

# Homeschooling ABCs

Lesson G

## Get Together – Networking with Other Homeschoolers

By

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## Welcome back to class!

I hope that you have had a great week of school. Whew! We have covered so much in these past 6 weeks. In a perfect world, you have now decided on what curriculum you will use this year, have placed your orders and are waiting for those wonderful boxes to arrive. It's almost like Christmas when the UPS driver delivers those boxes!

In the meantime, I want you to think about your most burning questions regarding homeschooling. We are going to take Week 18 to discuss your most urgent issues just in case we haven't covered them so far. So go ahead, write out those questions and send them to me at [terri@homeschoolingabc.com](mailto:terri@homeschoolingabc.com) with "ABCs question" in the subject line. If there are enough relevant ideas, we'll just add a few weeks of bonus lessons to make sure they are all covered.

Here's a look at the schedule from the past few weeks and the next few weeks so that you can see where we've been and where we're going. Remember to go at your own pace. If you need to go back and read any of the first six lessons again (or for the first time), you will always find the links to the previous lessons at the end of the current one. As you can see, we are now on Lesson 7! Next week, you will receive some amazing lapbooking and activity projects from Hands of a Child – a \$39 value. Keep an eye out for your lesson on Hands-on Learning and your bonus gifts in 7 days!

4. Dare to Differentiate (teaching to specific learning styles)
5. Establish Your Philosophy of Education
6. Finding the Best Curriculum for your Family
7. Get Together – Networking with other Homeschoolers
8. Hands-on Learning for Greater Retention
9. Internet and Library Research Skills
10. Just say No – staying focused and on-track

Time for Lesson G: Get Together – Networking with Other Homeschoolers.

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**Note:** Most weekly lessons will be 5-10 pages in length (not including cover page, legal page, and foreword) and will arrive approximately every 7 days. Keep a lookout for emails with [HomeschoolingABCs] in the subject line.

**Note:** Most weeks there will be curriculum samples, even entire programs, which are available to you. These will either be attached to the course materials or through a separate link on the download page. We clarify each week how to get these materials. Today's bonuses, generously donated by TEACH magazine and valued at \$36, are available through a link on the download page and at the end of this lesson. You'll love them!

# Get Together – Networking with Other Homeschooling Families

Homeschooling is not a “lone ranger” activity. Or at least, it shouldn’t be and it doesn’t have to be. We all need to connect with others who are “like-minded” in order to give and receive encouragement, share suggestions, help one another in our weaknesses, etc. And, thankfully, at this time in history, it is not too difficult to find those other homeschooling families. Even if no one in your neighborhood is homeschooling, you can probably find other homeschoolers in your town or nearby community, or at the very least online, in a virtual community.

**Note:** For those of you who are the “go-it-alone” types, who are thinking about not reading any further into this lesson, **may I stress how important it is for you to find at least 1 other homeschooling family to connect and spend time with?** It is critical that you, as the parent teacher, have a live human being to talk to, to share ideas or frustrations, to support and encourage on this homeschooling journey, because frankly, it’s not always a picnic in the park. When you have a hard day, it’s very comforting to talk with someone who is sharing your same set of circumstances. Your children also need other homeschooling friends with whom they can identify. This helps them to know that homeschooling is a valid, normal schooling choice and that they are not too exceptional in this department.

There are 3 primary ways (and places) to connect with other homeschooling families. We’ll discuss these at length, as well as the level of involvement you and your children would enjoy.

## 1. Your Local Support Group

For starters, you want to find your state homeschool support group. Usually, your state homeschooling organization has information about smaller local groups, political laws and measures regarding homeschooling, state conference information, testing requirements, etc. This is your first contact. You can find your state homeschool support group from either of these two websites:

### Learning 4 Life –

[http://www.learning4liferesources.com/homeschool\\_page2.html](http://www.learning4liferesources.com/homeschool_page2.html)

**Home School Legal Defense Association** – <http://www.hslda.org/orgs/>

Here's a third website that not only has state organizations, but also lists smaller local groups as well:

**Homeschool World** – <http://www.home-school.com/groups/>

Once you get connected with your state's organization, take some time to explore their website. Find out what is going on in your state regarding political measures, upcoming events, etc. Your state's website may have smaller local groups listed or you may have to call their phone number and talk to a human being to find out what specifically is going on in your area.

**Note:** Usually, you can find a group within a reasonable distance from your home. If you live way out in the countryside, you may be the exception. If this is the case, you may need to get more creative in finding fellow homeschoolers in your general area. Or you may decide that it is well worth the drive once a month or so to connect with fellow homeschoolers for a field trip or park day.

Find out what is available in your area. It is usually best to find out the names of the local support groups and the people who are running them. You can then pick up the phone and ask for any and all information that they can provide to you. Often a local support group will provide co-op classes (sometimes known as Friday School), field trip opportunities, group rates for local events, moms' breakfasts or sharing times, used curriculum swaps, park days, etc. You won't know what's available to you until you ask. So pick up the phone and give your local homeschool support group leader a call.

Ask...

- If there are specific requirements for joining?
- Is there a sign-up day or can you join anytime?
- Are there fees when you join? Or for specific activities?
- When is the next event?
- What can you do to help?

Okay, you may want to wait on the last question. There are usually a hundred things that you can do to help your local support group. But attend a few functions before you commit yourself to anything. You want to make sure it's a good fit first!

Joining a local support group is the best way to connect with other homeschoolers, for yourself and for your children. You may even end up making lifelong friends.

## 2. Take Part in Online Chat/Email Groups

This can never take the place of meeting with a homeschooling friend or two at the park, or over coffee, BUT it is a great place to ask for specific curriculum advice or suggestions, or pose general homeschooling questions.

There are some very fun homeschool chat groups online and each one has its own distinct personality. Some are very focused to the topic of homeschooling and others are more quirky and can hardly stay on the topic as nearly every post gets prefaced with an OT (meaning "off topic").

Generally, you have to create a username and password to join one of these groups as the owner of the site, or moderator, does not want just anyone posting just anything unchecked. It's a safety measure. Some groups are moderated, meaning that comments must first be checked by the moderator before being posted. Other groups are unmediated and posts go through right away. Some groups are local, others global. Some are centered around a specific curriculum, others are more general

There really is no "one size fits all" when it comes to online support groups. Here are a few that you might want to check out. Oh, and while you are at it, find out if your local support group has a yahoo groups account, or some place where members can communicate through email and group discussion.

This is the absolute best way to find a group that is a good fit for you. Click over to the yahoo groups website (<http://groups.yahoo.com>) and enter "homeschool" or "homeschooling" in the search box. Here is the direct link to the list of homeschooling related yahoo groups:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/search?query=homeschool>

Okay, there are over 6000 groups available. Isn't that incredible? Encouraging? Overwhelming? There are groups that are targeted to specific states, for example California or Indiana homeschoolers. There are groups that target specific needs within homeschooling, such as homeschooling just boys or high schoolers or special needs kids. There are groups for specific interests, such as notebooking,

curricula reviews, freebie finders, etc. There are discussion groups that discuss certain educational philosophies and/or specific curriculum.

**Here are 10 great choices from among those 6000 that might grab your attention and hold your interest:**

**AHomeschoolReview** - It seems we have all, at one time or another, wished we had advice from someone who has had experience with a certain curriculum or homeschool item. Homeschooling is a lot of trial and error but it definitely makes it easier when we share our experiences. So whether it's a how-to guide, curriculum, method, any type of homeschooling item ~ Your Homeschool Review will help! And as for any questions you might have, well, we now have a motto: "NOTHING sounds stupid around here!"

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

**Homeschool\_SpecialNeedsKidz** - THERE IS HOPE! This is a support group for those who live mainly in the USA who are homeschooling a "special needs" child, ages preschool to 19. Whether your child has ADHD, a learning disability (LD), dyslexia, emotional or neurological disorder, bipolar, tourette syndrome, deafness, autism, anxiety disorder, oppositional defiance disorder, blindness, any type of emotional or physical handicap, etc, then this group is for you. We all have our own individual needs and problems, yet we all do share a common goal -- to educate our precious children the best way we can.

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Homeschool\\_SpecialNeedsKidz/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Homeschool_SpecialNeedsKidz/)

**Homeschoolingboys** - BOYS... whether you have one, two, three or more --- this is the spot to discuss their special needs. You know, like LEGOS! Click [HERE](#) for our website! (www.homeschoolingBOYS.com) To join our group you should be PERSONALLY homeschooling 1 or more boys (parent, grandparent or legal guardian), seriously considering home education, or intending to begin soon. Parents of pre-school children who intend to KEEP homeschooling are, of course, welcome.

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

**AmblesideOnline** - Ambleside Online is a support group for families using the Ambleside Online Curriculum, which is designed to be as close as possible to the curriculum that Charlotte Mason used in her own PNEU schools. This list is exclusively for homeschool parents to discuss the implementing of this curriculum. You may not join this list to sell your product or advertise your business. THIS IS NOT A GENERAL CM LIST, nor a general homeschool list. Posts must be restricted to focus on AO's specialized purpose.

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

**NotebookingNook** - Are you a notebooking veteran or are you interested in learning more about notebooking your lessons? If so, then this is the group for you. Here you will be able to share your ideas, plans, and resources with other homeschoolers. You will also learn the ins

and outs of notebooking. No more filling in the blanks of a workbook... open your child's imagination to the wonderful world of notebooking!

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

**BasicallyBeechick** - Homeschooling...Ruth Beechick Style! Ruth Beechick Style Homeschooling is an Eclectic approach which focuses on natural learning through Real Books and Real Life. BasicallyBeechick is a Christian homeschool support group to discuss the methods and ideas of Dr. Ruth Beechick. Other authors whose ideas mesh well with Beechick's will be discussed as well. These authors include (but are not limited to) Susan C. Anthony, Rebecca Rupp, Jean Soyke, E.D. Hirsch, Jessie Wise and Susan Wise Bauer, Harvey...

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

**GamesforLearning** - GAMES FOR LEARNING with The Game Lady is designed for parents who wish to use games as part of the education of their children. Games are a fun-filled way to introduce skills, drill material until mastered, review lessons, or test ability. The goal of this list is to share ideas for creating games individualized to the needs, interests, and abilities of each child. Questions, ideas, and resources of materials will be welcome. Homeschooling parents will greatly benefit from the use of games...

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

**HomeFiresJournal** - DO YOU WANT HELP HOMESCHOOLING? Our friendly, all-inclusive, non-sectarian community provides free curriculum ideas, activities, resources, humor, support and thought-provoking discussion in a forum that welcomes and respects you no matter what method you choose. We especially recognize the importance of providing encouragement to families who homeschool independently (without government assistance) - beginners and veterans alike!

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

**hshs** - A non-denominational discussion list for parents homeschooling high school students, 9th-12th grade. Parents of 8th graders are welcome so they can start planning for high school. Only topics related to home schooling high school are allowed on this list.

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

**Clickschooling** - GET ONE, FUN, EDUCATIONAL WEB SITE RECOMMENDATION A DAY! ClickSchooling searches the Net to bring you one, terrific educational website each day: Monday-Math; Tuesday-Science; Wednesday-Language Arts; Thursday-History & Social Studies; Friday Virtual Field Trips; and Weekends are for Electives -- Art, Music, Foreign Languages and more! Look at what our subscribers say about ClickSchooling: "Of all the services on the Internet, Click Schooling has got to be the most useful.

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

What's the 3<sup>rd</sup> way to connect with other homeschoolers?

### 3. Subscribe to 1 or more homeschooling magazines

The third way to get connected with the homeschooling community is through subscribing to homeschool magazines. Magazines devoted to the topic of homeschooling provide encouragement, how-to articles, curriculum reviews, and so much more. Homeschool magazines connect us to the wider community – often the global one, helping us to realize that we are not alone on this journey that we have chosen for our families. Plus, you can usually request a free sample issue before making a selection and purchasing a subscription.

Here are my favorites:

**The Old Schoolhouse Magazine** – *Home Where They Belong* - What can you expect from **The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine**? This magazine contains over 200 colorful, glossy pages of practical and inspirational content. Designed by your fellow homeschoolers, TOS understands the real issues and challenges that home educators grapple with and presents solutions with wit and insight.

Typically, The Old Schoolhouse offers subscription specials that include free gifts, bonus downloads, extra issues of their magazine, etc. Ask about their specials when subscribing.

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

**Homeschool Enrichment Magazine** – *Real Help for Real Homeschoolers* - At Home School Enrichment, we believe homeschooling is the best lifestyle a Christian family can have. And, we want you to experience that joy and fulfillment throughout your entire homeschool journey! Most of our authors are homeschool parents themselves, so you know you're getting tried-and-true ideas that work in the real world of homeschooling.

Homeschooling can be tough sometimes, so we all need regular doses of encouragement and inspiration to keep our focus clear. That's why each issue of *Home School Enrichment* is filled with uplifting articles and Biblical advice to keep our perspective what it ought to be, to help you keep going strong, all year long!

<http://homeschoolenrichment.com/magazine/>

**TEACH Magazine** – *To Encourage and Challenge Homemakers and Home-educators* - **TEACH** Magazine will calm your spirit and soothe your soul with lovely pages filled with edifying encouragement, inspiration, and practical ideas in a 44-page quarterly Christian magazine for moms.

**TEACH** Magazine will inspire you to immerse yourself in the holy promises that are yours. Each issue of **TEACH** covers a specific topic, topics that are relevant and revealing for homemakers and homeschoolers.

Although this magazine is wider in its appeal, it is supportive of homeschooling and embraces this educational choice as a lifestyle.

**Bonus Gift:** TEACH Magazine wants to bless you with their Mother Enrichment Packet – a \$36 value. This includes a sample of their magazine stuffed with encouragement and practical advice for homemakers and homeschoolers, a copy of an ebook entitled Organizing Happiness, and an audio on the topic of prayer entitled "Queen of Her Castle".

You may pick up your bonus from TEACH from this link:

*[Sorry! This link is reserved for paid subscribers only. You can sign up for class here – [www.homeschoolingabcs.com](http://www.homeschoolingabcs.com)]*

There are many more homeschooling magazines out there. Some you can find at your local library or mega-bookstore, such as Borders or Barnes and Noble.

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In Conclusion...

Make it a priority to get connected with other homeschoolers – it is your lifeline when times get tough, or when you just have a bad day. We all need encouragement and these are some great ways to find it.

## This Week's Assignment

1. Find your state and local support group. Find out how you can get involved and attend an activity or two in the next month, if possible.
2. Join 1 or 2 (maybe 3) online homeschool chat groups. You can just "lurk" which means to listen in without posting or better yet, ask some questions that are on your mind and start a discussion.
3. Request sample magazines from the ones listed above and others that you discover that sound interesting. Enjoy perusing these storehouses of encouragement and information.

Enjoy your kids this week,



Terri Johnson

[www.HomeschoolingABCs.com](http://www.HomeschoolingABCs.com)

### Coming Up Next Week...

Next week we'll discuss the topic *Hands-on Learning for Greater Retention*. All kids love to learn by doing, but not all homeschool parents like to get out the glue and popsicle sticks, if you know what I mean. Doable hands-on projects that anyone can do and enjoy. Plus a \$39 bonus just for you from Hands of a Child. You won't want to miss it. See you then!

### Previous Lessons –

Lesson #1 ... [Click Here](#) to access

Lesson #2 ... [Click Here](#) to access

Foundations 1: Preparation for Christ... [Click Here](#) to access

Values Driven Discipleship Training Manual... [Click Here](#) to access

Lesson #3 ... [Click Here](#) to access

Get Organized with Cindy ... [Click Here](#) to access

The Schoolhouse Planner (31 page sampler) ... [Click Here](#) to access

Lesson #4 ... [Click Here](#) to access

Lesson #5 ... [Click Here](#) to access

Teaching Less While Your Child Learns More ... [Click Here](#) to access

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