**HOMEWARD MULTI-AGE CURRICULUM – FEATURES & DISTINCTIVES**

At present we custom-design each family’s program.

To add to this service we are developing an exciting curriculum program for home-based educators. Our vision for the future development of the Homeward Multi-age Education Program is that it will have the following features.

The trouble with most school-based education programs is they begin with the Australian Curriculum, and then try to adapt it to the school’s worldview. The Homeward Curriculum will be different. Although the new program will fulfill the Achievement Standards of the Australian Curriculum version 9.0 (and more), the design began with Christian worldview and our design parameters for a family-friendly program, and then mapped everything to the Australian Curriculum. It is hugely important to begin with the right foundation. The Homeward program has three important distinctives…

1. CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW: If Christianity is true, then it has implications for every area of culture and every subject area.
2. CHARLOTTE MASON’S VISION OF A “LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ALL’: It will embody the ideals of a classic liberal education as taught with Charlotte Mason’s effective methods of education.
3. PARENT FRIENDLY: It will be designed in a way that is family-friendly and very useable by parent home-educators, while also being adaptable for the classroom.
4. DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING: It will be designed in a way that makes differentiation for both slower and faster learners easy as the differentiation for a variety of year levels and abilities will be embedded within the design of the program

**Christian Worldview:** As with the L'Abri study centres overseas, *"The central thrust of our teaching is that biblical Christianity is true - not just a way of life, not one more religious option or one more spiritual experience, but the truth. What the Bible says is the way things really are. From this central conviction come two. As Christianity is the truth, it can stand investigation intellectually. Therefore, we stress the importance of thinking things through and finding satisfactory answers. Secondly, because Christianity is true, it is relevant to all of life. Thus Christianity as a world view has implications for the arts, the sciences, politics, economics, psychology, business [and how we respond to the environment, family, friends and associates; affecting our everyday choices in life, at home, at work, in our recreation, etc.]. We seek to develop a Christian mind and a biblical perspective in all areas of life, not just some narrow 'religious area'..." (edited extract from L'Abri website, comments added)*

Our aim is not merely to extend the students intellectually. From the beginning, those who teach/mentor/serve at Eastgate College have tried to show that God exists not only through intellectual analysis and argument but through the reality of prayers being answered and lives being changed. We may not always do this perfectly, but we continue in the conviction that this is the way Christians are meant to live, and that this is the most effective testimony.

**Charlotte Mason’s ‘Liberal Education for All’:**

* There will be a **balance** of i) rigorous academic skills, 2) rich literature and cultural appreciation, plus 3) hands-on real-life learning (eg., in project-based learning).
* We will put **only the best literature and cultural artworks** before the children. For instructional purposes, some practical icons may be used, but primarily we use quality artworks and photos in preference to cartoon characters. We also use whole books and occasional literature extracts in preference to textbooks, dumbed-down literature, you-tube clips, and computer programs.
* The **teaching/learning methods** embedded in the program are Charlotte Mason’s tried and tested methods.

**Family Friendly:**

* Knowledge & Understanding will be facilitated through the **integration of all subjects** around a 3 year cycle of historical and character-based themes. Where possible, academic skills development will be integrated into the topic themes, although some explicit instruction will also be required. This integrated approach will lessen the number of discrete subjects which need to be taught, and be time-efficient as knowledge and skills from a number of subjects are learnt together.
* The arrangement of **topics will be multi-age** so that the whole family can learn together some of the time within the same topic, along with extra activities and literature suited to the child’s own age level and maturity or individual abilities. In this way, no child is held back or unable to cope.
* There will be **minimal number of assessment items** each term by using integrated portfolios with clustered content-descriptors. This will result in less assessment items to prepare and submit, or to mark.
* We will **minimise the number of zoom sessions**: just 1 zoom session per week for the integrated theme plus a Maths skills and English skills zoom if required, will allow students and parents to get on with the learning, and teachers will have more time to assist those who need assistance.

**Embedded Differentiation:**

* The multi-age design will make customised differentiation much simpler. Differentiation is written into the program so most customisation is already part of the plan and easy to document. We simply **substitute the learning activities** at the child’s age-appropriate year-level, with learning activities at a lower or higher year level (all within the same theme/topic).
* As with other multi-age schools (like Brisbane Independent School and Yarranlea Primary School), the program will be **‘non-graded’. This means the children are grouped according to developmental ability, not strict grade levels**; and then they progress up a level when they are ready. A recent report by the Productivity Commission has recommended this strategy for all schools, but very few have or will implement the strategy.
NSSAB Auditor Dr Jenny Nayler has also identified the use of ‘conceptual threads’, designed to establish links which connect learning across year levels. She says that they are most useful when working with students with special needs; and that they synthesise the big ideas and inquiry questions that drive the unit planning for multiple year level classrooms.