

2026 Montana Homeschool Convention Workshop Descriptions

*Speakers, Topics and Workshop Descriptions Subject to Change

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026

(All Thursday sessions are open to the public, with no admission fee)

Legislative Day at the Capitol

Homeschool Montana Day at the Capitol is a hands-on, family-friendly event that not only creates lasting memories but also equips you to understand the value of homeschool liberty and discover practical ways your whole family can take part in preserving it for generations to come.

Bring the whole family for an exciting day of learning and civic engagement at Montana's Capitol. Pack a picnic (BYOL) and enjoy lunch in the historic Rotunda, take a guided tour of the Capitol building, and meet with legislators who help shape our state and our homeschool freedom. Students will also discover firsthand how a bill becomes a law, making civics come alive in a memorable way.

College Credit for High Schoolers

Earn College Credit as a Homeschool Highschooler!

Did you know your homeschooler can get a head start on higher education while still in high school? Through credit-earning opportunities, homeschool students can save time, save money, and experience the challenge of college-level learning—all while building confidence for the future. Whether your student is exploring interests or already aiming for a degree, earning college credit in high school is a smart way to open doors and expand possibilities.

Join us to learn more about this incredible opportunity! Meet with college admissions counselors, get your questions answered, and explore classes that fit your student's goals and interests. Discover how earning college credit in high school can set your homeschooler on the path to success.

Homeschooling 101

Homeschooling 101 – Aby Rinella

Are you considering homeschooling but aren't sure where to start? This workshop is designed for new and curious parents who want a clear, practical introduction to homeschooling. We'll cover the basics—legal requirements, choosing curriculum, daily routines, and tips for creating a learning environment that works for your family. Come with questions and leave with confidence and encouragement to take the first steps in your homeschooling journey.

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026

Keynote Address

Like Arrows in the Hands of a Warrior– Heidi St. John

God says that our children have been given to us like “arrows in the hands of a warrior.” The question is, do we see ourselves as warriors? Do we recognize the battle we are in? Are we passive or purposeful in the spiritual training of our kids? God desires that we train and sharpen our “arrows” so that they will be ready to fly when the time is right. Join Heidi St. John as she offers personal insight and practical application on your role as parents.

Workshop Session 1

- **Disabilities, Giftedness, and Typical Learners Under the Same Roof – Dana Wilson**

For those of us whose families include children with disabilities, children with exceptional gifts, and typical learners, one size fits NONE! Is there any hope for success in a homeschool with so many varied needs? Dana’s encouraging message is that, yes, you are still your children’s first and best teacher. Sharing from experience and data gathered over twenty years in the special/exceptional homeschool education community, this workshop will inspire and encourage families to not grow weary. From big-picture family vision to day-to-day juggling of lessons, therapies, and activities, get a glimpse of the glory God has in mind for your homeschool.

- **Finding Our Why – Aby Rinella**

Why do you homeschool? A customized education? A more flexible schedule? The ability to teach to your children’s unique gifts and talents? Are these blessings enough to withstand the hard times? What if your plan starts to unravel? What if these things don’t pan out? Having a why is important, but having the right why is crucial to staying the course. Come and join Aby as she discusses the heart of homeschool and the greatest ‘why’ of all. This session is for all homeschool parents; the new homeschool mom that is just now discovering her why as well as the mom that has been doing it so long, she may have lost her ‘why’ along the way. You will be inspired, encouraged, and have your passion for His calling lit on fire!

- **Civics and How to Teach it to Your Kids – Michael Farris**

Learning the mechanics of our political system can be boring. But if your goal is to learn the legitimate goals of government (protecting freedom and more) and train a generation to lead in godly virtue, then civics is not only far more interesting, it is an essential tool for preserving our country.

Keynote Address

Spiritual Warfare: Fighting for your Family – Chuck Black

Choosing to homeschool does not exempt us from spiritual warfare; instead, it puts our families on the front line. With over eighty percent of evangelical Christian young people leaving their faith when they leave home, never to return, something is wrong in our tactics in fighting the enemy. Ignore an enemy and he will defeat you. Underestimate an enemy and he will defeat you. The good news is that we can live in victory! God gives

us all the weapons and strategy we need to prepare our children for the spiritual battles to come. Trained as a military warrior, Chuck offers insight, training, and strategies for not only surviving the battle, but also advancing the kingdom through spiritual warfare.

Workshop Session 2

- **Finding Your Fit: Exploring Philosophies and Styles – Dana Wilson**

With so many homeschooling philosophies and teaching styles to choose from, how do you know which approach is best for your family? This workshop is designed to guide parents through the process of understanding and selecting a homeschooling style that aligns with their values, goals, and children's learning needs. Whether you're new to homeschooling or looking for a fresh perspective, this session will help you confidently choose a path that fosters growth, connection, and a love of learning in your home. Discover how to create a homeschooling experience that works for you!

Topics will include:

- An overview of popular homeschooling philosophies, including Classical, Charlotte Mason, Montessori, Unit Studies, Unschooling, and more.
- The pros and cons of each style and how they work in real-life homeschooling.
- How to blend or adapt multiple approaches to suit your family's unique dynamic.
- Tips for identifying your teaching style and your child's learning preferences.
- Practical advice for staying flexible and adjusting as your family grows and evolves.

- **Overcoming Homeschool Burnout – Zan Tyler**

Homeschooling is demanding, and expectations—both our own and others'—can be a weighty burden. This often sets us up for intense feelings of failure and disappointment, especially when things don't go according to plan. Even when we're doing our best to follow God and love our families, we may suddenly find ourselves in the "fiery furnace" like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Join Zan Tyler for a refreshing talk that will set you free. We'll cover what causes burnout, how to recover from it, and best of all, consider some simple but strategic steps to prevent burnout from happening.

- **Digital Privacy – The CIA Guy**

Details coming soon!

- **How can I teach my kids balance with tech (screens)? – Mark Naito**

What are the studies showing about finding balance with tech (screens)? What are some ways that I can educate my family on how to find a sustainable lifestyle with tech (screens)? I struggle with my own balance and interested in ways to do this for myself? Come learn from an intentional tech industry expert that is navigating tech for his own Idaho Homeschool Family and has four years of experience from secular and faith-based resources. Key is finding a 'sustainable lifestyle' that fits your family and he has some practical tips to share. Mark has professional years of presenting complicated things in a way that is consumable, insightful and gives you practical ways to tackle tech (screens). Do not leave tech navigation

up to others but educate yourself from a nationally sought after speaker (based out of Nampa, ID) and learn what makes sense for your family. Let us navigate this together!

Workshop Session 3

- **Dealing with Doubt: Strengthening your Children's Faith – Chuck Black**

At fourteen years old Chuck faced an episode of spiritual doubt that lasted for fourteen years. Because of it he could not claim God's Word as infallible nor witness boldly to anyone seeking answers about Jesus Christ. God preserved Chuck's faith through it all, but much was lost to those years lived in flimsy faith. It doesn't have to be so for your child. As parents we have an obligation to equip, prepare, and launch our children into the world fully capable of standing against the spiritual attacks and waves of doubt that they will often face. Discover how to discern if doubt is something your child is dealing with and learn a few basic principles on how to help them overcome and live a faith-filled life, even as a youth.

- **High School and Beyond: Transcripts, College Classes, GED, and Setting Your Child Up for Success—Veteran Homeschool Mom Panel**

Join a panel of veteran homeschool moms as they share practical wisdom and real-life experience on navigating the high school years and beyond. From creating transcripts and considering dual enrollment to exploring GED options and preparing your teen for life after graduation, this session will give you the tools and confidence to guide your child toward success.

- **Called for Such a Time as This – Aby Rinella**

As we look around, we find ourselves asking "how can it be?" Evil seems to be prevailing everywhere we turn, and the world looks almost unrecognizable. Yet, this is our place on the world's timeline; there never was another moment meant for us. We cannot let fear creep in and paralyze our purpose, nor can we turn and run. We have been called for such a time as this; called to live boldly, to stand on truth, and to make an impact on the next generation.

We are parents in 2026 and we are the front line. We must fight for the hearts and minds of our children—preparing them to stand strong, to cling to the ONE that gives hope in dark places, and to answer the call placed on their lives. Come and be encouraged, learn from biblical examples of those that have gone before us, and be reminded that He will equip us for the call, and the time, He has created us for.

- **Montana's Homeschool Laws – Rachel Dombach and Steve White**

Homeschooling in Montana is simple and full of freedom—but it's important to know the rules that make it all possible. Join us for this friendly workshop where we'll walk through Montana's homeschool laws in plain language, share tips for staying compliant, and talk about why following the law matters for every family. Bring your questions—we'll make sure you leave with clarity and confidence!

Freedom Panel

Homeschooling Freedom – Heidi St. John, Michael Farris, Zan Tyler and Steve White

Join Heidi St. John, Steve White, Michael Farris, and Zan Tyler for a powerful conversation on the freedoms we enjoy as homeschoolers. Together, we will celebrate those who have paved the way and gain insight into how we can remain vigilant in protecting our God-given right to educate our children at home.

Mom's Night Out

Don't miss this evening of encouragement just for moms with veteran homeschooling mama of seven, Heidi St. John!

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026

Guys Breakfast

Call to Arms: The Guts & Glory of Courageous Fatherhood – Chuck Black

There is a spiritual war being waged for our families. Our enemy is strong, and we are in his territory. Dad, if you don't fight for your family, no one else will. When a soldier is in enemy territory, he is alert, focused, and purposeful about every move he makes with weapons ready. Only you stand between the enemy and your family, for God has given you the authority and the responsibility to stop him from destroying your marriage and your children. This takes courage, but your calling is noble...it is God's call to arms. Chuck offers straight answers and practical help for dads who are looking to protect, train, equip, and launch soldiers for Jesus Christ.

Keynote Address

The Coming Battle for Homeschool Freedom – Michael Farris

The progressive left has discovered homeschooling and doesn't like the fact that tens of thousands of young people are escaping their indoctrination. We cannot think that the battle for homeschooling freedom is only in the past. New threats are very real and must be analyzed and opposed.

Workshop Session 4

- **Escapism: Avoiding the Snares of Media – Chuck Black**

In today's technology culture, the enemy's lure of our young people's minds to escape into an artificial world is great. As the line between reality and simulation blurs, the stronghold of escapism becomes more and more powerful. Apathy and self-indulgence are two destructive consequences that lead to broken relationships, broken homes, and broken hearts. Find some practical tools you can implement to help keep your children from getting caught in the snare of escapism.

- **Planning for Life after High School for the Student with Disabilities – Dana Wilson**

This workshop will touch on graduating a student with disabilities and life after high school including supported employment, college, independent living, guardianship, and planning for the future.

- **Help! I'm Homeschooling an Unmotivated Child – Zan Tyler**

Infusing our children's lives with motivation instead of having to drag them from one lesson to the next—is that even possible? Most of us are just trying to keep them on task in the midst of math anxiety, sibling rivalry, mounds of laundry, and the daily demands of life. Now imagine this: As you lead your children intentionally through their day, they learn and grow exponentially as you work to cultivate their strengths and encourage their faith. This isn't a dream—it IS possible! Zan Tyler shares four power-packed principles you can use right away to motivate your children and raise a family of mountain movers.

Workshop Session 5

- **Special Needs Parent Panel: Q&A**

If you're homeschooling a child with special needs, you don't have to do it alone. Come sit in with a group of parents who've been there—navigating challenges, celebrating victories, and finding what works along the way. This is a relaxed time to ask your questions, hear honest stories, and gather encouragement from others who truly understand the journey.

- **Digital Tracking and Awareness— The CIA Guy**

Details coming soon!

- **Gap Year Options: Discover, Grow, and Prepare**

Not every student is ready to jump straight into college or the workforce after high school—and that's okay! A gap year can provide time to grow spiritually, gain real-life experience, and discover God's direction for the future. In this workshop, we'll explore opportunities like **Pinehaven Christian Ranch, Montana Wilderness School of the Bible**, and **Torchbearers International**. Come learn what these programs offer, hear how they can shape your teen's faith and character, and get answers to your questions about whether a gap year might be the right step for your family.

Keynote Address

Raising Children with a Biblical Worldview in a Hostile World – Zan Tyler

Our children live in the midst of a secular, anti-Christian culture, facing issues and moral dilemmas we never had to deal with at their age. Meanwhile, startling numbers of young adults raised in evangelical homes are abandoning their faith. Training our children with a strong biblical worldview and deep spiritual roots is crucial to our mission as Christian parents and is one of the most important gifts we can give them. In this workshop you will gain insight on teaching your children how to think biblically about all areas of life, including academics. This will equip them to become powerful, faith-filled thinkers and leaders who can stand firm in the face of skepticism and opposition.

Workshop Session 6

- **Defining Moments That Change Your Future— Chuck Black**

Every person has a dozen or so defining moments in their life that have the ability to change their future. Many people don't recognize them or at the very least, don't allow them to significantly impact their lives like God has intended them to. Chuck shares life examples, biblical lessons, and encouragement on how to recognize and respond to your next defining moment so that you are blessed, the kingdom is advanced, and your future is filled with purpose. God loves using average people to do amazing things because then the glory all goes to Him. Learn how to let your next defining moment propel you into the amazing promises of God.

- **Affordable Homeschooling? – Aby Rinella**

Do you ever feel like homeschooling is for those 'blessed enough' to afford it? Do you ever feel like you don't have the financial resources to give your kids all the opportunities everyone else is giving their kids? Maybe if you just had a little more, your homeschool would be so much better? Come and learn tips and

tricks to homeschool affordably and be reminded of the heart behind the Great Provider that has called us to this gig in the first place!

- **The Spiritual Power of a Mother – Michael Farris**

This session will not give you a long "to do" list. It is pure encouragement for moms who are sacrificing the best hours of their days and the best years of their lives to homeschool their children.

- **The History of Homeschooling in Montana –Steve White**

Ever wondered how homeschooling came to be legal in Montana—and what it took to get here? This workshop will walk you through the story of homeschooling in our state, from its early beginnings to the laws we follow today. Learn about the pioneers who paved the way, the challenges they faced, and the victories that give us the freedoms we enjoy. Understanding this history not only connects us to the bigger picture, but also equips us to safeguard homeschooling for future generations.