



The education agenda is ramping up (or down depending on your approach) as we move rapidly toward the end of 2014.

Exams and assessments are either getting close, or have happened, and we trust you are able to look back on the year with a sense of godly satisfaction. I pray you have time for a well-earned rest over the Christmas period to recharge the batteries for 2015.

To enable that rest it could be a good scheme to begin thinking and planning for next year now so that you can have a short time to relax before it all begins again.

This Issue

In *Exploring Christian Education* I look at the fundamentals that make a Christian home education centre. In *Health* we reproduce an article by George Malkmus about how our modern diet has created a new 'normal' which is in fact unhealthy. Wendy Hill contributes another in her music series, this time on tonality, and Evelyn Garrard offers another LEM Phonics corner.

I pray that this issue will bless you as you seek to serve the Lord in education,

Christmas Closure
Our last day of trading will be **Friday 19 December 2014, re-opening on Monday 12 January 2015. Thank you for your business in 2014!**



CHESS

2015 CHESS seminars are planned and we bring you the tentative dates:

Adelaide	Saturday 9 May
Melbourne	Saturday 27 June
Perth	Saturday 25 July
Sydney	Saturday 1 August

These CHESS seminars will include valuable sessions on home education and opportunity to inspect and purchase from our large range of curriculum materials and library books. Our staff are on hand to assist with any questions you may have.

The CHESS is particularly valuable for new home educators and for those who have never had opportunity to inspect our materials in a relaxed atmosphere. You will participate in inspirational sessions focusing on the challenges faced by home educators and you will find it a great blessing to meet and fellowship with others who have embarked on the home education journey.

We are always on the lookout for anyone who may wish to host a seminar or book display in their area. If you feel that there is sufficient interest in your circles we would love to hear from you.

[Click here for more information and flyers for all CHESS seminars](#)

International News

Papua New Guinea

Our small group of teachers are now out and about assisting other teachers in preparing to teach LEM Phonics in PNG. There are frequent and ongoing changes in the education scene in PNG and it seems no one is quite sure where things are heading. This makes it very difficult to know how best to proceed. Please pray for Mark Baiai and his team as they endeavour to chart a constructive course in the midst of educational confusion in the nation.

Peru

As we have mentioned Bob and Frances Relyea are now well advanced in preparing to leave Peru to head back to Australia and perhaps 'retirement'. However, knowing Bob, retirement as we know it is not very likely and we pray that they will soon discover God's further plans. They have recently appointed a new board and a new President (Jose Ascate) for AME in Peru. Bob will carry on as Honorary President and Academic Coordinator for the work of AME (Light Educational Ministries) and by the end of October will leave Chiclayo to spend a week in Lima farewelling friends before arriving in Sydney on 9 November.

Bob and Frances have done a great job in developing Christian education and Creation Science in Peru for almost fifteen years. Today evidence of their work is to be found in almost every area of Peru as a testimony to their faithful service. ■



No. 94: Your Christian Home Education Centre

Is the Christ of Christmas
welcome at your home
education centre?

This is just a question to consider how your home operates in terms of its reliance on Jesus Christ. I believe all Christian home educators want Jesus to be central in all their endeavours, but what does this mean?

I am suggesting that around a foundation of some basic biblical principles the outworking of a Christ-centred education can mean different things to different folks. I would like to explore some of these basic biblical principles with suggestions as to how Jesus can be the King of your home education program.

God's plan for your family

At the moment we are coming to the end of one study year and preparing for a new. Some will come to the new year as seasoned home educators, whilst others will be just setting out on this adventure, perhaps with some trepidation.

We all, however, need to consider how Jesus' Lordship works out in daily practice

in the midst of frenetic and perhaps seemingly uncoordinated activity that often feels like a never ending merry-go-round. If we endeavour to understand the outworking of His Lordship in the midst of this activity I fear we will fail admirably. We must stop. Sit at His feet and learn to listen for the Christ of Christmas is none other than God Immanuel, the second person of the Trinity, the one crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The miracle is that He comes in His authority to your home and will tell you how you are to run it for His glory if you will but listen closely to Him! Many have been persuaded that because of His love for us He only ever comes in an advisory capacity. Unfortunately this line of thinking is one of the great achilles heels of the modern church. The truth is that He is your authority — He is God and by definition He is boss!

Thus what is shown to you will be Christ's own personal plan for you and your family! This is breathtaking — the creator of the Universe has a plan, devised before the foundation of the world, as the perfect fulfilment for you and your family. Are you interested?

But please, don't fall for the oldest trick in the book! Don't imagine, even for one minute, that you can work out this plan yourself — it is His plan and you will only ever find it at His feet. Incidentally, if you really want to be frustrated, exhausted, overwhelmed, condemned and completely

lose hope... the best way is to try home educating in your own strength! Wait on Him, inviting, perhaps imploring Him, to come to you as not only Lord and King but also as your friend to lead you through to His will for your family. He will do it through the indwelling power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, another gift of His to us!

This amazing empowerment is part of what some Christians call the 'faith walk', and it's not something we do alone. We were never designed to be alone — we were designed to be one with Him. Let's get started, then! This huge task just got a lot easier than many imagine, because it is God who works in us for His good pleasure, teaching us to live and work by faith. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Family atmosphere

As a family our first priority is to self-consciously see the process of sanctification continue in our own lives — that means we continue to progress from not-so-good to better and better in our life and faith. It is a slow process, but there is compulsory enrolment for every Christian. The first triumph in Christian home education is in the lives of the parents! The family is the key and it is dad and mum who are charged with the responsibility for raising their family. Without Christ this is an impossible task, but as we learn to rest in His call and purpose for us it will become an increasing joy.

A significant part of family life is the creation of a godly atmosphere and that is a

large part of the sanctification process, that is, God working with us and in us! Atmosphere is the feeling (you could call it 'the vibe') in your family — how each person is relating and the standard by which they behave and interact. We are aiming for an atmosphere of joy, peace, cooperation, love and unity.

The first triumph in Christian home education is in the lives of the parents

It is this atmosphere created by the parents into which children are born, trained and nurtured. Children copy that atmosphere they see modelled by their parents.

Many parents will be quick to let me know that they tried that and it did not work. There are a multitude of factors involved, but overall children do imitate their parents. Remember, though, that there will be all sorts of aberrations along the way. As parents we all experience times of frustration when we are convinced we are total failures (and if you have not experienced that, just wait a couple of days!) But in those times learn to be objective — see the bigger picture. Talk to trusted friends who may well be able to help you see that bigger picture.

At this point the adage 'never, ever give up' can be helpful! As with any marathon race there is a long way to go to the finish line. So press on by faith in and with the

Lord— He is on your side and He has a plan of victory for you and your family.

Home is the place where education takes place. Formal education is but one aspect of a Christian home education centre, for Christian learning comes with some prerequisites. It is a place where Christ is Lord, where our behaviours reflect those of His Word. It's a place of self-control, of order, of love, a place of initiative and responsibility. With these various fruits of the Christian faith in place we have a much better environment in which we can all learn God's ways.

Who owns knowledge?

Speaking philosophically for a moment, learning occurs when we submit to the person through whom information is being presented. For Christians that means beginning with submission to God, then to parents (teachers). It is part of the process of recognising that all knowledge is the creation of God. If so, He is the rightful and only owner of knowledge. To take knowledge to ourselves without permission is actually theft and a penalty for this sin is pride. Perhaps the biggest problem with obtaining knowledge is that it produces

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pride in us when we do not acknowledge the rightful owner. You may have observed this pattern in the lives of many educated people. I believe it is important to avoid this pitfall as it destroys the very purpose of Christian education, which I assume is to make us better people. The key for Christian educators is to teach so that the Lord gets the praise and thanks for all the knowledge He graciously makes available to us.

We learn to teach children the way of submission — an aspect of selflessness — so that learning becomes a rejoicing in God's blessing. This is a key test to our effectiveness as a Christian teacher. As an example, when it comes to testing it is not a matter of how much I have learned, but rather it is an opportunity for students to testify to the Lord of the wonderful things He has revealed to them. It would be a great opportunity, for example, for a student to write a psalm of praise to the Lord as a means of thanking God and ensuring that the praise goes where it belongs.

These, I believe, are foundational principles for home educators — if you get these right you can be assured of success. If you don't understand them, any success you apparently achieve may well be short lived. Training children is not a quick fix, and there are no short cuts that I am aware of. Sitting the child down with an educational package does not result in education. It has been well said: 'education is relationship'. Please spend time on these fundamentals as they will reap a good reward. ■



No 6: Tonality

So far in this series we have covered five music elements and seen how they are full of opposites.

Rhythm is long and short sounds and silences. Beat is even just like seconds ticking on a clock. Melody is high and low notes following each other like words. Harmony is the opposite of melody because two or more notes sound at the same time. Dynamics is loud and soft sounds. Tempo is fast and slow speeds. Together they form a powerful, persuasive music medium. And we've only looked at five out of fourteen elements!

This article covers one of the lesser known elements, tonality, which does not have opposites like the above. The essence of tonality is relationships and connections between sounds. A simple definition is 'tonality is how the notes are joined or related to each other.' It is impossible to hear the effects of tonality in a written article such as this so I will use analogies to help explain. Tonality must be heard to be fully understood.

Tonality connects notes. No note is a part of music unless it appears in context. It is the same as letters of the alphabet. If we take one letter (e.g. **p**) it means nothing unless it is a part of a word (**pig, apple, tap**). Likewise one person alone has no purpose. John Donne wrote, 'No man is an island.' A good analogy for tonality is how members of a family are related and connected with each other through marriage. Family relationships are vital and each person needs a relationship with others so society can function. God designed families in this way. After He created Adam He said 'it is not good for man to be alone', so He created Eve (Genesis 2:8). As well as earthly relationships, humans need a relationship with their heavenly Father God in order to carry out His design and will. Adam and Eve walked and talked with their Father in the Garden of Eden, and today we too can have a relationship with our Creator.

Herein lies the origin and essence of tonality in music. It teaches us that God created relationships between Himself and people and wants us to remain intimately connected with Him. Ephesians 2:10–22 describes so beautifully God's original plan for His beloved mankind. We were created in Christ Jesus to do good works before we even knew it. We were never designed to be separated from God to become foreigners, aliens and strangers. Jesus came and died for us so the dividing wall would be broken down and we can be fellow citizens in God's own household. We can be rebuilt together, joined and related to become a dwelling place in which God lives by His Spirit.

We seem to have departed from music but it is important to establish the foundation of tonality with God, the Creator of relationships. Let's now apply this to music and see how tonality (or lack of it) can reflect man's relationship with God.

What does tonality sound like? Distinguishing melody from harmony and rhythm seems easy by comparison. The best analogy I can come up with is food flavourings. The easiest way to tell the difference between a Valencia orange and a blood orange is to taste and compare. One is sweeter than the other. The sweetness or tartness permeates the whole fruit. Likewise, tonality 'flavouring' underlies a whole musical piece. With music we don't taste but we hear the sounds and compare.

Spiritually speaking, we can relate tonality to the Holy Spirit. Tonality permeates the music — it is invisible yet everywhere in the sounds. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God is also invisible yet omnipresent. John 3:8 tells us the Holy Spirit is like the wind. We only know the air is present when we feel the wind or see its effects. The Holy Spirit is like this both in the world and in our hearts. In the same way we only know tonality in music when we hear and feel the effects.

Back to music details now. Two most common tonality 'flavourings' used today are called **major** and **minor**. Major sound-flavour can be described as happy, joyful, bright, uplifting (e.g. *Joy to the World*). Minor sound-flavour is often described as sad, doleful, and melancholic (e.g. the first

movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*). Minor sounds can also be dramatic, exciting and mysterious (e.g. the second movement of the same sonata). Composers select major or minor 'flavours' according to what they wish to express. This in turn will affect the listener's feelings.

A Valencia orange is sweeter than a blood orange and the juice can be analysed chemically to find out why. We can perform a similar process with major and minor tonality families by breaking them down. Major and minor 'flavours' sound different because they use notes in different patterns called **scales** or **keys**. Scale simply means 'a ladder'. The sounds climb higher in a certain pattern of steps and half steps called **tones** and **semitones**. Simply put, on a keyboard, a tone is the gap between two keys with one white or black key in between. A semitone is the gap between two keys with no black or white key between.

Major keys all have the identical pattern of tones (T) and semitones (S) — T T S T T T S. A piece in the key of C major uses the keyboard notes C D E F G A B C. If you start on any note and follow the same pattern the sound will always be major. Minor keys lower or flatten the third and sixth notes to change the sound completely — C D E \flat

F G A \flat B C. The pattern changes to T S T T S 1½ S. You can try this out for yourself if you have a keyboard. Because of the constraints of this article we will just stick with the simplest key of C.

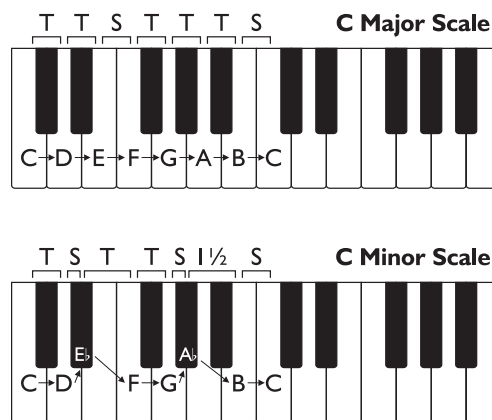
In the key of C a composer uses the notes in that scale as a basis so let's look closely at what the C scale consists of. This applies to major and minor scales alike. There is a hierarchy with levels of authority and relationships within the scale. Each note has a **scale degree number** with a certain value, importance and a role to play.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
C	D	E	F	G	A	B

The first rung/note of the ladder (I) has the highest authority and we know the piece or section is finished when it is heard. The fifth note (V) is the next level and the fourth note (IV) follows. These are the three primary levels in the hierarchy. The strongest

relationship heard is between V and I to form a strong ending (known as a **perfect cadence**). The next strongest is IV and I (known as a **plagal cadence**).

The scale is the foundation for melody. Melodies and chords don't just happen by chance. C major melodies use notes in the C major scale. C minor uses notes in the C minor scale.



Any other notes are either incorrect or not related. It's like finding a piece of hot chilli in a sweet apple pie. In the family analogy it is like an unwanted intruder entering the house. We know instantly something is not right. Having said that, notes besides those in the scale are often used for special purposes. They can indicate a change in direction to a new key—like adding cream on top of the pie or one family visiting another. Technically this is called **modulation**. Other incidental notes can also add interest—like adding some cloves to the apple pie or friends dropping in for a short visit. Technically these are called **passing notes**. But whilst these variations exist, the underlying scale remains the base which the other notes build upon.

The scale is also the foundation for harmony. The three **primary chords** are based on the I, IV and V scale degrees. For example, the number I chord (C) uses the first, third and fifth notes of the C scale—C E G. The number V chord (G) uses G B D and the F chord uses F A C. In this way all notes of the scale are included in the primary chords. Chords built on the remaining degrees (II III VI VII) are called **secondary chords**. Composers are well aware of such hierarchy and select every single note according to the message they want to convey to the listener. Tonality does not happen by chance.

History sheds a very interesting spiritual light on the above. In the eleventh century a monk, Guido D'Arezzo, began the **solfege** system which is commonly used by singers today. He named each note—**Ut, Re, Mi, Fah, Soh, Lah**. Later **Ti** was added to lead

back into **Ut** again. The fascinating thing is that **Ut** was changed to **Doh** which comes from the Latin word *domini*, meaning 'God' or 'Lord'. Another similar Latin word, *domus*, means 'home.' This note Doh is very important because it gives the melody and harmony a feeling of finishing — coming home to rest on the number I note and the number I chord. For this reason I like to call it the God-note, heaven note, home note or key note (technically it is called the **tonic**). This musical home with God symbolises how we can have a strong relationship with our heavenly Father and finally go to our spiritual home in heaven. I also liken the V note and chord with the earthly father of the family, next in authority to God (technically it is called the **dominant**). Number IV is the mother and the remaining notes in the scale are the children.

The whole tonality jigsaw puzzle comes together as we see the spiritual aspects in the music. The very word *tonality* comes from the Greek word *tonos*, meaning 'tension, pitch and key'. We hear connections between tensions created by the notes (itches) of the ladder (key, scale) and the resolution of tension when the music finishes on the Doh note. Tensions in families as well as in the world can be resolved if we make God the highest authority in the basic family unit. God designed us to be in a relationship with Him and for us to be in His family. Tonality in music is a reflection of relationship, this wonderful character attribute of God. Relationship with Him is the key to successful living in a tension filled world.

The principles outlined here can be applied to many other keys besides C major and C minor. Readers with more music knowledge will understand this deeper and understand how composers have many choices to work with. But let's now apply the above principles to music throughout history. An awareness of spiritual aspects clarifies much confusion and concern about why music is the way it is today.

In the Ancient times and Middle Ages early scales were called **modes**. There were about twelve modes to learn, many more than we use today. Ancient philosophers and musicians knew their sound flavours. For example, the **mixolydian** mode sounded gloomy, depressing, and was used for mourning. **Hypodorian** mode was tender and gentle. **Dorian** mode was used for rousing, military purposes. **Lydian** mode was sensual, soft, immoral, dangerous and ensnaring.

In the Renaissance and Baroque (1600–1750), the **Ionian** mode became known as major and has continued to be popular today. The **Aeolian** mode was called **natural minor** and changed into **harmonic minor** by sharpening the seventh note, and this is still common today. For several hundred years the ancient modes were rarely used but in the twentieth century they gradually came back into use in jazz and contemporary styles. Catholic and High Anglican churches kept using them in their chants.

There are many other types of scales with different effects on listeners. The Chinese five note **pentatonic scale** has been

used for thousands of years and gives an oriental flavour. Play only the five black keys on your keyboard to hear it. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, composers experimented with whole tone scales (i.e. no semitones) and adapted a vague, fuzzy sound reminiscent of blurry, fuzzy, impressionist art. **Polytonality** combines different scales at the same time. The **chromatic scale** consists of all twelve semitones between one C note and the next.

It has been known for millennia that music reflects the state of society

It has been known for millennia that music reflects the state of society. Plato wrote about this in his book 'The Republic.' Aristotle described music and society in his work, 'Politics.' Twentieth century music also reflects the state of various societies. For example, in much eastern music there is no definite ending with resolution on a Doh, thus reflecting the belief in reincarnation and life being a circle with no ending or heaven to rest in. Listen to how many radio shows fade out from one song and straight into the next. Another example is found in the blues scale with its flattened notes which perfectly describes the low, flat feelings of a depressed person.

Music using the chromatic scale in the 'twelve tone row' system contains all twelve notes which have equal value with no hierarchy. Each note has to be used before another

is repeated. Interestingly this occurred at the same time as the rise of communism in which everyone is supposed to be equal. Many composers experimented with **atonality** — no scale at all. This reflects the increase in atheism. Taking away the Doh, its tonal centre and hierarchy takes away the concept of God, family, marriage and relationships. We can see this breakdown throughout society today because God is denied. In 'Chance music' we see a reflection of evolutionary theory that we are only here by chance. I remember as a university student having to throw a dice to determine which notes were to be played. However it was forgotten that someone had to throw the dice and write the notes down!

All of these types of scales really have to be heard to properly understand tonality. So next time you are listening to music, try to at least identify major or minor. The main thing to remember is that tonality is all about relationships, and these relationships can reflect our spiritual condition. God created relationships between Himself and people. And in Him we are created to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). As this beautiful hymn from C H Morris says:

Nearer still nearer, close to Thy heart,
Draw me my Saviour, so precious Thou art.
Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast.
Shelter me safe in that haven of rest.
Shelter me safe in that haven of rest. ■

[Click here for more information and other music articles by Wendy Hill](#)

Health

GEORGE MALKMUS

Back to 'normal'

As regular readers will know, George Malkmus from Hallelujah Acres in the USA takes a strong view on diet and related issues. Despite this he does provide many useful hints for feeding and caring for our families. In this article George shows how our modern western diet can be dangerous for our children's physical development.

Accelerated maturity

If growth hormones and a high protein diet will cause a chicken to reach maturity in approximately five weeks today (instead of the 16 weeks it took in our grandparent's day), could there not be a relationship to the large size of our children today?

In fact, I have personally talked to farmers that raised thousands of chicks for market, who tell me the breasts of these chickens are sometimes so large and heavy that the chicken will actually fall over because of all the extra weight.

Most children today, who are on the standard American diet, are much larger than their parents and are reaching maturity much earlier in life. Why? I believe growth hormones given to milk cows and the high protein diets fed the animals cause the

animals to reach maturity earlier. The flesh and dairy of these animals being ingested by our children is hastening their maturity and increasing their size.

Early puberty

Dr Campbell shares in his book *The China Study*:

Chinese girls reach menstruation usually when they are 15–19 years old, quite a bit later than the 10–14 age that is average in the US. What is the cause of this rather dramatic difference? It has to do with what the girls eat.

Diets high in fat, calories, hormones, and animal protein hasten the start of menstruation by accelerating growth and jump starting puberty.

Dr Campbell continues:

It's not only the early age of menarche that's at issue here. Because Chinese women reach menopause at a younger age than do women in the west, they have about 8 to 10 fewer years of hormonal surges that are associated with higher rates of breast cancer.

What can we do to protect our daughters and calm our own overstimulated, trouble making hormones? Provide a diet low in fat and animal products and high in vegetables and grains!

And how about this for a side benefit of a plant-based diet? Later age at first menstruation could add

up to substantially fewer teenage pregnancies, which are currently estimated at more than 1 million per year in the US. alone.

And you will note that the boys are also larger than their dads and are reaching maturity much earlier than in past generations. Could this have a similar cause?

Big breasts

It's pretty hard to not notice the large breasts many of the girls are developing today, and some at very young ages. In fact, many boys are also developing sizable breasts. Once again, I attribute these large breasts to the hormones and high protein, high fat, animal products they are consuming.

In contrast, I look at the children being raised in China and on the Hallelujah Diet and I see a much slower rate of maturity, smaller breasts, later puberty, etc. — in other words, those children being raised in China and on the Hallelujah Diet are experiencing what used to be considered 'normal' growth patterns.

Through the years I have received letters from mothers whose young teen daughters were on the Hallelujah Diet. Their daughters were complaining that the other girls at school were developing breasts and starting puberty and they were not. I told these mothers to rejoice and be exceedingly glad that their girls were developing normally.

Getting back to 'normal'

For over 20 years, Hallelujah Acres has been warning anyone who would listen that the consuming of animal products, loaded with fat and protein — both flesh and dairy — along with their accompanying hormones, are the cause of up to 90% of all the physical problems being experienced today.

As I have been repeatedly saying in my lectures and writings: if people would only stop putting into their bodies the things that are creating their physical problems, and eat a predominantly raw plant-based diet, along with lots of raw vegetable juices, almost all physical problems would soon disappear from the face of the earth .

For me personally, it has been almost 40 years since I last ate the flesh of an animal or drank milk from a cow.

What have been the results of living almost half my life without consuming anything from an animal? I am 80-plus years of age, happy, have a strong and healthy body, and am married to one woman who also does not consume anything that comes from an animal. Who could ask for anything more? ■

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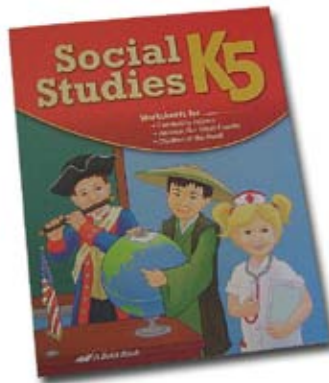


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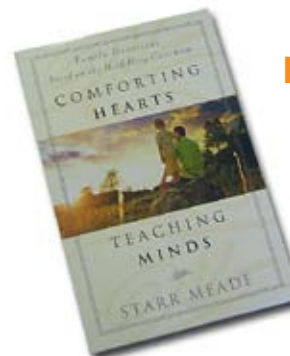
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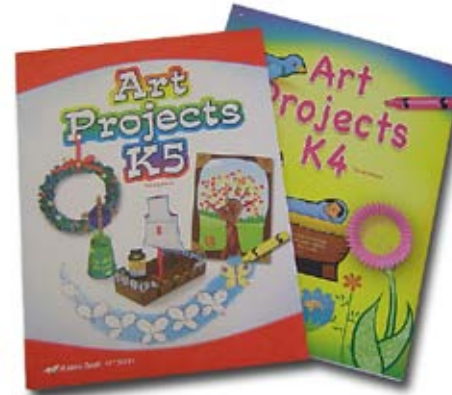
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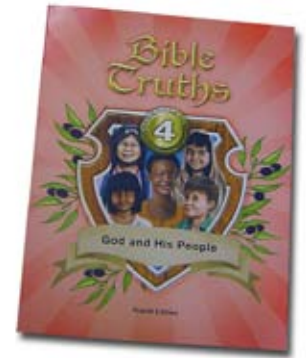
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Lower Primary

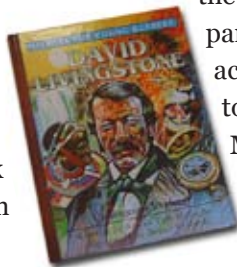
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Children of the Covered Wagon

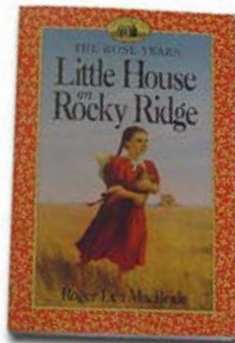
A wonderful story of families who braved the Oregon trail in 1844 to head for new lands in the north-west (what is now Oregon and Washington state in the USA). This is not the typical B-grade movie type account but a true and accurate picture of faithful families as they experience the many and varied adventures and dangers on their way to the beautiful Willamette Valley. Soft cover, 266 pages. **\$16.45**



Upper Primary

Little House on Rocky Ridge

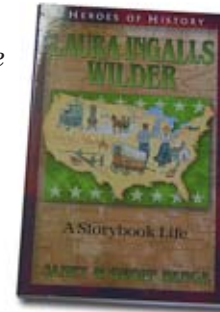
One of *The Rose Years* series of the Little House books. Rose Wilder is Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter, and the last of the *Little House* girls. Rose and her parents head off in a covered wagon across the drought-stricken midwest to the green valleys of southern Missouri in the pioneering days of new settlements in the USA. Many challenges confront them as they make their way to a new home. Soft cover, 353 pages. **\$13.90**



Heroes of History:

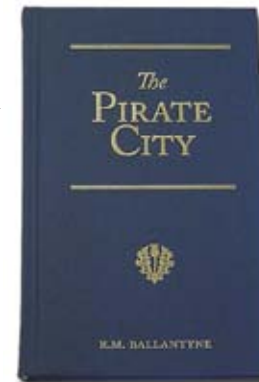
Laura Ingalls Wilder

The author of the famous, ever-green, *Little House on the Prairie* series of books and films, Laura Ingalls Wilder was a pioneer, teacher, farmer's wife and story teller. She experienced one of the most exciting times in American history and was able to bring it to life for generations to come. Soft cover, 196 pages. **\$11.00**



The Pirate City by R M Ballantyne

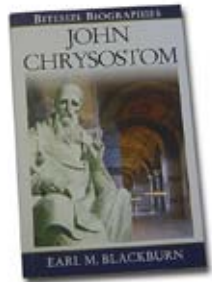
Another great story from devout Christian story teller R M Ballantyne. This story presents a true picture of life and events in the pirate city of Algiers in the early 1800s. Each of this series presents a unique insight into the various intriguing scenes of history. Valuable books for young readers. Hard cover, 377 pages. **\$24.95**



Secondary to Adult

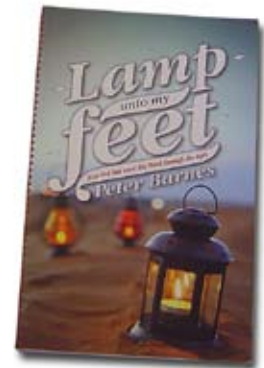
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LEM Phonics Corner

EVELYN GARRARD



The question is: 'at what age is it possible to begin teaching phonics to my children'?

The precursor to actual phonics is phonemic awareness, which is the ability to hear sounds and then reproduce them, joining sounds together to make a word, and hearing the word which a set of sounds make.

If children have an environment where they can become familiar with the fact that words are made up of sounds, they will progress to the actual skill of phonics very easily.

So how can parents make their children phonemically aware?

Here are some ideas coming straight from a mother who reared two children and used phonemic strategies without really realising the value of what she was doing at that time.

As she carried her first baby (aged 6 months) around in the kitchen she pointed to the D in 'FRIGIDAIRE' on the fridge, saying 'D for Daniel' (the sound 'duh', not the letter-name 'dee'). Some time later when passing by the fridge again she asked, 'where is D for Daniel'? He touched the D. Enthused by his response, but wondering whether it was a fluke, she tried it again. Positive!

This led to experimenting with other sounds and letters in different contexts. It seemed that the one year old was quite responsive as his mother experimented with him through the early years. She would present him with a cup and would say c-u-p whilst pointing to it. Later she would do the same thing with two objects (e.g. a cup and a pen) and ask him to identify which object fitted the sounds, c-u-p or p-e-n?

When the child was about three, he was easily able to move into actual phonics by learning to recognise the written letters which represent the sounds.

When this child moved on to school, the child's teacher was one who had not been taught phonics in teacher's college. The whole word method was used entirely, and despite the young boy's ability in phonics, he went backwards instead of forwards for a while. Fortunately after leaving that school he learned to read and spell well, despite self-proclaiming himself as dyslexic!

The mother used the same strategies on her younger son quite early. He, too, quickly learned the sounds of the alphabet by playing with a box of letters. At three he could put letters together to make words, and could also read simple three or four letter words too. So he wanted to read books. Soon it was necessary to *teach* him that more than one letter can sometimes make a sound. As need arose his mother taught him multiple phonograms and by the age of three and a half the child was able to read simple books. He used to read stories to the other kindergarten children.

You have probably deduced by now that I am that mother. Although I was unaware of these phonemic principles at the time, I can now see God's fruit in the LEM Phonics programme.

So you wonderful mums (or Dads for that matter), if you are able to give it some time, try your best to prepare your children with these simple things *before* they start formal schooling (whether it is school or homeschool).

I realise that there are some children who have learning difficulties, and you may need to go slower, but don't give up. In most cases phonics will help the child who is having 'issues' more than the whole word approach.

We certainly recommend a school which teaches phonics (LEM Phonics if possible), because this will equip your child to decipher the sounds which make up the English language, together with the letter patterns which represent those sounds.

Starting early with these principles before your child goes to school allows them to hit the ground running and more easily grasp the various facets of phonics instruction.

May God bless all of your efforts, and feel free to ask me any questions via email or telephone.

Light of Life

Light Educational Ministries is a faith ministry, working in the area of Christian education.

Our Ministry is to spread the vision and concepts of Christian education. Light Educational Ministries staff are available to share with and assist groups interested in or involved with Christian education. Our staff prepare and distribute resources and develop curriculum and LEM training programmes.

Light of Life is a non-subscription newsletter, published four times a year. We do, however, encourage donations towards the cost of production and distribution.

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Vol 35 No 4

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