



Practical, Fun and Affordable History, Geography and Science Resources!

Maggie Hogan's Bright Ideas Press E-Zine

Welcome to the July 2009 edition. I hope you find the following information useful, as you spend time teaching and enjoying your children!

From Maggie to You

Know Where You are Going: Lessons from the Airport . . .

Do you know where you're going this coming school year? I couldn't help but think of this due to my "interesting experience" this past week. It all began at o'dark thirty a.m. when I dragged myself from a deep sleep, grabbed a to-go cup of tea, and headed to the Philly airport. Parking there--as always--was a challenge. The bus was slow and the baggage check-in line, long. Finally, I heaved my book-laden suitcase onto the scale and handed over my ID and boarding pass. The Ticket Agent, yawning, typed in something, looked confused, and repeated her actions. Frowning, she examined my boarding pass more closely, then looked at me like I was sub-human and said very slowly so I would understand: "Your flight is out of Baltimore. You're in Philadelphia." <Maggie Smacks self on Forehead: Duh!>

An hour later, after having held up a line of travelers, forked over lots more money, and finally stopped blushing, I made it to my new gate. This flight not only cost more but I now had to change planes in Chicago and would be quite late for my meeting; but problem solved. Now I knew where I was going.

However, at about 10,000 feet a thought so ridiculous hit me that I laughed out loud. (alarming my seat mates). My original roundtrip ticket was still back to Baltimore even though my car was in Philly.

Why am I telling you this completely embarrassing story? Because it occurred to me this was a great analogy for this e-zine's theme: "Know Where You are Going" because if you don't know you will surely end up in the wrong place, spending too much time and money to get there!

Back-to-School Tips

Tips for "Knowing Where You're Going"

- Pray for Wisdom and Direction (literally and figuratively).
- Make a succinct Master Plan for each child using bullet points.
- Be Realistic: consider both your time and your resources.
- Meld the individual Master Plans into a Family Plan--combining subjects and grade levels as much as possible. (Example: *The Mystery of History* can easily be used with all grade levels).
- Simplify: no need to teach each subject every day!
- Ease into school.
- Teach geography! Everyone needs to know WHERE they are going :-)
- More below!

Illuminations-- Lighting Your Path Toward Excellence (Psalm 119:105)

Because I believe in fun, practical, affordable and realistic resources, I'm eager to share with you our newest curriculum: Illuminations--our six year project to use both *The Mystery of History* series and *All American History* series as the core to your complete course of study. Bonus: if you love literature, you'll LOVE Illuminations! The Study Guides alone are worth the cost of the program!

For years, Bright Ideas Press has carried the best materials for teaching Geography, History, and Science. Now we are branching out into Language Arts, Fine Arts, (and more), but our basic goals remain the same--keep it Fun, Practical, and Affordable.

- **Practical** - you will not find any assignments to "write a ten page treatise comparing and contrasting 6 major world religions" or "build the Great Wall of China to scale out of cereal boxes and recycled tires" in Illuminations. We are REAL homeschoolers who recognize that there is more to life than academics.
 - Our schedule also runs on a FOUR DAY school week for grades 3rd-8th! This allows for:
 - Co-ops or outside classes
 - Projects, experiments, field trips

- Catch-up days
 - Real life!
 - The high school schedule is five days a week but is still quite manageable.
- **Fun** - no, not all education is "fun" but we want to help you build "fun time" into your schedule. For some, this could simply mean having a great read-aloud and discussion time, for others it might be making costumes out of left-over fabric and duct tape, or enjoying ethnic cooking together. We want your family to build F U N memories of your homeschooling years!
- **Affordable** -
 - multi-grade materials
 - multi-year materials
 - as many non-consumable resources as possible

More Back-to-School Tips

More Tips for "Knowing Where You're Going"

Summer School

Here are a few ideas for getting a jump start on the new year. I always eased our way into school. First, anything educational we did during the summer I considered to count for the next year. This way I was always ahead - not behind. Yes, this is a mental trick, but it worked well for me. By "banking" school days during the summer, I felt comfortable taking days off as needed during the school year. I typically took one or two "Teacher Planning Days" per quarter. What "counted" for school in the summer? Theme camps, field trips, reading good literature, watching documentaries about topics we'd be covering, library or community programs, attending plays or concerts, or anything else that I felt comfortable calling educational. You might even choose to cover an elective in the summer - or at least jump start it. (See information on our new Composers book, below. This would be a fabulous start to your school year.)

Kick-Off

Just after Labor Day each September, our "official" school year started. We'd kick it off with a trip to pick up school supplies, or to the park, zoo, or for a number of years to go to beach for a program on seining or horseshoe crabs or some other cool nature program. My kids loved that we started after the local schools did and that we always did something fun that first week. I wanted them to appreciate some of the advantages of homeschooling: beating crowds, doing field trips, and picking out supplies they wanted - not supplies required by a certain school. And I loved that we never bought "back to

school" clothes! My boys didn't know a "cool" pair of sneakers from the discount store shoes.

Relax, start your year off a little early and ease your way into it. Do something special the first week of school - something your kids will remember fondly - something that will become a great family tradition.

Planning or Over-planning?

This is not hard, really. What subject are you teaching and how many days will it reasonably take to cover it? (120 lessons in your math book = 120 days needed for math.) Pick your starting date - count out the number of days on calendar that you will need - and now you have an ending date to shoot for. Tweak this by considering holidays, sick days, and other obligations.

I think sometimes moms make planning a far bigger deal than it needs to be. Planning is wise - obsessing over plans is not. The time spent in "over-planning" could be better spent actually teaching your children.

A Young Scholar's Guide to Composers

Christian, Creative, Chronological

Did you know that we have a new series here at Bright Ideas Press? The first book, *Composers*, is now available. I always 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. My boys are grown up but I teamed up with my dear friend Melissa Craig and our music editor Richard Pinkerton, and we think we've found just the right balance of fun and content. It's too late to use with my sons but not too late for you! It's already received rave reviews from users and product reviewers alike.

Why take the time to "Crack the Code" of Classical Music?

- Music is from the Lord. He created it, and He created us with the ability to both make and appreciate music.
- "Classical" music is uniquely part of our Western civilization.
- Research suggests that both listening to and playing classical music aids brain development.
- Even rudimentary exposure increases one's level of enjoyment and understanding.

It's perfect for grades 4-8 but is easily adaptable for younger and older students. Minimal teacher prep will return maximum enjoyment and even the musically challenged will enjoy this course! This is available as a paperback book (\$34.95) or as a book on CD-Rom (\$26.95).

- 32 Weekly Lessons

- 26 Bios of Famous Composers
- 6 Eras of Music Explained
- Easy-to-Use Comparative Timeline
- Easy-to-Use Maps
- Composer Info-Cards & Game Directions
- Note-taking Pages
- Quizzes
- Answer Keys
- Listening Suggestions
- Intricate Coloring Pages
- Resource Book List

Use this \$5.00 off coupon code (JulyEzine) so you won't miss out on this wonderful study. (And stay "tuned" for next in this series: *A Young Scholar's Guide to Poets and Poetry*.)

To learn more: Check out our BRAND NEW WEBSITE! See our new blogs, V-logs, and much more. Let us know what you think!

www.BrightIdeasPress.com

To learn more about our Resources: Check out our Yahoo Groups!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Illuminations1> (come find out more about it!)

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Whole_HOG/ (join us as we share geography ideas)

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

<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/MysteryofHistory3>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MysteryofHistoryHighSchool> (Using and of *The Mystery of History* volumes with high school students)

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

We appreciate you, our customers.
Feel free to contact us:

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Happy Trails,
Maggie Hogan
