



A Burst of Sonlight

Volume XVIII, No. 1

Occasional Bulletin of Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd.

FEBRUARY 2009

Our Mission

*Reach families worldwide
with remarkable,
internationally-focused,
literature-based
homeschool curriculum.*

**“We want to cultivate
in our children God’s
heart for the world
and to prepare them
to effectively engage
the world for Christ.
Sonlight reinforces
these messages
and gives us a
wonderful foundation
for discussion.”**

—Sherri N, Aug. 2008



A Resolution to Touch the World

Sarita Holzmann,
President, Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd.

As 2009 begins, you’re probably considering what you’d like to focus on for the year ahead. It won’t be long until Sonlighters start their famous ballads about the new catalog and choosing their curriculum for the year. I can’t wait to hear the excited “waiting” start! (By the way, you’re receiving this Burst electronically for now, but look for your spring edition of the Burst in hardcopy near the back of your 2009 catalog in April.)

This is also a good time to reflect on the past year as we make goals for the future. One of the things I believe was most meaningful to our Sonlight family last year was the Sonlight Rice Bag

Project with Mission India.

Sonlighters pulled together to surpass their \$100,000 giving goal for the Bible-based literacy project. I am so thankful for the generous spirits and sacrificial gifts of those who participated. I count it a privilege to be part of such a special group.

Because of the gifts of Sonlighters and the matching funds John and I have been able to provide, together, we sent over \$230,000 to help 7,682 women in India learn to read—and gain access to the Gospel message through the Bible.

If you’d like to read more about Mission India or give a gift, visit www.missionindia.org.

One of our “resolutions” for the coming year is to give Sonlighters opportunities to join with us to strategically help others on a yearly basis.

Although we need to take time to celebrate, we don’t plan to just fondly remember all that’s happened with the Sonlight families’ generosity. We want to do great things for the Kingdom together that none of us could do on our own.

May this year be a purposeful one for your family. And may you enjoy your part in the noble task of homeschooling.





Selling Rice Krispy treats hit a sweet spot for the R family as they raised money for Mission India through the Sonlight Rice Bag Project.

"We're thankful for this opportunity to serve and to learn more about India," wrote Beth R. "My kids were able to help support two Indian women with the money they raised."

"Your hard work has paid off, Sonlight. A wonderful homeschool graduate is now off on new adventures with a great base of knowledge and love for her Lord! "

—Sandra H, 2008

Meetup 2010: Our 20th Anniversary Celebration

You're invited to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Sonlight with us on July 2-4, 2010, here in the Denver area near the Sonlight headquarters. You can look forward to meeting Sonlighters from all over the world to enjoy special events, tours of Sonlight facilities and tons of exciting things to do in and around Colorado.

From the amazing natural beauty of camping and hiking to a professional baseball game with the World Series contend-

ers, the Colorado Rockies; whether you look forward to a relaxing soak in a natural spring or a wild ride at Elitch Gardens Theme Park, your family could have the time of your lives—and connect with other Sonlighters for fun and encouragement.

Stay posted for more details as the time draws closer. If you're interested in hearing more about this event as time goes on, go to www.sonlight.com/meetup2010 and sign up

for our email list with updates and key info about this once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

Do you have ideas for the Meetup 2010? What do you hope it will be like? Share your thoughts on the [Meetup 2010 forum](https://www.sonlight-forums.com/forumdisplay.php?f=82) (<https://www.sonlight-forums.com/forumdisplay.php?f=82>). ♦

Conquer the clutter and organize your homeschool

Get organized for the new year!

Hear practical ideas on how to create a workable plan for each area of your life that needs organization. Conquer clutter in eight easy steps.

Check out Sonlight's 6-part podcast with three veteran homeschool moms to help you get the year off to a strong start.

- Organize your school time:
Divide and conquer: Discover how to break your school day

into manageable moments.

- Organize your home:
Learn how to get rid of clutter--and even save on taxes-- with five boxes and a determined spirit.
- Manage your time better overall:
Get tips on practical multitasking; Laundry and the crock-pot can be going while the math lesson does, too!

Find ways to get your kids involved in keeping your home and school running.

[Listen to the first podcast in the series](http://www.sonlight.com/Organize_Homeschool_1.html) (http://www.sonlight.com/Organize_Homeschool_1.html). Or check out [the whole series](http://www.sonlight.com/podcasts.html) (<http://www.sonlight.com/podcasts.html>). ♦

Sonlighters' best secrets on how to avoid schoolroom disaster areas

Check out these tips on organizing your homeschool from these Sonlight forum members:

- Coupon holders with small tabs and folders work great for holding all flash cards. Keep the current set of addition cards and sight words handy! —*Sojourneyon*
- Keeping my books neatly on the bookshelf didn't work.

I now put current books and workbooks in a basket with regularly used school supplies. My basket keeps everything together, and it only takes a few seconds to clean up when school work is done! —*sewinglady*

- I keep a folder full of worksheets we skipped over. When we travel, I grab that and use it for review. —*goob*

- At the top of our markable map, I write the names of people or events we've studied with a symbol next to the name. I place the identical symbol on the map geographically so we can remember why we studied that region. It's a great way to review and recall events and past books. —*goob*

Do you struggle to teach writing, or wish for a break from the effort?



"I've told my husband countless times that I do not feel adequate to teach writing. This 'Pay per Paper' coaching service is a real blessing to me, just what I was looking for ... My son, Alex [age 11, using Sonlight® Core 5], is also very encouraged, actually excited about seeing what his coach says. I am impressed—we will definitely use this writing coach service again."

—Angela B, December 2008
[her first year with Sonlight]

During the holidays, Sonlight quietly launched a new Writing Coach "Pay per Paper" service to help you teach your students a most essential skill. Some moms (like Angela, shown at left) already enjoy the help—and share their feedback.

Students who learn strong writing skills can make better grades (in better schools), earn more money in great careers ... problem is, if you're like most homeschool parents you find it hard to be an objective critic, to give your children quality feedback they can use to improve their writing.

Sonlight Writing Coaches are experienced, talented writers, equipped and familiar with

the Sonlight® Language Arts programs your students use. Instead of adding a full course or program to your school day, these coaches can help your young writers develop greater technique, creativity and confidence ... one affordable paper at a time.

To learn more about Sonlight's Writing Coaches, view samples of their feedback, and check out the budget-friendly "Pay per Paper" service (including a year-long family membership that pays for itself after only a few papers), please visit our website at:

www.sonlight.com/write. ♦

Reenergize your homeschool... Even if your dream has become a nightmare

Are you behind a little (or a lot) in your schedule? Struggling with priorities, or motivation? Feeling like an organizational failure? Maybe there's a clash of learning and teaching styles in your home. You're not alone. In fact, you're in good company. All this, and more, happens to even the best veteran homeschoolers.

Listen to a conversation between three veteran homeschool moms—Judy Wnuk, Jill Evelyn and Kelly Lutman—as they share practical ideas and examples of ways you can bring joy and excitement back to your school day. [Click here to listen now:](http://www.sonlight.com/audio/mp3/teleseminar-homeschool-dream-to-nightmare.mp3) <http://www.sonlight.com/audio/mp3/teleseminar-homeschool-dream-to-nightmare.mp3>. (Be

sure to right click on the audio link provided here ... choose "Save Target As" ... and save the file to your computer.)

February is a notoriously difficult months for homeschool moms. Grab a cup of your favorite hot beverage and treat yourself to some encouraging tips and ideas!

Here are a couple highlights you'll enjoy...

- **Reenergize your homeschool**
Learn how to determine your child's learning styles ... then use that information to get the most from your homeschool curriculum materials during the winter months.
- **Get rid of the February home-school blues**

Set some specific, measurable goals to help breathe new life into your homeschool.

- **Figure out how much is "enough."**
Use our "5 Units" approach to organizing your school day to eliminate the fear of "not doing enough." ♦

"The camaraderie we experience as we use Sonlight is rewarding. We're learning and growing together and have become much closer."

—Victoria S, July 2008



Sonlight opens opportunities for my children to learn, work together, and enjoy a close knitted family relationship with one another," writes Dina W of Chino Hills, CA. "It's a joy to watch them grow strong not only academically, but also spiritually." Here, Niko (9) helps his sister Angela (6) work on her Markable Map for their Sonlight Geography activity in Core 1.

Renaissance man and homeschool dad creates a “learning home” for his kids—and yours.



Robert Velarde and his son, Dante

Robert Velarde, a member of Sonlight’s Product Development team and a writer for your Instructor’s Guides, is a true renaissance man. A classical pianist, author, seminary grad

and philosopher, one of his greatest focuses is homeschooling his four boys, who range from 2 to 14.

A contributor to Focus on the Family’s *The Truth Project*, Robert has also authored several books including *The Heart of Narnia* and *Conversations with C.S. Lewis*. The *Conversations* book was inspired in part by the literature-rich approach to education that Sonlight uses. “I wanted to present information about C.S. Lewis, his life and thought, in a fun story-based way,” says Robert. The book features fictional conversations between Lewis and a

contemporary atheist.

“I used to be an atheist back in my college days. As a Christian father, I see the importance of homeschooling in order to instill biblical values in my children, not in a preachy or pushy way, but in a way that comes naturally,” says Robert. “The Sonlight approach helps children listen, read, think for themselves, and spend time quietly in thought. This is quite a contrast to the typical child raised in a noisy, multimedia-driven culture.” The Velardes maintain a learning environment in every room of their home. They place books and maps everywhere to inspire

their children’s curiosity. The kids love to use their Markable Map to trace the explorer paths of Magellan and Columbus. Robert’s desires for his own family reflect Sonlight’s values as well. Robert explains, “One of my goals as a homeschooling parent is to help my children know what they believe and why they believe it. I want them to think critically, seek to understand ideas and listen, rather than just dismiss other people’s ideas. I also want them to see that the Christian worldview encompasses all of life.” ♦

Sonlight Moments

Dear Sarita,

Gazing up at our bookshelf, striped with seven years of Sonlight, I smile. These are not just books—these are memories.

Every day since I was four, I’ve visited this bookshelf. Hauled from house to house, adding more books each year, this shelf has grown with me.

Now, as my younger sister opens each book for the first time, I rediscover my own memories with doubled happiness and wonder: Snuggled together with my mother, as she reads I can feel her chest rise and fall, her breath warm on my cheek. I hear her voice whispering worlds into my mind. Today, I breathe in the sweet smell of the pages with joy, and delve back into the blissful universe of those stories.

I remember when new Sonlight books arrived, too. Packing peanuts crackling as I snatched them out, fingers searching for each new book. Brow furrowed, I struggled to comprehend this new world of printed black letters. Growing. Learning. Loving. Living.

Those peanuts later changed to brown paper, but my excitement never faded. Now I step out into a new, challenging phase ... but every day I will still pass our bookshelf, and smile again.

Love, Libby W (age 12), New Zealand

“I just finished tucking a very tired, rather sick 9-year-old into bed. He asked, ‘Mom, if I’m asleep when it’s time for History, would you wake me up please?’”

—Joanne J, December 2008

“We love to find countries on our map as we sing Geography Songs (my children already know more than I did when we started). My 5-year-old was outside lying on the ground, looking at clouds. Suddenly she gasped, pointed and cried, ‘Look! It’s Austria!’ Indeed, the cloud was shaped just like the country.”

—Lisa C, January 2009

“I heard my daughter (age 9) tell another mom, ‘We only school half a day.’ When I asked her why, she said, ‘We finish our workbooks by lunch.’ I explained that the History, Reading and Science we do later is school, too ... she replied, ‘That’s just fun stuff!’”

—Gretchen H, December 2008

“As the presidential election returns came in, our daughter grabbed her Sonlight Markable Map and colored every state red or blue ... soon we were all tracking and counting the votes with her.”

—Mia C, November 2008

Need a few creative ways to engage and “teach” your kids on winter days?

Would your family welcome an easy way to keep the kids warm, dry and engaged this winter? Why not add a complete bundle of activities and supplies to help your children build art skills!

Art can do more than encourage imagination. When you clear the kitchen table and set out sketch pads, charcoals and erasers or canvas, brushes and paint ... you can:

Help students develop (and learn to interpret) complex forms of communication like symbolism and metaphor.

Boost their overall academic performance (visual art offers

benefits similar to music).

Spark children’s empathy and desire to understand people and cultures they encounter in history reading.

Outfit your students with art activities such as the outstanding *ARTistic Pursuits* books for grades K-12 (and Sonlight-exclusive companion supply kits). Then spark even deeper interest in young artists with over a dozen vibrant “art appreciation” books for ages 4-18. Come explore them all at www.sonlight.com/art.html. ♦



“The Sonlight Rice Bag Project was a great experience for our family. We hope the efforts of all Sonlighters will make a continually growing difference in the lives of people in India,” writes Paula A of Colorado. Pictured here are her sons, Hayden (9) and Carsi (7). They spent hours making crafts to raise \$500 for the Sonlight Rice Bag Project.

How you can teach in 2009 ... at 2008 prices:

Stephanie F just wrote on the Sonlight Forums:

“We’re redoing our budget, like a lot of families. I need Core 6 for next year, and may order now rather than wait until summer ...”

Are you feeling the economic pinch, too? You may want to choose your curriculum for the coming year *before* Sonlight’s 2009 catalog arrives April 1st.

Here’s why: Until April 1, you can still buy any 2008 Sonlight Core or Newcomer package at the price we set last Spring—over ten months ago.

You may not need a new program yet. After all, part of the joy in homeschooling with Sonlight is setting your own pace, doing school *YOUR* way.

Though some package prices may change April 1st, you can

count on exceptional value—in Sonlight’s unmatched support (for planning, teaching and account services); in money-saving year-long discounts and budget-friendly options (like taking up to nine months to pay); and in extensive free supplements and resources.

Let us help you get what you need—when you are ready. ♦

“My son used your curriculum for the past four years and just earned \$96,000 in college scholarships for ROTC, his G.P.A., and SAT score.”

—Scott R, 2008

You Know You’re a Homeschooler When ...

... neighborhood kids insist that Ben Franklin was a President, and your son is the only one who says he was not!

—Loren F,
August 2008

... your 8-year-old daughter (while scooping ice cream) says, “Mom, I’ve been thinking about the polytheists...”

—Jeannine W,
September 2008

... your 6-year-old wants to test his pee to see if it is an acid or a base—and you let him!

—Carrie B,
October 2008

... your children use Latin nouns in place of English nouns when they are reading.

—Wanda B,
October 2008