

Flexible, Freedom-Loving Homeschool with the Reyna Family

Episode 243

Rachel Winchester [00:00:03]:

One of our favorite things to do on the podcast is to share stories of homeschool families who, as Carol says, have drunk the Kool Aid of this method and are reaping the fruit of it. In this episode, you'll hear from a family whose story will encourage and inspire you. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively and enjoyably. Carol Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades now, and this is one of the families who have attended our seminars and consulted with Carol over the years. We hope this conversation spurs you on in your own homeschool journey. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:41]:

So welcome, friends. I am sitting across a screen from my friend, Cindy Reyna in California as I sit on my front porch in Oklahoma. And just want you to know if trucks go by or whatever, this is just the earthy real life experience of being on my front porch swing, but, hopefully, it'll be pretty quiet. It's just such a beautiful day. I just couldn't stand sitting inside. So welcome, my friend Cindy.

Cindy Reynas [00:01:08]:

Hi. Thank you for having me.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:10]:

It's so exciting to be with you. So how long have we known each other?

Cindy Reynas [00:01:15]:

Probably 8 years. Around 8 years. 8, 9 years.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:19]:

Okay. And what brought you to me to was it the seminar that you've we first connected at? Is that

Cindy Reynas [00:01:27]:

Yes. You were in Costa Mesa, and, my husband was working with David Arroyo. Yes. And, we were looking into private schools because we didn't like how public school is going for our daughter, which was in 2nd grade. And we said, okay. We either go and petition the school and tell them, hey. You know, you're what you're doing is wrong. Silencing our daughter, she wasn't allowed to hand out flyers that had, like, a Christ name on it.

Cindy Reynas [00:01:53]:

But that same day, a little girl handed out birthday invitations, and they were all handed out to the kids, but hers were not because they had, it was like a back to school, you know, event. And she was heartbroken. And I told Jess, I was like, well, they're already telling her that Jesus isn't, correct. And I didn't like I didn't like that. That didn't resonate well with me. So we started looking at private schools. We had a little we have Raleigh at the time, my son, my second son. And I'm like, well, they're so expensive.

Cindy Reynas [00:02:24]:

Only one kid will be making it through private school, not the rest. So never thought I would be able to homeschool or never even considered it. I grew up in public school. And, he was working with mister Arroyo, and he said, come to the seminar. And I was super nervous, but I was like, you know what? I'll go in here. And once I heard your seminar is like, okay. You made it so simple that I'm like, okay. I think I can do this.

Cindy Reynas [00:02:50]:

I love my child. I think I can put these methods into play, and I think we can do this. And then, you know, after prayerfully talking it over with Joseph, we said, okay. I think we're gonna pull her out as of, you know, after 2nd grade. We let her finish, and we were gonna start. So as of 3rd grade, Joey's been homeschooled, and now she is a junior in high school.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:12]:

Oh my word. Yes.

Cindy Reynas [00:03:14]:

We got time back.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:15]:

And she's been to Coldwater?

Cindy Reynas [00:03:17]:

Twice. Yes. 2 years in a well, 2 the past not this this year, but the past 2 years before that. Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:23]:

Oh, and and was her experience with cold water a a good thing?

Cindy Reynas [00:03:30]:

It was amazing. So she was 13 when we signed her up. And, we were Joseph was gonna go fly her over there. It was her first big trip, and we ended up putting in a offer to a home. And we got into escrow. And the price for the plane ticket was a little high, and we couldn't at that point, we couldn't really afford for Joseph to go. And not only that, we were gonna get the keys to our new home while she was gone.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:00]:

Yeah.

Cindy Reynas [00:04:01]:

So we gave her the option. We said, Joey, we said, you either go by yourself and we can get the unaccompanied minor, or you just you don't go this year, we'll go next year. And she looked at me. She goes, mom, nope. I wanna do it. Very brave. And we me and Joseph were both shocked. We she's 13.

Cindy Reynas [00:04:18]:

How are we gonna allow our daughter to get on a plane from California to Minneapolis and then to Duluth or take a bus ride up to Duluth. And I was I was I was a little terrified, and I we were praying and didn't want fear to overcome that decision. So we were really, Lord, if this is you, if this is not you, close the door. And the whole time we're praying, So we put her on a plane and signed her away to the attendant. And, you know, cold water was great with communication and, you know, hey. We have your daughter. She they said, hey. We have your daughter.

Cindy Reynas [00:04:53]:

And then they said, we made it back to camp. We'll talk to you in 11 days. I was like, oh my gosh. So that was a really big, that was the first time that has happened. People thought I was crazy. Have you heard from her? You know, my mom, my aunt, everyone that knew they were going, they were all worried, didn't want me to send her, didn't know that they were highly recommended from Carol. So, you know, they were all worried thinking I was crazy. Yeah.

Cindy Reynas [00:05:20]:

And, you know, just I just had to have faith in God. I knew that this was gonna be good for her. I knew that I didn't want fear to override this experience for her. And, the whole time, anytime they try to sit in, I would just pray and give it to God right away. So I wouldn't let those thoughts simmer, And she did great. She loved it. She came back. It was funny because I was very she was kind of, aloof to some things, a little, to where I would be worried and tell her, Joey, you need to make sure you watch out.

Cindy Reynas [00:05:50]:

You need to look at people. You need to make eye contact. You can't just be, you know, looking down. You know? So I I gave her the whole adult spiel, and she said that when she went in there wait. I don't know. So like this, but She ended up, giving a guy that, like, kinda kept looking at her whether she was young or whether she was, like, why is she on the plane for herself or whatever? Yeah. She gave him a mean look and growled at him. And I said and he said, Joey.

Cindy Reynas [00:06:14]:

She's like, mom. And he never looked at me again. So she learned to Yeah. She just she learned to deter, and it was funny, but she was just, she kinda came on her own when she came back. Me and Joseph got a babysitter for the little kids and took her to lunch and just wanted to hear her experiences. And she just sounded so grown up. Her conversations, the time she got to spend with the Lord just really matured her in a different way. She she was a different girl when she came back.

Cindy Reynas [00:06:42]:

It was super sweet to see the impact it had in her life. Definitely.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:47]:

Oh, that just makes me cry. That's what everyone says. My son, JJ, said the same thing when his daughter came back. He said she was a she came back a different person. That is so that is so encouraging. Well, tell us a little bit about your family. So when I first met you and Joseph, Joseph was a tattoo artist back then. Right? But tell us about kinda what what the Lord's done and how he's changed, Joseph's career real briefly.

Cindy Reynas [00:07:14]:

Yes. He was tired of sitting inside ironically since, you know, we talk about always being outdoors. He was in the military and loved the tactical end of being in the military. And, when he was like, I can't be sitting inside for 14 hours a day, 12 hours a day doing what I love, but it just it's so I need to be I need to be doing more. He wanted more. So we we really talked about it. He came to to a crossroad where I don't wanna say he was

unhappy, but it just wasn't feeling fulfilled. He was actually at that time tattooing a lot of police officers, and they said we need guys like you on on the force.

Cindy Reynas [00:07:52]:

And he was already he was already removing his neck tattoos because he wanted to go back in the military as an officer. So he was already doing you know, when he got out of the military, kind of rebelled a little bit. You know, I'm gonna be a tattoo artist for this in my life. Like, it makes it's good money, and it was. We were making we were very well off. So it wasn't the money. It was more of the fulfillment. And, we looked at our finances and realized we had to cut some things out because being a police officer was gonna be a huge pay cut.

I was at home with 4 children. We cut a lot of things out and made it to where it was only basic. Like, our living expenses were only on his base pay and for for our being in the academy because he was gonna be in the academy for 3 months. So we did what we had to and, got hired on as a police officer. Really liked it. Within a within a year, he was able to be promoted after his probation being a officer for a year. He was able to be promoted to their full time SWAT team. He's only been a officer for 5 years.

So we made that transition, and, it's been super great for our family. Big a big change. Really, drastic. He still does it on the sides, and it's extra money versus it being, you know, our main income. But it's been a blessing. Definitely.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:07]:

Oh, so sweet. So, Cindy, how has this method worked for your family? How is would other methods have worked as well? Tell me a little bit about your home school journey.

Cindy Reynas [00:09:20]:

So the reason why this method works so great was because our we had our daughter, Joey, and there was a lot of things were about letting her be herself and not being so hyper focused on making her sit and do this and do these worksheets and, you know, just allowing her to be herself and allowing her to grow organically in the education process. I see it all the time. You know, I talk to a lot of parents that, you know, are frustrated about homeschooling, you know, just, from church. And I'm just listening to what they say, and it's just like, oh, we we we didn't finish curriculum today. We need to go workbooks and, you know, all this in the workbooks. Here's workbooks workbooks, and, oh my gosh. It, like, makes me cringe. I feel so bad for them because I'm like, there's so much freedom in your method.

And it really allowed Joey to really discover and go through the process and really find out what she loves, gives her the time, They gave her the time to explore options without her having to sit and do math for 2 hours or finish the whole, you know, math curriculum that year. You know, just she did her her basics and she did her, you know, math it and what she had to do. And then she was able to focus on what she loved and and figure out what it was she loved. You know? When we started your method, I think she wanted to be a doctor. And now, you know, she really loves large animals and is looking maybe to be a vet or, you know, there's so many things that, she loves agriculture and, maybe growing vegetables and, you know, so she loves that whole aspect, and she's had time to develop. And with our boys, same thing. Our boys your method has been a blessing for our boys because now we have 3 boys. Back then, we only had Raleigh.

Raleigh is now 12, and we have added 2 boys. Royal, he is 7, and Rook is 5, gonna be 6 in a month. So they're super close, but letting them be boys, letting them be outside, letting them explore the you know, we were able when Joey wasn't caught in water, we obtained a a property that had some acreage. So we were able to get horses and, you know, we had chickens. We brought them over with us because we started small. And, but the boys are outside. They're doing they're building things. They're you know, they took up a slide off of our playhouse and, you know, it is it does get a little messy sometimes.

My husband says, I see this at work. You guys need to clean stuff up. Like, but they get a slide from the side of the playhouse and they put it on the side of the hill and they're flying off the hill and, you know, but my little 7 year old moved the slide from the back of the house to the front of the house. He put it on the slope and was just zooming off. And for him to have the freedom to do that, it's been so great. So your program has allowed us to discover what they love and discover give it give them time to discover their hands, their movements. It's been interesting because, you know, we moved out here and, our kids are so agile when it comes to climbing up hills and going up mountains and going over the arenas for the horses and climbing those poles. You know, they're they're they have a different, agility for it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:47]:

Yes.

Cindy Reynas [00:12:48]:

And then when we go into town, it's it's different. The kids aren't used to climbing hills. Aren't you they slip easier. It's it's it's wild. I've noticed it over the years. And the boys are so they catch themselves. They fall and scrape their leg, and they just get up and

keep going. And everyone says I have the toughest kids, and it's just like, I don't they're just out in tough terrain all the time.

Cindy Reynas [00:13:08]:
Being in nature

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:09]:
all day long.

Cindy Reynas [00:13:11]:
All day long and being able to explore their their, you know, their childlike nature to be outside.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:18]:
That's so good. Yes. You know, you've been to I don't even know. How many seminars would you guess you've been to?

Cindy Reynas [00:13:25]:
At least 8. I think you've been in town maybe once or twice in those years. So

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:31]:
Okay. Well, at least 8, and you're always such a bright light for my day when you guys are there, you and Joseph both. But what what benefit I mean, people are like, well, I've been to a seminar. Like, why would I, you know, go again? Why have you been to that many seminars?

Cindy Reynas [00:13:48]:
You always hear something new and something new always it's like reading the Bible. You read the same scripture, like, 20 times and something new pops up every time. Right? Or you you're in a different season in life. And for that season that you get spoken into. And, you know, a lot of times, I think the enemy uses us being in a rut or being in the same routine as, as a way to, you know, distract us from what we our calling is or being able to adjust to a new season. And I think I've been really trying to be sensitive to that and go into your seminars and hearing, you know, sometimes the same thing, which is I love the articles that you read. You know, sometimes the same ones. But, you know, now my my 7 year old is growing up and now I'm starting school with him.

Cindy Reynas [00:14:32]:

And, you know, it's different. It speaks to me differently now for him with Joey. So even though my kids were in, you know, junior high and high school, you know, it's still relevant because as my littles are growing up, it's a refresher on why, you know, the seminar or why I'm doing it and a reminder of why it's so important to, you know, not be to give them the freedom to learn and explore. So that's why it's been it was so beneficial to always go, and I always receive something new. So I think if you go in with an open mind of, like, lord, you speak to me. Show me what I need to take from it. Some people go in with, like, a closed mind of, like, I already heard this. I've already been here.

Cindy Reynas [00:15:11]:

And, yeah, it's gonna taint the way, you know, the way you receive. So when when you go in with this open mind and this open heart of, you know, lord, you show me what I should take from this today. And, you know, what you say even if it's some of the similar articles, now speaking to my 57 year old versus my 1612 year old. And that's why I really enjoy going to your seminars and, really always make it a point. It tells Joseph, I'm like, we're doing this. We have to go. We never know. I think I have all your all the almost all the books that are, you know, there, but I always pick 1 or 2 up.

Cindy Reynas [00:15:44]:

But we love growing our library, and the kids get so excited. And it's, it's a blessing. It's a blessing to just be around like minded individuals as well that are going through the same struggles. Not everyone does your, does your method. So when you find somebody that does and they are being successful, when you hear the stories of, like, the kids that went off to college, I'm like, okay. My kids aren't being ruined. We they will go to college. You know? That's right.

Cindy Reynas [00:16:12]:

So mixed with what, the counseling that you have, the the sessions that you have, you know, we've been able to cater our program to what we need, and it's been it's been fantastic.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:21]:

Yeah. Because I have your file here of all the years we've consulted, and I have pictures stapled on the file. And when the kids are little bitty all the way till now, it's so it's so sweet to have that relationship. You know, we've walked together, and I've just seen what God has done in your lives. Yeah.

Cindy Reynas [00:16:42]:

And we've had to we've had to to during those 8 years, I I think you remember a cup maybe in 2019, we had to hit the restart button when right before Joseph I think Joseph was right when he's be doing that shift change. The reason why we started homeschooling too is his schedule. The kids wouldn't see his dad their dad because of the type of schedule he worked. That was a big factor in homeschooling as well. We wanted them to be avail even if it was a little they stayed up a little later, you know, they could sleep in a little later because dad would get off work so late, but they weren't he wasn't seeing them. So homeschool allowed us that freedom. But when he was becoming a police officer, our our whole family dynamic changed, and we needed your help to kind of reorganize that. And I think I called you.

I said, Carole, we need to start fresh. Like, I don't remember what great Joey is. I think she was still in elementary school, but I was like, we need a we needed a restart button, pretend this is our first consultation. Yes. Yes. You know, we we were in a whole different stage of life. You know, I don't know if I I think I told you we were on the point of putting the kids back into maybe like a virtual charter something because I was had the 2 babies. I didn't really it was hard.

Hadn't didn't have a lot of support. Joseph was gone so much with policing at that time. And I didn't feel led. I had everything filled out. It didn't feel led to put him back in, and then COVID happened. It was January when I was gonna put him in for 2nd semester, and then COVID happened. And I said, well, there was my answer. I said, Carol, we need a we need a restart.

We need a restart, and and go. And it was it's been a blessing to have you walk alongside with us.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:18]:

I'm so grateful. And I'm so grateful for Joseph because he really has drunk the Kool Aid, hasn't he, Cindy? He's 100% in on this with you.

Cindy Reynas [00:18:29]:

Yes. He is. We dear, when we hit that reset button, I think it was in 2019. When we hit that reset button, I think we were talking about, I didn't want the TV in the main living room.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:40]:

Yes.

Cindy Reynas [00:18:41]:

And, we said we don't want it. And you said, Joseph, why don't you want the TV? He's like, because it's gonna leave a big hole on my wall, and there's there's a area for a TV. What else am I gonna put there? You know? And he's he's artistic. So in his brain, it didn't make sense to have a blank wall. And you challenged him to do a painting and he did he has the outline and he did everything. He got really busy, and we moved to this house where we are now, and there was no area for a TV. So he but at that time, he took the TV down. As soon as he said, okay, I sold it.

I think I sold it for, like, \$200. And we sold it and got rid of it. And he was just kinda like, now I have a hole. I bought a map to put the size of our TV. I put a map up on the wall. That's right. But it wasn't idle when you walked in. Right.

And he did drink the Kool Aid and he loved it and so we don't have a main TV. We have a little 32 inch that we bring out when it rains and Right. You know, we do when the kids are not feeling well, we'll you know, we treat them to a movie here on the weekend, but it's interesting. People think, you know, it's it's it's different, but he drink it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:53]:

And he comes to the seminars and he consults when we talk on the phone.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:58]:

He's just he's so invested in your family and your children. Yeah.

Cindy Reynas [00:20:03]:

It's really important. It's allowed us to grow as a family, and I need his help. And I think we had this conversation, you know, because sometimes he didn't know you know, sometimes dads dads don't know where to fit in. And I told him sometime I would ask for his advice and he goes, I don't know. You're you're the one, you know, teaching, but I but we had a conversation early on. But you see it in a different view. You have a different perspective, and you think differently than I do. You know? I have more of a type.

He's more of, you know, artistic and he just has a different view of things. I'm like, I need we complement each other. I need your opinion. I need to hear what you have to say. Sometimes I overload my schedule and he's learned over the years to be like, you're not doing that no more. And I'm like, I feel like I'm missing out, but I have to submit to that to that discernment he has as a husband. And it's been so great to hear his input and him just vocalize what's important for our family, what's too much, we're

not doing that. You know, we both grew up in sports and, we even though we wanted our kids to play sports, it was more of like, well, they don't have to play sports.

Cindy Reynas [00:21:10]:

Even though they're good and but let's pray and see what God has to do. So it wasn't like an automatic they're playing sports. It's more of like, let's pray and see if that's what God wants for them. And, although they would probably be really good at it, we we know we're we live in a ranch. They're riding horses. Little Royal is really into motorcycle riding. He we just got him a motorcycle, and he's it's so it's a different it's a different type, but it was that discernment that he had to be able to walk away from the things of the norm, but he had he had that. He was able to bring that into our family, which was really important.

Cindy Reynas [00:21:44]:

And I I love his opinion.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:46]:

So Joseph said we don't don't assume anything. Like, don't nothing is a given. Let's pray about everything. Oh, I love it. Yes. I love

Cindy Reynas [00:21:55]:

it. He's like, what if they don't play sports and aren't in, you know, full time sports? And I was like, you know, I grew up I played soccer for 14 years year round. And I was like, okay. We can consider that thinking like Yeah. You know, the Lord will change his heart.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:10]:

Yes.

Cindy Reynas [00:22:11]:

But, no, the Lord softened my heart to know that it's okay to not live like everybody else.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:16]:

Yes. 1 oh, that's beautiful. Yeah. Just being in that's the customization that homeschool allows us to do. Every family is customized, but even every child is customized. That's the even our children don't all have to be the same.

Cindy Reynas [00:22:33]:

Yes. And that's how that's how we go about it. Every child is different, and your method gives us the flexibility to allow that individual growth in each child. And even though

some of them have the same characteristics, their interest in what they would be good at is completely different. So it's been really, freeing. Especially this year, we've, kinda stopped all all activities outside of the home other than church. And, Joey we gave Joey the freedom to kinda pursue a little more of what she wants. So she got a job at a ranch working with horses and, really training.

She's been training a lot, and, you know, she has the freedom to do that because we have the time. We're home. Raleigh's been building knives, and he's just been really, getting into what he loves. Yes. And Royal really likes motorcycles. So he is, and all the boys like to bake. My boys like to bake. It's funny.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:36]:

That is so amazing. And Rook and don't forget, Rook is a dog whisperer.

Cindy Reynas [00:23:42]:

Rook is a dog whisperer and he's gonna be an I think he's gonna be an artist like his dad. He's very meticulous with things, and, he's the little spark in this family. It's been it's been fun. And he cooks too, and he's 5. It's been it's been interesting. He puts a step stool up there and makes his eggs, and, it's really cute. It's really sweet.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:03]:

Wow. Well, any thoughts if if a young mom or dad is listening to this today and they're maybe thinking about using this method or homeschooling in general, what would you say to them?

Cindy Reynas [00:24:17]:

I would say do it without without there's gonna be fear there. Do it besides the fear. Reach out to Carol for guidance. Go to seminars. Go to her seminars. Not the homeschool seminars that are gonna throw a 120 different versions at you. Go with something that has been proven, something that is going to allow you the freedom to grow your children and love on your children and not have the pressure of feeling like you might not be good enough. You know, you're I always tell parents, you are the guardian over your children.

God put god entrusted you with these children, and he's gonna guide you. And if you need help, Carol's here. Go to our seminars whenever you're just go to our seminars because the enemy will always try to talk to you like you're not good enough and you're doing it wrong. But when you're there, you get replenished with, no. I am doing it right. I am the best person to teach my child. And you get this you get this confidence to not listen to everyone else and just hone in and focus on your family and

your children, and you love your children more than anybody else. And, you were gonna God's gonna guide you to pick the best, route and curriculum, and it's just amazing.

I definitely definitely, recommend it to families.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:43]:

Cindy, you are such an influencer and you you and and Joseph both. And I I just love the way you sit in the front row, and you cheer for me, and you encourage me. And we we just, have a really sweet friendship, and I'm I'm really grateful for your family.

Cindy Reynas [00:26:01]:

We're super grateful for you. We we wouldn't be here without you.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:05]:

No. Well, thank you for sharing, and I know that as we prayed before we started to record, that there are people that needed to hear this today, and I know that there are divine appointments. So, I'm so grateful for your time. God bless you, dear.

Cindy Reynas [00:26:22]:

Thank you.

Rachel Winchester [00:26:23]:

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 Podcast 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.