

Homeschool Group Study Guide

CHAPTER 1 – MAY

1. At the convention, Julianne was confronted with several people's approaches toward homeschooling, and each was convinced that their way was the best. Have you experienced that? How did you arrive at your current homeschool approach and why is it a good fit for your family?
2. When Lisa prayed for Julianne, she prayed that God would lead Julianne even though Julianne didn't know where she was going. Look up Hebrews 11:8. What are some other examples from the Bible when people followed God even though they didn't know what would happen?
3. Do you get overwhelmed and start feeling discouraged when you go to homeschool conventions? Why or why not? What are some reasons you like to go (if you do)?
4. What are you afraid about in your life right now?
5. Pray with the mom next to you for God's courage to walk in faith and follow where He leads you, even when it's scary.

CHAPTER 2 – JUNE

1. At the birthday party, did you think Vicky (Julianne's mother-in-law) was trying to be critical or do you think Julianne was being oversensitive?
2. After the birthday party where Julianne felt criticized by her mother-in-law, Julianne's mother reminded her of Galatians 1:10. What does that verse say? What is something in your life that you've done because you are serving the Lord, even if other people think it's nuts?
3. Is your extended family supportive of homeschooling? If not, how do you handle it?
4. Pray with the mom next to you that you would both serve the Lord and not others.

Optional Memory Verse: Galatians 1:10

(This is NASB, but use whatever version you want. If you don't have a verse memory system, try using spiral-bound index cards, one card for each verse.)

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. – Galatians 1:10

CHAPTER 3 – JULY

1. In this chapter, Joy had her Salvation Army meltdown. What did Julianne learn from that? What was your Most Embarrassing Mothering Moment Ever? What did you learn from it (other than to pray *that* didn't happen again)?

2. After the meltdown, Julianne thinks, "talk about pride going before a fall." Look up Proverbs 16:18 and Micah 6:8. Have there been any parenting moments where pride went before a fall in your life?
3. Julianne's friend Vanessa helps her with getting organized. Is this an area you are good at (neatness/organization) or are your strengths in different areas? What is one thing God has helped you with in this area? (Don't focus on what you're not doing.)
4. Pray with the person next to you that God would reveal areas of pride in your life, and ask for His help with those. Pray for a humble heart that leans on Him.

CHAPTER 4 – AUGUST

1. In California, at a Chick-fil-A, Julianne presses Daniel to finish his journal page, even though it is a struggle. Do you think that was the right thing to do? Then, she thinks about not doing any more for the trip, because he might not be ready yet. How do you know if your child is not developmentally ready for something or if he is just being lazy? How do you handle it if he isn't ready yet?
2. As they sit on the beach, Julianne thinks, "If I teach my children nothing else, I want to teach them to recognize true treasures – not jewels or palatial mansions, but this amazing world God created, the precious people around us, and His eternal Truth. For where my children's treasures are, there their hearts will also be." Look up Matthew 6:20-21. What do you want your children to treasure?

3. What is something your children treasure right now? What seems to be on their hearts and minds most often?
4. Take a moment and pray with the person next to you for each of your children to treasure God above the other distractions in their lives.

Optional: With your homeschool group, sing How Great Thou Art (sing without music unless you happen to have a piano and a piano player in the room.) The words are at the end of the August chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – SEPTEMBER

1. Why does Julianne feel so discouraged after her first few days of school? What are some of the things that are hard for you about homeschooling?
2. Why do you think Julianne felt like she had to include so many things on her schedule?
3. Pair up with a mom older/younger than you. If you are the less experienced mom, ask the more experienced mom any questions you have about your schedule. See if she has any ideas for you. If you are the more experienced mom, share a typical day's schedule with the younger mom (now or when you had kids her age), *especially any things you have cut out because they weren't priorities for your family.*
4. Pray with the mom you just paired up with for God's wisdom as you find a routine that works well for your family and ages of your children. (The next time you see your prayer partner, ask her how it's going.)

CHAPTER 6 – OCTOBER

1. At the homeschool co-op, Julianne vents to her friends about how hard homeschooling is for her. Do you have friends you call when you're having a bad day (or year)? What can we do or say to encourage each other? How might our responses unintentionally discourage someone in need of encouragement in the homeschool journey?
2. Julianne tells her friends that she looks around at all the other moms and they seem like they can do everything. She wonders what is wrong with her. Have you ever found yourself believing this lie? What is the truth?
3. The co-op moms talk about how their husbands often get what is left over at the end of the day. What is one way you can show your husband he's important too this week?
4. Is there anything you are doing to impress other people that might need to be cut out in order to have more time and energy for your husband?
5. Pray with the person next to you for God's wisdom to know what activities are most important, and which, if any, could be cut out.

Optional Memory Verse: Matthew 6:20-21

(This is NASB, but use whatever version you want. If you memorized the Gal. 1:10 verse, see if you can quote it to your prayer partner.)

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
– Matthew 6:20-21

CHAPTER 7 – NOVEMBER

1. Julianne is very aware of her character flaws (she's messy, she has a weakness for McDonald's and Diet Coke, she yells at her kids). What are some of her strengths that she forgets about? What are some of your strengths as a mother (that you might forget about)?
2. Julianne starts to compare her children's education with her sister-in-law's. Do you compare yourself against other schools or a relative's children? What are the things your children learn by being at home that those children don't?
3. What are some ways you cultivate in your children an appreciation for God's beauty around them and His still, small voice? How have you seen technology (TV, computer, phones) affect your children? Look up I Kings 19:11-12. Do you think that verse applies here? If so, how?
4. Tell the person next to you one strength you think she has as a mother. Pray with her and thank God for all the gifts He's given you both to mother your children.

CHAPTER 8 – DECEMBER

1. After yelling at her kids, Julianne is humbled to tears on the kitchen floor and has to apologize to her children and ask their forgiveness. Why is this important?
2. Why did Julianne get angry? What was the root of it? Can you think of a situation in the last week where you responded in anger to your children? What is one way to respond differently the next time that situation happens?
3. Look up James 1:19-20. Also, 2 Timothy 2:24-25. Why is this so hard? How can we do this as moms—be slow to become angry? If God has helped you with anger in your life, share with the other moms some things you have learned.
4. At the YMCA, Julianne reads some verses on her verse memory cards. Do you memorize verses? How has God used them in your life? Look up Psalm 127:1 and Psalm 127:3. How have you seen that children are a gift from the Lord?
5. Take a moment to pray with the mom next to you to confess anger, pray for God's wisdom on how to be more gentle and patient with your children, and thank Him for the gift of them.

Optional Memory Verse: Lamentations 3:22-23

(This is NIV, but use whatever version you want. If you memorized the other verses, see if you can quote them to your prayer partner.)

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. – Lamentations 3:22-23

CHAPTER 9 – JANUARY

1. In January, Julianne decides to keep homeschooling even though it's hard, because that's what she feels God is leading her to do. What is something you've done even though it was hard? Was it worth it?
2. How would you describe Julianne and John's relationship? Do you think he was a support to her in homeschooling? Why or why not?
3. In the beginning, Julianne set out to prove her mother-in-law wrong about homeschooling. What is her motivation after spending some time praying about it?
4. Look up Isaiah 54:13. Discuss.
5. Pray with the mom next to you. Thank God for providing a husband who supports you in homeschooling and works so that you can stay home. Thank Him for your husband's job, or pray for him if he needs a job.

CHAPTER 10 – FEBRUARY

1. Did you think the homeschool mothers in the book represented a diverse group? Why do you think the author chose to only include Christian mothers in the

homeschool co-op? Do you think the book reinforced stereotypes about homeschoolers or dispelled them?

2. Would you call Lisa, Julianne's mentor? Look up I Thessalonians 2:8 and Titus 2:3-5. How did Lisa apply those principles with Julianne?
3. Julianne mentions serving her friend Elizabeth and paraphrases Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Please look up those verses. What are some practical ways you teach your children to serve as you go about your life?
4. Pray with the mom next to you and thank Him for this group of moms you are with right now.

Optional Memory Verse: Isaiah 54:13

(This is NIV, but use whatever version you want. If you memorized the other verses, see if you can quote them to your prayer partner.)

All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace. – Isaiah 54:13

CHAPTER 11 – MARCH

1. School is getting easier for Julianne now. Why? What has changed since the beginning of the school year?
2. Julianne mentions one of the advantages of homeschooling is that her children get to spend time with their little brother. Do you think your children are closer to each other because you homeschool? What are the other advantages you've seen for your family?

3. Julianne mentions movement and hands-on activities being good for her son. Do you have children who struggle to sit still and pay attention? What are some ways you've helped them learn?
4. Please look up I Corinthians 3:6. Who brings the growth?
5. Thank God for bringing the growth in your children. Ask Him for their hearts to grow strong in His love.

CHAPTER 12 – APRIL

1. At the sheep farm, Julianne and her friend Vanessa discuss their schooling decisions. Why have you chosen the schooling options you have? Have people criticized you for it? Do you feel you have to defend your decision to others?
2. Look up Isaiah 40:11. Discuss. How has God led you and your husband in your parenting?
3. What are some practical ways to show grace to other mothers, even if their parenting decisions are different from yours?
4. Thank God for leading you in your decisions. Pray that instead of looking around to see what other moms think, we would keep our eyes on the Shepherd, who is leading us.

Optional Memory Verse: Isaiah 40:11

(This is NASB, but use whatever version you want. If you memorized the other verses, see if you can quote them to your prayer partner.)

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. – Isaiah 40:11

CHAPTER 13 – MAY

1. What is Julianne's true gift to Frank and Vicky? How would you describe her feelings toward Vicky at the end of the book?
2. What was the symbolism of the yellow roses?
3. Discuss the role of the art, poetry, and hymns throughout the book. Which ones stood out to you and why? How did they parallel the story?
4. What do you think Julianne learned during the year? What did you take away from the book?
5. With the mom next to you, thank God that He has given you the gifts to teach your children. Pray that He would help you apply whatever you learned from this book and be an encouragement to another mom. (If you memorized the verses in this study, try to quote them to your prayer partner.)

Optional: With your homeschool group, sing Be Thou My Vision (without music unless you happen to have a piano and a piano player in the room).

*Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.*

Homeschooling Resources

This is a work of fiction. However, I wanted it to be a resource for homeschoolers and potential homeschoolers. The fictional items from the book are listed first; followed by real resources for homeschooling and life.

Fictional

- Classical Advantage, Exploring God's Creation, and A Natural Education are fictional programs
- Dalton Prep and Redbud Christian Academy are fictional schools.
- *Superfood Mommy* is a fictional blog.

CHAPTER 1 – MAY

BOOKS

- Welchel, Lisa: *So You're Thinking About Homeschooling* (an excellent overview of the different approaches to homeschooling.)
- Wilson, Todd: *Help! I'm Married to a Homeschooling Mom!* (and Todd's book *Lies Homeschooling Moms Believe* is a great one for moms.)

OTHER RESOURCES

Different Homeschool Approaches – Many homeschoolers use a mix of ideas and materials from different methods. (You don't have to figure out what 'approach' you want to use before you start. Your theories may change once you try something.)

- Classical - *The Well Trained Mind* is a good introduction to the Classical method of homeschooling. For a classical memory program, please visit www.classicalconversations.com.

- Charlotte Mason - www.amblesideonline.org. A *Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola is a good introductory book. Another website is www.simplycharlottemason.com.
- Literature-based – Sonlight (www.sonlight.com), Tapestry of Grace (www.tapestryofgrace.com)
- Unschooling– <http://www.holtgws.com/whatisunschoolin.html>
- Unit Studies – www.konos.com
- Hands-On, mix of Charlotte Mason and Classical – My Father’s World (www.mfwbooks.com)
- Traditional – some of the larger companies include: A Beka (www.abeka.com), Bob Jones (www.bjupress.com), Rod and Staff (www.rodandstaffbooks.com), and Saxon (www.saxonhomeschool.hmhco.com).
- There are many other educational approaches including Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, and Montessori that can be adapted to homeschooling. With any approach, use discernment and wisdom to decide which aspects are best for your family.
- Many of these resources are Christian-based resources. If you want secular resources, the book *The Well-Trained Mind* has many suggestions. Saxon is a well-respected secular program.

Other products, available at amazon.com or teacher supply stores

- Handwriting Without Tears – multi-sensory handwriting program for pre-K and up
- Laurie Toys – hands on for toddlers
- Apologia science books
- Butterfly houses, ant farms
- Counting bears
- Melissa & Doug puzzles
- Math Manipulatives: Unifix cubes, pattern blocks, Cuisenaire Rods (dried beans, toothpicks, Cheerios, and buttons work well too)

General Websites

- www.thePioneerWoman.com/homeschooling - blog by Ree Drummond, homeschooling section by Heather Sanders and Kristen Chase. Good online community.
- www.aholyexperience.com – encouragement for moms, written by Ann Voskamp, author of *One Thousand Gifts* and homeschooling mom, about giving thanks for the ordinary.
- www.owlhaven.net – written by Mary Ostin, a homeschooling mom of ten, with information on living on a budget, homeschooling, and other practical topics.
- www.wholeheart.org – written by Sally Clarkson, author and speaker on motherhood and home education.
- www.lisawhelchel.com – Lisa Whelchel’s site. The homeschooling tab has links to lots of online resources for those just getting started.
- www.Familymanweb.com – Todd Wilson’s encouragement for dads and homeschooling moms.

CHAPTER 2 – JUNE

BOOKS

Board Books

- Boynton, Sandra: *Moo, Baa, La La La*
- Brown, Margaret Wise: *The Big Red Barn*
- Fox, Mem: *Where is the Green Sheep?*

CHAPTER 3 – JULY

None

CHAPTER 4 – AUGUST

BOOKS

Easy Reader Books

- McNulty, Faith: *Listening to Whales Sing*
- Turner, Ann and Barrett, Robert: *Dust for Dinner*

Picture Books

- Bishop, Jennie: *The Princess and the Kiss (a purity story for girls)*

OTHER RESOURCES

Websites for Educational Opportunities in Orange County, California

- The Ocean Institute www.ocean-institute.org
- San Juan Capistrano Mission www.missionsjc.com
- Pretend City Children's Museum www.pretendcity.org

CHAPTER 5 – SEPTEMBER

BOOKS

Chapter Books

- Atwater, Florence and Richard: *Mr. Popper's Penguins*
- Dahl, Roald: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- Estes, Esther: *The Hundred Dresses*
- Lindgren, Astrid: *Pippi Longstocking*
- Miller, Susan Martens: *Hudson Taylor (and all Chronicles of Faith series)*
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls: *Little House series, all*

Picture Books

- Cheney, Lynn: *America; A is for Abigail; Our 50 States*
- De Paola, Tomie: *Favorite Nursery Tales* (illustrated by de Paola)
- Hunkin, Oliver: *A Dangerous Journey: Pilgrim's Progress for Children*
- Stevenson, Robert Louis: *A Child's Garden of Verses* (There are many versions. Two good ones are published by DK (with fine art to accompany the poems) and Chronicle Books (beautiful illustrations).)

Easy Reader Books

- Rylant, Cynthia: *Henry and Mudge books; Mr. Potter and Tabby books; all others*
- Parish, Peggy: *Amelia Bedelia books*
- Selsem, Millicent: *Greg's Microscope*
- Roop, Peter and Connie: *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie*
- McLerran, Alice: *Roxaboxen*

Beginning Reading (equivalent to easiest level of Easy Reader books)

- Maslen, Bobby Lynn: *Bob books*; published by Scholastic
- Seuss, Dr.: *The Cat in the Hat*, others

Board and Lift-the-Flap books

- No titles specified

OTHER RESOURCES

Curriculum

- “Baby Bible” Program for Toddlers
www.SeeandKnow.com

CHAPTER 6 – OCTOBER

BOOKS

- Glaser, Linda: *Emma’s Poem* (about the Statue of Liberty)

CHAPTER 7 – NOVEMBER

BOOKS

- Alcott, Louisa May: *Little Women*

Thanksgiving Books

- Dagliesh, Alice: *The Thanksgiving Story*
- Devlin, Wende: *Cranberry Thanksgiving*
- Hines, Gary: *Thanksgiving in the White House*
- Spinelli, Eileen: *Thanksgiving at the Tappleton’s*
- Waters, Kate: *Tapenum’s Day: A Wompanoag Indian Boy in Pilgrim Times*

OTHER RESOURCES

Memory CDs

- States and Capitals CD www.audiomemory.com

CHAPTER 8 – DECEMBER

Christmas Books (Listed on Weekly Lesson Plan)

- Bronson, Linda (illus.): *Sleigh Bells and Snowflakes*
- Busch, Melinda: *Born on Christmas Morn*
- Chaconas, Dori: *On a Wintry Morning*
- Forrester, Maureen: *Joy to the World*
- McKissack, Patricia: *The All-I’ll-Ever-Want-for-Christmas Doll*
- Noble, Trinkia Hakes: *Apple Tree Christmas*
- Ransome, James: *A Joyful Christmas*
- Riordan, James: *Favorite Stories of the Ballet (Nutcracker)*
- Spirin, Gennady (illus.): *Twelve Days of Christmas*
- Tews, Susan: *Gingerbread Doll*
- Wojciechowski, Susan: *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*

OTHER RESOURCES

Movies

- The Sound of Music
- Mary Poppins
- White Christmas

CHAPTER 9 – JANUARY

BOOKS

Parenting Books (Discussing simplicity—less technology, less structured activities, more time in nature—for the emotional, intellectual and physical health of children.)

- Elkind, David: *The Hurried Child*
- Healy, Jane: *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It*
- Louv, Richard: *Last Child in the Wood: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*
- Payne, Kim John: *Simplicity Parenting (though this is not written from a Christian worldview, many of the practical ideas on simplifying family life can be helpful)*
- Wilson, Todd: *Taming the Techno-Beast (Discusses relational and spiritual impact of too much technology.)*

OTHER RESOURCES

Chores/Organization

- www.titus2.com The book *Managers of Their Chores* has a book and supplies for a Chore System (it comes with Chore Packs™ and cards). The book *Managers of Their Homes* has information on creating a workable daily schedule. Also, their CDs on “Anger, Relationship Poison” and “Homeschooling with a Meek and Quiet Spirit” are excellent for dealing with anger (getting mad at our kids) and gentleness.
- Brenneman, Kim: *Large Family Logistics: The Art and Science of Managing the Large Family* – excellent ideas for families of all sizes (not just large ones)

CHAPTER 10 – FEBRUARY

BOOKS

Winter Books

- Brett, Jan: *The Mitten; The Gingerbread Baby*
- Conley, Lucy: *The Lost Milk Jar* (rodandstaffbooks.com)
- dePaola, Tomie: *Pancakes for Breakfast*
- Frost, Robert. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers: *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*
- Keats, Ezra: *The Snowy Day*
- Neitzel, Shirley: *The Jacket I'll Wear in the Snow*
- Shulevitz, Uri: *Snow*

Board Books

- Gerth, Melanie: *Ten Little Ladybugs; Good Night, Sweet Butterflies*

CHAPTER 11 – MARCH

BOOKS

Civil War Books

- Brenner, Martha: *Abe Lincoln's Hat*
- D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar: *Abraham Lincoln*
- Fritz, Jean: *Just a Few Words, Mr. Lincoln*
- Gayle, Sharon: *Harriet Tubman and the Freedom Train*
- Hines, Gary: *Thanksgiving in the White House*
- Woodruff, Elvira: *Dear Austin (chapter book)*

Project Books

- Broida, Marian: *Projects about Plantation Life (Hands-On History)*

- King, David: *Civil War Days* (American Kids in History)

Books on CD

- Any that your local library has that look good to you.

OTHER RESOURCES

Music

- McGill, Alice; *In the Hollow of Your Hand: Slave Lullabies*
- Mattox, Cheryl Warren; *Shake it to The One that You Love Best: Play Songs and Lullabies from Black Musical Traditions*
- Swing Low, Sweet Chariot (traditional hymn)
- Glory, Glory Hallelujah (traditional hymn)

Movies

- Famous Americans for Children: Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman
- An Apple for Harriet Tubman (also a book)
- Follow the Drinking Gourd (also a book)

RECIPES

Fruit (Green) Smoothie Recipe (Great for kids, babies and Mommies. Even Daddies!)

- Juice (apple or orange)

- Frozen banana (peel overripe bananas and freeze in Ziploc bag in freezer). Adds sweetness.
- Frozen berries (strawberries or blueberries, blackberries, mango)
- Greens (raw spinach or kale, start with one handful, add more as you get used to it)
- Avocado (optional. Try without it first.)

Blend. Enjoy!

Chocolate Banana Milkshake (with stealth greens)

- Milk (if milk allergies, can use soy, almond, coconut, rice milk, etc.)
- Frozen banana (peel overripe bananas and freeze in Ziploc bag in freezer). Adds sweetness.
- Cocoa powder (to taste)
- Greens (raw spinach or kale, start with one handful, add more as you get used to it)
- Optional: a little sugar or honey (with the sweet bananas, you probably won't need it)

Blend. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 12 – APRIL

OTHER RESOURCES

Websites

- **Homeschool CDs (for Moms & Dads):** This is an excellent way to learn while you are cleaning the kitchen or folding laundry. Google the homeschool convention in your state, then go to their website and order CDs from past conferences on topics that interest you. CDs are usually about \$6.00 each. If you can't get to a convention, this is a wonderful way to get quality information right at home. You

can also ask homeschooling moms if they have CDs from past conferences you could borrow.

- **Information (and CDs about) Teaching Highly Distractible Children-** www.sizzlebop.com Click on 'Carol's Web Corner' for practical free tips. Click on 'Sizzlebop Store' to order CDs. (I think her ideas are helpful for any child, especially boys!)
- Awana Bible memory program: www.awana.org
- Shepherd's Cross sheep farm: www.shepherdscross.com
- Homeschool laws by state: www.hsllda.org/hs/state (Homeschool Legal Defense Association)

Spring Activities

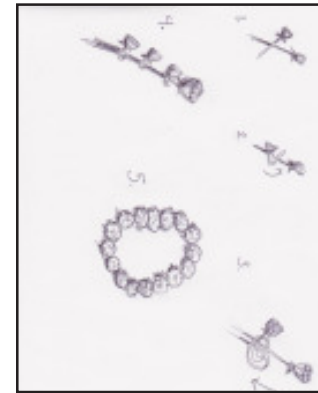
- **Simple Messianic Passover Dinner**
Wertheim, Janie-sue: *Walk with Y'shua Through the Jewish Year*

The above book has ideas for celebrating the traditional Jewish holidays with children, with a focus on Y'shua (Jesus). A Passover Seder can be as simple as paper plates with unleavened bread, horseradish, parsley, and charoset (apple mixture). Each person gets a cup with salt water (to dip parsley in) and grape juice to drink. Tell the kids the symbolism of each (look this up online) and read about the first Passover with Moses, and Jesus' Passover at the Last Supper in the Bible. You can read more online, but don't get intimidated. Start simply.

- **Resurrection Rolls**
Get some yeast freezer rolls, the kind that has to rise for 3-5 hours. Let them rise. When risen, your kids hide a big marshmallow in the center of each one, wrap the roll around, sprinkle with cinnamon and

sugar and put it on a cookie sheet. Bake normally. When the rolls are done, the marshmallow is gone! It symbolizes the empty tomb! These rolls are a great, easy, fun activity and can be served with the Easter meal or as dessert.

- **How to make a clover crown**



CHAPTER 13 – MAY

BOOKS/CURRICULA- Teaching Your Child to Read/Phonics

- A Beka Kindergarten Phonics book: *Letters and Sounds K*
- Use with the A Beka *Handbook for Reading*

OR whichever one you like best of the following:

- Englemann, Siegfried, Haddox, Phyllis and Elaine Bruner; *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons*
- Hiskes, Dolores; *Phonics Pathways*
- Wise, Jessie; *The Ordinary Parent's Guide to Teaching Reading*
- Any other reading/phonics program recommended to you