

Foreword

M. J. Claus has been my dear friend for many years. Like I did with my seven children, she has homeschooled her two through all their school years. I can testify that she excelled in raising two kind and thoughtful children into exemplary adults who care deeply about the world around them and who actively involve themselves in caring for other people.

M. J. herself is a very creative person, often thinking outside the box for solutions to difficult problems. She recognized early on in raising her children their creative natures, and she created space around them to allow them to grow into their potential as thinking, caring human beings, just as God designed them to be. No parent would want less for their own children.

This intentional, nurturing tending to the strong growth of her children can be, perhaps, understood by M. J.'s own growth. Very early in her life, she demonstrated an enthusiasm for life, especially with plants. Her discovery of plants and her desire to learn to identify them in fields and forests drove her to learn as much as she could about them. She delights in searching out growing plants that are difficult to find in the natural settings. She is now a certified expert in the identification and care of plants. She leads children and adults on forays into forests so that she can share her enthusiasm for plants, especially in their natural habitats. She brought this enthusiasm into her homeschool and found that her interests and skills adapted very well to teaching school topics and life lessons to her children. Having the courage and determination to remain fully herself as she built her homeschool gives M. J. Claus the proven right to encourage other parents to *go for it* as they consider homeschooling their own children.

Her expert knowledge of what plants need to be strong and healthy is reflected in the environment she created for her children to grow in wisdom and understanding. She knows that plants need all the right elements to grow well: sunlight, water, soil with good nutrients, and space to grow freely into the beauty of the mature plant that God had designed it to be. Children need the same.

This book is full of M. J. Claus's powerful, creative ideas for homeschooling children. Her ideas were forged in her own home and have proven to be wonderfully effective. May this book be a springboard for many families' adventures into homeschooling.

Sara Lapointe, homeschool teacher and parent