

# *Training for Triumph E-Newsletter*

## *Issue 005*

### *March and April 2005*

#### **Table of Contents:**

##### **1. Training for Triumph (TFT) Events and Announcements**

- \*Announcing Our Newest Products: CQLA, Volume II
- \*Special Prices on CQLA Through May 1<sup>st</sup>
- \*Obtaining Materials That Correlate With CQLA
- \* Cottage Classes for 2005-2006 academic year
- \* About Our E-Mail Address List
- \* Training for Triumph speaking and vending at FWAHS Expo May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

##### **2. Spotlight on One of Our Products**

- \* *Character Quality Language Arts*

##### **3. Frequently Asked Question(s) About WBLA/CQLA**

- \**My second or third grader does not read well enough to do language arts yet. How can I get him up to speed in reading without pushing him too much?*
- \**What should I do about my child's poor penmanship?*

##### **4. Tips for Homeschool Moms---Organizational Strategies for the Busy Homeschool Family---chores, efficiency, and more!**

- \*Speed Work
- \*Biggies and Littles

##### **5. Book Review Just for You**

- \**Accelerated Distance Learning* by Brad Voeller

##### **6. To Make You Laugh; To Make You Cry; To Make You Smile; To Make You Ponder... Prose, Poetry, and Anecdotes**

- \*Vegetable Soup Reloaded
- \*He is Risen, and I Believe It!
- \*A Day Without Siblings Is Like Having a Hole in Your Heart

##### **7. In the Kitchen**

\*Kitchen “Staples”

**8. Get Connected: Internet Site Review**

\*Accelerated Distance Learning site

**9. This and That: Thoughts from TFT**

\*Mad Dad or Glad Dad? Mean Mom or Merry Mom?

**10. Article from Training for Triumph**

*Who Are You Talking To?*

by Kayla M. Reish

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**1. Training for Triumph Events and Announcements**

**\*Announcing Our Newest Products: CQLA, Volume II**

We are excited to announce that the second volume of *Character Quality Language Arts* is nearly ready! Yes, those of you using Volume I will be able to move into Volume II right on schedule! We are also excited to announce the following changes/improvements in Volume II (and eventually in Volume I also):

-Better, clearer essay instructions where there were questions

-More challenging spelling lessons and spelling words at each level except for Pre A

-Spelling Further Practice sidebars in which students unscramble, fill in the blanks, syllabicate, etc. their spelling words for each week

-Crisper, neater text

See below for our April CQLA special, and order early to get a better deal!

If you would like more information about CQLA, email Cami, and she will send you samples to try and a Frequently Asked Questions document.

**\*Special Pricing on CQLA Ordered in April!**

To help us with our print order on CQLA books, we are offering families special pricing on any CQLA book that is ordered by May 1<sup>st</sup> for a June 30<sup>th</sup> delivery. (Younger levels will probably be delivered sooner than that date.)

So...order and pay for any CQLA books in April, and receive your CQLA books for the current price of \$49.50 (which includes \$2.97 per book tax)---and no

shipping. (After the FWAHS expo, the cost will be \$49.50, plus \$2.97 tax and \$5.00 shipping.)

This special offer is available only for CQLA orders received before May 1<sup>st</sup>. (All other materials are at their regular prices.) To order or to receive more information about CQLA, email Cami at [trainingfortrump@mchsi.com](mailto:trainingfortrump@mchsi.com) For help in determining levels for your students, call to speak with Ray or Donna at 260-597-7415.

### **\*Obtaining Materials That Correlate With CQLA/WBLA**

Training for Triumph carries many items that are recommended in the sidebars of CQLA for Further Study, Character Connections, and more. And we are adding new materials all the time to help you bring Bible, character, and spiritual applications together with your language arts studies. Watch this part of our E-Newsletters, as well as updated catalogs that are emailed periodically, to see what we have. In the new *Teacher's Guide* for CQLA (coming out this summer!), there will be overview charts for each monthly unit, indicating what Further Study items are recommended, etc. Also included in this overview section is a list of materials you may want each month that Training for Triumph offers. We hope this will help those of you who are trying to connect your Bible and character studies to your language arts do so more efficiently. In the meantime, we carry the following character-related materials that correlate with various units of CQLA:

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 booklet \$.50

Power for True Success \$25.00  
Sovereign in the Affairs of Men \$7.00  
Eagle Story \$8.00 (temptation and perseverance)  
Pineapple Story Book \$6.00 (yielding rights)  
Pineapple Story Cassette Tapes \$29.00

Father and Family 3-Tape Set \$12.00  
Teaching Children to Be Diligent tape \$5.00  
Making God Real 3-Tape by teen for girls \$12  
History Tapes/ Children (teaching) 3-Tapes \$12

### **\*Cottage Classes for the 2005-2006 Academic Year**

We had a great year this year with our cottage classes, and we are hoping those of you in north east Indiana can join us for a class or two next year! Our class schedule is tentative until we have firm locations, students, and times, but we are hoping to offer the following classes. Email or call us to receive a registration form (available May 1<sup>st</sup>) for a complete schedule. (You may also register for classes at our TFT booth at the FWAHS expo on may 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>.)

All classes are one-semester in length, except for Algebra I and the complete language arts classes, which are one year in length. Students may opt to attend one or both semesters. (Algebra I students will not be able to join mid-year.)

Classes will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. All language arts and writing classes will be limited to five or six students (depending on the class) due to heavy in-class editing.

### **First Semester (End of August through late November)---two locations:**

South west Fort Wayne (probably The Chapel); Thursday afternoons/evenings

1. Elementary Essay Class
2. Junior High Essay Class
3. High School Essay Class
4. Research Paper Class
5. Story Writing Class
6. Elementary/Middle School Speech
7. Beginning Speech and Debate
8. U.S. Government
9. Shakespeare
10. Algebra I

## 11. Advanced Speech

Near Ossian (our learning center in Craigville); Wednesday all day/evening

1. Early Elementary Language Arts
2. Upper Elementary Language Arts
3. Middle School Language Arts
4. High School Language Arts
5. Beginning Speech
6. Research Paper
7. Algebra I
8. Beginning Piano Lessons (days and times will vary)
9. Beginning Guitar Lessons (days and times will vary)

### **Second Semester: January through May**

North of Fort Wayne (possible Auburn area; day and place to be announced)

1. Elementary Essay Class
2. Junior High Essay Class
3. High School Essay Class
4. Story Writing Class
5. Elementary/Middle School Speech
6. Beginning Speech
7. U.S. Government
8. Shakespeare
9. Algebra I

Near Ossian; Wednesday all day/evening (our learning center in Craigville)

1. Early Elementary Language Arts
2. Upper Elementary Language Arts
3. Middle School Language Arts
4. High School Language Arts
5. Elementary and Middle School Speech
6. Research Paper
7. Algebra I
8. Piano Lessons (days and times will vary)
9. Guitar Lessons (days and times will vary)

### **\*About Our E-Mail Address List**

We are very new in the areas of publishing our own materials and speaking to homeschoolers 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.

## **Training for Triumph speaking and vending at FWAHS Expo May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>**

Training for Triumph will be speaking and vending at the Fort Wayne Area Home School Expo on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. We'll kick off the event at the expo preview with Kayla, Cami, and Kara speaking to parents about "Building Strong Relationships With Your Teen" on Friday evening at 7:00. The girls are in twelfth, eleventh, and eighth grades and will be discussing how their parents work at developing relationships with them and their brothers, what is effective in gaining and keeping teens' hearts, avoiding peer dependency, being best friends with siblings, passing on the faith to your teens, and more. Friday evening's sessions are at First Assembly of God church on Coliseum Boulevard.

On Saturday, TFT will be selling materials (language arts curriculum, character materials, and speech and debate items, as well as teaching tapes) and answering questions at their booth at the expo at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. The event begins at 9:00 and will run until 5:00. Then on Saturday afternoon, Donna will speak at 1:00 on language arts—how to utilize CQLA in your home school. Donna will also speak at 3:00 on homeschooling with babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, including how to schedule your little ones while still spending the time with them they need, how to train older children to help with younger siblings, the "bus stop approach" to schooling with little ones, and more.

In addition, you may register for cottage classes for next year at the TFT booth. All classes are filled on a first-come, first-basis. Writing and language arts classes are limited to five or six students per class.

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## **2. Spotlight on *Character Quality Language Arts***

News is traveling around the globe about *Character Quality Language Arts* as the emails and phone calls continue to come in from those who "have a friend who is using this great language arts program with its content based on Scripture and character qualities and its methodology combining all the best language arts tools available---Institute for Excellence in Writing, Jensen's Grammar, Easy Grammar, Tools of the Trade, Editor in Chief, Writing for 100 Days, and more." Check out the details below to discover why after only one year of availability to all home school families, over four thousand students are learning grammar and composition the CQLA/WBLA way! Also, for those of you already enjoying CQLA Volume I, Volume II's will be out in the next couple of months. Watch your inbox for the news! (And Volume II's are better than ever with new spelling practice sidebars, character overviews for each monthly unit, and more!)

### ***Introducing...Character Quality Language Arts***

Character Quality Language Arts (CQLA) is a multi-level, user-friendly language arts program for second through twelfth grade students. CQLA is an integrated approach to language arts, utilizing all language tools necessary for developing excellent communication skills (copying, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, composition, creative writing, poetry and dictation) in a consumable workbook designed with busy home schooling families in mind. Each monthly unit has lesson plans and Answer Keys provided for the teacher as removable pages following the students' pages.

All four levels use the same format and approach and the same character based/Scriptural topics each month for their language learning. Thus, your upper level students and your younger level students are all learning English while reading and studying the same character and Scriptural principles. As an added bonus, optional unit study topics, suggestions, and reading assignments are provided in the sidebars of each weekly lesson, based on those monthly character quality and Scriptural principles. (For example, during the first month, all levels focus on "wisdom" and "being a peacemaker." The Pre A students are copying a passage and writing about William Penn being a peacemaker between the Indians and white man--and Pennsylvania being named after him. The A students are copying a passage and writing about Jesus calling Peter to be a "fisher of men." The Level C students are copying and writing about John Calvin and his peacemaking/reconciling efforts.)

Each CQLA book is broken down into eight monthly units with four weekly lessons per month. It is designed so Level B and C students can work independently. Each week, students at all levels have directed essay instructions. More than a composition idea book, CQLA teaches students how to write twelve essay types, while learning and applying grammar and usage concepts.

If you like Learning Language Arts Through Literature, Andrew Pudewa's Structure and Style (from the Institute for Excellence in Writing), Jensen's Grammar, Spelling Power, Character Sketches, Writing for 100 Days, Editor in Chief, and Easy Grammar, you'll love CQLA as I have combined the best ten programs I have ever used for language arts into one, compact package!

Find out why four thousand students are using our curriculum one year of availability to all home schoolers! Volume I for all levels currently available. (Once your student completes Volume I at any level, you will move into Volume II for the next year with all new character focuses and principles.)

**Level Pre-A (Volume I):** This 400+ page book contains all of your 2nd and 3rd graders' language arts for one year. A gentle, yet thorough introduction to English, with the emphasis on learning to write correct sentences and paragraphs, reviewing phonetic sounds for spelling, learning to take dictation, and organizing information for writing.

**Level A (Volume I):** This nearly 500 page volume contains all of your 3rd-5th graders' (depending on abilities) language arts for one year. Continued emphasis on writing with longer original essays including step-by-step instructions, adding more revisions to their essays, and applying their grammar skills to writing.

**Level B (Volume I):** CQLA Level B--The CQLA approach continues! Your middle school students (grades 6th-8th) will continue to learn excellent communications skills in the same formats as the previous books, with more challenging grammar and composition assignments, the making of grammar cards, and advanced sentence structure usage required in their essays.

**Level C (Volume I):** CQLA Level C---Your high school students will be challenged in this final level of CQLA. Following the same format and approach as the earlier levels, directed essays of six to twelve paragraphs, advanced grammar lessons with more essay applications, and complex sentence structures are added in this level. Finally, high school students will graduate with the ability to write with colons, appositives, semicolons, compound sentences, dashes, quotation

marks, and more!

**Volume II** of all four levels available in June 2005! (Pre A and A are nearly ready to go to press even as I type this!)

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### **3. Frequently Asked Questions About WBLA, CQLA, or Language Arts**

*\*My second or third grader does not read well enough to do language arts yet. How can I get him up to speed in reading without pushing him too much?*

I will enumerate some ideas for the reluctant reader below. I personally have had children learn to read at ages seven, eight, and nine years old (none younger than six and three-fourths), so I would be of the “do not push” school of thought as opposed to the “hurry up” school of thought. I put my children in first grade when they are seven years old, and before we developed level Pre-A, I never had a child do a formal language arts program before he or she was in third grade. (Now with Pre A, I put my last little guy in language arts when he was eight years old and beginning “second grade.”)

Here are some things to consider in helping your child reach “reading fluency” and be ready for language arts learning:

1. Do not expect a child to spell a word he cannot read, write a word he cannot read, or tell the part of speech of a word he cannot read. In other words, reading should be well underway before beginning a language arts program per se. Now, you can definitely do parts of CQLA orally as an adjunct to his reading program (especially taking oral dictation on the essays as this is such good language preparation), but do not expect him to learn the parts of speech, etc. if he is unable to read.
2. Be sure to read with him frequently. (I prefer to read with a brand new reader two times a day and have him read alone at least once a day.) Consider the following for your reading times together:
  - a. Have short reading snatches of five to twelve minutes at a time.
  - b. Choose books that are just at his reading level or a tiny bit above it. (You will be there to coach him, remind him of his word calling skills, etc.)
  - c. Have two or three of these sessions per day.
  - d. Don't let him agonize over words. Tell him ones that he cannot get, and remind him why. (“Remember, that word is ‘neigh.’ Do you remember how ‘eigh’ says ‘ay’ like in ‘neigh,’ ‘weight,’ and ‘sleigh’?”)
  - e. Attach the skills from his phonics program to his reading---help him see how it all fits. Remind him that a family is one he just reviewed in his phonics book, etc. (One big downfall to many phonics program is the lack of correlation to real reading. Each time a child learns a new sound, he should read a story or reader containing that sound to practice it for real.)

3. Continue his phonics instruction until it is no longer needed. Yes, CQLA does have phonics/spelling instruction, but it is definitely not as much drill work as a phonics program teaching intensive phonics skills for the first time.
4. One of the biggest mistakes people make with their new readers is to assume that because they can read easy books, their phonics and reading lessons are done. Of course, the student will usually review phonics in his spelling program (assuming you are using a word-family based spelling program—neigh, weigh, weight---and not a vocabulary based spelling program---sun, beach, water, bucket, shovel, etc.). However, he still needs to practice his reading skills every day and see how those rules he has learned in phonics and might be reviewing in spelling are related (and needed!) in his reading.
5. A lot of children can “read between the lines.” In other words, they might not be able to read the words that are written there for them, but they can “fill in the blanks” with what works (and makes sense). By reading orally with your student for a few years, you are able to catch his phonics mishaps and force him to use the word analysis skills that he has learned.

*\*What should I do about my child's poor penmanship?*

Teach him to type...the sooner, the better. My oldest daughter has dyslexia that severely affected her spelling and penmanship. I taught her to type as soon as I felt that she could physically handle it small motor skills-wise, around age thirteen, and she has never looked back---writing articles, poetry, curriculum, Bible school materials, workshops, children's books, and more. Just one year before she learned to type, she still cried and labored for hours to write one paragraph out by hand. Typing works!

In the meantime, here are some tips that might help:

1. Get him a penmanship program and have him do it every day. We continued this for Kayla up through high school. Students like this often need the actual instruction on how the letters are formed way beyond their peers.
2. Take turns having him write some and you write some for him for his essays, as needed. Do not let his penmanship difficulties stop him from becoming an excellent writer. Composition is a thinking skill; writing is a small motor skill. (I wrote pages and pages of text for Kayla with her dictating to me before she could handle the physical aspects of writing. I knew she had a lot of great information within her that would never get on paper if I didn't let her dictate to me. I think this has become a major factor in her becoming a writer today.)
3. Do not expect perfection in his essays in terms of penmanship. Many teachers give grades for “neatness” in essays. If your child has a true penmanship difficulty, he should not be given a grade for neatness. A student should not be graded for something that is out of his control.
4. Consider typing his final copy essays for him. Yes, have him put in the edits and changes that are needed, but instead of having him

laboriously write out his final copy, considering typing it or writing it for him. He needs to see that he has skills in language arts---that penmanship (and spelling, in Kayla's case) is one small aspect of the writing process. (And they are actually two skills that lose their significance more and more in adulthood due to computers.)

5. In the case of dyslexia or other learning disabilities, do not allow his penmanship or spelling problems to cause him to think he is stupid. Students often have so much in their heads that is interesting, meaningful, etc.—and if they physically cannot get this information on paper, we need to help them do so.

## 6. Tips for Homeschool Moms

### Speed work

When our older children were little, we had at least one dawdler. I will not name any names to protect the sweet little one, but this child moved like an absolute snail. I am happy to report that all three of my older children are now fast, eager workers who actually love to work, just like their parents! However, ten years ago, when I had six children twelve years old and under—and more work than I thought I would ever get done, it didn't seem like any of them could work fast enough to suit me. 😊

One of the ways we taught them to become faster workers (and to see the benefits of working speedily) was to have speed work sessions. We did this many ways, but we began by showing them how quickly a job could really be done. One evening as we sat around the dinner table at the end of the meal discussing what we would play and do that evening, one of them remarked that we wouldn't have any time because the kitchen was such a wreck from the meal. Ray and I looked at each other, and the challenge was on!

We told the children that we knew that all of us together (that's the way we always cleaned up meals when we had all younger children) could get the kitchen completely cleaned up in five to ten minutes. (I must note here that we always used freezer meals at the time, so the kitchen was never really a "wreck." We had an entrée in a 9 x 13 glass baking dish that had been in the freezer; some vegetable, fruit, and salad bowls; and each person's table setting. We might have had a bread pan or vegetable pan, but it wasn't like we had countertops filled with dishes and food from the meal preparation.) Anyway, Ray and I told the children that we knew all of us could clean it (including sweeping the kitchen and dining room) in under ten minutes, and, furthermore, Daddy and Mommy could clean it all alone within fifteen minutes.

"No way!" they exclaimed. "You guys can't clean this alone in that short of time." So we did. We rolled their chairs back from the table for the "show," set the timer,

and got started. Their eyes got bigger and bigger as they watched us run around and clean. They cheered us on. We made a big show of it. And before the timer went off, Mom and Dad had the kitchen clean, including sweeping and spot mopping!

From that day on, dinner clean up took on a whole new dimension. Suddenly, it wasn't the big job they had always thought it was. Dinner clean up could really go fast if everyone worked their very best all the time---and the evening was free for reading, playing, singing, and family time.

Another turning point in teaching our children to work diligently came when Ray arrived home from work to toys and things out everywhere. We all worked together to put them up, and then he called all of the children into the family room for a little "lesson." He set the timer for five minutes and called out things from various parts of the house for the children to get and bring to the family room---favorite dolls, a cup, a certain book, a napkin, etc. When the five minute timer went off, he reset the timer and had all of the children race around to put those items back. The children had the things put away in less time than it took to get them out and bring them to him! Another lesson learned: it doesn't take any longer to put something away than it did to get it out---so put it away!

By the looks of things around here lately, it's time for some of those early lessons to be taught to the little boys! In the meantime, we need to remember the importance of building these habits and skills early in our children's lives. Our older children can work circles around most people their ages. They all get so much done in any given day that it is absolutely amazing. They have excellent time management skills and work habits that I pray my younger ones will also "catch." All of those early days of training our children really do pay off in the long run!

### Biggies and Littles

One method I used for being sure that my little kids always had help with things, didn't get lost in public, etc. was to assign each "biggie" a "little." We did this at breakfast and lunch time, so that if anyone needed anything, I wouldn't have to stop reading aloud to the kids; each "little's" "biggie" was there to help him.

This was especially effective when we went places. We would announce on the way there who each of the three older children's "littles" were, and they would hold that child's hand; help him or her with skates, shoes, coats, etc.; and generally just be there for their "littles." Sometimes I had a baby and someone didn't have a "little" because the baby needed Mom, etc. but then that child would just help me with whatever I needed help with.

It sounds kind of artificial and formal as I type it here, but it really wasn't at all. It built love and devotion in the children towards each other. When someone's

“little” for the day or event was announced, the children would hug each other, tell the little one, “I’m your biggie. You want sissy to be your biggie? Sissy will help you.” He or she would grab the little one by the hand as we unloaded from the van, smiling and proud.

It also built responsibility. Even at a young age (say eight or so), each one had important things to do---help little brother get buckled in the car seat, refill little sister’s milk at the table, etc. It wasn’t just a job here and there, but it was a real responsibility.

Of course, things weren’t always that wonderful. Sometimes they fought over who their littles were; sometimes they just wanted the least needy little; sometimes they didn’t feel like helping. But we dealt with those times---and everyone looks back fondly to their days of being a “biggie” or a “little’---and the love and care an older sibling had for them when they were “littles.”

## **5. Book Review Just for You**

*\*Accelerated Distance Learning* by Brad Voeller

The rumors you are hearing are true! Home schooled students all over the country are earning bachelor’s degrees in business, political science, history, communications, English, accounting, and more without ever stepping foot onto a college campus. And Brad Voeller’s book *Accelerated Distance Learning* is the place to begin.

We got this book three years ago in anticipation of our son starting to earn a degree at the Advanced Training Institute’s testing and prep center Verity. He went to Verity for a year---and came home with a soon-to-be wife---and three-fourths of a degree. This month he is anxiously awaiting his diploma (he finished securing the wife first!)---a history degree obtained by testing out of the entire degree except for two classes for which there no tests available.

Now, we are using this book to help us plan for Kayla’s degree. The college she is attending, Huntington College, has a liberal CLEP acceptance. She is well on her way to obtaining over twenty hours of credits through CLEP’ing out.

If you are interested in learning more about this exciting approach to higher education, Brad’s book is the place to begin. It describes how he and many others have been obtaining degrees through non-traditional means, then it goes on to elaborate on those means---distance learning, accelerated learning, and more. It tells how to get started, skills needed to achieve your goals, planning for young students, and more. It is truly the starting point for accelerated distance learning.

This book was written by a young adult who had been home schooled all his life, then went on to get a degree by the methods described in this book, then went

on to write a book and start a business. Your teens will be inspired, and you'll be surprised! What a great book.

*Accelerated Distance Learning* is written by Brad Voeller, published by Dedicated Publishing, and available at many home schooling suppliers, as well as at his web site, featured in our "Get Connected" column this month.

## **6. 6. To Make You Laugh; To Make You Cry; To Make You Smile; To Make You Ponder...Prose, Poetry, and Anecdotes**

### **Vegetable Soup Reloaded**

I was working with my nine year old son in the kitchen, showing him how to combine different leftovers to come up with stew. We were using leftover vegetable soup, leftover green beans and potatoes, and leftover carrots, and adding beef we had precooked and frozen. My six year old was sitting at the table still looking at his vegetable soup from lunch, complaining about how he didn't want it, etc. when my twelve year old son said, "Jakie, you may as well eat the soup now because Mom's making "vegetable soup reloaded" for the next meal!" That will surely become a "treasure term" the little kids and I will use for years to come---leftovers reloaded!

### **He Is Risen and I Believe It!**

Jakie said the cutest thing on Easter. I had been trying all morning to get him to say, "He is risen, indeed," whenever I said, "He is risen." He just couldn't remember the line. At church, the pastor had us greet one another with this "He is risen," and I turned to Jacob, said it, and motioned for him to respond. He said, "Indee.....He....uh....I believe it!" I said that was good enough for me!

### **A Day Without Siblings Is Like Having a Hole in Your Heart**

We took our boys to a new Christian scouting program at our church. We thought at first that Ray could go with them, and all three boys could go together (not really understanding much about the nature of the program). Anyway, it didn't quite work out that way, and all three boys ended up in different classes. It wasn't until our then-nine-year-old was telling us how lonely it was without his brothers that I realized that he had probably never in his entire life been to anything without one of his siblings---or at least his sister-in-law, Mom, or Dad with him. He had a lonely, scary evening, and when we talked about it later, he said, "Mom, a lot of those kids go to school every day without any mom, dad, brother, or sister with them. I could barely go one evening without Jonathan or Jakie. If I had to go to school all day without my brothers and sisters, I would feel like I had a hole in my heart." I chuckled a little, and he emphatically continued, "Mom, I'm serious. I would just die of that hole in my heart without my brothers all day."

That's what home schooling is all about! (Now I just need to remind them of these "holes in their hearts" when they're arguing with each other during chore time!)

## **7. In the Kitchen---Kitchen "Staples"**

The words kitchen staples usually conjure up an old-time kitchen with plenty of flour, sugar, and other baking goods on hand for anything they might be needed for. Staples usually include those items with long shelf lives, but we consider many freezer items to be staples, too. Nowadays, with our hurried lifestyles, we don't always bake from scratch—and kitchen staples can mean anything from being sure you're well-stocked on frozen pizzas to making sure you have plenty of tortilla chips for anything Mexican you might make.

We have a list of kitchen "staples" that might be different from some others. Thought I would share it this month---and why the items are staples for us---along with how we utilize them. We love to cook from scratch (and do so whenever we have time), but we are realists at this time in our lives, so some of our "staples" are nothing more than being sure a certain convenience item is always there. Obviously, everyone likes to keep bread, milk, and toilet paper on hand at all times, but our staples reflect how we cook---and the busy-ness of our lives at times.

1. Potatoes---Our first kitchen staple is definitely the potato. We always have at least a ten to fifteen pound bag of white potatoes and a five pound bag or two of red potatoes on hand. Why? When in doubt, make baked potatoes. Got some extra reading-to-the-kids-time this afternoon? Pull out ten pounds, have the kids peel while you read, and make mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, or fried potatoes. Grilling out this week? Cut the red potatoes in half, put them cut side down on cookie sheets with butter and seasonings, and bake until tender. (Or if your "griller" is good at watching things closely, grill them on foil.) Great with grilled foods! Going to a potluck? Gather everyone around, pull out fifteen to twenty pounds, put in a storage bag, and in no time, you have mashed potatoes. We take potatoes of some kind to nearly every gathering we go to. They're cheap and good.

2. Soft tortilla shells and tortilla chips—These have become staples as we make more and more hurry-up foods. Nachos, layered Mexican chicken casserole, taco salads, etc. can all be whipped up quickly when we keep these staples on hand.

3. Evaporated milk---Evaporated milk can be used in place of cream or half and half in making many dishes---without the excess of the quart size or the spoilage of the perishable creams. I keep it on hand for making pot luck items especially. (For everyday,

the kids just use 2% milk in potatoes, cream soups, etc.) It makes yummy macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, scalloped potatoes, cream soups, and more.

4. Minced onion—This sounds like a silly staple, but by the looks of the frequency with which we replace our large container of this from the wholesale store, it truly is a staple here. Besides the regulars of adding it to vegetables, soups, stews, chili, etc., I also mix it with beef base, and a dash of this and that to come up with “onion soup mix.” (A look at the label on the onion soup mix will show you that it’s really not much more than minced onion, beef base, and corn starch.) Then we use our new “onion soup mix” in soups, roasts, meatloaves, and more.

5. Beef/chicken/pork (or smokehouse) base---Besides making “homemade onion soup mix,” these bases have so many other uses. We use the chicken and beef base for whipping up rich “broth.” We use the pork, or smokehouse, base for seasoning bean soup, green beans, baked beans, pork gravy, and more. Any of them can be mixed with water or milk and cream soups, then poured over meat and baked for a delicious gravy or stew. We also add some to our water when cooking some vegetables---and to our rice water when cooking rice. (Base, a few seasonings, and minced onion can totally replace “Rice a Roni”!) Anytime we have a weak soup or broth, we enrich it with base. (For those who have never used base, it is available beside the bullion cubes, I believe. It is far superior to bullion cubes. I either get it at the wholesale store or the Amish store.)

7. Frozen meatballs--- I talked about this in the last issue when I talked about quick meals, but they truly are staples. While I prefer homemade meatballs, that just doesn’t always happen. Frozen meatballs are often on sale for half price (buy one, get one free), and they are so wonderful to have on hand as they work as main dishes or appetizers/finger foods. If you put them in the sauce or gravy early enough, they lose some of their “frozen, store-bought” flavor and take on more of the flavors of the sauce---barbecue sauce, marinara, sweet and sour, or Swedish meatball gravy. (For a really fast “Swedish meatball dish,” mix cream of mushroom soup with milk or water and beef base, pour over the meatballs, and heat thoroughly. My kids actually love this dish.)
8. Foil pans and disposable containers---Aren’t those disposable containers great? You can send something home with someone, to work with your son or husband, or take them to someone filled with a treat, and not worry about getting them back. We buy large packages of 9 x 13 foil pans for freezing entrees, and we buy variety packs of disposable containers for sending leftovers home with grandparents or taking side dishes to new moms. Hint: We always buy the same brand and sizes of the disposable containers. That way if a lid or bottom gets melted in the dishwasher or lost, we have replacements in the new box of them.
9. Pork Seasoning/Marinade---We have a sprinkle on pork seasoning that we get from a caterer that we seldom use for pork! It is good on pork chops for grilling, but we use it all the time for chicken breasts. I don’t think this particular brand is available just everywhere, but the concept is the same---find a seasoning/marinade you like that is versatile and keep it on hand. The boys season and tenderize boneless, skinless breasts (with this seasoning), then we are ready

- for anything: grilled chicken breasts for an entrée; Monterey chicken bites (chicken pieces seasoned, grilled, and wrapped in bacon and sprinkled with cheese) for appetizers or finger foods; grilled chicken breast sandwiches; chicken cordon bleu; chicken and rice; and more. We have found it especially helpful to have some things you always do the same way---so anyone can do it.
10. Chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, and peanut butter chips—Does chocolate need an explanation?
  11. Bacon crumbles---When we buy bacon to use for seasoning, salads, etc., it ends up getting fried up a few pieces at a time, and suddenly, there's no bacon! Thus, we like the real bacon crumbles either from the wholesale club or from a grocery store's salad bar. They are wonderful to have on hand for salad, cheese balls or cheese spreads, dips, green beans, baked potatoes, baked beans, etc. The kids don't eat them on sandwiches like they do whole pieces of bacon!
  12. Whipped butter---We started buying whipped butter instead of regular butter for every day use. (It is recommended that you not use whipped butter for baking as it does not measure the same as regular butter.) Anyway, it is quick to get a dollop for seasoning corn, etc., and it seems to go farther than regular butter when kids are making toast, baked potatoes, etc.
  13. Large (#10) cans of cheese sauce—We buy this at the wholesale store for under five dollars, I believe. Then we have it for broccoli, potatoes, nachos, etc. It goes really far when making chips and cheese sauce for a crowd or bread sticks and cheese sauce for special occasions.
  14. Staples for quick foods---Those of you who have been getting this newsletter are going to think I have an obsession with speed. Well, I guess I sort of do! We like to keep “staples” on hand for things that are quickly prepared---those foods that take just a jiffy to whip up and take to a carry in or family gathering. Here are some of our most common ones:
    - a. Betty Crocker fudge brownie mix for 9 x 13 pans---We used to make a “brownie mix” from the “Make a Mix Cookery” book I wrote about a few months ago, but now that time is so limited, this is next best. It is Josiah's (our ten year old) specialty!
    - b. Duncan Hines cake mixes---We often make homemade frosting, but we start out with this brand of cake mix.
    - c. Ingredients for pistachio pudding---pudding mix, crushed pineapple, and marshmallows---and wahla!
    - d. Pork loins and barbecue sauce---Put pork loins in the crock pot the night before a gathering, and the next morning, you only have to remove the lid, stir the pork roast with a fork, and stir in barbecue sauce---bbq sandwiches that quickly!
    - e. Ingredients for seven layer salad---If you always have peas, Miracle Whip, bacon, eggs for boiling, etc. on hand for this salad, it comes together very quickly.
    - f. Frozen cookie dough---We like to keep cookie dough (especially peanut butter) in the freezer. It can easily be made into “kiss cookies” or other treat. One of our favorite treats to make quickly to take places is “cookie candy bars” in which you push cookie dough (chocolate chip or peanut

butter) into a cookie sheet with sides, then bake it. When it comes out, spread melted chocolate chips and butterscotch chips (mixed) over it, and sprinkle crushed candy bars, M and M's, etc. over all. Cut into squares, and serve.

- g. Ingredients for Rice Krispy Treats or Scotcheroos---Even little kids can whip these up quickly!
- h. Ingredients for “doubled” eggs
- i. Ingredients for potato casseroles---hash browns, evaporated milk, cheese, cottage cheese

## **8. Get Connected: Internet Site Review**

\*Accelerated Distance Learning site

Want to learn more about CLEP'ing out of a college degree? Want to order Brad Voeller's book? Want to know more about teaching your middle school or high school student speed reading skills? How about more about test-taking skills? Would you like to know about how your fourteen year old can begin testing out of college? His web site is [www.globallearningstrategies.org](http://www.globallearningstrategies.org) and you can find answers here! Check it out!

## **9. This and That: Thoughts from TFT**

\*Mad Dad or Glad Dad? Mean Mom or Merry Mom?

What kind of dad are you---a mad dad or a glad dad? How about you, Mom---are you a mean mom or a merry mom? Now, before you get defensive, my kids will be the first to tell that Ray is sometimes a mad dad---and I am not always a merry mom. We all have our days---and being a parent, managing a household, working full time, starting businesses, being involved in church ministries, leading home school groups, etc. can all take its toll on our “niceness” factors. But, like I always ask my children: *Are you characterized by it?*

Little kids are painfully honest, so one of my younger kids usually tells it like it is: “Mom, you're nice tonight. Not like you were the other days.” Or “What's wrong with Dad? He's in that mood again!” But, just like our children's bad behaviors and fighting with each other---these situations should be the exception---not the norm.

I have been teaching my children since they were very small to be observant of human behavior and emotions. It is a skill that is vital in ministry and relationship building. A couple of my kids can spot a lonely person, an angry person, etc. a mile away. Some of them wouldn't notice another's emotional state unless the person screamed at them or visibly cried. My observant ones are also painfully

honest. They ask questions like, “Why is so and so’s mom always frowning? Why does their dad always sigh real loud?”

How do your children rate you? While I am not into making our children happy and comfortable. And I don’t think they have to have bubbly parents all the time. I also don’t think they should have to have grumbling, sighing parents all the time--while we tell them to straighten up and have good attitudes!

Have you ever thought of some of our adult behaviors through the eyes of our children? I imagine they see dad sighing as the equivalent of their eye rolling. And mom’s nagging as the equivalent of their complaining. Yet, they get reprimanded for those behaviors!

I know when Jacob tells me he’s glad I’m happy today, it is certainly time for a “Mommy check up.” How about it? Mad dad or glad dad? Mean mom or merry mom? Check it out---and change that behavior---before you get sent to your room!

## 10. Article from Training for Triumph

### ***Who Are You Talking To?***

by Kayla M. Reish

No one reads a book or hears a speaker with an open mind. Everything a person hears is filtered through his or her personal beliefs. At the time of Christopher Columbus, people believed that the earth was flat. Everything they thought about travel, science, and any other subject was based on that notion, even though it was wrong. The same holds true in America today, except there is not just one belief that the world or America believes; there are dozens of beliefs about religion, science, ethics, politics, and morality. When those of one viewpoint come into contact with those of another, two different belief systems come into conflict.

Those of different assumptions often do not communicate with one another. Just because people speak the same language, it does not mean they will understand each other. Great Britain, America, and Australia all speak English, but words and phrases have totally different meanings in different countries. When companies send workers from one country to another, they spend thousands of dollars to educate them concerning the differences in culture.

People of different beliefs are as different as people from different lands; we may speak the same language, but we do not mean the same thing. Even among Christians there are

multiple assumptions, myriads of goals, and various interpretations of what the Bible means.

### **Different Assumptions People Make**

**Premise:** A premise is a person's most basic and beloved belief. The premise of a Christian's faith includes the belief in the God of the Bible, the authority of Scripture, Jesus' atonement for sin at Calvary, and Christ's resurrection. These are the most important pillars of our beliefs, and everything else rests on them. When addressing a Christian audience, one does not need to try to prove or justify any of them. They are simply believed.

If, on the other hand, a Christian pastor were to start preaching to a group of atheists in the same way he preaches to his congregation on Sunday, there would be a communication breakdown because atheists do not share the same premise of beliefs as his congregation. To the atheists, the foundation is that there is no God. When a Christian tries to talk with an atheist, he must first deal with that basic premise.

A person's premise is not easily changed. When an atheist even hears someone speak about God, he stops listening, maybe not consciously but sub-consciously; he does not consider the fact that he might be wrong. The same is true of those of other faiths. It takes years of erosion or an act of God to dispel a wrong premise.

**Authorities:** People with different premises place a different amount of influence on the authority of sources. To Christians, the Bible is the ultimate authority on any issue. We base our beliefs on what God's Word says.

Other faiths do not hold the same belief about the Bible. Some respect it, but what it says is not the deciding factor for their faith and lives. If you tell a Muslim, "The Bible says . . ." he might find it interesting, but it will not be a crucial consideration of what he believes. If you tell an atheist, "The Bible says . . ." it will probably not mean anything at all to him.

Whether or not a Christian uses the Bible to persuade people is largely based on what he is trying to persuade someone to and who he is trying to persuade. If a Christian is sharing the good news of the Gospel, he must use Scriptures. But if a Christian is trying to persuade someone who does not believe in the authority of Scripture that abortion is wrong, there are other arguments than the Bible to use that may be more effective, since that person's *premise* is possibly different from the Christian's. Medical research, legal precedent, and social effects are only a few of the many reasons abortion is wrong, and to a Muslim, atheist, or Jew, they are more compelling reasons than, "The Bible says."

**Interpretation:** Even among people of the same faith there are important differences in how we interpret what our faith means. This is why there are so many denominations in the Christian Church. Catholics and Protestants share the same premise, but in the interpretations of what the Bible means, they are drastically different.

What the Bible says about abortion, divorce, and modesty, unfortunately, are not all interpreted the same way in the Church. When a Christian speaks to another Christian, he has the advantage of both having the same basic beliefs. It is now a matter of dealing with the mistakes (or differences, at times) made in interpretation. When speaking to a fellow Christian about abortion, a homeschooler can and should use, “The Bible says . . .” because for both of them it is the ultimate authority.

Interpretations cannot be assumed though. When speaking to a Christian audience, a homeschooler cannot assume that the audience shares his views on issues. They may not. If he addresses a homeschool convention, he can assume that most of the people there agree with his interpretation of the Bible concerning homeschooling. But if he is speaking to a church group, he cannot make that assumption. He has to persuade people that homeschooling is right first, then proceed.

**Meaning of Words:** What means something to one person might mean something else to a different person. If a Christian asks the average American if he believes in God, he will say yes. But what does he mean by “God”? Probably not the All-Powerful, All-Loving, King of kings, and Lord of lords a Christian means. A Christian has one definition of who God is; he has another. Before they can talk about God, a Christian must make sure both of them are talking about the same God.

Problems with the meanings of words happen in normal conversations all the time. A few months ago, my family and a friend were talking about a mutual friend named “Joel.” Somehow things were not making sense about what we thought we knew about him (his hometown and family size). A few minutes into the conversation, we figured out that we were talking about two different Joels! When someone says right and wrong, does he think right and wrong are the same thing as we Christians do? Before you can carry on a conversation with someone, you have to know what he is talking about!

**Purpose/ Goals:** God gave Christians a very clear purpose in life. We are to love God and love our neighbors, praise Him, serve Him, and follow Him. Others, though, do not share those goals. Some want to be rich; some want to be famous; some do not know for sure what they want, but they do not want to have to go through unnecessary pain.

If you are trying to persuade someone not to steal, a wonderful reason is the fact that someone could be arrested if they did. If someone does not respect Scripture or follow the law, it is still probable that one of his goals is to stay out of jail. People will tend to do things that will help them reach their goals (whatever they are). A Christian’s goal is to follow Scripture, so when he is told about a Scriptural standard, he listens because it is part of his goal. The same is true of those in the world. They want to reach their goals (even shallow ones, such as self-preservation).

**Knowledge/ Experience:** When a pastor teaches children’s church, he will use different examples, vocabulary, and attitudes than if he is teaching adults. Why? Because adults and children have different levels of knowledge. Adults have lived longer and have more experiences than children. Messages must be made simpler for children, so they can understand them.

How someone communicates a message changes depending on the knowledge of his audience. He does not want to talk over people's heads, but he also does not want to talk down to people by explaining things they already know. If a writer writes an article about the rights of a baby in the womb for a medical journal, there is no need to explain what a trimester is. The doctors reading it will probably know that better than the author does.

### **Biblical Examples**

The Bible is full of examples of someone matching a message to his audience. When Jesus spoke to the crowds, He spoke in parables. When He spoke to His disciples, the Bible says He spoke straightforwardly. Jesus spoke differently to different audiences.

In Acts 1 and 17 there are examples of two sermons, one is Peter's at Pentecost, and the other is Paul's at Mars Hill. Because Peter and Paul were talking to two different audiences, their messages were different. They both boldly proclaimed truth, but they had to convince their audiences of different things.

Peter was talking to a Jewish audience. The Jews of that day had the right premise of one true God and the inspiration of Scripture. Peter had to explain the right *interpretation* of Scripture.

Paul was talking to a Greek crowd; they believed in many gods and no one authority on any subject. Paul had to deal with the wrong premise of his audience. Two different crowds both received the message of the Cross, but the preachers had to modify their methods and message to deal with the wrong assumptions of their individual audiences.

We should not *lie* or alter the truth in any way in order to speak to our audience. Paul did not say what the Greeks wanted to hear, but he explained truth in a way that they could understand. Some still thought he was crazy, some understood but wanted time to think about it, and a few understood with more than just their heads-- and believed. Nevertheless, he proclaimed the gospel in truth, without altering it in such a way that he no longer spoke the truth.

When someone writes an article, speech, report, or anything that will be more than simply private usage, he needs to take into account *who* he is speaking or writing to. He should recognize his audience's premises, emphasis on authority, and knowledge before trying to communicate.

### **Questions to Ask to Determine Your Audience:**

1. What is my audience's professed faith?
2. When my audience says "god," what do they mean?
3. Does my audience believe in the authority of Scripture?

4. Does my audience hold the same standard as me on \_\_\_\_\_(abortion, divorce, purpose of government, etc.)?
5. What are the goals of my audience?
6. What is the age of my audience?
7. Will my audience already know something about the topic?
8. Are there any words that I need to explain to make my message clearer?
9. Are there any assumptions I need to deal with before I present my message?
10. Do the members of my audience have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

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