



HOMESCHOOLING HIGH SCHOOL WITH MEREDITH!

FINISH WELL II RUNNING THE RACE TOGETHER!

Running the race together is more fun than running alone, and sometimes the only way to finish the race. When we find ourselves knocked down and on the sidelines, watching the other runners pass us by, we need another runner to stop, give us a hand, and help us get back into the race.

Finishing well can require healthy relationships! Last time we talked about how our relationships with our husbands and children can help us finish the homeschooling race well. Today, we'll talk about homeschooling with other families and our support system.

HOMESCHOOLING WITH OTHER FAMILIES



Most of us homeschoolers reject age segregation. Instead, we believe that life is best with all ages mixed together. Unfortunately, the rest of the world is not on the same page, so we get to church and the family is divided up--teens to youth group, kids to Children's Church, and parents to the "Married with

Kids Sunday School Class." Of course, the church is waking up and ridding itself of age segregation in some parts of the world and maybe you belong to a church like mine that mixes every age together.

Homeschooling families long to connect with other families who are on the same page when it comes to being together as families. Parents want to be with other parents who like having their kids around and kids who enjoy hanging out with their parents. What a wonderful thing to be friends with other homeschooling families, not just to coop together, but to enjoy life and ministry together.

When the Nolette family joined our church in 2000, we became instant friends. When Laura pulled her older sons out of public elementary school, I had a homeschool buddy. Soon we were co-oping once a week and calling it "History Day." Those weeks turned into years and, to this day, we still have "history day" once a week. Sometimes "history day" has been government or economics class, but we have continued to enjoy a friendship over the years. Our children are all close friends and we have helped each other through many difficult times, including a period where we only had one working vehicle between both families!

Friendships are built slowly over time and involve conflict. Our children have had to work through conflicts with one another and so have the parents. But we value this friendship and so we work through any obstacle that comes up. Because we share the same values, we reinforce these values for one another's children. Our children have peers to stand with who believe in honoring their parents, courting instead of dating, dressing modestly, and listening only to Christian music.

Our families serve the Lord together! We have visited nursing homes, played together on the worship team, studied in the same Bible studies, and been part of many church "work days." Learning, ministering, and growing in the Lord have been serious things for both families, but most of our times together are filled with joking and laughter. We make happy memories together that will last a lifetime in our children's hearts.



When homeschooling with other families, consider the following:

- Values
- Relationship with the Lord
- Church commitment
- Education style and values
- Family "culture" and habits
- Personalities within each family
- Educational and spiritual goals of each family
- "Do we click?"

SUPPORT GROUPS

Throughout my homeschooling journey (since 1991), I have been part of various homeschool support groups. They have been a blessing to my entire family, providing fellowship and educational opportunities.

Support groups can provide co-op opportunities, equipping sessions for moms, field trips, ministry opportunities, play dates for children, and moms-nights-out. Every support group has its own flavor, strengths, and weaknesses.

All the support groups I have been a part of have been led by Christians who are serious about their walk with the Lord. But, many of my fellow support group members have had different values when it comes to child rearing, manners, courtship, media, educational values, and wardrobe choices. I have

had to ask myself, "Do I feel comfortable with the other families and their values?" Sometimes, I have realized that we are just too different and I need to be part of a group whose values are more akin to my own. Other times, the Lord has used me to impact other moms and their families, who end up sharing our family's convictions.

When looking for a support group, think about what you are needing to supplement your homeschooling experience.

Do you need encouragement and training? Then look for a group that offers meetings just for moms with training and ministry time.

Do you want opportunities for your children to build friendships? Then look for a group that offers field trips and other activities for your children to participate in.

Do you want help with academics? Then look for a group with a co-op or enrichment classes.

Visit a few times before making a decision about joining. Ask yourself:

- "Are the ladies and children friendly to my children and me?"
- "Do I feel comfortable here, like I fit in?"
- "Are there opportunities for me to serve other homeschooling moms and their children?"
- "What things does this group offer that will benefit our family's homeschooling journey?"

As you run the homeschooling race, may you link arms with like-minded families and finish well!