



They Call Me Blessed presents

A Modern Charlotte Mason Education

By Ana Willis



A Charlotte Mason Education

Who was Charlotte Mason anyway? And what is this Charlotte Mason Homeschool Approach all about? More and more you are probably hearing about Charlotte Mason within the homeschooling circles.

I confess that [when I first started homeschooling](#) I had no idea there were even different approaches to homeschooling. Can you relate to it too? I thought homeschooling was just imitating public school at home. Surely that was the only way to do it because it was the only way I knew.

It wasn't until 3 years into homeschooling that I began to read more and educating myself about other methods of education. It was then that I heard about [Ms. Mason and her philosophy of education](#). Little did I know that I was in fact following some of her principles through our [Sonlight Curriculum](#).

So, who was Charlotte Mason?

Ms. Mason was an innovator in education who believed that living books and real-life experience were the best forms of education. Her work included a feast of ideas to help children receive a well-rounded education.

In 1887 she founded the Parent's National Education Union to support teachers, schools, and parents who wanted to adopt [her principles of education](#).

Self-education is the only possible education; the rest is mere veneer laid on the surface of a child's nature. — [Charlotte M. Mason](#)

Ms. Mason has taught me to be my children's facilitator. She taught me to inspire them to read and allow their curiosity to cause them to [learn independently](#) as much as alongside me.



So what is exactly this Charlotte Mason homeschool philosophy we hear so much about?

Here is a short and great explanation I found at [Simply Charlotte Mason](#), one of the most popular websites for a Charlotte Mason inspired education and resources.

*The **Charlotte Mason** method is based on **Charlotte's** firm belief that the child is a person and we must educate that whole person, not just his mind. So a **Charlotte Mason** education is three-pronged: in her words, "Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life."*

Education is more than just academics. Just as a child is made of a body, soul, spirit, and mind, we must educate her as a whole, not just in part. Education involves parenting, character training, and discipleship.

Although Ms. Mason had no children of her own, she had a true passion for teaching children and giving them a well-rounded experience of learning. She knew that children love to learn and need a supportive environment to do so and she built her methods around these principles.

Notes



Here's a look at what Charlotte Mason believed to be the best foundation of a full and inspiring education:

Copywork

In order to practice handwriting, spelling, and grammar, Ms. Mason believed it was important to keep a notebook for copying down poetry, prose, scripture, and quotes daily.

“Charlotte Mason taught that a child learns grammar (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.) best by doing copywork – that is copying over selections from fine literature into a notebook. The child is forced to pay attention to the details of writing, and corrects his work when through, by comparing it to the original .” (quote taken from Queenhomeschool.com)

We use NotebookingPages.com for copywork and handwriting.

Narration

“Narrating is an art, like poetry-making or painting, because it is there, in every child's mind, waiting to be discovered, and is not the result of any process of disciplinary education. A creative fiat calls it forth. 'Let him narrate'; and the child narrates, fluently, copiously, in ordered sequence, with fit and graphic details, with a just choice of words, without verbosity or tautology, so soon as he can speak with ease. This amazing gift with which normal children are born is allowed to lie fallow in their education”. - Charlotte Mason Volume 1, page 231

A narration is a great way to ensure that children understand the information they are learning. It's the process of having the student repeat back in their own words what they have learned from a lesson or a book. **Children narrate by nature.** When we read great stories they are more likely to remember these stories and enthusiastically retell it to others.



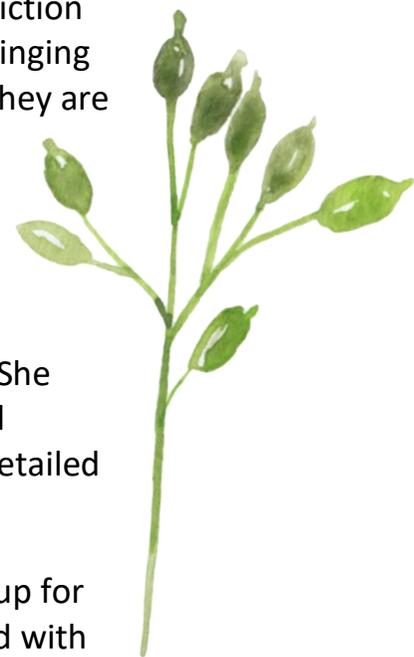
As they get older and develop better writing skills, children can also write their narrations. Narrations can also include creative outlets such as painting or drawing.

Living Books

“And all the time we have books, books teeming with ideas fresh from the minds of thinkers upon every subject to which we can wish to introduce children.”

— Charlotte Mason

Living books are an alternative to boring textbooks. They include fiction and non-fiction literature written by an author with a talent for bringing the story alive and engaging children’s ideas and imagination, so they are able to better understand and retain the information they learn.



Nature Studies

Ms. Mason had a strong belief that children should explore God's creation and spend time outdoors to develop a better education. She encouraged them to keep [nature journals](#) in order to discover and identify plants and wildlife. She also encouraged [writing poetry](#), detailed descriptions, and even notes about the weather in these journals.

I highly recommend you visit [Handbook of Nature Study](#) and sign up for their Outdoor Hour Challenge Newsletter. It's free and jam-packed with information.

And we absolutely love using [Exploring Nature with Children](#) year round!

Picture Study

[Art appreciation](#) was another important aspect of Ms. Mason’s program. Her recommendation was to work with one artist at a time for a few days and allow the student to look at the painting then take it away and have them narrate back from memory what they saw. Then continue this process for several days with the same painting and watch how the student’s understanding expands as they continue to look at it and discuss it.

Enrichment Studies has fantastic resources for picture studies.

Hymn Study

The singing of hymns at home and of the hymns and canticles in church should be a special delight. —Charlotte Mason

Ms. Mason believed that appreciation for life could come from music. For the [study of hymns](#), she recommended teaching one hymn at a time until students learn every verse by memory, usually working on one hymn per week.

I love this [Hymn Study plan](#) from Simply Charlotte Mason and also their [Singing the Great Hymns curriculum](#). We enjoy Hymn Study in the morning along with our [Morning Basket](#).



Shakespeare

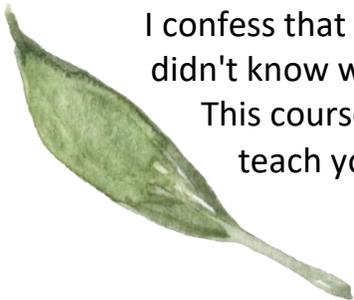
The work of Shakespeare helps to develop language arts through poetry. Ms. Mason wanted students to have a wonderful use of words and vocabulary and believed that poetry is the best of literature. She introduced students to [poetry through Shakespeare](#) by reading plays, then reading specific lines from the play in Shakespeare's words and asking students to narrate back in their own words what they believed Shakespeare was saying.

I confess that for as much as I wanted to introduce my children to Shakespeare, I didn't know where to begin until I enrolled myself in [10 Weeks of Shakespeare](#).

This course is wonderful, and it gives the confidence and the resources to teach your children from Kindergarten to High School.

Foreign Language

Ms. Mason believed that learning a new language should be approached in the same way that we learn our own, hearing it and speaking it first, then learning to read and write it. Have students say a series of statements, such as "I pick up the book. I open the book.", while performing the action helps reinforcing it. By



performing everyday activities with the new language, students begin to think in the new language.

Speaking five languages fluently myself, let's just say I've learned a trick or two on how to learn a new foreign language. Unquestionably, the best way to learn a language is by complete immersion in it.

Loving foreign languages as I do and understanding how to learn a language quickly, I have created a Hebrew online course that helps homeschool families read, write, and speak the basic Hebrew language in only 10 weeks. This course is much more than a simple foreign language course. It also teaches important aspects of the Jewish culture so necessary to not only understand the language, but also to understand Scriptures.

Learn more about Hebrew for Homeschoolers at hebrewforhomeschoolers.com.

Habit Training

The habits of the child produce the character of the man. - Charlotte Mason

Ms. Mason considered the formation of habits in a child a mother's habit. Habit formation is an important part of a Charlotte Mason homeschool approach. Charlotte Mason describes training habits as laying down the rails. What a wonderful picture in a mother's mind as she focuses on teaching her children good habits and trains them the way they should go as the Bible commands us.

My favorite resource for habits training it's called [Laying Down the Rails](#) from Simply Charlotte Mason. I do recommend the full bundle that comes with a workshop DVD on habits formation taught by Sonya Shafer.

To get started with the Charlotte Mason Method, you'll want to familiarize yourself with the methods. It is not about a set curriculum, but more about a group of methods you can teach using a variety of resources.

Where to Find Great Resources and Curricula for a Charlotte Mason Homeschool Approach:

- [Grammar Galaxy](#)
- [Ambleside Online](#)
- [A Gentle Feast](#)
- [My Father's World](#)
- [Sonlight Curriculum](#)
- [NOEO Science](#)
- [Apologia](#)
- [Truth Quest History](#)
- [Beautiful Feet Books](#)
- [Brookdale House](#)
- [Queen Homeschool](#)
- [Math Lessons for a Living Education](#)
- [Loving Living Math](#)
- [Notgrass History](#)
- [Diana Waring](#)
- [Our Journey Westward](#)
- [Northwood Press](#)
- [Maple Tree Publications](#)



To find the best resources to get you started and support your educational journey, be sure to also visit [Simply Charlotte Mason](#), [Amazon](#), and [Christianbook.com](#) for tools, guides, journals, living books and more.

Favorite Charlotte Mason Homeschool Books:

Some of the best books for learning the Charlotte Mason Homeschool Approach include:

- [A Charlotte Mason Companion](#)
- [For The Children's Sake: Foundations of Education for Home and School](#)
- [A Charlotte Mason Education: A Home Schooling How-To Manual](#)
- [Mother Culture: For a Happy Homeschool](#)

-> Check out also my [big list of homeschool book recommendations](#).

Charlotte Mason Homeschool Focused Podcasts

If you enjoy listening to Podcasts, like I do, some of the best I've found include:

- [A Delectable Education](#)
- [The Mason Jar](#)
- [Simply Charlotte Mason](#)
- [A Charlotte Mason Education](#)
- [Charlotte Mason Says](#)

Other Blog Posts About a Charlotte Mason Homeschool Education

- [What Is the Charlotte Mason Homeschool Approach?](#)
- [10 Things I Love About A Charlotte Mason Education](#)
- [Our Unhurried Charlotte Mason Homeschool Approach](#)
- [Our Relaxed, Restful & All About Charlotte Mason Homeschool](#)
- [An Organic Charlotte Mason Homeschool](#)
- [Charlotte Mason Tidal School](#)
- [A Modern Charlotte Mason Homeschooling](#)
- [Modern Secular Charlotte Mason](#)
- [A Second Generation Homeschooling Family](#)
- [From Public School to Homeschool Charlotte Mason's Way](#)
- [Our First Year of Homeschool: Approach, Routine & Curriculum.](#)
- [Reflections As We Near The End Of Our Homeschooling Journey](#)
- [It's a Wabi Wonderful Life](#)
- [Cultivating a Life of Order and Wonder](#)
- [Charlotte Mason How-To](#)
- [An Organic Charlotte Mason Homeschool](#)

Tips for A Techie Charlotte Mason Mom

I am a Charlotte Mason homeschool mom who loves technology! I was automating my dad's business when I was only 14. At age 17 I started college pursuing a degree in IT then I fell in love with graphic design on the way. So, I always loved technology!

I also love reading and in fact, I devour books (lately audiobooks), so when I discovered living books and what a [Charlotte Mason](#) education was all about, I knew it it was just the homeschool approach for us. But how to blend my love for all techie things to it was still a mystery to me until last year.

I'm a techie Charlotte Mason homeschool mom. Our kids are living in a digital era with a feast of ideas that can be easily reached through the internet. And why not take advantage of all the brilliant digital resources we find online?

What Would Charlotte Do? (WWCD?)

Ms. Mason was an educator ahead of her time. She knew how to blend the innovative with the classical and traditional. Often I ask myself "What would Charlotte do?" "Does this go with her philosophy of education?" And the answer is many times "Yes! I think she would have loved that!"



Here are my 5 best tips for a techie Charlotte Mason homeschool mom:

1 - Give each child a tablet!

This was probably the cheapest techie investment I have ever done and one of my favorites! Last year I purchased three kindle fires, one for each child, for less than \$50 each. I was amazed by how we could access everything we needed just like from my iPad that cost twelve times more!

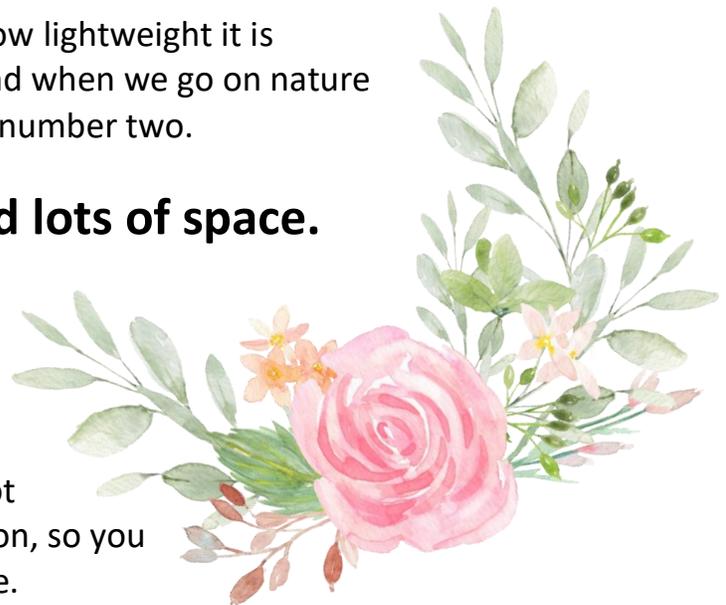
The same apps we used on my iPad, we use on the Kindle Fire. My kids can take pictures, make videos, read ebooks, listen to audiobooks, watch documentaries on [PureFlix](#), read their Bible, practice their spelling, take their CTCMath lessons and much more.

Because here in British Columbia, we homeschool under a Christian school, each of my kids has to share pictures or videos of their work with our support teacher, their tablets come in so handy! They get to choose what work they are most proud of to take pictures and upload to FreshGrade with their comments, which they now are able to type on their own. That means less work for mom and more ownership of their own accomplishments.

My favorite benefit of using Kindle Fires is how lightweight it is compared to my iPad. So easy to carry around when we go on nature walks, for example, and that leads me to tip number two.

2 - eBooks save you money and lots of space.

You can access hundreds of amazing books without taking any space on your shelves or having to buy one more bookcase. Ebooks are great!! Not only this saves you money but saves trees as well. They cost a lot less and some will come with a whisper option, so you can listen to it while following on your device.



Remember I said we take our tablets for our nature walks?

Having access to our Handbook of Nature Studies and our Burgess' nature study guides or nature stories ([many which I only paid a dollar for](#)), and many great books that are too heavy to carry on a backpack for a long nature walk is such a blessing! With lighter backpacks, we can use the space to carry our nature notebooks, colored pencils, pastels, and snacks instead.

3 - Audiobooks are not cheating.

Listen to an audiobook is like listening to a read aloud. The only difference is that mommy is listening and enjoying the story alongside her kids cuddling on the sofa, driving, laying down before bedtime, etc. I love audiobooks! My kids love audiobooks. Last summer we went through the whole Chronicles of Narnia, Anne of Green Gables, The Pilgrim Progress, and other books just driving around.



In fact, those audiobooks got us excited to get out of the house and go explore someplace new so just we could listen to the next part of the story.

Like ebooks, audiobooks don't take any space and you can take them anywhere with you. But audiobooks are not only good for kids. For me as a busy mom, audiobooks are the only way that I can enjoy listening to a good book while cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and other chores. Having an Audible membership helps me to read at least one new book every month.

4 - Digital resources are mostly inexpensive and many times free!

Homeschool bundles, anyone? If you are a homeschool mom reading this, which I think you are, you know that every year there are amazing homeschool bundles available for very little money and with lots of amazing resources! These gems can be stored on your computer and use it per your convenience for years to come. And as a Charlotte Mason homeschool mom, I can buy bundles especially designed for our homeschool approach.

How about free printables? There are so many great printables out there. You can download [notebooking pages](#), lapbooks, and [unit studies](#).

5 - Outsource your homeschool with online courses.

As a techie Charlotte Mason homeschool mom, I am always on the lookout to find [great courses my kids can take online](#). Especially courses on subjects I don't have a clue how to start teaching them like Shakespeare, for example.

My kids and I have enjoyed an amazing variety of online courses at [Schoolhouseteachers.com](#). They have a lot of Charlotte Mason friendly courses in all subjects like Bible, history, grammar, poetry, foreigner languages, all sorts of music courses, art appreciation, and more We also love our [online math](#) and [chalk pastel courses](#).

There is nothing wrong with outsourcing your homeschool! I heard moms saying that they feel like they need to teach everything to their kids on their own but at the same time they are exhausted and on the verge of burning out. Online courses, allow me to sit down and read a book while they watch their lesson, or start dinner or fold the laundry.

There are great online courses that can enrich your homeschool out there! I am teaching [Hebrew for Homeschoolers](#) online and we're taking Latin also online. What courses would your homeschoolers enjoy taking?

Dear Charlotte Mason homeschool mom, you can make technology your friend too!

Yes, I know that there are a lot of bad things out there, but there is also a world of information and opportunity for us to learn through the web. Our tablets are only used for learning here and we still limit how much time our kids spend online.

But going back to my question: "What would Charlotte do?". I think she would have taken advantage of all the great educational resources online to teach her pupils. Perhaps she would even enjoy watching nature documentaries on Pureflix or exploring jungles and deserts through the National Geographic channel.

