**Getting Started with a Charlotte Mason Education**
Hello- I’m Bruce McNeice – a former school Principal, Homeschool Dad, and education consultant. My passion is to impart courage to parents, and to equip and support parents in their God-given role of teaching and training their children to reach their full potential, and live an abundant life.

The first thing you will need to organise is your education-programme. A Charlotte Mason education consists of ...
i) the atmosphere of a positive parent-child relationship and an aesthetic environment;
ii) Charlotte Mason’s disciplined methods of habit training; and
iii) living books from the CM-Australia Curriculum Booklists. The book/resource list by itself is not sufficient without the parent-child relationship and the CM method.

This is not a self-tutorial workbook or textbook system but a relationship in which the parent is consistently training the ‘tastes’ of the child towards becoming a lover of all that is good, true and beautiful.

The place to begin your home-education journey, is to read everything you can about the Charlotte Mason Method. Her methods were drawn from observing thousands of children, and how best to help them succeed. We cannot stress enough that doing your homework as a parent, by taking time to learn the CM Method, will be the key to your success as a home-based educator.

Your own initial orientation may take some weeks (and will then be ongoing). There is a great deal of flexibility and freedom of choice within the Homeward Curriculum, so you will need to select the resources that suit your situation. This will be best done after you begin to understand the CM Method, which takes some time.

Here are the steps to getting started with a Charlotte Mason education at Homeward...

**STEP 1- PARENT TRAINING:** Work through the suggested Parent Training materials from the Homeward website.

**STEP 2- THE CURRICULUM PLAN:** Download your Homeward Curriculum Plan, and do a quick-scan read-through the planned unit for the term. We suggest commencing at the beginning (the ‘Orderliness Unit’), as this will help you and your child to put in place organisational habits that will make all the difference to the success of your home-education.

**STEP 3- COLLECT RESOURCES:** Go to the ‘Required Resources’ for that term’s Unit of Study, and make a list of books and materials to collect (according to the age/maturity of each child).
It would be a good idea to do this a few weeks before the start of each term. If a particular book is not available to purchase, borrow or access online, then go to your local library and select a similar book on the same topic.

**STEP 4- PERUSE THE NEXT WEEK:** Once you have done your quick peruse of the term ahead and collected all your resources, we suggest you set aside a regular time (eg., two hours on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday) to familiarise yourself with the learning activities coming up in the next week.

**STEP 5- CHOOSE ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK:** Plan the coming week in a diary so you know ahead of time, which activities you will do each day. If you can’t find the resources for a particular activity, then select a different activity that is more achievable. You might be able to swap around some activities and do them later in the term.

**STEP 6- REVIEW ACTIVITIES FOR THAT DAY:** Before getting started each day, spend 10-15 minutes to remind yourself of what each child will be doing for that day.

**STEP 7- ENJOY YOUR KIDS:** Enjoy taking your children on a wonderful learning journey...plus...don’t forget to ‘stop and smell the roses’ along the way. It’s not a sprint, but a ‘life’ you are sharing together.

**STEP 8- KEEP LEARNING YOURSELF:** Allocate some time each month to continue learning more about the ‘Charlotte Mason Method’ of home-education, through our website and other opportunities.

**Adjust your Load:**

A CM education is an ambitious education with many different subject areas containing a smorgasbord of mind food for your child. However, it is a long-distance journey, not a sprint. So, don’t try to accomplish everything at once.

You might begin with a lighter load (with just a regular short time of Maths and English skills, then enjoy reading together some great literature plus a ‘narration activity’). Then, once you are in a daily routine, you can add one or two hands-on activities per week, plus nature study, art, music, foreign language, and drill exercise or dance – one step at a time.

Parents enrolled in a Homeward/Charlotte Mason School would negotiate this roll-out with the supervising teacher, whereas those doing independent homeschooling will make these decisions themselves.

While you are settling into your new routine, work in short bursts and try to alternate between the quiet thinking subjects, and the more physical hands-on or creative activities to keep your child’s mind fresh.

**Develop habit routines such as:**

* *Do short sessions of Bible Reading, Maths, Poetry, Copywork every day. Eventually, your formal school day may be done by lunchtime, but plan for longer at first (a normal school day) as you and your child adjust to this new endeavour.*
* *After your child reads a section from one of his allocated books, have him tell you what he has just been reading (this is narration). This will often springboard to interesting discussion (but don’t drift into a full-on lecture, or ‘object lesson’).*

After the first week or month, reassess yourself (if homeschooling) or discuss with your teacher (if doing distance ed) how your schedule is working and what you might change. Add Nature Study, Art or Music. Over the following weeks, slowly add one subject at a time as you feel you can handle it. Remember that any new venture can seem overwhelming and don't rush yourself to get it all in at first.

Learn as much as you can before you start, and continue to learn as you go. The Charlotte Mason method is more than a booklist. It's a whole philosophical approach. The more you understand, the more effective your home-education will be.

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Before you go – I would like to briefly pray a blessing over you.

Lord God - awesome creator of the universe, you came to set the captives free; and to give us abundant life. So, I ask your blessing over these dear folk as they launch out on their learning journey. Help them to comprehend the breadth and depth of your love for them, and open their eyes to this amazing learning journey in pursuit of all goodness, truth and beauty. Bless them, in Jesus name amen.