Bible study helps, many Bibles, Strongs Concordance, the Websters 1828 dictionary etc. Check it out! www.e-sword.net

8. Article from Training for Triumph (informal article by one of us)

Teaching a Speech and Debate Class for Homeschoolers by Donna Reish

For four years, we have been teaching and coaching speech and debate for homeschoolers in northeast Indiana. Last year, we took the plunge and began writing materials and speaking to those who wish to begin speech and debate classes and clubs in their communities. We try to share our experiences with others because speech and debate are such vital skills for students to acquire. We have had great joy in watching a student who was afraid to answer the telephone or stand up at the end of his table in class in front of four other students to talk for thirty seconds about his favorite book become an excellent speaker who wins competitive speech events---and then goes on to preach at his church or lead someone to Christ.

Public speaking is a skill that most young people are terrified of learning. They often do not have opportunities to practice this skill in the home environment. Debate is another excellent communication and thinking skill that is truly best taught in a group environment due to the nature of needing four students in which to debate, as well as others to give feedback. Both skills equip students “to be ready to give an answer to those who ask of the hope that is within them”; prepare them for being leaders in their families, communities, and nation; and give them confidence and preparation to face job interviews, scholarship reviews, and much more.

Speech, Debate, or Both?

Speech and debate are often thought of together simply because in order to debate, a student must learn to speak. One can speak without learning debate skills, but we combine the two for the most effective outcome. Our experience has been that a student often “just wants to do debate”—none of those speech *things*—then gets involved in speech and loves it as well, The same is true of those who think debate looks too difficult and only want to do speech. Once they get a taste of debating, they enjoy it too. This

article will assume that you desire to start a class or club for both subjects, and you can pick and choose the approaches if only one of them is desired.

What Is Debate?

Policy debate is the most popular form of debate and the one that we teach the most extensively. It is a four person debate competition in which two teams of two students debate against each other in a ninety minute round of competition. Each student has certain speeches (They speak equally and in a certain order.), and each one has a chance to do cross-examination on a member of the opposing team. In a debate tournament, each team will have opportunities to be the “affirmative” team and the “negative” team the same number of times (except in the case of a bye); thus, each student must learn, research, and study that year’s topic extensively enough to argue both sides at any given moment.

The resolution (the topic that will be debated) is set at the beginning of the academic year, and all students debate about the same topic the entire year—on both sides. A team (of two students) writes what is called a debate plan and uses that plan for the whole year to argue that the resolution should be changed (though teams often rewrite plans throughout the year as their plan gets solved by the government mid-season!). When the team is on the negative side during a tournament, they argue that the affirmative team’s plan will not work and the United States should stick with the current system. (Last year’s resolution was that the US should change its policy toward one or more of its protectorates.)

We coach and teach policy debate in preparation for tournaments that are sponsored by debate and speech clubs all around the country, following the National Christian Forensics Communication Association (NCFCA) guidelines and resolution. This is the home school debate and speech league. It was founded several years ago by Home School Legal Defense and Michael Farris’ daughter, Christy Shipe. A few years ago it grew so large that it broke off as its own organization, and is today its own entity, no longer a part of Home School Legal Defense Association (though HSLDA still supports and encourages it and Christy Shipe is still on the board of the organization). In contrast to public school (and even some Christian school leagues), NCFCA’s debate resolution for each year is never a topic that forces a student to argue for something he is convicted is wrong (e.g. abortion, euthanasia, etc.); the debate topic each year is never a moral issue.

A Club or a Class?

Some people want to jump in to speech and debate right away by getting involved in competitions. Others just desire for their students to learn the skills of speaking and debating and will consider the competition later. If you desire to teach students the fundamentals of speech and debate, you may want to start by offering a class. Then, any students who enjoy either speech or debate (or both) may pursue competition by forming a speech and debate club.

In our area, we offer a class each fall for thirteen weeks in which we teach the fundamentals of policy debate and public speaking. The second semester of the school year, any students who desire (those from our class, from previous classes, or those taught at home without a group) may join our speech and debate club. As a club (during the second semester of the academic year), we do not have formal classes, but instead go to tournaments together, host home tournaments, share evidence and information, and have practice sessions. The primary teaching comes through the first semester class. Last year, we had fifty students in the class in the fall. At the end of the class, all of the students were required to participate in one tournament (unless parental permission was given to not participate) in speech, debate, or both. During the second semester, twenty-five of those fifty students went on to be in the club and compete in one to eight tournaments.

Starting a Speech and Debate Class

To start a speech and/or debate class in your area, you might want to do any or all of the following:

1. **Find a place to hold the class.** Secure a site that is large enough for the group you think you will have attending. This site should have one large meeting room (size is dependent upon the number of students you anticipate) and some smaller rooms to break up into to practice speeches. When we had thirty students, we had a meeting room that was large enough for five or six eight-foot tables and at least six other rooms to break up and debate and speak in. When we had fifty students, we had eight or nine eight-foot tables in one large room and another ten rooms for debating and speaking in small groups.
2. **Determine class length and times.** Decide on the length of your class and the number of sessions. We found that we needed a minimum of three hours per week for our class, and four hours would be even better (again, this will be based on the number of students in your class). We had thirteen weeks of classes the first year and eleven the next. We do not recommend having less than twelve weekly sessions, or you simply do not have time to cover all the basics.
3. **Determine ages of students.** You may choose to have high school students only if your space is limited, or you may choose to just have a speech class for elementary and junior high students, and skip debate this year. (If you do the latter, you may desire to use a directed curriculum with places for the student to fill in notes, outline speeches, etc. such as *Speak Up!* by Kayla and Cami Reish (Training for Triumph, 2003). Since we teach speech and debate with the intention of training students for competitions in the NCFCA league, we open our classes to students ages twelve through eighteen by January 1st (the league guidelines)—though our daughters do offer elementary and middle school speech classes various times throughout the year.
4. **Choose curriculum.** Decide on your curriculum for the class. You may obtain speech and debate books and tapes from the library and make up a curriculum as you go along, or you may desire to get materials published by those involved in

homeschool speech and debate such as *An Introduction to Argumentation and Debate* by Christy Shipe (HSLDA, 1998) or *Ready to Give an Answer for the Hope That Is Within You* by Ray and Donna Reish (Training for Triumph, 2003). The Shipe book is strictly debate, but it gives a lot of details concerning policy debate to new students. *Ready to Give an Answer* covers speech and debate. Both of them include forms for the NCFCA league. The Reish book has details on how to host classes and evaluate students' speeches. It is nice if each family involved in the class can obtain a book, so the students can read the material at home that you are presenting in class.

5. **Advertise.** You need to spread the word about your class. If your home school community does not have speech and debate at this time, be ready for an onslaught of students. Speech and debate seem to be sweeping the country in home school circles. You need to determine ahead of time how many students you will be able to handle according to the amount of help and space you have. You might want to include this number in your advertising, along with a note indicating that the spaces will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Usually an article or advertisement in your local home school support group newsletter is all that is needed for advertising
6. **Host a kick-off meeting.** It is good if you get all the students and at least one parent from each interested family together for a kick off meeting in which you present the details of your class. Often, a parent will bring along the students he or she wants to enroll in the class, and once the students see what it is all about, they are eager to join. Likewise, a student may have heard about peers in a neighboring community doing this and drag along a parent to see if he can join. Either way, your kick off meeting will help some decide whether they really want to take the class or not. In our kick off meeting, we like to have a mock debate (especially humorous ones in which students are debating a funny topic, like whether they should order pizza or whether sisters should share clothes) in order to let them get a taste of what debate is like. We have had past students come and give an explanation of debate, but all of the technical terms have a tendency to intimidate the students and overwhelm the parents. Keep it simple. Also, we have past students give various speeches from the NCFCA speech categories to show parents and potential students the skills that can be developed in the class. (Be sure to have a sample of a dramatic event, such as humorous interpretation or dramatic interpretation as many students are interested in learning dramatics.)
7. **Determine the costs.** We have charged between nothing and a couple of dollars per session per student for our beginning classes so far (just enough for the Reishes to each supper after class and to pay our college students who help us). The amount you charge (if any) will be based on the time you have for the class, whether you use volunteers to help you with the class, whether you are paying former debaters or college students to help teach, how much the families will spend for materials, etc. In addition to class fees, be sure to calculate the costs of any shared materials. For our class, we purchased some books and videos from the NCFCA (in addition to each student's text book purchase) and photocopied debate plans, evidence, and speaker feedback forms. Do not underestimate the cost of doing all of this. (You may want to charge \$10 to \$20 per student for copy

costs in the beginning with the option of having another payment midway through, if needed.) By the end of our last class, we had over \$800 in copying costs for the shared debate evidence the students found that we photocopied for each student, feedback forms, sample cases, etc., and during our last couple of classes, we have used over three hundred feedback forms per session.

Structure of Each Class

The structure and format of your classes will be based on what you are teaching (speech, debate, or a combination of the two), how many students you have, the length of your class meetings, the number of class sessions you have, and more. In our classes, we intermingle speech and debate each week. We have found the following structure to work well for us:

1. At the beginning of each session, Ray writes the schedule on the board for that day. We rarely get to everything we want to do, but this does get us started anyway and lets the students know what is in store for the session. (As to what we do each week, we go in order of the *Ready* book and teach the speech types and debate theory a little each week, assigning outside reading, speeches, and doing activities and games that reinforce that week's teaching.)
2. Ray assigns two students each week to give a three to six minute devotional in front of the whole class, preferably something about communication, if possible. These two students kick off each class. (We start out recruiting former students for this until new ones are comfortable enough to volunteer.)
3. While the devotionals are being shared, Ray discreetly goes around the room and checks each student's sermon notes. Each student is expected to take notes during the sermon at his church; if a student is unable to attend church that week, he is permitted to listen to a tape, radio broadcast, etc. and take notes over that. Ray does not evaluate the notes at this time; he just makes sure they are done and provides accountability. Each student's note taking skills will increase through frequent note taking.
4. Next, we usually have a lecture over the information they read from their *Ready to Give an Answer* book about speech. We use a "Teach-Practice-Apply" approach in our classes. This means that we *teach* the skills through outside reading, sample speeches from past students, and lecture over the topic. Then the student *practices* the skill by preparing a speech of the type that was *taught*. (During the *practice* stage, the student will give his prepared speech one time to a small group. He will receive feedback from parents and other students, then he will go home and *apply* what he has learned to improve his speech. (This is one aspect of the *apply* part of the TPA approach; the real *apply* step comes when he competes, speaks at the nursing home or local support group, or shares his testimony at church!) He will come back and give his speech again to the group with the improvements made.
5. Ray or one of our college helpers will lecture about debate. Each week, we try to give them little doses of what debate is all about rather than overwhelming them with too much all at one time. We utilize many teaching methods for debate, such

- as lecture over the outside reading they were assigned, mock debates, passing out sample evidence and reviewing the components of a piece of evidence, passing out sample plans and reviewing the parts of a plan, going over the speaker's positions and roles in the debate, having someone give a first affirmative speech and as a group determining some arguments you could make against this plan, and more. We do a lot of interaction and class participation; we also use games and activities for teaching speech skills.
6. We assign homework, usually something as follows (about three hours worth of homework per week): prepare a devotional (as it is each student's turn), prepare the new speech type, improve last week's speech, read about speech in book, read about debate in book, look up five pieces of evidence online, prepare a one page brief about one of the countries that might be included in this year's resolution, take sermon notes, and more. Eventually, they will be writing debate plans, and, very soon, debating in class with experienced debaters. (We bring in former debaters for this.)

Important Tips for Speech and Debate Class

We feel that there are several key points that have made the difference between success and failure in our classes. Keep these points in mind as you prepare for your class:

1. **Note taking is one of the most vital components for good speaking, debating, and writing.** We teach various note taking skills for the different types of speeches, and we also expect students to take notes each week on a sermon. Home schooled students often do not have good note taking skills as they are not expected to practice this skill in the home. We emphasize the fact that note taking is for the student; thus, he should be able to use his notes to write from or speak from at any given time. Our students know that Mr. Reish could call on them anytime to give a "mini sermon" from their sermon notes. The purpose of taking notes is to be able to use them!
2. **Research is a vital tool for good debating.** We list web sites in our book in which they can find evidence. The NCFCA web site (www.ncfca.org) gives sites to look into. There are books published each year with evidence in them already; the sources of these pieces of evidence will give the students further links to look into. We start the students researching from the very first week. We assign certain countries for them to find information about. They either come back with a written brief about that country or a speech about it. Sharing knowledge that the students acquire through research makes the research even more valuable. Evaluating pieces of evidence in class early on teaches the students what to look for in evidence---credible sources, format of evidence, importance of dates, etc.
3. **Have students speak immediately about topics they already know.** Students should begin speaking immediately about things they know. During the first class, students are surprised to find that they will speak two to four times each! It does no good to prolong the speaking assignments "until they get better at it." The only way to dispel fears of speaking is to speak. We start our students out speaking the first week about themselves for thirty seconds, their summer for one to three

- minutes, and some other personal topic (like favorite book or favorite subject). By speaking about something they know, their fears are lessened. We briefly teach the type of speech they will be giving (introduction speech, personal speech, etc.), then the students speak!
4. **Break up into small groups within the room for students to speak.** We have our students speak for the first few weeks at the end of eight-foot tables simultaneously. (All nine eight-foot tables have speakers speaking at the ends of them at the same time.) This sounds confusing, but it is really profitable. For one thing, the student is not expected to speak in a quiet room with many people listening to him. The others in the room kind of drown out his errors! Secondly, it takes less class time to quickly teach about a topic and then have everyone do it at first. It is not intimidating to the students since everyone else is doing it too.
 5. **Branch out into rooms for longer, more polished speeches.** After several weeks, students will break up into groups and go to individual rooms to speak and debate. By then, they have prepared the various types of speeches ahead of time (dramatics, persuasive, informative, etc.), and they are more confident to give their speeches. Continue to have students speak often! Each student should have the opportunity to speak at least a couple of times per week to a small group or table of students and parents.
 6. **Have students prepare some speeches in class.** During the first couple of weeks, we have the students speak about topics they are familiar with and that do not require research. We give them ten to fifteen minutes during class to prepare, during which we will roam around and help those who are struggling with the outlining or thinking process.
 7. **Feedback is one of the most important aspects of speech class.** I cannot stress enough the feedback process of speech class. Every time a student speaks in our class, at least two, but preferably four to six, people give feedback on feedback forms. You may use the feedback forms provided in the Reish book or use the judges' forms at the NCFCA web site, or design your own feedback forms. Basically, the student needs to know what he did right and what he did wrong. He needs to know ways that he can improve his speech. That is what feedback is all about.
 8. **Welcome help from parents.** We take all the help we can get in our classes. The more parents who are there giving feedback, taking small groups to rooms to debate or speak, assisting students with outlining, etc., the better. Students seem to put more stock in the parents' feedback forms than they do their peers'.
 9. **Make your speech class a safe environment.** We enjoy having fun with our students in class and at tournaments. The students know that Mr. and Mrs. Reish will be there to help them with their speeches, improve their skills, and have an enjoyable time in the process. They also know that we, under no circumstances, will tolerate making fun of others' abilities. From the beginning, make it known that no teasing and put-downs will be tolerated. The only way students can improve their skills is if they feel comfortable in the environment in which they are speaking. No exceptions.

Teaching speech and debate has been rewarding for us. Helping students become “ready to give an answer” has been rewarding for us. Investing in the lives of others always is.

For more information and speech help, see our E-Catalog. We have cassette tapes of sample speeches and a mock debate, tips on starting a class, and how to’s of speech writing and delivery, in addition to our books *Ready to Give an Answer* and *Speak Up!*

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