

The Artios Home Companion Series

Curriculum Preface

Welcome to The Artios Home Companion Series! The curriculum and resources contained in The Artios Home Companion Series are the same as those which we use in our accredited academic program at our Artios Academies locations. Thus, you can be assured that it is a quality curriculum. However, The Artios Home Companion Series goes far beyond the normal tendency to promote retention of facts and random pieces of information. The developers of this series know that a child is not educated simply because he or she has completed a particular curriculum or logged a certain number of hours. From God's viewpoint, "educated" is something you become.

As home educators, many of us desire to give our children a Biblical education, grounded on Biblical principles. Many home educators apply Biblical principles to WHAT is taught, but it is also important to apply Biblical principles to HOW the subject is taught. The reality is that many of us were educated in a system that had priorities, principles, and philosophies that, at their very core, were non-Biblical — or even worse, diametrically opposed to a Biblical philosophy of education. Yet, we want to educate our children differently.

As a mom who home-educated her children for 23 years and as a teacher of hundreds of home-educated students for more than 25 years, my search and study for a Biblical approach to education, one that goes beyond just random facts and information, has been an ongoing journey. In many instances, I found myself learning right alongside my own children while retraining my thoughts, approaches, and methodology to fit what I saw in Scripture. I often wished that I could just buy one complete curriculum and be done with it. However, my heart told me that to meet the needs of each of my children individually, I needed to put much thought, prayer, and research into pulling together a unique curriculum that adapted to each of them. It was difficult and time-consuming to pull together pieces from various sources, knowing what to include and what to leave out.

Then, after going through this laborious process, it was even more daunting to realize the REAL work hadn't even begun. With materials selected and lesson plans ready, my work was just beginning. When it was time to execute the plan, I would need to be available to find those teachable "heart" moments with my children that would educate and stimulate so much more than just the mind. My goal with each of my children has been to graduate a well-rounded, heart-instructed student, who knows the source of real knowledge and wisdom.

As my husband John and I began to envision how a Biblical approach to education would play out in our personal lives, in the lives of each of our children, and then in the life of our family, several key and core values began to surface. These core values formed a firm foundation upon which to build our lives and our family. They don't reflect methodology. Instead, they reflect a foundation upon which to base methodology. These values, in and of themselves, don't describe what we do. Instead, they reflect the foundation upon which we make strategic choices in fulfilling what God has called us to do.

In a sense, these core values represented our worldview of education. "Christianity Today" defines worldview as follows:

- A set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world.
- More simply put, *worldview* refers to is the sum total of what we believe about the most important issues of life.¹

As we began home educating our children, we discussed what we felt were our God-given responsibilities and priorities in raising our children. The attempt to define and verbalize these priorities

has been an ongoing process. However, I assure you that without these priorities, or when we lose sight of them, we are greatly tempted to make decisions based on fear, peer pressure, tradition, or many other ungodly influences.

Throughout The Artios Home Companion curriculum, the choice of eclectic resources, the application of truths, the choice of emphasis, and the leading ideas emphasized all reflect these core values. During the development of The Artios Home Companion, we have tried to apply a Biblical worldview and the core values that have appeared throughout our study of Scripture. It is our prayer that this curriculum will be of great help to those parents wishing to reflect these core values to their own children and will save them the time of pulling together a myriad of resources.

What are these core values?

- God's Word reigns supreme and is the guiding force behind our thoughts and actions in every area of life.
- The heart is the focus of spiritual growth.
- God created man as multi-faceted and unique individuals.
- God's Word "equips" the children of God.
- Our lives and choices should reflect God's character to those around us.
- The family is a God-ordained institution through which the next generation is nurtured and disciplined.

Let's take a look at each of these core values in more depth.

God's Word reigns supreme and is the guiding force behind our thoughts and actions in every area of life.

God's Word speaks to the issues that we face including questions regarding the origin of the world, marriage, friends, entertainment, government, economics, and yes, even education. Because of this, God's Word and the principles found therein should be pointed out and emphasized in those "teachable moments" found in every academic and arts related topic and in every situation that we face as we "walk along the way" with our students. It is not enough to throw Scripture at a particular topic in arts and academics. Our goal should be to begin and end our study of each subject with God's Word as the foundation and the lens through which we view it.

1 Timothy 3:16 and 17 states this very plainly when it says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." In the Greek, this is the only instance of the word "Artios" appearing and it means: competent, equipped, thoroughly prepared. Isn't that what we want for our children? We want them to be competent, equipped, and prepared for whatever God has for them and for whatever the future holds. The answer to making sure they are equipped is not found in the perfect curriculum, the perfect methodology, or the perfect teacher. The source for equipping our children is God's Word. If we believe this to be true, Scripture must reign in every aspect of life, instruction, and education. This belief should motivate us to ponder and consider the influence (or lack thereof) of God's Word in every academic and artistic subject.

In 2 Peter 1, Peter talks about the power of Scripture as including "all things that pertain to life and godliness." Thus, a Christian's worldview, including his approach to education, is to be based on Biblical truth. To hurry through those teachable moments and opportunities, or to fail to see opportunities to teach our students how to apply God's truth as the guiding force behind their lives, is to miss a vital aspect of a truly Biblical approach to education. I love how Paul states this in I Corinthians 2:12-16 when he says, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by

the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ‘For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.”

As I have journeyed through a study of Scripture to find what God says about the education of my children, I have realized time and time again that my thinking was “off” from what Scripture said was to be my priority. Colossians 2:8 gives a charge that many of us should take to heart: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Many times, in the area of education, I have found myself influenced by a leader’s personality, by peer-pressure, by friends, by fear, and by tradition. If my number-one core value and the guiding force behind my thoughts and actions in every area of life is that God’s Word reigns supreme, then that should apply to my approach and to my priorities in the education of my children. It is to Scripture that I should first turn when making decisions in this and every area of my life.

In developing this curriculum, one of our goals has been to assist you in educating and equipping your children by providing you with a framework and specific help in finding those teachable moments, those times when God’s Word can be applied to the topic at hand, so that amazing discussion and interaction can take place between you and your child as you “teach them in the way.”

The heart is the focus of spiritual growth.

For a Christian educator, our primary focus should always be the instruction of the heart. Noah Webster, in his 1828 dictionary, defines the word heart as “the seat of affections and passions as of love, joy, grief, enmity, courage, pleasure.” He defines “educate” in this way: “to bring up, as of a child; to instruct; to inform and enlighten the understanding; to instill into the mind principles of arts, science, morals, religion, and behavior. To educate children well is one of the most important duties of parents and guardians.”

The heart is referred to hundreds of times throughout Scripture and its mention can be put into the following categories defined by Ruth Beechik, author of *Heart and Mind*: thought, emotion, motive, physical, spiritual, moral, general or a combination of these. We instruct the heart of our students thoroughly and diligently. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

When we focus on the instruction of the heart, those things that we find important in education and in outward performance and appearance are forever altered. Although it is a noble aspiration to have your children do well in school, it is not a supreme priority. Although it is a noble aspiration to have them achieve high honors in various areas of life, it is not a supreme priority. It is not enough to focus on outward performance and conformity, our goal should be the instruction of our child’s heart. We must remember that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” — a wisdom that is much more than a head knowledge, but rather leads to a heart change.

Throughout this curriculum we have tried to find opportunities to assist you, not only with teaching the academic subjects, but by pointing out those times when instruction of the heart is vital. The study of history, literature, science, the arts and more, provides ample opportunities to demonstrate “heart matters” to our children.

God created man as multi-faceted and unique individuals.

Many of us have been educated in a secular system or perhaps private schools in which a secular philosophy of education has become prevalent. A secular philosophy of education views a student as a

wonderful and complex human organism just waiting to be filled by a learning process that is measured simply by the retention of facts and information.

In contrast, a Biblical view of education views education and learning as a personal process that not only involves a student's heart, but also his soul and mind. With this view, education can be measured by wisdom, understanding, and a knowledge of the truth. Our children should be seen as "whole" and unique individuals whose whole being should be addressed through the process we call education.

Thus, our instructional approach throughout The Artios Home Companion Series is to implement a creative and integrative approach to learning. Just as each individual is unique and multi-faceted, life, in and of itself, is also multi-faceted. When a student cannot understand how his subject matter interacts with real life, or with other aspects of study, the motivation and enthusiasm for learning will not be as strong as it could be. When students realize that what they are studying is not alienated from other subjects or from real life, there is a mental and emotional engagement. This where real progress begins.

Our subjects are integrated, not only by time period, but also by theme and emphasis, which will be referred to throughout the curriculum as "Leading Ideas."

Not only is our approach to content and instruction creative, integrative, and multi-faceted, but throughout The Artios Home Companion Series, the learning activities and assessments are also creative, integrative, and multi-faceted, addressing various types of learning styles and teaching personalities.

Last but not least, if you are teaching children of various ages within your home, we have integrated weekly topics at the appropriate age development level, to allow for more family interaction, study, and discussion. This integration avoids having each student studying something different and the teacher (that's you), being pulled in numerous different directions.

God's Word "equips" the children of God.

While traveling this 23-year journey of home education, I came across a book called *The Noah Plan* from The Foundation for American Education. Within that book, the authors contrast two historic worldviews of education. When we say that we have as a core value the fact that God's Word "equips" the children of God, it is important to define the word "equip." To many the word "equip" applies only to areas of knowledge, academic competence, usefulness in society, and the ability to produce. However, the philosophy that I found within this valuable resource, *The Noah Plan*, contrasted two very different views of someone who is "equipped" or "educated."

The authors contrasted a Hebrew mindset of education with a Greek mindset of education. I have included their chart:

	Hebrew Mindset	Greek Mindset
Education Begins:	Knowledge of God	Knowledge of Man
Essential Quality:	Holiness of God	Transference of Knowledge
Education is for:	All the people	Wealthy and leisure classes
Education is to develop:	The whole person	Aptitudes and talents
Why Learn:	To revere God	To comprehend
Object of Education	To know God and submit to the authority of His Word	To know thyself

While a knowledge of man, a transference of knowledge, a knowledge of oneself, the ability to comprehend, and the development of specific aptitudes and talents may be important, do you notice the difference in focus between the two columns? One column focuses on man, the other on God.

A few years ago, I wrote a book titled: *Beginning With the End in Mind*, which is basically a study of 2 Peter 1 and its application to various areas of our lives. In no uncertain terms, Peter tells us that our two supreme priorities as Christians are to know God and to grow to become more like Him. If we “begin with the end in mind” in education, with a focus on what God says is most important, then our approach and priorities in education will be transformed.

Our lives and choices should reflect God’s character to those around us.

The study of history based on the lives and characters of individuals provides a superb means by which our focus on God’s character helps us discern the ways in which the lives of significant historical figures did or did not portray true reflections of their Creator. It has been said that the study of history should prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past. However, it is one thing to study history. It is a completely different approach to study history through the study of individuals, to study the arts through the lens of historical events and their influences, and to study literature as a reflection of the time in which it was written. By studying these subjects and others in an integrative method, not only are the subjects themselves given new meaning in the lives and minds of our children, but these individuals, events, actions, and products are all shown to be related. “No man is an island,” and nothing could show this fact to be more true than the study of subjects in an integrative and creative format.

It is all too common to study subjects in isolated and mindless file folders of information, never taking the time to show our students how life and LIVES interact with one another. As children of the Most High God, we are to be a reflection of God to the world around us. But often we think that our actions and our choices make little difference in the grand scheme of things. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our lives have the ability to influence for good or for evil, for positive action or for negative apathy. Studying history, literature, the arts, and other subjects as they relate to each other helps students develop an integrated way of thinking and reasoning. On a spiritual level, it helps them see their own lives as a reflection of God in their unique spheres of influence.

The family is a God-ordained institution through which the next generation is nurtured and disciplined.

The family is God’s first institution shown in Scripture, and by the very nature that it was created by God as a reflection of Christ and His church, it has important meaning and an aspect of holiness and sanctity. Yet, each family is made up of individuals. Because of that, there are many variables in our approach to educating our children as individuals.

It is our hope and prayer that The Artios Home Companion Series will be able to literally come alongside you and assist you in your role as the God-ordained institution through which the next generation is nurtured and disciplined. We hope that you will find contained within the pages of these resources the structure, guidance, and flexibility needed to approach the students within your family as individuals, all while you move together as a family unit to bring honor and glory to the One of whom we are to be a picture.

1. *Exploring Christianity - Truth*, <http://www.christianity.co.nz/truth2.htm>