

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

In today's episode, we are starting a little series that will introduce you to our educational approach. This first episode will give you the big picture view as Carol and I talk about what it means that our approach is research based, interest led, and literature rich. If you want to understand the Homeschool Made Simple method in a nutshell, this episode is for you. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carol Joy Seid. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carol has been teaching people her literature-based approach to education for over 30 years now, and I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom to 3 kids. If you're looking to nail down your philosophy of education, listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:45]:

Today, I am with Carole Joy Seid talking about how to homeschool using the Homeschool Made Simple method in a nutshell. We've had lots of families reach out to us and say, we love to share this with other people, but could you put it into one episode to share what exactly teaching and how to help people understand our method. So we wanted to do that today. Hello, Carole.

Carole Joy Seid:

Hello, Miss Rachel. It's fun being here with you.

Rachel Winchester:

So I thought that we could just do a big-picture overview. And then in a few more episodes, we could break down what it looks like in each stage and age of homeschooling.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:23]:

Right. That sounds really good.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:25]:

So today, three phrases that come to my mind and that I have been using, but I don't know that we've really talked about this, are research based, interest led, and literature rich. I love those. I thought we could talk about how all of those really work together to define the Homeschool Made Simple approach.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:47]:

Wonderful.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:48]:

Okay. Let's start with research based. So what do we mean by that?

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:54]:

Well, that really comes out of the history of the homeschool movement. So doctor Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy, who were the founders of the American Homeschool Movement with John Holt, They both camps were researchers. John Holt tried to heal the public school system, and after many years and many books that he wrote, gave up and became an advocate for homeschooling. And then Raymond and Dorothy, they of course, doctor Moore had a doctorate. He'd been a college dean, pastor, president of a college, missionary, but he worked for the office of education in Washington. And he and Dorothy, they inherited some money from a wealthy lady that they had helped take care of. And with that money, they started the Hewitt Moore Foundation, and it was a research arm. And they, through their years of study, evaluated 8,000 different studies that had been done on early childhood education.

And from their studies, they wrote a book for Reader's Digest, and they said that of the 8,000 studies, not one indicated that early childhood education was helpful for children. And in most all the cases, it showed that it was detrimental. And so everything that they taught and did was based on research. And that made me feel really safe having a master's degree in education and studying those things in grad school. I loved that this was not just somebody in an ivory tower coming up with theories that had no basis in research and fact. And, of course, Piaget, who was a Swiss physician, did the exact same thing. And Raymond and Dorothy were Piagetian developmentalists, which is to say they studied the writings of Piaget, and Piaget did the same thing, which is he researched actual children there in Switzerland. And based on his research, came up with overriding premises.

Things like later is better than early, which is to say it's easier to teach a 12 year old to crochet than a 2 year old to crochet. Because the older that a child is, the more that they bring to the table and the more accessible high level of thought becomes. So we are research based and, of course, I've been in the homeschool movement now 42 years. And what I've seen is that there's a flavor of the month every, you know, year. And this year, everyone's doing blah blah fill in the blank. But next year, oh, we hated that, but now we're doing this new flavor of the month. But in 2 years, we hate that, and then we move back to And so this this cycling from one extreme to the other, one philosophy to the other, is really detrimental to children, but it's also very expensive and very stressful to the family. And so it's because there's no research behind it.

Someone decides I'm gonna write a book or I have a theory or whatever. It worked with my 2 children in Boise, Idaho, but there isn't this base that protects us and our children

from going around the mulberry bush over and over again and leading to a lot of confusion and a lot of, I think, loss of success. And, like, in geometry, we're taught the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. And that's what I'd like to see in the homeschool movement where we begin with the end in mind and we have a plan. This is what I want my child to look like when they're 21 or 18. And when they're 2, I'm gonna start moving toward that direction. And it's gonna be consistent, and it's gonna be thoughtful, and it's gonna be based on research. And that's what I love about the founders of the homeschool movement and where I feel like we've fallen off the turnip truck in the new homeschool movement, where we just keep reinventing the wheel and each wheel is worse than the last.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:50]:

Yes. And one of the things that the Moores talked about was that education is a 3 legged stool, which is work, study, and service. And so a lot of times, we put education down to just being study. And so then people are thinking about, how do I move my child academically only in the study realm from and there to toward that goal I have for them at 21? But you're really saying and the research is pointing us toward a more holistic view to say, okay. Look at the whole child, and they are developing physiologically from the time they're being built in your body until they're an adult. And how is that happening? How do we understand that process so that we can work that process rather than against the grain?

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:38]:

I love that, Rachel, and that's really helpful. Yesterday, I did an appointment with a family that goes to church. It's a small country church with a family who I believe educates and graduates their children by the age of 12. And when the mom that I was speaking with was telling me about this, and, of course, it's intimidating to someone who knows a family like this, and you start to think, well, what am I doing wrong, or should we be doing this? And I said jokingly, you know, I'm a little facetious, but I said, I hope that family who's graduating their kids at 12 from high school has a really good therapist on speed dial because their children are gonna need it. And the mother said, well, yeah, the child does have lots of anxiety and different health issues. And, you know, she told me different things about this young girl. And I said, well, yes. I mean, something's gotta give.

It's just what you said. If you're just wanting to create a smart, highly educated child like you would in a test tube, then, you know, in utero flashcards are gonna be the way to go. But if you're wanting to create a well rounded, godly, well adjusted child who is kind and compassionate and full of the fruits of the spirit as well as being bright. But first, we want them to be godly, then we worry about them being smart. Not that they

can't be both, but we put first things first and second things will follow as CS Lewis said. So I think what you said is brilliant. We have to educate the whole child, and that means their emotional health, their spiritual health, and their mental acuity. All those pieces come together to make a child that you want to spend time with and you would want to sit under as in if you were in a capacity where that person was then in leadership.

Are they just smart, or are they kind? Are they compassionate? Are they sensitive to the Holy Spirit? So all these pieces, nothing can be left out or you wind up with these Frankenstein monsters that, you know, are super, super gifted. But doctor Moore actually taught us about this man who determined he was gonna raise a genius, and he took his son. He had one child, and he he started teaching them in the crib, you know, with flashcards and all the things that these people think are so creative and original, and how this man grew up to go to Harvard at I forget. Now I wish doctor Moore were here to help me with this, but let's say he went to Harvard at 15 or 12 or something, and he later committed suicide. And he had a terrible, terrible emotional and spiritual upbringing. He was smart, but he was not whole. And he would tell us that story as a perfect example of what you just said. I'm sure I'm getting the details wrong, so don't quote me on the details.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:29]:

But the general overriding premise was, don't do this to your child, whatever you do.

Rachel Winchester [00:09:35]:

Right. Yeah. We want our children to go out strong, in strength, able to do what God has called them to do, not crippled and having to recover from the things that we've done with them.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:46]:

Yes. And, you know, Rachel, sometimes when I'm consulting, particularly dads will say to me, I was homeschooled, and I don't wanna homeschool my children. It was a disaster. The proof is in the eating. If you see an adult who is homeschooled, wanting to homeschool their child, as you or JJ said to me I forget one of you said to me. Normally, those families that we hear are 2nd generation. That's because they were homeschooled using doctor Moore's philosophy and not the flavor of the month. And those people are sustaining their love of learning and that well rounded upbringing to where now they want to do it for their children as opposed to saying, I was abused as a homeschool child, and I don't want to do that to my kids.

And and dads will tell me that when we consult. And then I as I ask questions, well, can you tell me more about how you're homeschooled? They were either truant or they were doing school at home, both of which are not sustainable and not reproducible. Nobody wants to do that to their kids.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:47]:

Yeah. So the next point would be the interest led aspect of what we teach. How to let your child's interest expand, become significant, and something that is encouraged.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:02]:

The promise of this podcast is that you can homeschool simply. Doctor Raymond Moore said you can homeschool with a bible, a library card, and a math curriculum. He was a radical guy. You might be asking yourself, is there any evidence it can really be that simple? Can books be the basis of a good enough education? And how do you find the very best books and not waste time on duds? For 35 years, Carol Joy Seide has been helping families use great books as the basis of their education. And now we are seeing kids homeschooled with this method grow up to use it with their own children. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. In our upcoming webinar on June 1st, Carol and her son, JJ Side, will teach you our literature based approach to education. You'll learn how to make your child a lover of books, how to create unit studies around books, and much, much more.

If you want to build a simple yet comprehensive education on of books, then join us for a literature based approach to education on June 1st. You can learn more about the webinar at homeschoolmadesimple.net forward slash seminars. And even if you can't make it to the live event, registrants have access to the replay for 2 weeks afterwards. Plus, you get book lists that are yours to keep indefinitely. Visit our website, homeschoolmadesimple.net/seminars to register today. Now back to the show.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:25]:

Yeah. That's great. So the Smithsonian Institute did a study on 23 world class geniuses, people of the caliber of Einstein, Edison, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt. And what they found were three characteristics that were universally applicable to all these geniuses. 1st, they came from warm, nurturing, loving homes. 2, they spent very little time with children outside the family, which is shocking, I know. And 3, they were allowed to pursue their own interests under parental guidance. And so when you think of it that way, basically and John Holt was an expert at this.

He, of course, coined the term unschooling where he really didn't even consider what we do school, but that we unschool children, and then we create a rich environment with wood and tools and water and sand and cooking supplies and bazillion books and all the different things. We create this environment, and then basically, his motto was and then we leave our children alone. Doctor Moore wasn't an unschooler, so he would say, we create that environment particularly through work and service, and then we let our child pursue their own interests. So I wanna study butterflies, mom, or I wanna study the history of war fair, or I wanna study the history of dolls or music or so whatever it may be, you let your child as the saying goes, which way does the twig appear to be bending? So you look at your child and you say, this child was born to be a landscape designer. This child was born to be a pastry chef. This child was born to be a rocket scientist or a brain surgeon or teacher or whatever, baker. And so as a parent, you say, would you like to learn more about that thing? Well, missus McGill cut you up the street. That's you know, she has a doctrine in that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:26]:

And the library has a whole shelf of books on that subject, and there's a museum that's doing a show that's all about what you're interested in. So you're finding the resources for your child without having your own agenda. You know, some families tell me, since the dad was born, I had to be a doctor because that was the only allowed pursuit in our home. This is the opposite of that. This is knowing your child, being expert on your child, and then helping them get to where they need to go. That's the difference.

Rachel Winchester [00:15:00]:

That's really great. And I'm gonna play the devil's advocate for a moment and say, but so never make your child do something that they don't want to do, or do they just always do the things that they want to do and come easy to them?

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:16]:

That is a wonderful question and a very weighted one in the culture in which we live. So coming from a biblical base in theology, we have to understand that our children, they don't come into this world as godly people. And so apart from Christ, we're all dealing with what theologians call original sin. The humanistic base is that children are innately good. The biblical base is children are not innately good, but they have the potential to become good through the death of Christ. And so we as parents are the key in shaping our children's spiritual formation, which means we're discipling and mentoring our children in the paths of godliness. And so they are not gonna come up with that on their own. They are bent.

And so we come along, and through judicious parenting, we are straightening them out in the precepts of God. So, no, it isn't that they're running the asylum. That is never a good plan. We're running the asylum. We need to be parental, but we also need to see our children's gifts and abilities and passions and help them pursue them in a godly manner. Does that make sense?

Rachel Winchester [00:16:34]:

Yep. That's great. So then lastly, we emphasize a literature rich education. What does that mean?

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:42]:

We should have talked about that one first because that's the cornerstone. And I always say when we're doing the all day seminars that when we get to the how to make your children love books part of the day, I say, this is the fun part of the day, but also the really important part because without this, nothing else that I teach makes sense. Because this is what gives this teaching method joy. It also creates deep emotional ties with you and your child, and it is the place where so much of the discipleship and mentoring take place without anyone even knowing it. Because the books that you choose become the voices that shape your children's spiritual formation. As Gladys Hunt in, *Honey for a Child's Heart* said or her son her son said, you never had to teach me a class on ecology or the environment. We just read books with animals that I came to know and love, and I instinctively figured out these principles without someone sitting me down and giving me coursework on this subject. And so books, they really shape our children's theology and their destiny and their character.

And you don't have to make school out of them. They will get that information without anyone pointing it out to them. As a matter of fact, if you do point out to them, it's like Alfred White North. He said that if you analyze a book, it's like poking a lab specimen until it dies. That's what happens when we make school out of great literature. The way we read great literature is we read books where our children beg for one more chapter. That's how we know we're reading the right books. And if they're reading under the covers with a flashlight, we know that we've been successful.

So, yes, we surround our children with books. I think of CS Lewis' quote in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, where he describes the books being as high as his shoulder in the cistern attic. Books on every surface in every part of their house, books readable and unreadable, books suitable for a child, and books most emphatically not. Nothing was forbidden me. I had the same opportunity of finding a new book in my house as a man who walks into a field has of finding a new blade of grass. That's how to create a literary home and a literary rich person in their childhood going all the way

through life. When the house is burning, we buy get the baby pictures, and then we get the books out the windows, you know, before the firemen ruin them. So we teach our children to love reading by reading to them, and that's the key.

A lot of homeschool people talk about their kids reading, and that's fine. But the way to make a child read and love reading is counterintuitive. It's not by making them read. It's by reading to them and creating a hunger for this kingdom, this magic kingdom that they wanna break into. And even if they have some learning challenges and learning difficulties, they will bang that door down, and they will find a way to get into that kingdom because you have spread a buffet that they cannot resist eating. So, yeah, this is the key to it all.

Rachel Winchester [00:20:02]:

I love that. And so then I was gonna just say as a final point, so then we're taking all those things together, and we're really giving people tools, but it's really so that each family can create a customized curriculum that fit their family.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:19]:

That's right, Rachel. Yes. The wonderful thing about you is you've drunk all the Kool Aid. So you know all this stuff so well. But, yes, I'm glad you clarified this. This is not a one size fits all approach to education. Even within a family, each child in your family is gonna get a different take on how they're educated because each child is so unique. Even within sibling family memberships, it's amazing how even a brother and a sister and a sister and a brother and, you know, the different kids in the family are like, okay.

Was this child traded at the nursery in the hospital? Because how could this child be related to this child? That's the beauty of homeschooling. We get to custom make the suit for each child in our family, and it won't even look the same as their older brother's or sister's suit. And, of course, as we age, we become more confident, and we actually, I think, become better homeschoolers as we let go of the reins. The first child, you know, we're, like, grinding our teeth at night. But then as we move down the family line, we're, like, yeah. Whatever. It's all good. The culture can really change, and you get that quietness and confidence, which is your strength.

So we become experts the farther we go in this in this field.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:32]:

That's awesome. Well, I think this will really encourage our families, and it will give them a picture of what we're really going for and the really rich environment that homeschooling can be. Thanks for sharing.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:45]:
Thanks for asking me too.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:48]:
You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid.

If you want to learn more about the Homeschool Made Simple approach, you can visit our website, homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook to get our free ebook about the 5 essential parts of a great education.

Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Be sure to join us next time as we help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Blessings.