



SONLIGHT
The way you wish you'd been taught.

HOW TO SET GREAT GOALS FOR YOUR HOMESCHOOL And Use Your Strengths to Reach Them

(A Homeschool Webinar Resource)

*Created from research materials provided by
Sonlight Curriculum Consultants
Jill Evely, Judy Wnuk, & Kelly Lutman*

© 2010 Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd.

8042 South Grant Way
Littleton, CO 80122-2705
USA

(303) 730-6292
Fax: (303) 795-8668

main@sonlight.com
www.sonlight.com

How to Set Successful Homeschool Goals:

1. Establish a Foundation for Your “Mission”

“And Jesus went on advancing in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and men.” Luke 2:52 (Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible)

This verse is the foundation of the homeschool mission statement for many families. It seems to speak to every aspect of a child’s education. It speaks to growing mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. You may want to incorporate a verse like this into *your* mission statement.

To begin setting goals for your homeschool, it’s important to consider your purpose. Talk about it with your spouse. Give prayerful thought, and then written answers, to these two questions:

- a. Why are we homeschooling our children?
- b. What do we hope to accomplish?

2. Set Specific, Measurable Goals

Someone said that goals are like the rungs of a ladder; if your ladder is leaning against the wrong wall (overall mission), the goals themselves will only lead to the wrong outcome. Using your answers to the questions above, now set 1-2 goals *for each child* in the specific growth areas from Luke 2:52. **Write them down.**

- a. Academic goals (growing in wisdom)
- b. Physical goals (growing in stature)
- c. Spiritual goals (growing in favor with God)
- d. Social goals (growing in favor with men)
- e. What other goals do we have for our family? (such as church activities, housekeeping, and so on)

3. Evaluate and Adjust As Needed...

Next, take time to review what you’ve written down so far. It’s okay to “brainstorm” and dream big. But to achieve your mission, the actual goals you set must meet several criteria. Go over your rough goals lists (one list for each child), and answer these questions:

- a. Is the goal specific and measurable?
- b. Is the goal realistic, reasonable—reachable?
- c. Is the goal compatible with this child’s natural bent and abilities?
- d. Is the goal more or less important than other goals?

As you review your goals, adjust and rewrite them to be as clear, realistic and “mission-oriented” as possible.

4. Manage Your Time and Priorities

If your goal list gets overwhelming, simplify things with this quick five-point test for each goal. Ask yourself:

- a. Does this goal support or reflect our mission statement?
- b. Is this goal important to work toward now, or can it wait?
- c. Is this goal worth the time it will take to reach it?
- d. Is this goal worth what we may have to give up to reach it?
- e. Is this goal essential—does it really matter in the long run?

Use your answers to make another adjustment to the list of goals, so that only those that you can work on now are on the list (though you can certainly save the others to review again later).

5. Create Your “Action Plan”

Look at what you wrote down as academic goals for your first child. Write down a specific task you can do that will help you reach that goal. Repeat this for each goal, for each child.

For example, your goal might be:

- I want Mary to be able to read 3-letter short vowel words by Christmas.

Your tasks might look like these:

- We will do Sonlight Language Arts four days a week
- We will play phonics-based games (like “I Spy” something that starts with a ‘B’ sound) two days a week

Each goal should include at least one task, but don’t add too many.

6. Always Keep Your Plan in Sight!

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care; serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

—1 Peter 5:2-4 (NIV)

This is the verse that keeps many homeschoolers going. Peter’s advice to the elders of the scattered early Christian Church can certainly apply to you and me as shepherds of the children whom God has entrusted to us. Put this, or other encouraging verses, where you will see them daily.

Also, put your written goals where you can see them. Make sure each goal has at least one specific task listed which will help keep you moving toward meeting that goal. Re-evaluate your goals at least once or twice a year, and adjust them to keep your homeschool on track for success.

Reaching Your Goals—One School Day at a Time

A model for lower elementary students is shown here...

Aim for at least 5 “units” a day:

Language Arts	2-3 units
Math	1 unit
History / Science	1 unit in either subject
Music / Art / Physical	1 unit in any related subject

Note: Each item on the next page equals one “unit.” These are suggestions only, to be used as guidelines and tools—not to be your slave-master! Also, they are not to be taken as legal advice; consult your state homeschool regulations with specific questions.



“Thank you Sonlight for being able to capture the interest of three very busy boys!” writes Krysta M of Andrews, TX. “After Bryce completed kindergarten, I realized I was not succeeding in giving my children a love of reading. I spoke to several friends who used Sonlight and realized the problem was the books I had been asking Bryce to read. They were not holding his interest.” But when Bryce (7) started Sonlight, he discovered that through reading, he could teach his younger brothers and take them on adventures. Here, he reads *Hill of Fire* (from Core 2) to Drew (5) and Sam (3) in his second year of Sonlight. Krysta says “I have spent hours looking through different curriculum and have yet to find anything else that compares.”

“We have so appreciated the quality of Sonlight books. When the kids demand to have a book read for the third time in a row in a single morning, I’m much more likely to acquiesce if it’s a Sonlight book. And the missionary stories, particularly The Gods Must Be Angry and New Toes for Tia (from P4/5) have triggered some deep conversations about the difference Jesus can make in a person’s life. Thank you, Sonlight, for excellent products that both kids and their parents enjoy!”

—Jane H, June 2009

Language Arts/English (2-3 units)

- Reading (thirty minutes or more, books approved by parent)
- One phonics lesson (age appropriate, applies to Pre-K through 2nd grade)
- One writing exercise daily (i.e. creative writing, a letter, history paper, etc.)
- One handwriting lesson (as needed outside writing exercises)
- One spelling lesson

Math (1 unit)

- One math lesson
- One math review session
- One math test
- Math game or software (thirty minutes)

History (1 unit) or substitute Science (1 unit)

- Reading on related topic (thirty minutes or more, parent-approved)
- Field trip (may count as two or more units, depending on quality)
- History program or video (thirty minutes, parent-approved)

Science (1 unit) or substitute History (1 unit)

- Reading on related topic (thirty minutes or more, parent-approved)
- Discussion with parent on related topic (thirty minutes or more)
- Science program or video (thirty minutes, parent-approved)
- One science experiment (including observation and conclusions)

Music/Art (1 unit) or substitute Physical Education (1 unit)

- Music listening and discussion with parent (thirty minutes or more)
- Field trip (may count as 2 or more units, depending on quality)
- One organized rehearsal for a music program
- One instrumental lesson
- Instrument practice (at least 15 minutes, uninterrupted)
- Faithful work on a craft or art project (thirty minutes or more)

Physical Education (1 unit) or substitute Music/Art (1 unit)

- Participation in group or team games (15 minutes or more)
- Physical activity such as skating, swimming, etc. (one hour or more)
- Combination of running, sledding, jumping jacks, etc (parents' discretion)

Use Your Strengths to Reach Your Goals

Discover your personal learning and teaching style

The complex understanding of how we think and behave actually indicates countless possible learning and teaching styles; after all, didn't God make us each wonderfully unique? For the sake of clarity, however, we can talk about our different styles in four major groups. These main types, and some typical characteristics of each, are listed here.

Your learning style naturally has an impact on your teaching style. Use this understanding to adapt your teaching methods to better fit the learning style you see in each of your children.

Type A: Actual Spontaneous Learner

- Learns best by doing ... a hands-on, creative person
- Carefree, impulsive ... lives for "the moment"
- Prefers variety, freedom of choice in learning methods
- Likes games, competition
- Enjoys short, dynamic presentations and audiovisual aids
- Dislikes planning, organizing, and long-range goal-setting
- Can be disruptive in groups
- Short attention span, trouble following through
- Does not like "deep" thinking
- Often difficult to motivate, dislikes paper-and-pencil tasks and workbooks
- May have done poorly in school (due to boredom or lack of interest)
- Dislikes paperwork, record-keeping
- Looks for creative and efficient solutions to tasks
- Prefers to teach fine arts, physical education, and activity-oriented classes

Type B: Actual Routine Learner

- Responsible, oriented toward duty
- Likes things to be clearly structured, planned and organized
- Likes to see that everything is done correctly
- Follows rules, respects authority
- Likes to belong to groups, seeks approval and affirmation
- Prefers time to prepare for discussion
- Works well with traditional curriculum (workbooks, outlined lectures, etc)
- Responsible, oriented toward duty
- Learns well by repetition and memorization, drill and review
- Seldom acts spontaneously, dislikes creative activities
- Doesn't like changes in planned schedule or curriculum
- Gets upset when children don't cooperate
- Worries about meeting requirements
- Often prefers to work under an umbrella program for home educators
- Prefers to teach a pre-planned curricula
- More at ease with "cut and dry" subjects than those with no clear answers



“Sonlight offers such wonderful books that pass on a love of learning and missions to my children,” writes Kim T of Bend, OR. “We love to read about people groups around the world and pray for them. The books you put in our hands are so amazing, I would never be able to find them on my own.” Here, Josiah (8) reads *From Akebu to Zapotec* from Core 1 with Anna Naomi (11 months) as they learn about people groups who do not have the Bible in their own language.

Type C: Conceptual Specific Learner

- Likes to be in control of self and surroundings
- Likes to analyze and understand things, thinks and acts logically
- Self-motivated problem-solver, enjoys solitary activities
- Enjoys independent, long-term projects
- Values intelligence and wisdom, good at “brainstorming”
- Has poor social skills, difficulty relating to peers
- Prefers organized lectures, student/teacher discussion and debate
- Doesn’t like peer group discussion
- Dislikes repetition, excessive written work
- Often impatient with those who are slow to grasp concepts
- Likes to make long-range plans
- Prefers to teach math, science, and other logic-related subjects

Type D: Conceptual Global Learner

- Social person, warm and responsive, enjoys group activities
- Interested in people, ideas, principles, values
- Focuses on concepts, not technical details
- Likes to be known, desires to please people
- Vulnerable to conflict and criticism, worries about what others think
- Dislikes competition, prefers cooperation
- Gets excited about new projects, but loses interest as novelty wears off
- Prefers small group discussion, social interaction
- Likes creative writing, role playing
- Dislikes independent (isolated) work, being ignored
- Often idealistic about expectations and goals
- Prefers to teach subjects in language arts, social studies and fine arts

Sonlight helped these homeschoolers reach their goals!

“**Sonlight gave us our family time back!** After a long year of unsuccessful struggles to make my own lesson plans using a variety of different programs, I prayed God would lead our family to something better. Three days later, I received my answer—a Sonlight catalog in the mail! Homeschooling is now joy for us all. We are infinitely thankful for a wonderful Christ-centered curriculum and the hours I don’t have to spend on lesson planning anymore.”

—Tiffany S, August 2009

“Sonlight’s lesson plans are laid out so simply—it is such a relief to me as a busy homeschooler. I have tried several different curriculums that either demanded many hours of advance prep work or were dreadfully boring. **This past year of Sonlight has been the best year yet. I now feel like a success as a homeschooler, and a huge burden has been lifted from my shoulders: the anxiety and guilt are gone.**”

—Valerie G, August 2009

“**Ever since we began with Sonlight, our children have actually enjoyed school**—giving me the confidence I needed.”

—Denise T, August 2009

Recommended Resources for More Help:

- *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon MacDonald
- *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* by Richard Swenson
- *The Way They Learn* by Cynthia Tobias
- *Help for the Harried Homeschooler* by Christine Field
- *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully* by Dr. Ruth Beechick
- *Christian Home Educators’ Curriculum Manual: Junior/Senior High* by Cathy Duffy

Contact Us

Phone: (303) 730-6292

Fax: (303) 795-8668

8042 South Grant Way

Littleton, CO 80122-2705



Forums

<http://www.sonlight-forums.com>



Chat

<http://www.sonlight.com/contact.html>



Email

Curriculum Advisor: advisor@sonlight.com

Customer Service: main@sonlight.com