

On Socialization with a Mom of Eight

Episode 31

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

If you're thinking about homeschooling, you might be concerned about socialization, or perhaps you've heard worries from others when you mentioned you're going to homeschool. How will they learn to fit into society? Are your kids going to be weird? Let's talk about it. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carol Joyside has been helping families homeschool for several decades now through her literature based approach to education. In this episode from the archives, Carol talks with her friend, Chrissy Woodard, mom of eight, about how homeschooling is actually one of the very best ways to socialize our children. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:42]:

Well, today, I have the unbelievable treat of having my dear friend, Christy Woodard, in to talk with me about socialization. And you're thinking, well, why Christy Woodard and why why the topic of socialization? And I'll tell you. Because Christy and her sweet husband, Jason, have eight children ages from 22 down to seven. They've always been homeschooled. And Christy has also got a degree in elementary education, has been a classroom teacher. She and Jason met at a Christian university, and they're very involved in their church and in their community. And I have had the pleasure of knowing some of her children personally and observed their contribution to society and, just thought, wow. If ever a family got it right with this area of socializing their children, it's the Woodard.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:42]:

So welcome, Christy.

Kristi Woodard [00:01:44]:

Thank you for having me.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:46]:

So, you know, this socialization question, it's one that we hear often at Thanksgiving dinners and things like that. Tell me how you've kind of processed that in your mind and in your lives as a family.

Kristi Woodard [00:02:00]:

Well, you are right that that is the question everybody gives you. If I think if anyone says they're gonna homeschool, someone says, well, how will they be socialized?

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:10]:

And I'd love to say, oh, that's such an original question. Where did

Kristi Woodard [00:02:13]:

you come up with that? Or did you come up with that? Yeah. Yes. So I basically think that people who have that question don't know homeschooling families. So true. Because I think they have a misconception somewhere in their mind of a very odd family that is, that lives in a bunker and wear very interesting clothes. Yes. Yeah. I heard someone made a joke once about, you know, not being able to make eye contact with the opposite sex.

Kristi Woodard [00:02:39]:

You know, they're just so sheltered.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:40]:

You know, I'd be for the best.

Kristi Woodard [00:02:41]:

That's true. Very true. I'll just say not a bad idea. Right. But it's this idea that, you know, kind of a very backwards secluded, thing. And that just couldn't be further from the truth. I agree. If anyone knows homeschooling families That's right.

Kristi Woodard [00:02:56]:

They are very, very active and very involved. All you have to do is go onto social media and search a homeschooling hashtag, and you will see families at museums and service projects and traveling. And at the opera, you know, they're doing all sorts of amazing things. Singing at the opera. Probably. Yes. My kid, not in my house, but, so, you know, when I, I don't think I ever had that fear. I feel like I didn't know homeschooling families, but I, I was never afraid that my children wouldn't be socialized because for the most part, a lot of what people mean by socializing is fitting in with peers, their age.

Kristi Woodard [00:03:39]:

And there was a lot of me that said, I don't really care for my kids to fit in with peers their age. So I wasn't afraid of having them not know what's going on in pop culture or some of those things. I wanted them to know adults and people of multiple ages and not just kids in their own grace.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:01]:

But I have to jump in here and say that I know some of your children, and they are incredibly popular with the kids of their own age. I mean, they are in demand, but they're not just popular with the kids of their own age. I don't know if you were there one Sunday when our pastor from the pulpit said that he would give anything to someday have a son like one of your sons, and he mentioned his name. That was, like, take me to heaven right now, lord, because my life has not been in vain. Right? One of your sons, babysits with two of your kids, babysit my grandchildren. And, when they know that they're coming, they will turn down other fun opportunities or invitations because they don't wanna miss being with your boys.

Kristi Woodard [00:04:47]:

That's exciting.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:48]:

So yes. It is. So your children are far from misfits. So how have you done life with your kids? What's some of your see?

Kristi Woodard [00:04:57]:

Well, cause I would say, I think what makes them be able to be very socially engaged is comes from maybe the fact that we do homeschool and give them opportunities to get to know so many different people and so many different ages. And so that they're not only feeling like they can function when they are surrounded by people their exact same age, you know, on task. So we've made it such a, desire of ours to have our kids interacting with other adults, with kids, their own age and with kids younger than them, which is something when I went to school, I was public school. You did not play with kids that were younger than you, even if

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:36]:

they were six months younger than you.

Kristi Woodard [00:05:38]:

Right. Right. It was very, because you get this idea of here's my grade, here's my level and where I belong. So, I feel like something that I got to see through our years of

some homeschool co ops is watching how often. Older children are willing to engage the younger children. And I think that's a beautiful, beautiful tool. And I, you know, I don't, I can't say it's because of homeschooling, but I have people always say, how do your kids have such a heart for children while your kids love babies? They love babysitting. And I think they just have been around so much of that, because of our opportunities to be really with other families, to be, engaging with the parents of other kids in a way that you don't really get to do necessarily in the classroom.

Kristi Woodard [00:06:26]:

So You know, I think

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:28]:

the day that I first met you, I was here visiting, my grandchildren, and we're on a field trip. You were. And I believe it was Colson who spent the whole time chasing my grandchild. Well, I didn't have the energy to chase, and he did. Yes. And that just is like, I don't need to know anything else about this little boy or anything else about his family. I knew that this was a marriage made in heaven in my heart. They do love kids.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:52]:

Yes. They really do.

Kristi Woodard [00:06:53]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:54]:

But but, you know, Colson is now working as an intern at our church, working with my son, I believe, for part of his internship. Is that

Kristi Woodard [00:07:01]:

right? Well, he's working with the children's ministry. Oh, great. Worked with with JJ last year.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:06]:

Oh, that's what it was.

Kristi Woodard [00:07:07]:

Okay. And, It was JJ who once commented to me that when he had sat down with Colson and said, tell me about who is pouring into you in your life. Or, and he was like any teenage boy he's ever talked to lists a group of peers. And he said, here, Colson was listing off these men in our church. He was like, that's crazy. How has that

happened? And I just feel like the exposure to be around and asking other adults to pour into my kids, has been such a blessing and they have peers their own age, certainly. But I think that wide range just sets you up for life way more than where else in life are you segmented off just with people's your very own age? You're really not. And when you are, there might be a, it's not quite as rich.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:55]:

No. And, you know, who socialized your children? Not not not their peers.

Kristi Woodard [00:08:01]:

Oh, right. Of course. That was that was the decisions that we made for them. And then, of course, there are a lot of them. So they that's right. Did get some socialization with each other.

Rachel Winchester [00:08:09]:

Well, all the better.

Kristi Woodard [00:08:11]:

But yeah. So our, our desire has always been that we get to choose what is going to shape them and what is going to feed them. And my own experience in public school, even, you know, thirty five years ago, there were some very not lovely things and things that I did not want for my own children.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:29]:

Absolutely. So those share with me, some of the activities that these eight children have been in over

Kristi Woodard [00:08:36]:

the years. Okay. Well, when we first started, probably my goal. And I think it was a smart one is we didn't really leave the house and do anything for quite a while. And of course I had, they were very young. I had lots of little ones, so that was probably survival for our, for our, the way things were for us, but we did not get out of the house much at all. We just kind of stayed home. But over the years we have found homeschool co ops and not really necessarily like rigorous homeschool co ops, but maybe a little bit more relational ideas.

Kristi Woodard [00:09:10]:

So finding families that we have very similar standards, same worldview, the same ideas on some of the bigger things in life. And then kind of just doing life together, finding things where we say, man, I never take my kids on a field trip by myself. Let's get

together and we can do field trips or art. Cause that was another one. I would buy all these great art curriculums and then never do them. And so having some accountability and people to do that with some community, to let my kids feel like they have community and friends, but it wasn't in such a way that made them feel like they were missing out on something. I think being like minded is very important. I had a friend who actually had been homeschooled as a kid.

Kristi Woodard [00:09:57]:

I have no peers that were homeschooled, but this, this man, it was. And one of the things he said to me years ago was that we were allowed to do just enough to know what we were missing, meaning his parents allowed them to do some things with. Other kids, but then they weren't allowed to do most of the things those kids were doing. It made them feel right. Very on the fringe. And so I think if you help provide for your kids community that, yes, that believe the way you do that are going to say, Hey, we don't do this either. Or we, then they don't ever have a sense of not belonging. They feel, they feel very much like they have a community.

Kristi Woodard [00:10:38]:

So it's an extension of the family. Yes. So that was very, very helpful. We've done drama classes. We've done. That's our big thing. So we're very artsy and, and musical in this house. I have lots of friends that do things like, you know, science fairs and my kids would rather sing and dance.

Kristi Woodard [00:10:59]:

That's right. So we do, we've done theater, we've done co ops, we've done football, basketball.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:07]:

Lots of service

Kristi Woodard [00:11:08]:

in the community

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:09]:

as well.

Kristi Woodard [00:11:09]:

Lots of service in the community. With co ops with church groups, just different opportunities. We work with foster kids every month and out in at Anna's at yes. And Anna's house and Luther. And, that's such a blessing to our, our whole family.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:24]:
Tell us, tell us about that ministry.

Kristi Woodard [00:11:27]:
Well, so there.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:29]:
It's called Anna's house house.

Kristi Woodard [00:11:31]:
They support in, educate and support foster families. Here, but they have this community out in Luther where they have eight big, beautiful homes where foster parents can live if they agree to take sibling sets because sibling sets often get broken up in foster care. So you go out like the house that I, we try to go back and stay in the same houses. We babysit, we give the foster parents a night off and we come and do dinner and play and put the kids to bed. The house that I've been going to most recently has 10 kids in it. So, it's yeah. And so it's a great siblings. And that house, seven of them are siblings.

Kristi Woodard [00:12:16]:
Then two of them are siblings and one is adopted into the family. It's a lovely opportunity. And my kids love it. They love it. I have had kids pass on parties or get together just to get to go back out because they love getting to bless those kids. So I think when you as a family, and then you're a part of a community that values things like that, it just helps pass that down to them. And it's a no brainer. Why is there really another way to, you know, to think,

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:46]:
see, Christy, we we're raised in in America where we think teenagers need pizza parties and volleyball games and beach bongo or whatever they call. But I remember when JJ was growing up in his youth group, we didn't have a, a kitchen at the church, you know, we went to when he was a little boy, and so when he was a teenager. And so we borrowed a sister church that we were close friends with. We borrowed their kitchen and the kids, the teens did a home homeless dinner for there are a lot a lot of people that were homeless in our community. And I can remember the kids talking about that forever, that it was the high point of the whole year and that they were begging when can we borrow that kitchen again so we can do it again? They knew all the people's names by heart. They were talking about them as individuals and people, not just nameless faces. Right. Children love to be treated with responsibility.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:41]:

Right. And to get outside of themselves. That's it.

Kristi Woodard [00:13:44]:

Because we aren't created to look only inward. That's right. That's right. So teaching them if

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:49]:

you wanna be great in the kingdom, learn to be the servant of all. Yes. So, Christy, there's a lot of research that has been done on this socialization thing. When people start getting all emotional with these hot topics, I like to just dial it down and say, so let's talk about the statistics and the research. Right. Is there anything you wanna share with with our listeners?

Kristi Woodard [00:14:13]:

Yes. Well, I think all it takes is a quick Google search on homeschooling and socialization, and you can find plenty, plenty of, of studies that have been done. I had just recently read one that came out of Australia. I think it was even done by the government of Australia. Was there was concern about homeschooling. Of course they found, you know, that homeschool children are

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:35]:

amazing and more socialized than any other children.

Kristi Woodard [00:14:37]:

Yes. But I did pull this off from, it was a study done from a university in Florida. And what they did is they studied homeschool children from three different vantage points.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:47]:

Okay.

Kristi Woodard [00:14:48]:

Talking with parents and what parents had to say about their kids and their socialization, speaking with the children themselves. To see what they had to say and then speaking with objective observers. And so the way this wraps up, it says in conclusion, homeschooled children in this study described themselves as more cooperative, assertive, empathetic, and self controlled than public school children did. There appears to be therefore a convergence of evidence from three different perspectives. I just lost it. Three different perspectives, parental report, objective

observers, and self report that homeschool children's social skills are exceptional. Yeah. And every, every report you read is going to say the same thing.

Kristi Woodard [00:15:36]:

There's just something about that ability to be engaged with people from different walks of life. That's it's not even just different ages. Carol, the studies will say that homeschool children interact with people from different walks of life more than their peers, and then different ages. And, I think just the ability to have a confidence that maybe for some children would, would get rattled in a school setting. There's a confidence that, that can build when. You have the ability to shape that for your children and, and people will say, well, aren't you being protective? And I say, yes, yes, I am. Just like you're being protective

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:15]:

over a plant that you put. And that's just,

Kristi Woodard [00:16:17]:

I was just gonna say that it's about roots. Right? But we, we put a plant in a greenhouse and we protect it and we let it get strong roots. And so we've been very mindful that we want our children out in the world. We want our children interacting with all kinds of people from all different walks of life. And we want them to bless the world, but they can't do it without strong roots.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:39]:

That's it. Tell us about your oldest daughter and, and how she's sprouting her wings.

Kristi Woodard [00:16:44]:

So Madison, just turned 22 and she has moved to Central Rural Iowa, where she is the children's director at a new church. That's been planted in Rural Iowa called sacred mission church. There are no churches and you know, about an hour, it's like, yes, yes, there's an unreached people group.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:05]:

That's it in the, in the rural communities of America

Kristi Woodard [00:17:08]:

where 99% are unbelievers. So she has been able to go up there with a few other families And they have planted a church that is they're just seeing fantastic results.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:21]:

Well, I heard our pastor because, of course, this is a plant, you know, from our church. Yeah. I heard our pastor David talk about the statistics. There's only a few. How many people live in that community and how many people are attending the church?

Kristi Woodard [00:17:33]:

Yeah. I don't I don't have those numbers.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:35]:

Oh, it was amazing. I almost fell off of my pew. It was like there's 350 people in the community and 212 are attending the church or something like that.

Kristi Woodard [00:17:45]:

I mean, I've been making, they have had an amazing response. You know, they worked, they worked for a year on getting a core team together of people that were driving an hour to get to church on Sundays, to get them to commit to, pouring right into their community. And they have, they've had some tremendous results.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:04]:

So and she just thought nothing of moving completely to another part of the country, not really knowing anyone other than the little team that she's going with. Right. Yeah. Isn't she dysfunctional? I mean, how does she know her even like, like, chew gum?

Kristi Woodard [00:18:20]:

Well, and she's, it's funny because she is my one that if I would say you need to go up to the counter and ask, you know, for something, she would be like, me? What? You know, I would have to say, oh, if we're going to call a restaurant to make a reservation, it would be Madison. You need to do it. No, really. That was when she was little when she was little and to keep giving her opportunities and, you know, and she has just flourished into this lovely woman who, right. Who said, I think the Lord is calling me and I'm going to go and I'll, I'll give them a year of my time. And then at the end of the, of her year, she said, well, I don't think the Lord has called me away yet. So I'm going to stay and keep serving. And you aren't so proud.

Kristi Woodard [00:19:01]:

I mean,

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:01]:

that is the test of the pudding is

Kristi Woodard [00:19:03]:

in the eating. So it's I mean, and that is, that's the Lord. It is. It's all the Lord. It's our great prayer. And we keep putting before them a picture of a great big, magnificent God and, and just hope that that would take root

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:18]:

in their hearts. And as I worship near your family on Sundays, the high point of my worship experience is looking down the row and watching your teenage children worshiping their hearts out. It just I literally think I'm gonna lift off the ground and just fly around the room. But It's so encouraging to

Kristi Woodard [00:19:38]:

Stirs my soul too. Yeah. There have been times I've pulled out my phone to try to take a picture down the aisle, which is so tacky. I know. But I'm like, I just I wanna capture. I wanna remember this because it fills my heart as

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:50]:

a mom. Reaping what you've sown. And our whole church is reaping what you and Jason have sown.

Kristi Woodard [00:19:55]:

Wow.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:56]:

So we That's the goal. I know.

Kristi Woodard [00:19:58]:

Is that we would all then bless. Right? Not keep it all inward. That's it. Turn it outward.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:03]:

Raise children to be outward focused children because they are secure, they're confident, they know they're loved Right. Not just by you, but by the the the church family Yeah. Loves them. Everyone loves them everywhere they go. They're in demand. And that's what I see everywhere I go is that homeschool children, people fight over who they're gonna work for, what they're gonna, you know, who's great. They're in demand everywhere they go. People want that.

Kristi Woodard [00:20:30]:

It's true. It really is true. We we have people that will say, man, you know, I can come work for me, you know, or like when they come to Chick fil A and they go through and everyone's like, they're all so amazing. Those kids were all homeschooled. So at that, at

that Chick fil A, and then they go on and work somewhere else. And someone says, where did you get your training? Like, well, my mom taught us to go above and beyond

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:54]:

and do more than what's expected. That's exactly right.

Kristi Woodard [00:20:56]:

But it is true. No one has to worry that their kids are gonna be, you know, misfits and that they're, they're not going to fit in it. Homeschooling is just a fabulous opportunity to launch them into the world. But in the way that you want them to be launched and that's the timing that you want and exposing them to the issues when you know, they're ready for it. And not because a classmate said something or showed something or, you know, so thankful I wasn't in school when smartphones

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:29]:

existed. Yes. Oh, I know. I know. Well, would you mind praying because, you know, we have people listening. They're thinking about homeschooling

Kristi Woodard [00:21:37]:

Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:38]:

Or maybe have no intention to ever homeschool. But, this issue is so near and dear, and this is a fear. I like to say worry about the ozone layer before you're worried about this.

Kristi Woodard [00:21:49]:

Right. It really is a non issue. It's just something that people bring up because they don't really have anything else to bring up, I guess. But it is, it's definitely not the issue you need to worry about.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:00]:

So would you pray for these sweetie?

Kristi Woodard [00:22:01]:

I would love to. I would love to. God of grace. We thank you so much. For those who are listening to us today, that we get to be a part of their day and for the parents out there that are new to homeschooling or considering homeschooling, I just pray that you would draw near to them. I pray that you would, call them into this endeavor and

that they would come with, with boldness and with confidence. And if they're worried about whether or not their, you know, 12 year old might fit in with other 12 year olds, would you just would you calm them and and help them to groom their children and their 12 year old to be accepted by you, to know who they are in you and to give them an identity in Jesus, Not, not from their friends, from peers, but that they would give a foundation to their children, that they are loved and that they are, Called into a kingdom where they can contribute. And I just pray that you would bless their efforts.

Kristi Woodard [00:23:04]:

Would you calm their fears? Would you, help them to research more if they're still worried or if they have, in laws who are on them and asking questions, would you give them lots of confidence to to answer those questions graciously and lovingly, but ultimately know that the proof will be in the pudding as they continue to pour into their children and disciple them, that others will see the work that they are doing and, and know that, that being disciplined in their family and to be, Brought up by their parents is just the most important and valuable thing they can have. So bless these people listening and those who have no interest in homeschooling. Just help them to not perpetuate this idea that homeschool kids are so so odd or so weird or not socialized. Just help, bring truth and light to the situation, And maybe they would seek ways to bless homeschooling families in their lives. And, to be a part of what's going on in those families in Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:02]:

And, you know, I just wanna give a plug for the homeschool legal defense fund. HSLDA. Yes. Fabulous. We recommend that every, potential homeschool family looks into joining, and we need to stand together, hang together as Benjamin Franklin said, lest we hang separately. But they also have a research arm called the National Homeschool Education Research Institute, n h e r i, I believe is what it's called. And doctor Ray is, the head researcher. They also have a professional journal of research on homeschooling and the statistical makeup of the homeschool community.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:44]:

And if you are losing sleep over any issue about homeschooling, do your homework. That's right. Do your homework and see why homeschool children, by, you know, really non homeschool friendly organizations have found that homeschool children are the most socialized of any children in America in in all the different levels of testing Yeah. That they evaluate children by. So this is a nonissue, but it's also a a place of encouragement Yes. I think and, hope for families. So this has been a true treasure and a blessing. I'm so grateful to be in your life and to know your children.

Kristi Woodard [00:25:26]:

Well, thank you for those kind words. My pleasure. It is the Lord.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:30]:

It is.

Rachel Winchester [00:25:31]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. If you like what you heard in this episode, please leave a rating and review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify, or share this episode with a friend. It means so much when you help us spread the message of Homeschool Made Simple with others. Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:01]:

Free audio post production by alphonic.com.