



# The Perfect Charlotte Mason Education

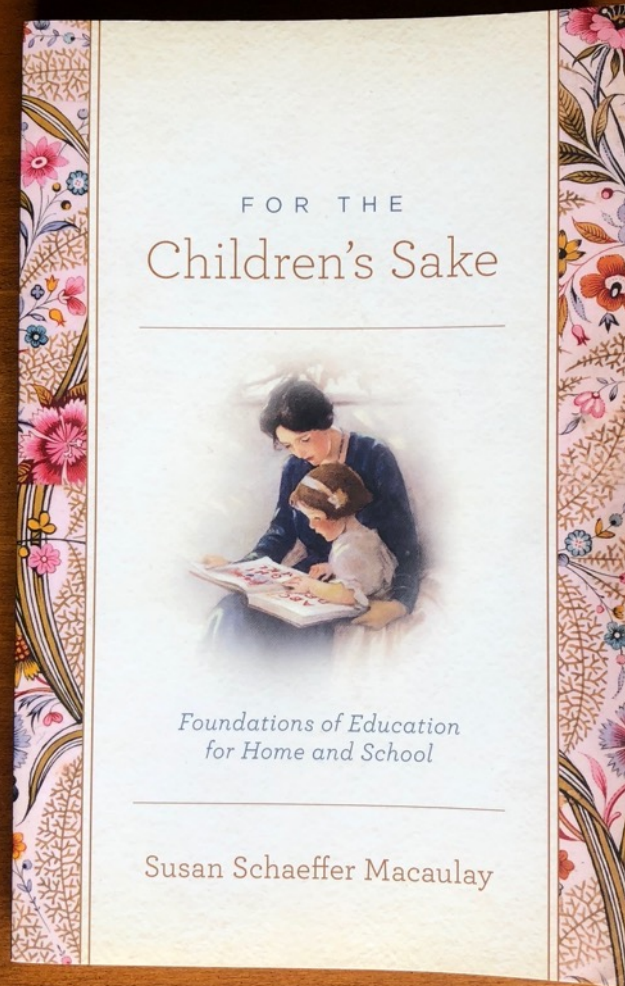
Art Middlekauff

[CharlotteMasonPoetry.org](https://CharlotteMasonPoetry.org)

# The Four Stages of a Charlotte Mason Educator



# Interested



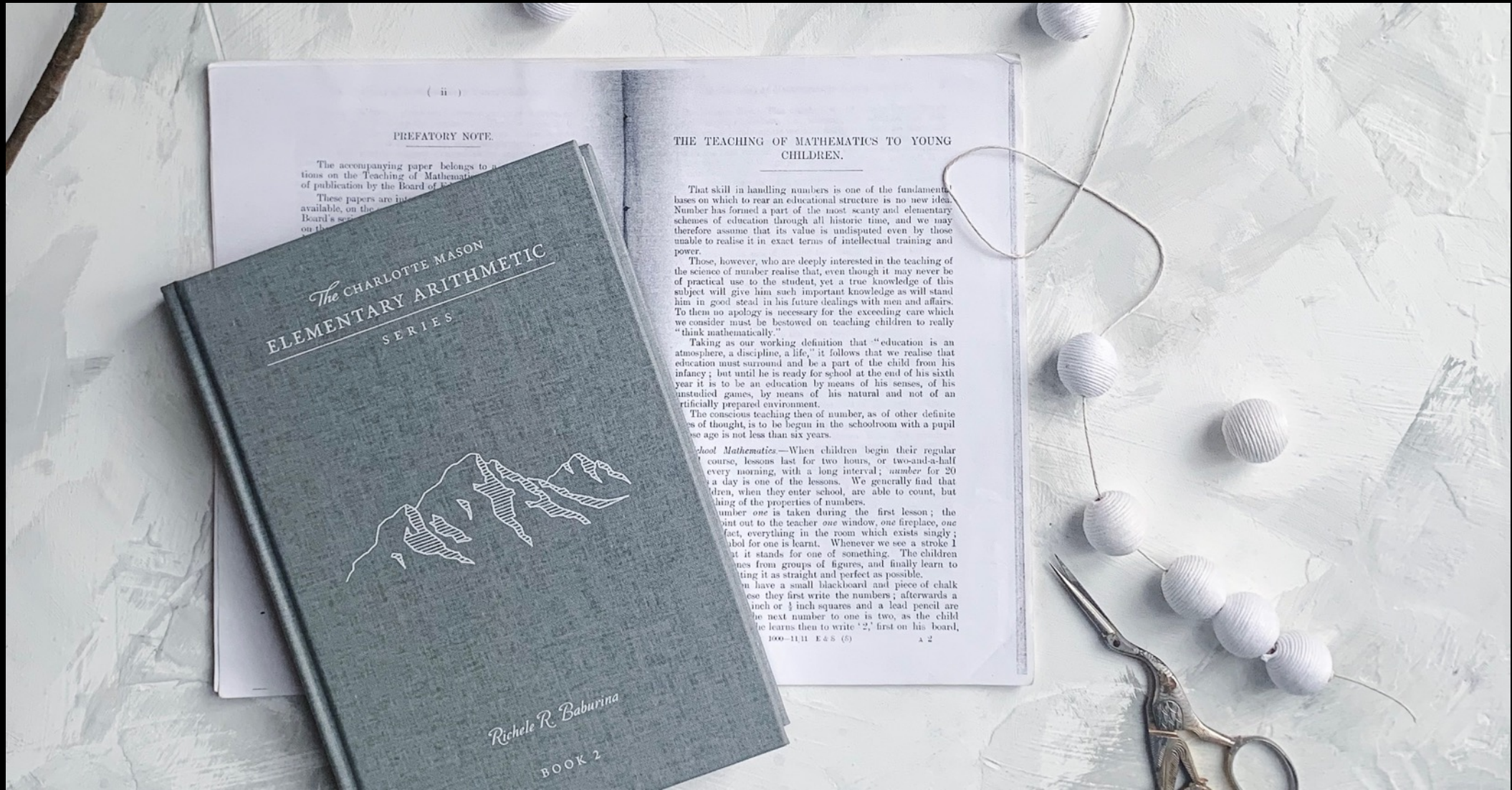


# Influenced





# Intentional





# Impeccable



# This Presentation is for You

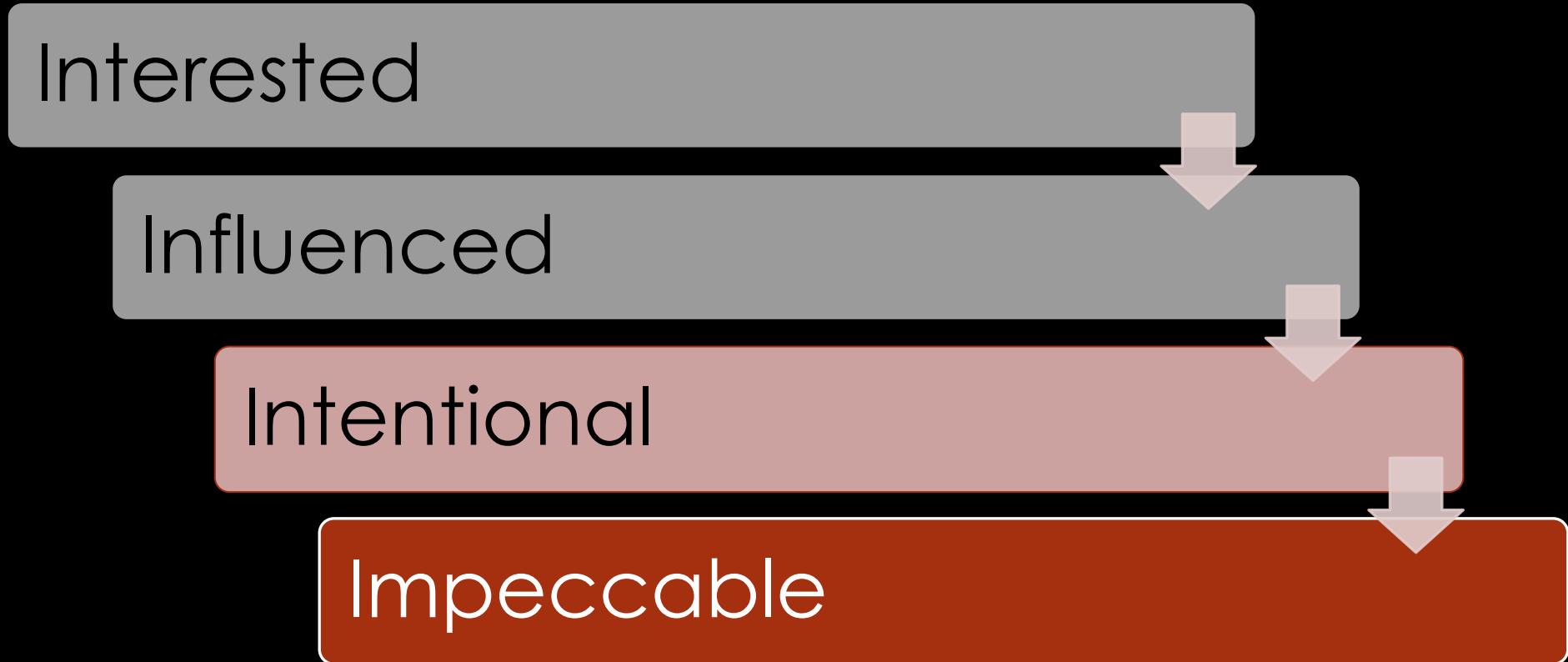
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# What is the allure of the perfect CM education?





# What is the allure of the perfect CM education?

The Good

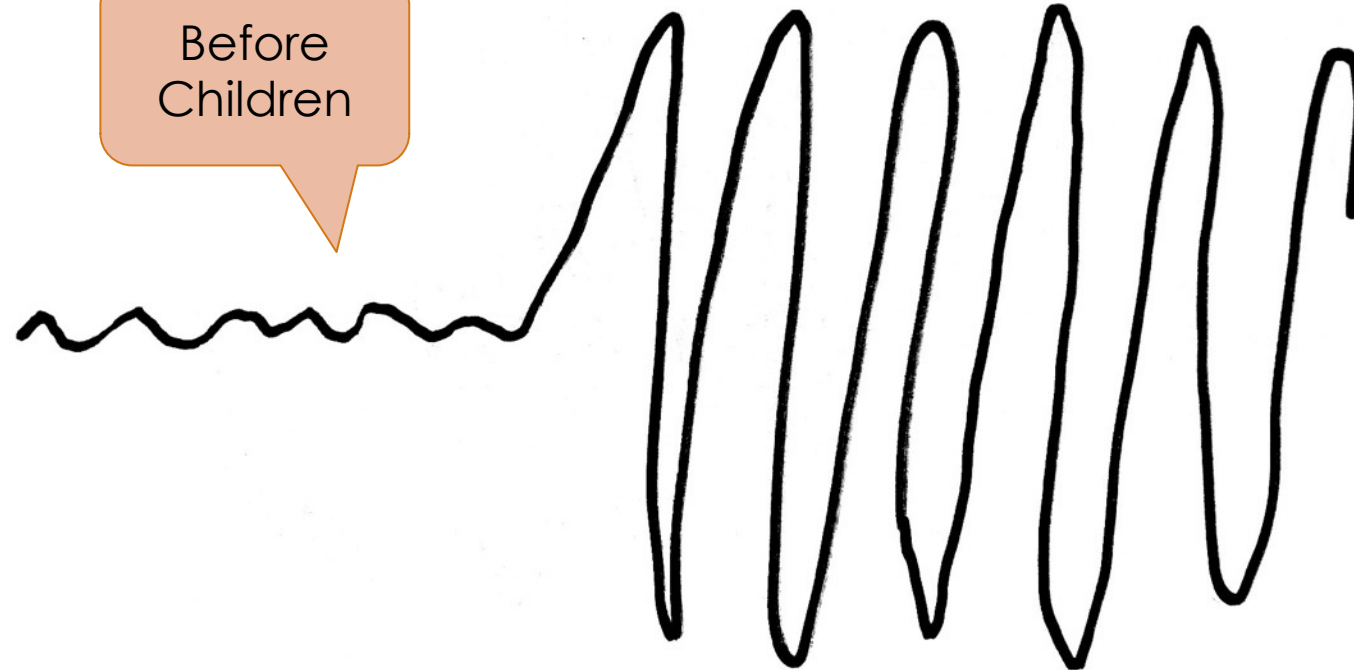
The Bad

The Ugly

The Good

# The Happiness Graph

Happiness



Age

# What do you want for your children?

- To have a lifelong love for Jesus
- To fulfill their unique calling in the world
  - To attain maturity and joy

How do you know if you're  
on track to get them there?



# Proxy Indicator

“Indirect measure or sign  
that approximates or represents  
a phenomenon in the absence  
of a direct measure or sign”

# Proxy Indicator

I can't measure if I'm on track to  
give my children everything they  
need

But I can measure how close  
I am to the perfect Charlotte  
Mason education

The Bad

# Conforming to Your Tribe





The Ugly

Vanity



The Ugly

Pride

The “perfect Charlotte Mason  
education” offers a way to prove  
that you really are better than  
someone else

# Why “the perfect CM education” fails

The Good

The Bad

The Ugly

1. It is not attainable

2. It is not authentic



Attainable

## Up to Age 6

“‘I make a point,’ says a judicious mother, ‘of sending my children out, weather permitting, for an hour in the winter, and two hours a day in the summer months.’

That is well; but it is **not enough**. In the first place do not send them; if it is anyway possible, **take them...**

And long hours they should be; not two, but four, five, or **six hours** they should have on **every tolerably fine day**, from April till October.”

Attainable

## By Age 12

- (a) To grasp the sense of a passage of some length at a single reading: and to narrate the substance of what they have read or heard.
- (b) To spell, and express themselves in writing with ease and fair correctness.
- (c) To give an orderly and detailed account of any subject they have studied.
- (d) To describe in writing what they have seen, or heard from the newspapers.
- (e) They should have a familiar acquaintance with the common objects of the country, with power to reproduce some of these in brushwork.
- (f) Should have skill in various handicrafts, as cardboard Sloyd, basket-making, clay-modelling, etc.
- (g) In Arithmetic, they should have some knowledge of vulgar and decimal fractions, percentage, household accounts, etc.
- (h) Should have a knowledge of Elementary Algebra, and should have done practical exercises in Geometry.
- (i) Of Elementary Latin Grammar; should read fables and easy tales, and, say, one or two books of 'Caesar.'
- (j) They should have some power of understanding spoken French, and be able to speak a little; and to read an easy French book without a dictionary.
- (k) In German, much the same as in French, but less progress.

Attainable

## By Age 12

(l) In History, they will have gone through a rather detailed study of English, French, and Classical (Plutarch) History.

(m) In Geography they will have studied in detail the map of the world, and have been at one time able to fill in the landscape, industries, etc., from their studies, of each division of the map.

(n) They will have learned the elements of Physical Geography, Botany, Human Physiology, and Natural History, and will have read interesting books on some of these subjects.

(o) They should have some knowledge of English Grammar.

(p) They should have a considerable knowledge of Scripture History and the Bible text.

(q) They should have learned a good deal of Scripture and of Poetry, and should have read some Literature.

(r) They should have learned to sing on the Tonic Sol-fa method, and should know a number of English, French, and German Songs.

(s) They should have learned Swedish Drill and various drills and calisthenic exercises.

(t) In Drawing they should be able to represent common objects of the house and field with brush or charcoal; should be able to give rudimentary expression to ideas; and should be acquainted with the works of some artists through reproductions.

(u) In Music their knowledge of theory and their ear-training should keep pace with their powers of execution.

*School Education*, pp. 301–302



Attainable

Age 17

- *La Fleur Merveilleuse*, by M. Zanacois
- *Aeneid VII*, by Virgil
- *Soll und Haben*, by Freytag
- *Il Purgatorio*, by Dante

Attainable

# Habits

- Attention
- Courtesy
- Devotional reading
- Diligence
- Eager inquiry
- Gentleness
- Neatness
- Praise and thanksgiving
- Prayer
- Prompt Obedience
- Promptness
- Quick perception
- Reading
- Regularity in devotions
- Reverence in thought, attitude, act, and speech
- Self-control
- Sunday-keeping
- Sweet thoughts
- The thought of God
- Truthfulness

Attainable

# Atmosphere

“we shall permit no *pseudo* Art to be in the same house with our children”

“The child who sits down to a crumpled or spotted tablecloth, or uses a discoloured metal spoon, is degraded—by so much”

“The children should be brought up to think that when once an article is made unsightly by soil or fracture it is spoiled, and must be replaced”

“the lawless habit of scattering should not be allowed to grow upon children”

Attainable

The Ugly





## Authentic

“If a human being were a machine, education could do no more for him than to set him in action in prescribed ways, and the work of the educator would be simply to adopt a good working system or set of systems.

But the educator has to deal with a self-acting, self-developing being, and his business is to guide, and assist in, the production of the latent good in that being, the dissipation of the latent evil, the preparation of the child to take his place in the world *at his best*, with every capacity for good that is in him developed into a power.”

Authentic

“We cannot of course overtake such a programme of work, but we can keep it in view; and I suppose every life is moulded upon its ideal.”

Authentic

Interested

Influenced

Intentional

Impeccable



# Charlotte Mason: Mentor or Master?

Understand  
your calling



Fulfill your  
calling

Charlotte Mason  
can help

Charlotte Mason  
can help



## Mentor

- Your calling comes first
- The principles serve you
- CM is a means to an end
- You take responsibility for the results

## Master

- The rules come first
- You serve the principles
- The means becomes the end
- You blame Charlotte Mason for the results

Someday you will answer to your  
grown children for the choices you  
made as a parent

# My View

Charlotte Mason's ideas are best suited to helping a parent fulfill her holy obligations, not to easing her conscience or giving her assurance that she is doing a good job

# Three Keys to an Authentic Charlotte Mason Education

Conscience

Context

Calling

“the woman receives from the Spirit of God Himself the intuitions into the child’s character, the capacity of appreciating its strength and its weakness, the faculty of calling forth the one and sustaining the other, in which lies the mystery of education, apart from which all its rules and measures are utterly vain and ineffectual.”



Conscience

# Primary Factors

Authentic

- Your Beliefs
- Your Values

Conscience

# Commentary Example — Acts

Authentic



- By Ellen M. Knox, first principal of an Anglican girls' school in Canada
- “Commentary” published in 1908
- Book review by Charlotte Mason in *The Parents' Review* in 1910
- In use in the Parents' Union School from 1913

Conscience

## Your Values

Authentic

- What do you want your children to learn?
- Your children are citizens of the entire world, not only the West
- “our sense of the oneness of humanity reaches into the remotest past, making us regard with tender reverence every relic of the antiquity of our own people or of any other”

Conscience

## Your Values

Authentic

- The authentic CM educator follows her conscience
- I go on record:  
I categorically reject any and all arguments for confining CM history at any level to Western history

1. Determine what Charlotte Mason implemented in the historical PNEU schools
2. Deduce the principles which informed those practices
3. Apply those principles to the North American, 21st-century context
4. Apply those principles to your unique situation



Calling

# Your Child is Unique

Authentic

“And each person, in whatever station, requires preparation for his calling;

first, the **general preparation** of being a person ready and fit;

and next, a **special preparation** of training and teaching for the particular work in question.”

# Two Kinds of Preparation

## Life

“The question is not,—how much does the youth *know*? when he has finished his education—but how much does he *care*? and about how many orders of things does he care? In fact, how large is the room in which he finds his feet set? and, therefore, how full is the life he has before him?”

“it is the man who has read and thought on many subjects who is, with the necessary training, the most capable whether in handling tools, drawing plans, or keeping books.”

## Vocation

“Some boys know, at an early age, that they are being brought up for the navy, for example.”

“In order that a girl may get the full advantage of the course of reading in Form VI. she should do the work of that form until her 17th birthday. Then, still in connection with the P.U.S., she should work for Matriculation during her last year (17–18), as a girl would work from any school... It is desirable that a candidate for Matriculation should throughout her course keep up her P.U.S. work in Latin and Mathematics.”

*School Education*, pp. 170–171; *Towards a Philosophy of Education*, p. 3  
*Ourselves*, Book I, p. 205; *The Parents' Review*, vol. 30, p. 71

Calling

“I did it for Charlotte Mason”

Authentic

Joyous results from questionable motives:  
“street cred”

- Brush drawing
- Latin
- Plutarch
- Sloyd

Calling

Two Different Goals:  
Both Developed by Knowledge  
Both Taught in a Living Way

Authentic

**Life**

Caring

**Vocation**

Competencies

Calling

# The Living Way

Authentic

“We are told that the Spirit is life; therefore, that which is dead, dry as dust, mere bare bones, can have no affinity with Him...

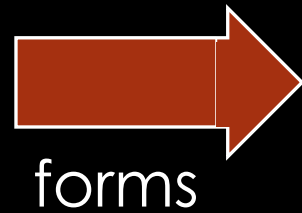
... there is **no subject** which has not a fresh and living way of approach.”



- There are no formulas
- However, a framework can help you make your decisions

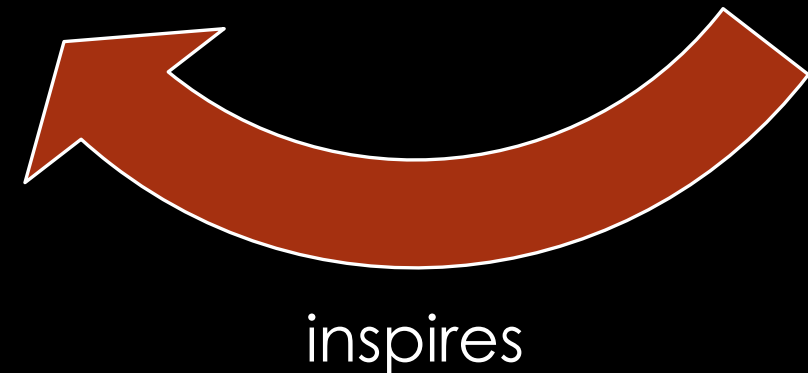
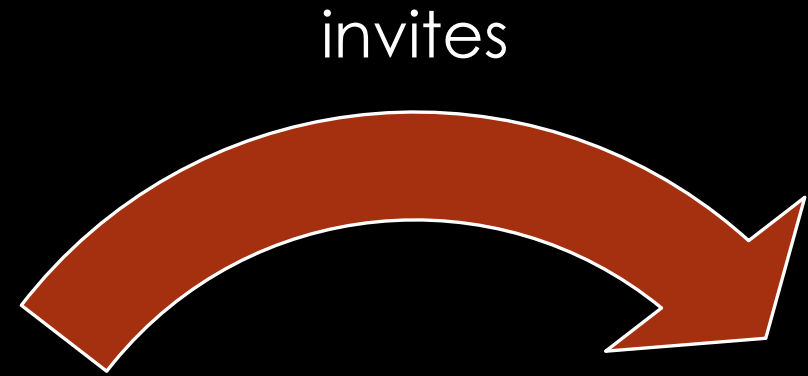
# The Instruments

Atmosphere  
Circumstances



Discipline  
Habit

Life  
Ideas



# The Instruments

## Atmosphere

Masterly Inactivity  
Mother's Attitudes  
People  
Home Environment

## Discipline

Lifestyle  
Corrective

## Life

Books  
Things

# The Banquet

## Knowledge of God

Bible  
Catechism  
Prayer Book  
Church History

## Knowledge of Man

History  
Literature  
Citizenship  
Composition  
Grammar  
Foreign Languages  
Latin  
Art  
Music

## Knowledge of the Universe

Science  
Nature  
Geography  
Mathematics  
Dance  
Physical Exercise  
Handcrafts  
Work

# Questions for Reflection

# The Holy Spirit

1. What does your intuition tell you is working or not working in your homeschool?
2. What do you feel bad about? What do you feel good about?
3. Are you teaching every subject in a living way? Do some subjects not seem living to you?



# Preparation

1. Do one or more of your children have a sense of future calling?
2. What competencies do you want your children to have to prepare them for their vocation?
3. Do you have a plan and a schedule to develop those competencies?
4. Are your children developing “care” for a wide range of subjects?

# Atmosphere

1. Do you practice enough masterly inactivity?
2. What ideas are your children breathing in from your spiritual atmosphere – the ideas that rule your life?
3. What opportunities do your children have to meet people outside your family?
4. Is your home physically set up in a way that reflects your values?

# Discipline

1. Do you leverage consistent routines as much as possible?
2. Does your family have a lifestyle that reflect your beliefs about education?
3. Is there anything your family does that undermines the habits you are trying to form?

# Life

1. Are all of the elements of the banquet reflected in some way in your homeschool?
2. Do your children participate in the banquet in ways outside of standard lessons? (e.g., choir, team sport, etc.)