



# Lesson Preparation

---

Ashley Olander

Charlotte Mason Poetry

# My Journey

## Part One

Started homeschooling with  
Classical Conversations™

Teacher intensive



# Agenda

---



## Principles

- Who are the participants in a lesson?
- What are their responsibilities?

## Practices

- What to do
- What not to do



# The Principles

---

- Everything in the Charlotte Mason method is based on guiding principles. Lesson preparation is no exception.
- To understand what we need to do to prepare for lessons, we need to first understand the roles and responsibilities of each participant.



# The Four Participants

---

## *The Holy Spirit*

- The Supreme educator of mankind and the teacher of your child.

## *Books & Things*

- Convey the living ideas to inspire your child and interact with the Holy Spirit.

## *The Student*

- Does the work of the learning by reading and narration. The student builds intellectual and moral habits as a result of self-education.

## *The Parent*

- Provides an atmosphere that allows the Holy Spirit, book, and student to work together to the best of their ability. Doesn't overstep bounds.



# The Holy Spirit

## *The Teacher*

- “... we believe that the Holy Spirit is the Supreme Educator of mankind, dealing out knowledge to men as they are able to receive it, and educating those who *will* to be educated in things intellectual and moral, practical and spiritual.”
- “In the things of science, in the things of art, in the things of practical everyday life, his God doth instruct him and doth teach him, her God doth instruct her and doth teach her. Let this be the mother's key to the whole of the education of each boy and each girl.”



# The Holy Spirit

## *The Teacher*

*Subjects that are under the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit.*

- “The child’s faith and hope and charity—that we already knew; his temperance, justice, prudence and fortitude—that we might have guessed; his grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic—... his practical skill in the use of tools and instruments, from a knife and fork to a microscope, and in the sensible management of all the affairs of life—these also come from the Lord, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.”



# Books & Things

## *The Ideas*

---

“I have tried to show how necessary it is to sustain the intellectual life upon ideas, and, as a corollary, that a school-book should be a medium for ideas and not merely a receptacle for facts.”

“Ideas are of spiritual origin, and God has made us so that we get them chiefly as we convey them to one another, whether by word of mouth, written page, Scripture word, musical symphony; but we must sustain a child's inner life with ideas as we sustain his body with food.”

“Now, thought breeds thought. It is as vital thought touches our minds that our own ideas are vitalized in the contact, and out of our ideas comes our conduct of life. That is why the direct and immediate impact of great minds upon his own mind is a necessary factor in the education of a child.”





# Books & Things

## *The Ideas*

---

“‘Education is the Science of Relations’; *that is, a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts*”

“A small English boy of nine living in Japan, remarked,—‘Isn’t it fun, Mother, learning all these things? Everything seems to fit into something else.’ The boy had not found out the **whole secret; everything fitted into something within himself.**”

“Our aim in education is to give children vital interests in as many directions as possible—**to set their feet in a large room.**”



# The Student

*Does the work of learning*

“One thing at any rate we know with certainty, that no teaching, **no information becomes *knowledge* to any of us until the individual mind has acted upon it**, translated it, transformed, absorbed it, to reappear, like our bodily food, in forms of vitality. Therefore, teaching, talk and tale, however lucid or fascinating, effect nothing until self-activity be set up; that is, ***self-education*** is the only possible education; the rest is mere veneer laid on the surface of a child's nature.”

“Now the object of narration is to compel the child to perform the ‘act of knowing,’ by which knowledge is acquired and assimilated. If a child has to tell the substance (as distinct from the words) of what it has read, it must (1) concentrate its attention on the reading and (2) sift out its knowledge and arrange it in order, thereby making it its own.”



# The Student

*Habits are formed by what the child does.*

---

**“The intellectual habits of the good life form themselves in the following out of the due curriculum in the right way.** As we have already urged, there is but one right way, that is, **children must do the work for themselves.** They must read the given pages and tell what they have read, they must perform, that is, what we may call the *act of knowing.*”

“The importance of rightly directing the *habits* of thought and feeling during the *whole* stage of Bodily growth, comes to be still more apparent, when we regard those habits as really *shaping* that Mechanism, whose subsequent action mainly determines our Intellectual and Moral character, and, consequently, the whole course of our conscious lives.”

“Attention is not the only habit that follows due self-education. The habits of fitting and ready expression, of obedience, of good-will, and of an impersonal outlook are spontaneous bye-products of education in this sort. So, too, are the habits of right thinking and right judging ; while physical habits of neatness and order attend upon the self-respect which follows an education which respects the personality of children.”



# The Parent

## *Sets the atmosphere*

*Don't overstep  
your bounds*

- “But the fussy parent, the anxious parent, the parent who explains overmuch, who commands overmuch, who excuses overmuch, who restrains overmuch, who interferes overmuch.”
- “The teacher who reads and stands aside to let the child also read may rest assured that mind food will produce mind growth and his part is to exercise ‘masterly inactivity.’”
- “The children must know themselves to be let alone, whether to do their own duty or to seek their own pleasure. The constraining power should be present, but passive, so that the child may not feel himself hemmed in without choice. That free-will of man, which has for ages exercised faithful souls who would prefer to be compelled into all righteousness and obedience, is after all a pattern for parents.”





# The Parent

## *Sets the atmosphere*

### The parent's responsibilities.

- To provide the structure, the living materials, and a love of learning.
- To create an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit, the book, and student can work together to the best of their ability.
- “For as Physiology teaches that external agencies exert their most potent influences on the *bodily* Organism during the period of its development, so Educational experience proves that nothing exerts so great an influence on the *psychical* Organism, as what may be called the *moral atmosphere* which is breathed by it, from the very earliest stage of conscious existence, up to the time of its full maturity. This influence—exerted, on the one hand, through the medium of the body, on the other, through the unconscious action of *example*, in shaping these habits of Feeling which give the *tone* to the character...”

# The Four Participants

---

## *The Holy Spirit*

- The Supreme educator of mankind and the teacher of your child.

## *Books & Things*

- Convey the living ideas to inspire your child and interact with the Holy Spirit.

## *The Student*

- Does the work of the learning by reading and narration. The student builds intellectual and moral habits as a result of self-education.

## *The Parent*

- Provides an atmosphere that allows the Holy Spirit, book, and student to work together to the best of their ability. Doesn't overstep bounds.



# The Practice

What to do

What not to do



# The Practice

*What to do*

---

## Prepare yourself

- Learn the Method
- Understand how each type is supposed to work.
- Model lifelong learning

## Prepare the year

- Build your own “programme”

## Prepare the term

- Preparing subjects
- Oral Lessons

## Prepare the week

- Lesson Type 1
- Lesson Type 2





# Prepare Yourself

---

*Learn the  
method*

- Read the volumes and narrate to yourself or a friend

N.B. 3 —For methods of teaching the various subjects see *Home Education*, 5/6, *School Education*, 5/- (P.N.E.U. Office).

Understand *how*  
each lesson type  
is supposed to  
work

- Home Education
- School Education
- A Philosophy of Education



# Prepare Yourself

## *Model lifelong learning*

---

### Mother's Education Course

- *Divinity*
- *Physiology & Health*
- *Mental and Moral Science and Education*
- *Nature Lore and the Elements of Science*

### Learn about Nature

- ***“Mothers and Teachers should know about Nature—The mother cannot devote herself too much to this kind of reading...”***

### Develop your own interests in these subjects.

- *Brush drawing*
- *Nature journaling*
- *Book of Centuries*
- *Reading*
- *Handicrafts*



# Prepare the Year

Build your  
own  
“programme”

- How do we do that?
  - *Outside assistance*
    - Consultations
    - Fully Planned Curriculum
  - *Plan it yourself*
    - The programmes in the CMDC
    - Charlotte Mason Poetry – *Parent’s Review* and other articles
    - Online groups – Facebook
    - Curriculum Templates



# Prepare the Year

---

- Even with outside assistance you have to supplement with programmes
- Choose Artists and Composers to study
- Look over math scope and sequence
- You might change books or subjects
- Can take several weeks to plan





# Prepare the Term

---

- Pick special studies, songs, recitations
- Reading Lessons
- Math
- Gather and print materials



# Prepare the Week

---

## Lesson Type 1

*Book/Student Led*

- Pick up where you left off
- Make notes of last narration
- Prepare living elements—why are you including?

## Lesson Type 2

*Instructor Led*

- Gain understanding in what you're teaching
- More preparation is required

## Pre-reading

- No hard and fast rule
- Bible
- Citizenship

# Prepare the Week

## *Lesson Type 1*

---

### *Early Years*

“In every case the reading should be consecutive from a well-chosen book. Before the reading for the day begins, the teacher should talk a little (and get the children to talk) about the last lesson, with a few words about what is to be read, in order that the children may be animated by expectation; but she should beware of explanation, and, especially, of forestalling the narrative. Then, she may read two or three pages, enough to include an episode; after that, let her call upon the children to narrate.”

### *Later Years*

“We cannot do without the oral lesson—to **introduce, to illustrate, to amplify, to sum up.** My stipulation is that oral lessons should be **few and far between**, and that the child who has to *walk* through life,—and has to find his intellectual life in books or go without,—shall not be first taught to go upon *crutches*.”



# Prepare the Week

---

## Lesson Type 1: Book / Student Led

- Poetry
- Literature
- History
- Geography
- Nature Lore



# Prepare the Week

## *Lesson Type 1*

---

### *Method of Lesson*

“...when the narration is over, there should be a little talk in which moral points are brought out, pictures shown to illustrate the lesson, or diagrams drawn on the blackboard.”



# Prepare the Week

---

## Lesson Type 1: Living Elements

- Maps
- Pictures
- Diagrams
- Sand Tray





# Prepare the Week

## *Lesson Type 2*

### *Subjects of Instruction*

- “Mathematics depend upon the teacher rather than upon the text-book and few subjects are worse taught; chiefly because teachers have seldom time to give the inspiring ideas, what Coleridge calls, the ‘Captain’ ideas, which should quicken imagination. How living would Geometry become in the light of the discoveries of Euclid as he made them!”
- “But perhaps the immediate point is that the teaching of grammar by its guiding ideas and simple principles, the true, direct, and humble teaching of grammar, without pedantry and without verbiage, is, we may venture to believe, accompanied by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, of whom is all knowledge. “



# Prepare the Week

---

## Lesson Type 2: Instructor Led

- Math
- Grammar
- Handicrafts
- Foreign Language



# Prepare the Week

---

## Lesson Type 2: Instructor Led

- Prepare ways for the student to do the learning
- Don't prepare lectures
- Understand what you're teaching
- More preparation is required



# Prepare the Week

## *Pre-reading*

---

### Pros

- They're living books – who wouldn't want to read them?
- It could facilitate richer discussion with the child and help with introducing the book

### Cons

- It may lead the parent to not allow the child to discover for him/herself
- It may stress out the parent or lead to burn-out
- It may lead to the child to believe he/she can't learn on his/her own



# Prepare the Week

## *Pre-reading*

---

### Bible

- Chief knowledge
- Read the passages ahead of time
- Read a commentary for your benefit
- See if living elements are needed
- Look for customs to be explained, such as Jairus's daughter; not every time
- Omit passages if necessary

### Citizenship

- Make sure you understand how to pronounce names
- Omit passages if necessary



# Prepare the Week

## *Pre-reading*

**Method of Bible Lessons.** “Read aloud to the children a few verses covering, if possible, an episode. Read reverently, carefully, and with just expression. Then require the children to narrate what they have listened to as nearly as possible in the words of the Bible... Then, talk the narrative over with them in the light of research and criticism. Let the teaching, moral and spiritual, reach them without much personal application. **I know of no better help in the teaching of young children than we get in Canon Paterson Smyth's *Bible for the Young*.**”

“...but where it is necessary to make omissions, as in the Old Testament narratives and Plutarch's *Lives* for example, **it is better that the teacher should always read the lesson which is to be narrated.**”



# Prepare the Week

## *How I prepare*

I look over the math concept to ensure my understanding and have mental math questions marked and ready.

Go over foreign language pronunciation.

Get all reading lesson materials ready.

Look over geography and plan according to form.

Skim books to see if living elements are needed. I typically write a note from the week before if I happen to identify where a living element such as a painting would bring the lesson to life.



I spend about one hour on Sundays preparing the above



# What not to do

---

*Don't predetermine what the narration should cover in order to check answers*

- “There should be no misconception. [Narration] is not a teacher's device designed to find out if the child has completed a given task. It is not an act of verbal memory...”

*Don't predefine words*

- “A child unconsciously gets the meaning of a new word from the context, if not the first time he meets with it, then the second or the third: but he is on the look-out, and will find out for himself the sense of any expression he does not understand.”

# What not to do

## *Don't spoon-feed information*

- "... in PNEU we depend upon fine books by authors who may have made the subjects their life work. For instance, since the teacher is not to *instruct* or *lecture*, or force-feed the material..."

## Living Elements

### *Don't include dry as dust materials*

- "A first condition of this vitalising teaching is that all the thought we offer to our children shall be *living* thought; no mere dry summaries of facts will do..."
- "Like the body, again, the mind rejects insipid, dry, and unsavoury food..."
- Facts only
- Not high quality images
- Limiting imagination



# What not to do

## *Don't Prepare the "moral" of each lesson*

- "We may not point the moral; that is the work proper for children themselves and they do it without fail."
- "As for moral lessons, they are worse than useless; children want a great deal of fine and various moral feeding, from which they draw the 'lessons' they require."



# What not to do

*Don't bury instructor-led subjects with too much teaching.*

- “...the verbiage of a lecturer is not assimilated. There is no education but self-education and only as the young student works with his own mind is anything effected.”
- “Do teachers always realise the paralysing and stupefying effect that a flood of talk has upon the mind?”
- “Such teaching as enwraps a child’s mind in folds of many words that his thought is unable to penetrate, which gives him rules and definitions, and tables, in lieu of ideas—this is teaching which excludes and renders impossible the divine co-operation.”



# My Journey

## Part Two

---

Read *For the Children's Sake*

Switched to the life-giving teaching of Charlotte Mason

Continue to read Charlotte Mason to understand her method

