

Maggie Hogan's Bright Ideas Press E-Zine

Welcome to the February 2007 edition. I hope you find the following information useful, as you spend time teaching and enjoying your children!

Geography Awareness Week: November 11-17, 2007

From Maggie to You – lost in a brown paper bag . . .

Okay, true confessions. I was born without an internal compass. I am always getting lost. Not just a little lost – but really, really totally LOST. The kind of lost that would make a good sit-com. Lost -- as in call the Mounties, they always find their man -- kind of lost. Now, I know I am not the only one with absolutely no sense of direction, but it's kind of hard making this admission when I speak around the country on . . . geography. Somehow people think because I speak on geography that I must be naturally, um, geographic.

Why am I telling you this? I hope it will encourage you to know that even geographically-challenged folks like me can teach geography. Over the years I have done a tremendous amount of reading and research looking for the best ways to teach geography. I wanted our sons to be more geographically literate than I am! And you can benefit from my geo-obsession – I am dedicating this month's e-zine to Geography. Only fitting as last week was **Geography Awareness Week**. (Read on for a sports-lover's answer to geography!)

This is SCARY STUFF:

The following points were excerpted from:

The National Geographic Roper Public Affairs 2006 Geographic Literacy Study.

www.nationalgeographic.com/roper2006/findings.html

This study assesses the geographic knowledge of young American adults between the ages of 18 and 24.

Despite near-constant news coverage of conflict in the Middle East, young Americans have a **weak knowledge of the geography of this region**.

- Six in ten (63%) cannot find Iraq or Saudi Arabia on a map of the Middle East,
- Three-quarters (75%) cannot find Iran or Israel.
- In fact, 44% cannot find even one of these four countries.

Other **hot spots in the news** around the world also **fail to register** with 18- to 24- year-olds.

- Nine in ten (88%) cannot find Afghanistan on a map of Asia.
- Sizeable percentages do not know that Sudan and Rwanda are in Africa (54% and 40% answer incorrectly, respectively). In fact, 20% place Sudan in Asia and 10% put it in Europe.
- Seven in ten (70%) cannot find North Korea on a map, and two-thirds (63%) do not know its border with South Korea is the most heavily fortified in the world.
- Two-thirds (67%) can find Louisiana on a U.S. map and half (52%) can find Mississippi, leaving a

third or more who cannot find these states, in spite of months of intensive media coverage of the 2005 hurricanes and their aftermath.

Also striking is young Americans' ignorance of how the United States fits into the wider world. Majorities overestimate the total size of the U.S. population and fail to understand how much larger the population of China is.

- Three-quarters (74%) believe English is the most commonly spoken native language in the world, rather than Mandarin Chinese.

And closer to home:

- Half or fewer of young men and women 18-24 can identify the states of New York or Ohio on a map (50% and 43%, respectively).

Entertaining Ways to Incorporate Geography into your life ---

November marks the beginning of a season of celebration starting with Thanksgiving and moving right on through Christmas and New Years and Epiphany. Of course, for some, a big reason for celebration during this time is football season! Why not capitalize on this with a little "Pigskin Geography." Choose your favorite team, whether it be NFL or college, and learn about the locations of their games for the next few weeks or months. What are the major geographic features of the town they will play in this week? Will anything about that location have an effect on the game? How far is it from their home town and how long will it take them to travel there? What sorts of activities might they or their families take part in during their time off?

For more fun football ideas check out page 242 in *The Ultimate Geography and Timeline Guide*.

<http://brightideaspress.com/UGTG.htm>

From www.PigskinGeography.com:

Looking for a hands-on approach to tackle geography fundamentals? This standards-based program motivates students to learn U.S. geography by tracking NFL football teams through the newspaper. Weekly worksheets grow students' knowledge of physical landmarks (states, rivers); geographic concepts (time zones, latitude/longitude) and map legends (mileage, capital cities). Choose **Pigskin Geography** for grades 5-12 or **Pigskin, Jr.** for grades 2-4. The question of the day is fun – CALL to enroll. The online order form does not work.

<http://www.pigskingeography.com/>

Atlases and Maps are a Must!

Here's my article on choosing geography reference tools:

http://brightideaspress.com/articles/geo_reference_tools.htm

Looking for maps and atlases – we sell our favorite products here:

<http://brightideaspress.com/catalog.htm#geography> (scroll down)

Updates on Bright Ideas Press Products

1. Christian Kids Explore Physics
2. All American History Volume 2
3. The Mystery of History Volume 3
4. Young Scholar's Guide to Classical Composers
5. PRICE INCREASES

This is NOW HERE! Hot off the press and in our warehouse:

Christian Kids Explore Physics **Discover the Power of Physics!**

- For Grades 4 – 8
- 30 Lessons in 6 Units
- Hands-On Activities
- Vocabulary Words
- Outstanding Book List
- Coloring Pages
- Unit Reviews
- Scripture Tie-ins

The universe that we live in is the result of God's thoughtful design and careful building. Physics gives us a glimpse into the materials, laws, and structures of that universe. Behold the wonders of creation with this series of 30 easy-to-understand lessons for grades 4 – 8. Each lesson helps develop an understanding of matter and energy and the rules they follow. Exploring physics is an exciting adventure!

From a mom:

"I have been homeschooling for 6 years and have finally found a science curriculum that I can realistically use with all of my children. On top of that, it is Christ-centered, well researched, and has the best book list I have ever seen for science. We stress a literature-based approach in our home, and this series is an answer to my prayers!"

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChristianKidsExploreBiology> (Covers all of our Christian Kids Explore books)

About the Authors

Robert W. Ridlon, Jr., is a consultant for a systems development firm and an adjunct faculty member at Southwestern Illinois College, teaching courses in information systems theory. Elizabeth J. Ridlon is an adjunct faculty member at Southwestern Illinois College where she teaches biological sciences. The Ridlons have explored 17 countries on four continents and written two creation science books, as well as *Christian Kids Explore Chemistry*.

Retail price \$34.95

ISBN 978-1-892427-20-5

All American History Volume 2

Well folks, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that the books are almost ready for the printer. The bad news is the books aren't AT the printers yet. If you would like to be on the list for an email alerting you that the books are HERE and ready to ship, please email: contact@BrightIdeasPress.com and ask to be on the AAH 2 list.

People keep asking us for an estimate. I said about a year ago that it would surely be finished by the summer of 2007, as the book had been written and turned into the graphic design company in April of 2006. I hate giving excuses and reasons for the constant delays on this project but I am pretty convinced there is some real on-going warfare with our efforts to publish God-honoring materials. Your prayers for this book and our other book projects as well, are earnestly coveted.

In the meanwhile, if you go to our yahoo group and check the files section, you will be able to download the first 2 units (16 weeks) worth of activity pages and Teacher's Guide. You'll have to email us for the Reader pages though as the files are too big to post. Thank you for your kind understanding. I cannot tell you how it grieves us to cause delays and readjustments to your schooling plans – as if homeschooling isn't hard enough as it is!

The Mystery of History series

Volume 3

As you might imagine, I am loathe to put in writing ANY dates for any of our books at this point! But here is the update. Linda Hobar has finished writing Vol 3. She is working with the editor now. Then it will go to the graphic and lay-out design firm. The exciting news and prayer request is that we greatly desire to produce Volume 3 in color!!! There are so many artists covered during this time period that color would be totally perfect. If you wish to receive updates and WORD files, week by week, please join the MOH 3 yahoo group.

A link is available on our home page www.BrightIdeasPress.com.

Volume 2

The audio cd for volume 2 is more than half-way done. Please pray for Linda Hobar as she completes this time-consuming task.

Volume 1

I am excited to tell you about the newest add-on to The Mystery of History series! We're in the midst of producing a top-notch book with coloring pages and copy work. The Mystery of History Color & Copy Book Volume 1 will be ready (God-willing) this spring, and we will keep working until we have one completed for each subsequent volume I hope to get samples of the pages up on our website of the MOH 1 yahoo group soon.

Young Scholar's Guide to Composers

Did you know that we have been working on a new series here at Bright Ideas Press? The first book, Composers, is due out in 2008. If you're like me, I wanted to include this kind of study with my boys but had no idea of what to do or where to start since I had no musical training worth mentioning. I teamed up with my dear friend Melissa ---<http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/MelismaTo4/> and we think we've found just the right format to use. We've been field-testing it like crazy (not just in my class but with 250 families across the country) and are thrilled with the responses. (For those of you who really want in on a secret, the next volume is already in the works! Subject?? Poetry!)

(Unavoidable) Price Increases 2008

The Christian Kids Explore series will each eventually retail for \$34.95. Physics is currently \$34.95. Biology will be \$34.95 in January. The costs of remaining two titles will be increased when we go to reprint them sometime in spring 2008.

The Mystery of History Vol 1 will be \$49.95 beginning in 2008. There are still some left at the \$44.95 price.

*Cathy Duffy Top 100 Picks

See the books that Cathy loves: The Mystery of History Series and The Christian Kids Explore Series at www.BrightIdeasPress.com

Check out our Yahoo Groups!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AllAmericanHistory> (Our awesome American History curriculum!)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HSGifted> (Homeschooling gifted children)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MysteryofHistory1>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MysteryofHistory2>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MysteryofHistoryHS> (Using The Mystery of History with high schoolers)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChristianKidsExploreBiology> (For all of our science curriculum)

We appreciate you, our customers.

Feel free to contact us:

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Come visit my blog:

www.homeschoolblogger.com/maggiehogan

Happy Trails,

Maggie Hogan