Homeschool Philosophies

Traditional

This method most resembles school at home. So think, textbooks, workbooks, occasional testing. Teacher led, sticking to particular curricula. Probably the way most of us remember public schooling, that does not mean this method is wrong in any way, I only compare to the educational structure of sitting down and schooling traditionally like many of us remember.

This method is structured usually with a routine or schedule, teacher's manuals with lesson plans to stay on task. You still have the freedom to choose what curricula appeals to you or meshes best with your child.

- This method works well with parents who don't necessarily want to create their own curricula, or lesson plans but do well working with a set plan and routine.

Classical

Classical homeschooling involves teaching based on the three stages of learning: the Grammar stage, the Logic stage, and the Rhetoric stage. The Grammar stage involves learning facts, memorization, and knowledge gathering. The Logic stage is when reasoning and logic begin to be applied to the knowledge. If you have hear of classical conversations, they follow this method. Aristotle, C.S. Lewis & Thomas Jefferson were all classically educated. This will contain usually quite a bit of memory work, I have seen classical homeschools that are extremely rigorous in curricula and structure and I have also seen some that are classical schoolers but more on an unschooling level as far as structure. So this is one that you can curtail either way depending on yourself and your learners, you can also create your own curricula and planning or there are many options out there for kits or curriculum ready to go for a classical learning approach.

- This method works well with all types of parents, and has some room for flexibility, but usually works best with parents dedicated to instructing their children with classical curricula while creating independent thinkers.

Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Mason a British Educator, known as the founder of the homeschooling movement, wanted all children to develop a love for lifelong learning. As a child she was homeschooled by her parents in England. She made education her life's work after being orphaned at sixteen years of age.

The Charlotte Mason method is based on Charlotte's firm belief that the child is a person and we must educate that whole person, not just his mind. So a Charlotte Mason education is three-pronged: in her words, "Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life."

This method relies heavily on living books, spending much time in nature, and introducing great works of artists and composers. She uses the living books to practice narration, handwriting and spelling all from passages in literature. This method can be done in a relaxed approach, and focusing on the well roundedness of the child particularly.

This method is not a set curriculum but more of a group of methods. This will require some planning on your part, there are many supplemental items to use with this method but more than likely this method will require you to plan and create your own routines and studies. This wouldn't be a homeschool philosophy that you could just order a kit for example. You will need to do your research, read her books, and plan your path.

Unit Studies

As a definition, the basic concept of unit studies is using one topic or literary selection to incorporate the majority of school subjects, especially: science, history, social studies and geography, writing, art and reading. So for example if your child were interested in Little House Books By Laura Ingalls Wilder, you could study all semester or even all year with the books, and incorporate the books into every subject – my daughter and I did this one semester and you are doing things like making your own butter=science & math, sewing, math & life skills, learning about all the animals that were included in all the books = science that also tied in geography of the areas covered in the books, and that led to the history of the areas and how they were in that time period and so on. You can really dive into some subjects this way. Whatever your child is interested in can become a unit study – legos, weather, people, places, particular subjects. The possibilities are endless.

This particular style will require plenty of planning and prep work on your end, so if your time is limited or you aren't creative in the planning department this one may require more focus on your part to make it happen.

Prairie Primer/Laura Ingalls Books

Unschooling

Unschooling is an educational method and philosophy that advocates learner-chosen activities as a primary means for learning. The definition is short however the options are endless. This is going to be a relaxed approach to learning, giving you flexibility to learn anywhere – from the park to an RV trip. It is also geared more towards the interests of the child, and pursuing topics that keep the child engaged in the natural process of learning. Less structure, less of a schedule, and more creativity and fun.

This method can be tricky, if you are extremely laid back and choose this approach you still need to be able to maintain focus enough to insure there is actual learning taking place. I have seen this method appeal to many families but later feel like they weren't accomplishing much. So you don't need to be structured but you need to have somewhat of an idea or general plan on what topics you want to pursue and how to execute that. This method is extremely flexible.

Biblical Principle Approach

The Principle Approach has been called "reflective teaching and learning." It is America's historic method of Biblical reasoning which places the Truths (or principles) of God's Word at the heart of education. This method is referred to by a few different names, biblical worldview is another version but basically you are creating your curriculum around all biblical truths. There are box full grade kits with lesson plans and everything laid out for you and there are also so many individual curricula choices if you wanted to plan your own year and purchase and pull your own curricula from various sources.

If you want the bible at the center of your homeschool this is the method for you and it is customizable if you are good at planning and prep or if you want it all laid out for you with lesson plans you can purchase the full kit, just open and go for the most part.

Child Led or Interest Led Learning

This is also known as interest driven, child-led, natural, organic, eclectic, or self-directed learning. Lately, the term "unschooling" has come to be associated with the type of homeschooling that doesn't use a fixed curriculum.

Similar to unschooling, but could also be used with unit studies as you go along or eclectic if you like to have a hodge podge of different styles or curricula.

The Eclectic Approach

is the result of a parent's commitment to provide a highly individualized education plan for each of their children, based on their child s strengths, learning styles, and interests. So this would be the hodge podge as I like to call it, pulling from various sources or meshing a few different styles that appeal to you or work well with your learner.

- This is fully customizable, but another one that will require planning and prep on your end to make it all come together.

Basic Questions you may ask yourself when choosing your styles are:

How would this work with my level of time management, organization, and planning?

Would my child receive this method well, does it work with his/her learning styles?

Things to remember:

Be flexible, you can always tweak and make changes along the way in your homeschool.