



TFT Newsletter
Issue 032
April 2010

Section I: Training for Triumph (TFT) Events and Announcements

[Sec. I: Events and Announcements](#)

1. [Donna's Desk](#)
2. [Jump Start Classes](#)
3. [TFT Representatives](#)
4. [Revised CQLAs](#)
5. [CQLA Rebates](#)
6. [TFT Calendar](#)

[Sec. II: Heart Training](#)

[Sec. III: LA, CQLA, MC Helps](#)

[Sec. IV: Article](#)



Ray and Donna Reish
and family

[trainingfortriumph@mchsi.com](#)

[www.tfths.com](#)

[Donna's Homeschool Blog](#)

Become [Donna's](#)
Facebook friend

[Positive Parenting 3-6-5 Blog](#)

[Become a fan of Positive Parenting 3-6-5 on Facebook!](#)

Donna's Desk

Hello: Note from Donna

Dear Friends,

Happy Spring! It is hard to believe that many of us have three to six weeks remaining in this school year. As more of my students graduate and become adults, time with my remaining kids at home just seems to fly by.

Speaking of the end of the school year, we do not have any graduates this year (rare year—no weddings or graduations!). However, I have a link in the margin for some open house tips and recipes. It is such an exciting thing to be planning for a homeschooler's graduation—not just for the students, but for the parents, as well, after so many years of investing into our kids in this unique lifestyle known as homeschooling!

Our March sale was a great success. Thanks so much to those of you who bought early (and took advantage of our \$59 sale!). See the links in the margin and the information below to learn more about how you can earn money telling other people about CQLA. We are having a CQLA Rebate for April, May, and June in which parents who bring new CQLA customers to us may receive \$30 per family. We want to show our appreciation to you, our faithful CQLA users!

May will find us at the Fort Wayne homeschool expo in Indiana and INCH conference in Michigan. Come visit us and take a look at our materials. (See our speaking topics below.)

More Encouraging Notes
About Our New
Parenting Blog, Positive
Parenting 3*6*5

"I couldn't read this entry fast enough! I also can't wait for more on this topic! Chores and teamwork excite me."

"Thank-you so much for sharing what God has revealed to you, Donna."

"Thank-you for sharing that...it was wonderful and thought-provoking."

"Wow. I have not seen this before...what an awesome lesson for children!"

"Although I don't always make a comment, I always read and enjoy your posts. Thank-you!"

"This is what I'm needing at this moment!"

"I was taking a break from the kids, and I found your blog really insightful! Look forward to reading more!"

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, use the link at the bottom of the newsletter. If you'd like to refer a friend, they may sign up at the [TFT website](#), in the upper right hand corner of the homepage.

Have you heard of the Academy of Arts? I have talked about it many times in past newsletters, and if you had formerly been intrigued by this organization, now is the time to get serious about checking it out! Spring is the ideal time to talk to the A of A about scheduling a drama seminar for your homeschool group (or

Beginning May 1st, area families may register for our 2010-2011 cottage classes. Check out website for the information for both semesters, all locations. (Links given in margin.)

Additionally, we are setting up speaking engagements for fall. If you would like to host a seminar (Well-Trained Heart, Almost 3 R's, Character Training From the Heart), contact us.

Ray's mom is home from the rehabilitation center and is gradually regaining lost skills from her massive stroke in February. My dad continues to regain skills at home following his para-paralysis in the fall. And I am doing much better with the pre-diabetic condition I found myself in over the past year! Thanks to those who have asked and have been praying for our family during the past year's health challenges.

Speaking of prayer, we would like to ask fellow homeschoolers to remember our friends, the Heng Too family, following the loss of a godly, wonderful homeschooling mother last week. The article at the end of this newsletter is a memorial to Cheryl Too. She leaves behind four homeschooled children, ages ten through seventeen and a homeschooling husband.

Thanks again for all of your support and encouragement. We appreciate it more than you know!

Sincerely, Donna Reish

Jump Start Writing Correspondence Program

Training for Triumph can help you jump start your student's writing in six weeks through our new Jump Start Correspondence Writing Program! TFT is now offering a six-week "distant" program that can be done during any six week period you desire (even during the summer!) for students in fourth through twelfth grade (or for adults who desire writing remediation).

The Jump Start program works similarly to our regular

Christian school—tell your friends!) for next year.

The A of A comes into your group for a week—all day long (elementary half days and junior/senior high full day) and teaches all aspects of drama: costuming, make up, lights, scenes, acting, etc. etc. At the end of the week, your students put on a professional-looking, godly production, using the A of A's costumes, make up, lights, props, etc. You provide the building and the students, and they do the rest.

Furthermore, the caliber of students (college students and other young adults) that they bring to lead these seminars is phenomenal. (Our daughter Kara is one of them!) These are godly, focused young people who will influence your kids in all the right ways!

It's more than a drama seminar! It is like a Bible/character seminar as well. The leaders do life-impacting devotions and expect utmost behavior from the participants. Seeing young adults give of themselves to teach kids drama and Bible is extremely impacting to homeschooled kids.

Check it out—and consider scheduling this amazing opportunity for the students in your community.

Here is our [Kara](#) at the Academy of Art's college's home play they did this winter during a time that they were not on the road doing seminars:

Fall Classes! Check out the class offerings for 2010-2011 in Craigville,

one-semester correspondence writing classes. You choose the level, send your registration and payment, and mail us six SASE that are 9 x 12 or larger with \$2.00 worth of postage on each one. TFT will send you a six-week book, a corresponding cd that describes the lessons in the book, and a syllabus for the six week period.

Then you oversee your student (some even work with the student for the six weeks, so the parent learns too!) in his assignments for that particular week and mail them to TFT by Friday of each week. Then, you begin the next week's assignments. In the meantime, TFT will evaluate your student's work and create a cd describing suggested revisions and usage errors. This combined critique (written edits with verbal feedback) will help your student grow in his or her writing quite rapidly.

The [registration form](#) includes information on choosing levels. Mail registration form to TFT Correspondence Writing Program, 6456 E US 224, Craigville, IN 46731; email us at trainingfortriumph@mchsi.com; or call for more information (260-597-7415).

Cost:

\$60 six week tuition

\$20 six week book

\$10 cd's and processing

\$90 total per student *(please send with*

[registration form](#))

TFT Representatives

It is not too late to become a Representative for TFT products for this spring! If you think you can sell ten or more CQLA books (and/or MC books), you should consider becoming a representative! We drop ship books to your customers so that inventory is not necessary. Contact Ray for more information.

Also, if your favorite homeschool curriculum supplier does not carry CQLA, MC, or The Well-Trained Heart, contact them and tell them about us! They can see our samples at the website—and we would be happy to send them review copies of our materials.

Grabill, and Fort Wayne,
Indiana:

[Craigville](#) (near Ossian)

CQLA Day in [Fort Wayne](#)

[Grabill](#) Second
Semester

To learn more about our daughter's (Kayla's) upcoming full time mission position; have her speak to your church, Sunday school class, homeschool group, etc; or learn about supporting her, check her [facebook group](#).

You may also wish to check out the [Mission Organization](#) she will be working with.

Consider booking a [TFT speaker](#) for your support group this fall. We would love to come see you! TFT Speaking Topics for support groups, conventions, and more:

Meaningful Composition [samples](#)—try before you buy

Meaningful Composition
Pricing

Watch our website for additions to the MC family—we are in the process of adding three new books this spring and hope to add MC 2 I and MC 3 I later in the summer! Check out samples of our MC books. The pricing for MC for individuals, as well as for groups, are as follows:

CQLA Revised Books

TFT has been working hard to make the revisions and changes that customers who have been testing the program for the past five years have requested! The Blue Series and the Green Series are both now revised and ready for purchase. We will take orders for the Red Series on special order only. We ask that you purchase either Blue or Green starting in Spring 2010. (The Red Series will be revised next year; all three colors will be "new" and "improved" sometime in the next year or so.)

CQLA Rebates

If you miss the March sale, you may still get in on some special CQLA savings by spreading the word about CQLA. Folks who tell their friends about CQLA, resulting in that friend's purchase, will receive cash rebates in April, May, and June!

You read that right—not vouchers, not gift certificates, not product, but cash commission. In lieu of advertising, we are allowing happy customers to advertise for us—and receive the advertising money we would have spent to reward TFT friends.

Here is how the rebates work: When you tell a NEW friend about CQLA and that friend purchases CQLA in April, May, or June, and gives us your name and mailing address, we will send you \$30! That's right. Thirty dollars cash for EACH NEW user FAMILY who orders CQLA in April, May, or June as a result of your telling them the good news about learning language arts with CQLA!

Want more good news? There is no limit to the number of rebate checks you may receive! If you tell ten new families about CQLA and they each purchase, you will receive three hundred dollars!

Catches? None—just the following up-front guidelines: Your friend must order from TFT (other vendors are not

One MC of one level=\$35 per book

2-5 of one level=\$32 per book

5-10 of one level=\$28 per book

10 or more of one level=\$25 per book

New [CQLA Samples](#) at Site! The samples provided at the website are now from the CQLA Blue Series. We ask that families either order the Blue Series or the Green Series this year. These are the two most revised books. We think you will love the awesome changes! (The Red Series may be ordered, but you will receive the old version of the Red for this year.)

[Graduation Ideas, Tips, and Recipes](#)

Humorous story showing the importance of not speaking or writing with clichés or boring repetitions:

"A professor at the University of Pennsylvania was known for giving boring, cliché-ridden lectures. At the beginning of one semester, an innovative class breathed new life into the course by assigning baseball plays to each hackneyed phrase. For example, when the professor said, "On the other hand," that counted as a base hit. "By the same token" was a strike out; "and so on" counted as a stolen base.

offering the rebate). She must give us your name and mailing address (not just my friend Sue from Atlanta...). She must order during the months of April, May, and June. She must be a new CQLA user. The rebate is per family who orders, not per book (i.e. it doesn't matter how many books your friend orders).

The best advertising we can do is to have happy customers. We appreciate our loyal CQLA fans. Many of you have been with us from the beginning and made your way through less-than-perfect books because you believed in the ideas and concept of CQLA. Thanks! We want to reward you and thank you monetarily as well.

TFT Calendar

May 14th and 15th—*Fort Wayne Area Homeschool Expo*

*Donna speaking Friday night about "Creating a Love for Learning"

*Donna speaking Saturday about Character Quality Language Arts

*Area families come to sign up for 2010-2011 Cottage Classes (see links in this margin for class offerings at various locations). *More info--
<http://www.fwaahs.org/expo.htm>

May 14th and 15th—*INCH homeschool convention in Michigan*

*Joshua will speak about the following topics:

- Teaching Without a Textbook
- Leaving a Legacy to Your Homeschooled Children

June 24th-26th—*CHEO homeschool convention in Ohio*

*Donna will speak about the following topics:

- Organizing Your Life, School, and Home
- Babies and Toddlers
- Multi-Level Teaching

Divided into two teams by the center aisle of the lecture hall, the students played inning after inning of silent but vigorous baseball. On the last day of class, the impossible happened: the score was tied and bases were loaded. Then the batter hit a home run. The winning team stood and cheered wildly. Though deeply appreciative, the professor later was quoted as wondering why only half of the students had been enthusiastic about his lectures!"

Source: [Absolute Humor](#)

For Easter this year, we used a tremendous resource that will bless your family any time of the year! It the the Lee Strobel Film Collection: "The Case for Christ," "The Case for Faith," and "The Case for a Creator." They are documentaries—but not your typical documentaries! They are interesting and extremely informative. They will build up your family's faith. I just can't recommend them highly enough!

We got our dvd at Sam's Wholesale Club. (I was so excited to see them for sale there!) Check them out at this [source](#) (or others).

April Reading Lists

Jacob's (grade 5) April Reading List

Magic Tree House: Night of the Ninjas by Mary Pope Osborn

Magic Tree House: Dawn of the Sabertooth by Mary Pope Osborn

Section II: Heart Training - More Blog Entries Focusing on Tying Heart Strings (from Positive Parenting 3*6*5)

- 1. Blessed to Be Part of Your Family**
- 2. Praising Older Children**
- 3. Love What Your Kids Love**

1. day fifty: tell your kids from the beginning that you are all blessed to be a part of your family

"The only rock I know that stays steady, the only institution I know that works is the family." Lee Iacocca

About a dozen years ago, we went to a parenting seminar (we never outgrew parenting seminars!) in which the teacher said that we should tell our kids that our family is the greatest and go on and on about how wonderful it is to be a member of our family. He even said, "When you are all in the vehicle and driving somewhere, say aloud, 'Which family is the best family ever?'" Then we should all chant and yell, "Ours is!"

Ray and I looked at each other and burst out laughing. Was this teacher a mouse in our full sized van, "Big Blue"? Ever since we can remember, and certainly since our oldest children were preschoolers and primary age children, we always gathered in the van and shouted out how great our family was, how glad we are to be a part of it, etc.

"Which family is the best family ever?"

"Ours is!"

"Who loves to be in our family?"

"We do!"

"Who has the best brothers and sisters?"

"I do!"

It sounds a little strange to read it—and unless you were

*Magic Tree House:
Afternoon on the Amazon*
by Mary Pope Osborn

*Boxcar Children: The
Snowbound Mystery* by
Gertrude Chandler
Warner

*Boxcar Children:
Surprise Island* by
Gertrude Chandler
Warner

**Josiah's (8th
grade) April Reading
List**

Just As I Am by Billy
Graham (still working on
this 700+ page tome!)

Worship His Majesty by
Jack Hayford

**Jonathan's (11th
grade) April Reading
List**

A Grief Observed by C.S.
Lewis

The Problem of Pain by
C.S. Lewis

Heaven by Joni
Eareckson Tada

(Can you tell by his first
three books that it's been
a rough two weeks?)

Les Miserable by Victor
Hugo (1400+ pages—it is
finished!!)

Men God Challenged by
D.L. Moody

**Donna's Morning
Bible/Character Read
Aloud With the Boys**

*Character Sketches,
Volume III*—published by
Institute in Basic Life
Principles (one semester
book)

*Classics to Read Aloud
to Your Children*—
compiled by William F.
Russell (one semester
book)

there in our van with happy, giggling children and overjoyed parents, you can't fully appreciate those wonderful times. But they were wonderful.

Children have a tendency to believe whatever they are told. So let's tell them good things! How much better to start them off with a positive outlook on their family than on a complaining "other people have it better than I do" attitude that is so prevalent among kids today.

Our children always believed that we had an awesome family, in part because we "chanted" it (!) and in part because we did! We tried to do the many "positive parenting strategies" that I have been writing about. And we told them—frankly, that God has truly blessed us with a family and a Savior.

We wanted them to be happy that they were born into the Reish family. We wanted them to see how blessed they were to have such incredible siblings. We wanted them to appreciate their parents, who were dedicating a huge portion of their lives to raising them in the best environment we could create.

Maybe yelling out how blessed your family is seems awkward to you. However, we can all use a little more thankfulness and a little less complaining. And our children can certainly benefit from seeing us be grateful and happy that God has given us each other. Something as small as, "I am so happy that God gave us each other" or "We are certainly blessed to have the family we do" is a good place for us parents to start.

Obviously, it takes a lot more than chanting to create a happy home. But verbalizing our blessings can be a part of the making of a happy home. And convincing our children from the earliest ages that they truly are fortunate to be born into our family is a great way to get them on our team from the beginning.

**2. day forty-four: praise older children sincerely
without over-praising**

*"If you're sincere, praise is effective. If you're insincere,
it's manipulative."* Zig Zigler

In His Hands: A Family Devotional Book—by James and Priscilla Tucker (year long book)

The Story of Stories: The Bible in Narrative Form—by Karen C. Hinckley (one semester book)

Astronomy and the Bible: Questions and Answers by Donald B DeYoung (one semester book)

Meriwether Lewis: Explorer by Janet and Geoff Bengtson (one month book)

The One Year Book of Poetry—published by Tyndale (one year book)

History Read Aloud With Boys

The Landmark History of the American People by Daniel Boorstin (one year book)

Our Fifty States—A Family Adventure Across America by Lynne Cheney (one semester book)

Everything You Need to Know About American History Homework by Anne Zeman and Kate Kelly (one semester book)

Don't Know Much About the 50 States by Kenneth C. Davis (one semester book)

The Oxford Illustrated Book of American Children's Poems edited by Donald Hall (one year book)

The American Patriot's Almanac by William J Bennett (one year book)

Don't Know Much About American History by Kenneth C. Davis (one year book)

A Child's Story of America by Christian Liberty Press (one year book)

Yesterday I talked about how preschoolers respond to praise. Older children can also respond to praise, but they are much more discriminating in the types of, frequency of, and giver of praise.

Research has shown that children seven and under are not so selective about the praise they receive. They often respond to most praise and do not readily see the sincerity or insincerity of the “praiser.” However, children older than this (and this is extremely relative because if children are allowed to be children longer, they keep their innocence and sweet naivety longer) are not so ready to buy the praise lines of everybody.

Older children who perceive that you are insincerely praising them often mistake that praise for pity. They think that you are praising them because you feel sorry for them or think they cannot accomplish things (Henderlong and Lepper 2002). They also often think that when an adult is syrupy with praise, he or she is trying to manipulate (Meyer 1992).

I have seen this borne out with my children. A couple of my children have as their primary love language (more on that later!) words of affirmation. They love to affirm others—and they love to receive affirmation. Because this is their love language, the praise they receive always had to be “just so.” If I just told them they were the greatest fourteen year old daughter or the most amazing sixteen year old son, they would often respond with “You have to say that; you’re my mom.” General, sweeping, effusive praise did not work on these kids! They also sensed that when I would give general praise I was avoiding the specific: “You’re saying I ‘was awesome’ because you thought my speech needed work in the middle.” And they were usually right! Overpraising a child has the same effect as sweeping, general praise. My kids once had an art teacher who would always start her critique of their work with, “This is just perfect!” Then she would tell them what they needed to work on and what they should change. My “discriminating praise receiver” would go crazy over this: “It can’t be ‘perfect’ or else there wouldn’t be anything to change.” This teacher was outstanding, just a little too sweet! She couldn’t bear the thought of telling a student what he or she needed to work on, so she tried to soften the criticism with “perfect praise,” which does not work

From Sea to Shining Sea for Children by Peter Marshall and David Manuel (one semester book)

Donna's Nightstand

You Can Afford to Hire Household Help by Kathy Fitzgerald Sherman (insightful book about dividing up housework—not just about hiring help, which would be nice but not likely! ?)

What to Read When by Pam Allyn

Low Carb Dieting for Dummies by Katherine B. Chauncey (agghh....)

Top 100 Finger Foods by Annabel Karmel

Story Time Read Aloud "Collections" for April (Mommy and Jakie!)

Six By Seuss by Dr. Seuss

Classic Tales of Beatrix Potter

Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories, Volume I

From Sea to Shining Sea, a Treasury of American Folklore, Stories, and Songs

Coming Next Month:

*Audio books you won't want to miss!

*Chores, chores, chores!

*Vocabulary Study in the Homeschool

Visit our website to read [past newsletters](#).

well on older kids.

I try to remember this with my writing students. I tell them specifics that are good—good transitions; strong thesis statement; outstanding quotation and double quotation use, etc. And I tell them specifics that need improvement: the main topic of your report is redundant—make a synonym or similar words list to fix that; you can't join two sentences as one with a comma only; etc. They respond to the specific, sincere praise of the aspects of their paper that they truly did well in. And they respond to the aspects of their paper that they need to work on more readily.

Besides the "you're perfect" praise, we have to watch for any generalities that simply cannot be true. These include phrasing such as "You are the best colorer in the world," "There is nobody who can play the piano like you," etc. Only in extremely rare cases would this be true. We would be better off telling the child that he is being so detailed and careful to stay in the lines that well or that we can really tell that he practiced all of his songs diligently this week—his music sounds terrific.

Finally, overpraise is interpreted as insincere praise. We all know the parent who dotes on her child, commenting about every move the child makes: "You are the best slider in the entire park! Oh, my, you run so fast. There isn't any little boy who can run as fast as you. Look at those dimples. You are the cutest kid in your preschool!" Now, that might or might not work with a preschooler, but it isn't healthy regardless of the age and definitely does not work for tweens and teens.

For one thing, the praise is not meaningful because everything the child does cannot be that wonderful! (Okay, I sometimes think everything my kids do is wonderful, but generally speaking, most kids are not great all the time!) For another thing, the child will be so used to hearing that everything is great, that he or she will not be able to tell when something is really good. Lastly, overpraising forces us to lie to our children.

Again, specific, character-driven, process-based, non-constant, genuine, non-syrupy praise works best on older kids. We want to encourage our children in excellence,

help them develop the skills and talents they have been given, and endear them to us. Purposeful, honest praise can help us do those things.

3. day twenty-five: love what your kids love

"The Colts are goin' to the Super Bowl!" quoted everywhere in Indiana right at this moment....

Okay, I admit it--I don't always love what my kids love. Right now we are at my Dad's watching the Colt's play in that game that decides who gets to go to the big game in two weeks. And I have been working, flipping through channels in another room, and even dozing a little. Five of my seven kids love the Colt's--and football in general. They wear our throw pillows in their clothes as football pads and play knee football in the living room. They have "real" football gloves to play football in the yard. And no Christmas is complete without their traditional mud football game—my sweet, feminine nineteen year old daughter included! So I guess you could say that I tolerate what they love (i.e. let them go to Grandpa's to watch it!)-but I don't exactly love it.

One parenting technique that we have utilized throughout the years is showing an enjoyment, interest, or at the very least, appreciation for what our kids love. When Joshua was hooked on basketball a dozen years ago, Ray spent the last hour of the night with Joshua playing ball in the driveway nearly every night for over a year. When Kayla was crazy about sewing, I tolerated two years of sewing lessons with her to "love what she loved." When the four older kids were into speech and debate, we coached the team and traveled across the country to make it possible for them to compete. When Josiah couldn't get enough of law enforcement information a couple of years ago, he and Ray went to a four hour class every week about it for three months.

One thing that we caution against when we are "loving what our children love" is thinking that attending their events and activities is a substitution for time spent with them—or even that it is "family time." When we were heavily involved in speech and debate competitions for several years, the time we spent on it was time spent on our kids—but it wasn't necessarily time spent with them.

And it for sure was not family time. As we traveled to competitions, we were usually all in different parts of the building, busy coaching, timing, competing, and judging. Evenings at the events were spent with the entire team, not with just our family. It was great—and it showed our kids that we were serious enough about helping them develop their talents and skills and about enjoying their interests—but it was not quality parent-child time by any means. Our kids need a lot of both—our support in their activities as well as time with us.

Loving what your kids love takes a great deal of time—and patience! I remember spending four solid hours reading poetry in the Indiana room one summer day when Kayla chose that for our special time together. I vowed within myself that on the “kids’ days” I would not work, read my own personal things, or write. I would just do whatever that child wanted to do. Genealogy and Indiana history are definitely not my things. However, I wanted to keep my vow to “love what the kids” loved as we spent one-on-one days together that summer. Thankfully, another one of the kids chose hiking and another an afternoon movie!

When we love what our kids love, it shows them that every aspect of their lives is important to us. When we take the time to enjoy their interests with them, it shows them this even more. Go Colts!

Section III: Language Arts, CQLA, and/or Meaningful Composition

What Makes CQLA Unique?

CQLA is a unique program for many reasons:

(1) It contains all language arts in one place—no more multi-book language arts classes—vocabulary, comprehension, copying, spelling, grammar, usage, prewriting, editing, writing, revising, homophones, dictation, and more—all in one large work-text.

(2) It is based on character—all of its assignments, passages, sentences for grammar, writing topics, and

more are based on monthly character qualities.

(3) It is biblically-based. Its character basis is linked extensively to Scripture. What does the Bible say about each quality?

(4) It is composition-driven. All of language arts is learned for three reasons: reading (i.e. comprehending the written word), writing, and speaking. Thus, all of the assignments in CQLA are aimed at application to writing. Its language arts components are linked—grammar is taught as it relates to writing; spelling instruction is given, again, in order to learn to write.

(5) It uses a Teach-Practice-Apply method. The grammar (and other language arts aspects) is taught; then the student practices it through sentences (i.e. highlight the prepositional phrases); then the student applies what he learned (i.e. writes with prepositional phrases in his composition).

(6) It is multi-level. Three levels are within each level (i.e. 6th, 7th, and 8th graders all use Level B, for example). This allows students to be grouped together—and simplifies things for busy homeschooling mom.

(7) It is designed in a work-text format. This means that a student does not have a hard-cover textbook and another workbook. Even the lesson plans and Answer Keys are provided in the back of each student's work-text.

(8) It is content-driven. (See last month's article about CQLA content at <http://www.tfths.com/docs/enews/031.pdf> --scroll to bottom of newsletter.) In other words, all sentences, passages, and writing assignments are filled with rich, interesting content.

(9) Students write across the curriculum. This approach is a language arts teacher's dream. Over and over again, new language arts and composition teachers are told to "teach across the curriculum"; "have students write about content areas in language arts," so that when they write about frogs, for example, they are doing it with their language arts teacher's help.

(10) It was written by a homeschooling mom for homeschooling moms—and it continues to be tested, rewritten, and edited with homeschooled students by a homeschooling mom.

Section IV: Article: In Loving Memory of Cheryl Too

The piece below was written last week on the day of a homeschooling mom's funeral. May we all learn to be exactly what God wants each one of us to be from the life of this godly mom.

Today was a glorious, yet incredibly sad, day for many homeschooling families in the Fort Wayne, Indiana area. A lovely fellow homeschooling family lost its mother. Cheryl Too, age forty-five and mother of four children ranging in age from ten to seventeen, died a few days ago suddenly from a brain aneurysm. I say it was a glorious day because all of us at her funeral knew beyond a shadow of a doubt where Cheryl is spending eternity. It was a sad day for obvious reasons: four sweet children and a wonderful husband are without their mother and wife.

Cheryl's godly, productive life and her sudden death have caused many people, me included, to think about our own lives—and to desire to do this job of Christian parenting (and marriage) better. And when I think, I have to write. So, here are my inspirations from this amazing mom's life and death. May you glean from her as I have.

Use our time wisely. My first thought is one that most people think of when they consider someone their own age passing away: we need to number our days. Psalm 90: 12 tells us, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." In parenting terms, however, I am more motivated than ever to "number my days." To make the most of the time I have remaining with our sons at home—and any opportunities that we get to influence, teach, love, and invest in our four grown children. Cheryl was such a good example of using her

time wisely with her children. One of the recurring themes from everyone concerning her these past few days has been that “her children were prepared for anything.” They are well-educated (via their parents’ diligent homeschooling), eloquent, servant-minded, loving, character-filled, content, well-adjusted kids. That didn’t just happen. The time Cheryl used wisely to invest in her children was a huge part of their “readiness for anything.”

Have a meek and quiet spirit. I have never been accused of being quiet. I sometimes consider myself meek only when defining the word as “strength under control.” However, Cheryl was the epitome of a meek and quiet spirit—and not because she didn’t say anything or didn’t think her own thoughts. She fulfilled I Peter 3: 4 (“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”) as she served, loved, taught, reached out, and helped without great fanfare or expectation of acclaim. Her four children are the types of kids that everybody wants—loving to each other, kind, helpful, intelligent, diligent, servant-minded, talented, AND absolutely beautiful! And yet, she never made others feel jealous or inferior as some moms with those types of children might do. This, too, was her meekness coming through in all of her interactions.

Prioritize serving others—and teach our children to serve. On the evening of Cheryl’s death, Cami and Joseph (my daughter and son-in-law) had their hands full with one hundred cognitively disabled adults who didn’t understand why Cheryl was gone. “She’s my friend. She can’t die.” “She loved us. She has to be here.” A little more than a year ago, Cheryl and her family started serving at the One Heart Disability Ministry that Cami and Joseph lead. Specifically, Cheryl led the singing on Thursday evenings during a worship service that is designed just for adults and young adults with disabilities. This fall Cheryl was planning to lead one of the newly-formed clubs, specifically a choir, for these special people. As pastors and family members spoke of Cheryl at the funeral today, the theme was the same: she always reached out and ministered to others. And she taught her children to do the same. Serving at One Heart was a priority for Cheryl and her kids, as were other ministries and opportunities that she participated in throughout her life.

Serve at home first. We have always believed that there are hundreds of principles that can be seen throughout Scriptures. One that we have taught our children over and over, and that is obvious in Cheryl and Heng's life, is that of serving closest to home first—then branching out. I think that's why Jesus said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" Acts 1:8 (NKJV). That denotes an order--first closest to you, then farther from home, then all over the world--once you have shown yourself faithful to those closest. This was obvious in Cheryl's life in the way she ministered in her home tirelessly before branching out to what we sometimes consider "great" things. And then, when she did branch out, it was to her own community—and to the lowly, whom many people do not want to serve. Of course, she had served in her church for years and years through singing, teaching, and gifts of helps. Also, pertinent to this discussion of serving those closest to us first, it was amazing to hear her three siblings' testimonies of how Cheryl had been instrumental in each of them coming to Christ as adults. That is definitely "receiving power to be witnesses" at home first!

Do things well. We have had the privilege of having the Too children in Training for Triumph's cottage classes in the past few years. In teaching their children speech, debate, writing, and sign language, it is obvious to us that Cheryl did what she did very well. Specifically this year, I have loved editing her son Jeremy's papers in writing class. As he completes the Checklist Challenge (the revising and editing system in our books), I can tell where Cheryl's teaching touch was present—helping him find the perfect verb, replacing redundancy with synonyms, writing strong thesis statements. She would let him think of what he wanted to say here or there and pen it into his rough draft for him, cuing him and modeling for him. Not long ago he even brought a paper that his mom had printed off the internet for him—one hundred ways to replace the word "says" in your writing! She and the kids sang in February at One Heart's Valentine's banquet this year—and they definitely did it well. I know for me personally I continue to get bogged down trying to do too many things—and feeling that I am not doing any of them well.

Cheryl's life makes me want to do what I do very well.

Juggle expertly. Cheryl was a mom like the rest of us, doing the stuff day in and day out; making decisions as to what could fit in their schedule and what had to be dropped; budgeting for a family of six on her husband's full time salary and her part time (third shift!) job; trying to meet the needs of four children and a husband while serving the Lord and others; attempting to manage a household, homeschool, and more. And she did it with such grace and skill. "Juggling" is one of the hardest jobs for the Christian mom—and one that I, like Cheryl did, want to do more expertly—and with fewer balls dropped.

Teach my children God's Word and God's ways. My sons were greatly affected by Cheryl's passing after having worked with her at One Heart, as well as through being friends with her kids. It has been hard to think about the Too children being without their incredible mother. However, it is also amazing to think about how thoroughly and diligently Heng and Cheryl taught their children God's Word and God's ways. At home, through church activities such as Awana's (in which their parents helped serve), and, yes, "when they walked by the way," the Too children were instructed in righteousness. Can I look for more opportunities to teach my boys God's Word? Can we read more, study more, listen more, and talk more? I think we can; and I want to.

A godly mother's life well-lived. I know that I will not be the same as a result of getting to know Cheryl and seeing her life end so quickly and suddenly. Let's provoke one another to good works as this mother did—even moreso as we see the day approaching.