

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

BIBA KAYEWICH



HONOR CODE

Some high schools and colleges require new students to take an honor pledge. Such a rite of passage could provide a defense against the lure of technology and the temptation to cheat.

EDUCATION

The End of Education as We Know It?

PART 2 OF 2

5 Education Practices to Set Your Child Apart From the Crowd

America has depended on an educated citizenry since its founding

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

It has become a common occurrence to see angry parents attending school board meetings in the past few years, upset about sexually explicit material or gender transition encouragement presented in the classroom.

But a recent school board meeting in California featured parents upset about something other than gender and sexuality issues for once. This time, they were concerned about high school honors classes—removed in the name of equity.

School is already too easy for students, parents told the board, one parent noting that she wanted her child to be challenged.

“My daughter, who is a sophomore, has said that it’s not working,” another parent said. “She’s been in honors the whole way and as a sophomore now, she says she’s not challenged.”

It’s time to teach students to ask questions and turn them into active, not passive, vessels.

Perhaps that lack of challenge is the real goal. The equity excuse works as a nice, politically correct cover—but maybe what the powers-that-be really want is a dumbed-down society that doesn’t have enough brains to fight back against the encroaching government powers of the elite.

Since its founding, American government depended upon an educated citizenry. Individuals such as Thomas Jefferson, Neil Postman explains in his book, “Building a Bridge to the 18th Century,” believed that “the best way for citizens to protect their liberty is for them to be encouraged to be skeptical, to be suspicious of authority, and to be prepared (and unafraid) to resist propaganda.” This is done by training citizens to have “critical minds.”

Clearly, today’s classrooms—honors or otherwise—aren’t doing that training.

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6 things you can do to combat ChatGPT’s impact on learning

MATTHEW JOHN

The new artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot known as ChatGPT is poised to have an outsized effect on the educational landscape, for better or for worse.

Which outcome it will lead to is largely in the hands of parents, educators, and—ultimately—our children, and how they respond to it.

To ignore it is to do so at one’s own risk. Cheating is now exponentially easier, quicker, and less costly; and also

far lower risk, as ChatGPT’s output isn’t very traceable, and the software meant to combat such things has much catching up to do. (Even the makers of ChatGPT, OpenAI, find that their best tool for detecting AI writing is only able to spot it 26 percent of the time.)

All of this hasn’t been lost on students. One recent survey revealed that more than 1 in 4 K–12 teachers have caught students cheating with ChatGPT. In another survey, of college students, 30 percent—nearly 1 in 3—admitted to having used it on an assignment.

So what can you, as a parent or educa-

tor, do to help keep the popular bot from undermining your kids’ development as writers, thinkers, and future citizens? Here are six possibilities.

Ban or Block It

This will probably be the default course of action for many institutions, in due course. New York City’s public schools led the way, banning ChatGPT in January 2023. Others across the country have followed suit, with more surely to do the same, as the ramifications of the new technology are fully felt.

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According to Neil Postman, author of “Building a Bridge to the 18th Century,” asking questions is “the most significant intellectual skill available to human beings.”

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EDUCATION

The End of Education as We Know It? PART 2 OF 2

Continued from Page 1

Banning it isn't as easy as one might imagine, however. Suppose the chatbot's website is blacklisted by a school's firewall. That's a good start, as it means no access through the campus internet portal.

But internet access is far more ubiquitous than in decades past, and so that pesky bot is everywhere your child's smartphone goes, too. What's to prevent a student from accessing it, say, in the cafeteria, hallway, or bathroom, away from prying eyes and off the school network?

For a ban on school grounds to really reach full impact, it means collecting smartphones and other devices with internet capability. While some schools have no-device policies (with independent schools leading the way), the majority don't, and implementation adds what for many would be a large layer of a logistical nightmare.

Parents can do their part and at least look after their own kids by using parental controls, filters, and specialized software on devices. Just as important as mobile devices, of course, are the internet setup you have at home and how any personal computers are configured. Common Sense Media offers helpful advice on how to configure things, and what tools you might utilize for the task.

If you've covered your part on the home front, that's half the battle. And if your child's school isn't doing its part, your voice and concerns as a parent are important to express.

Have That Talk About The Bees and Bots

The bees can wait. The bots can't. Even if your child is in elementary school, it isn't too early to have some important conversations about the responsible use of technology and the ethics of using AI tools.

While almost every child knows by a certain age that cheating is wrong, with ChatGPT, the lines can become blurred. It can do many helpful and productive things, after all, and it can serve as a resource or tool for studying and learning. Many educators are trying to tap into this side and teach kids to use it constructively.

But the problem is that it's a slippery slope, and one is never more than just a few clicks (or "prompts," more accurately)

away from letting the chatbot do all the thinking—or essay writing—for you. It's easy to have a moment of weakness, or panic, that leads to a very bad decision. And even at its best, as a research tool or study aid, the tool might very well foster dependency.

If you're looking for an analogy, I think it's never been more appropriate to invoke the phrase "playing with fire."

All of these are things that should be talked about. And that's true every bit as much if your household (or school) opts to block ChatGPT. It's important for children to know the "why" of the decision, and understand that it's a reasoned move that has to do with their best interests.

Perhaps the greatest teachable moment of it all is the chance to foster moral reasoning, virtuous decision-making, and personal responsibility.

Children who are fortunate to have adults nurturing these values and traits in them will be infinitely better prepared for handling the temptations of today's chatbots—or whatever it is next coming down the tech pipeline.

Make a Pledge of It

Talk may be cheap, as they say. So why not go one step further and consider implementing—at the school level—an honor code? In days past, many institutions prided themselves on such things and made honor pledges and the like a defining part of character-centered education.

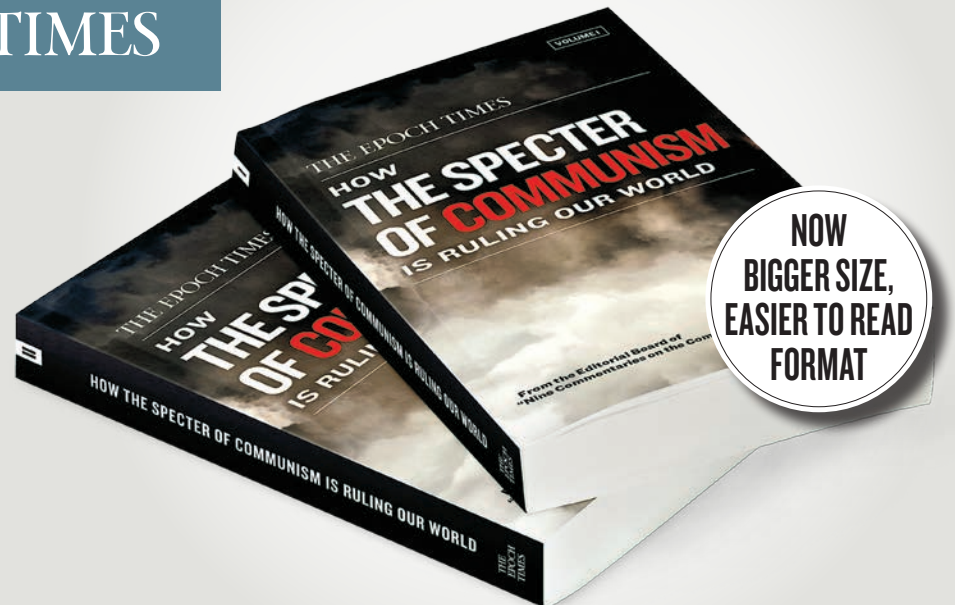
Examples of these still abound, and at multiple age levels. Haverford College, in Pennsylvania, has been carrying on the tradition of its honor code for more than 125 years, and it's still going strong. At the secondary level, St. George's School, in Rhode Island, begins each academic year with an honor code ceremony in the school's chapel, with students signing their name into an honor book as a pledge of fidelity. Breakout discussions follow to help internalize it all.

Rites of passage and traditions such as these provide a powerful buttress against the lure of technologies and tendencies that might cater to our lesser whims.

When implemented at the schoolwide level, they become part of the culture of a place, and a shared value, or practice, of the entire community. They can provide a behavioral norm that's in everyone's best interest. Doing the right thing becomes just what you do, even when nobody's watching.

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5 Education Practices

Continued from Page 1

So how do we as parents and caring adults give today's students a solid, challenging education? Postman sets forth five ideas that are sadly foreign to today's education system.

- 1 Teach Students to Ask Questions**
Asking questions is "not taught in school," Postman writes, an amazing fact because this is "the most significant intellectual skill available to human beings." There are several possible reasons for this lack of instruction, including that teachers don't know how to teach such a subject, nor do they or other leaders want students to understand the art of question-asking, for "they want students
- 2 Move Beyond the Grammar Stage**
Many people are familiar with "grammar school," a term synonymous with elementary school. But what many don't realize is that grammar school is just one of three educational phases, the other two being logic and rhetoric.
We have largely forgotten these latter

to be answer-givers, not question askers." Such a failure to ask questions hinders curiosity. It accepts the world as it is and turns the student into a passive vessel waiting to be filled, rather than an active one ready to pour into others, conjure up possibilities, and make connections. It's time to teach students to ask questions and turn them into active, not passive, vessels.



ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

A crucial but often overlooked part of tech education is learning how to analyze technology's psychological, social, and political effects.

to Set Your Child Apart From the Crowd

two phases today, but Postman recommends we revive them.

- 3 Expose Students to Multiple Scientific Theories**
Today's scientific instruction, Postman explains, is very dogmatic and authoritarian in nature, and as such, "it is the exact opposite of scientific belief." Because of this, Postman believes that competing scientific theories should be taught alongside each other—evolution and creation, for instance, or the theories of Ptolemy and Copernicus—causing students to weigh the evidence for each "and then explain why they think one is to be preferred over the other."
"Good science has nothing to fear from bad science," Postman writes, "and by our putting one next to the other, the

education of our youth would be served exceedingly well." Having lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing firsthand the results of various scientific and medical theories on the spread and behavior of infectious diseases, it seems that many of us would have been better off had our own generations learned such an approach to science.

4 A Different Kind of Tech Education

In the past 30 years or so, the demand for the latest tech equipment always seems to top educators' lists. First, computers were absolutely necessary, then it was a tablet for every student, and a while back it was smartboards (are those even around anymore?). As someone recently commented to me, schools likely push tech instruction so that it looks like they're doing something.

Whether that's true or not, Postman encourages us to pursue a different kind of tech education, one that focuses not on how to use computers, but on the "psychological, social, and political effects of new technologies."

"If we are going to make technology education part of the curriculum," Postman writes, "its goal must be to teach students to use technology rather than to be used by it. And that means that they must know how a technology's use affects the society in which they live, as well as their own personal lives."

“If we are going to make technology education part of the curriculum, its goal must be to teach students to use technology rather than to be used by it.”

Neil Postman, author

Benchmark It

Here's one last suggestion for those wishing to go the extra mile, and for those who are still leery about the specter of the bot (which perhaps your school has yet to ban).

In the first week of school, have students write an essay, in class and by hand, as a baseline or "benchmark" assessment. It doesn't matter so much what the topic is, though it might be wise to have it mirror the type of writing students will be doing in your class later on (e.g., persuasive, narrative, etc.). It could spill over to a second class if need be.

The point is to capture a sample of where the student is at and what their work looks like, left to their own (non-electronic) devices. File it away, and should the need ever arise, you'll have a reference point for what the student's unadulterated work looks like. It can be surprisingly helpful.

Think of this as an old-school plagiarism detector. It may not be AI-powered, but it's apt to be just as good, if not better.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

lot of buzz, in a post-pandemic era, it's old hat for many. Or at least, not a huge leap. Abundant resources are there to support the transition. Check out the website modernclassrooms.org for resources, videos, and research supporting the approach.

Even if one doesn't go all the way in flipping things around, a little tinkering can go far. To illustrate, for a social studies paper, initial research could be done as a class in the library, as several of my colleagues like to do. (It's a great chance to teach and model information-gathering skills, apart from a nice change of scene!)

That can be followed up with hashing out an initial thesis statement in class, along with doing a first outline there. (I often like to see this done on good old-fashioned paper, as it's more tangible and allows for rich markup from peers or the teacher on the spot.) One can also do other forms of pre-writing in class, which allows the teacher to guide students through it and see their work in real time. Again, this by default makes everything transparent.

You can also go a step further by allotting time in class for constructing opening paragraphs or even writing much of the first draft—perhaps even, again, on paper.

All of this not only builds confidence in students and gives them valuable practice and time on task, but also makes their thinking visible. To help students get the most out of it, I like to give feedback at each stage of the writing process; peer feedback is great, too.

With these creative approaches and others like them, ChatGPT should have far less appeal to students. By the time they hit that second paragraph of the first draft, they're off and running, on their own two feet.

BIBA KAYEWICH



A flipped classroom decreases the chances of cheating while increasing the teacher's opportunities to give feedback to each student.

Provide Strategic Professional Development

One recent survey by Study.com found that 72 percent of teachers haven't received any form of faculty guidance on how to handle ChatGPT. That means the majority of teachers are having to go it alone, professionally, on this one.

While the topic is certainly the stuff of lunchtime chats, casual conversations, and ad hoc troubleshooting, these are no substitutes for administrative guidance on the matter. School leaders need to provide training and perspectives—and ideally, a position—on handling the technology if faculty are to respond as thoughtfully as possible and, more importantly, all be on the same page.

If students are using it as widely as believed, it's tantamount that school resources be marshaled to prepare teachers to deal with the problem—and quickly.

Annie Holmquist is a cultural commentator hailing from America's heartland who loves classic books, architecture, music, and values. Her writings can be found at Annie's Attic on Substack.



Truth Tellers: Bach's Music 'Mandated by God's Spirit'

It is a great thing when people gather to celebrate a mystery and to create something of beauty together. Bach's Passions address the eternal question 'Why do we suffer?'



St. Thomas Church and School, Leipzig, where Bach served as choirmaster, in 1723.

RAYMOND BEEGLE

We live in secular times. One of our former presidents, Calvin Coolidge, said that "the business of America is business." Certainly, making and taking money seems to be heavy on the minds of many people. Even in music, a prominent contemporary composer remarked, "I began working in a record store when I was a kid. The first thing I knew about music was that you sold it; in other words, people paid for it."

Let us compare this way of thinking with that of Johann Sebastian Bach, a citizen of another country, from another time, almost 400 years past. His works often bore the inscription "Only for the glory of God." In the margins of books from his personal library are entries such as "Where there is devotional music, God with His grace is always present," and "music has been mandated by God's spirit."

The deeply religious Bach was born in 1685 at Eisenach in present-day central Germany, next to last in a line of six generations of highly esteemed church musicians. They made their livelihood as organists, choir masters, or composers, but their employment was secondary to their ardent faith.

The extended Bach family, scattered throughout the various Germanic kingdoms, celebrated an annual reunion, and it's significant that the first event, after everyone was assembled, was the singing together of a hymn.

Student Years

From the age of 8, Bach sang in the choir, and he quickly learned all keyboard, string, and wind instruments. In his 18th year, he became organist at the New Church in Arnstadt, and 20 years later, after a series of increasingly prestigious positions, he became cantor and music director of the magnificent St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, where he remained until his death in 1750. His duties there were formidable. He taught composition, practiced, performed, and conducted at church services, wrote more than three sets of cantatas for every Sunday in the liturgical year, and produced masterpieces including the B Minor Mass, the St. Matthew and the St. John Passions, the Magnificat, the Christmas and Easter Oratorios, and scores of other works for various solo instruments and ensembles.

The output is astonishing, but still more astonishing is that the expressive power of every note of every piece, religious or secular, is filled with the "glory of God," to whom they are dedicated. Indeed, there is no distinction between sacred and secular in his writing.

He spoke little about himself, other than a passing remark like "I work hard." While he wasn't treated very well by his superiors at St. Thomas, Bach lived in God's eyes rather in the eyes of men. It mattered little to him what others thought.

Bach the Man

Aside from the memories of friends and family, a few letters, and some legal documents, little is known about Bach the man. However, we know he loved his morning coffee, he loved his pipe, and he loved his first wife, Maria Barbara, who bore him

seven children. After her death, he loved his second wife, Anna Magdalena, with whom he fathered 13 more.

He was sometimes outspoken. He had a temper, and once, at a rehearsal, threw his wig at a careless musician.

He was also kind. When a favorite student, Johann Philipp Kimberger, was ill for several weeks, the teacher came to the boy's room so the lessons might continue. Later, when thanks were offered, Bach asked him not to speak of gratitude, but only promise to pass on what had been given to him.

The Bach Passions

Statistics, anecdotes, and critical analyses can't tell us what Bach's music tells of this servant of God, perhaps the greatest of all musicians. The deepest expression of his faith is found in the St. John and the St. Matthew Passions. Their dramatic structure, their vision, and their expressive power place them at the zenith of our Western musical tradition.

During the Christian Holy Week, it was customary in the early Christian church to read the story of Christ's final days. By Bach's time, this story, the Passion, had become a musical narrative, a remarkable phenomenon unprecedented in our musical canon: Every soul present in the church becomes a participant.

A solo voice reads the words of the Evangelist, soloists are assigned the roles in the story, the entire congregation joins in the chorales, and other soloists bear witness to the events that unfold, expressing their compassion, their sorrow, their thanks.

It's a great thing when people gather to celebrate a mystery and to create something of beauty together. Bach's Passions address the eternal question "Why do we suffer?" The works give us perhaps the only answer we can begin to grasp: God himself assuming a human form, suffering what mortals suffer, in order to offer eternal life. It is the ground that the faithful stand upon, and certainly the source of Bach's musical offerings to God and man.

Raymond Beegle has performed as a collaborative pianist in the major concert halls of the United States, Europe, and South America; has written for *The Opera Quarterly*, *Classical Voice*, *Fanfare Magazine*, *Classic Record Collector (UK)*, and *The New York Observer*. Beegle has served on the faculty of the State University of New York–Stony Brook, the Music Academy of the West, and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. He has taught in the chamber music division of the Manhattan School of Music for the past 28 years.

Illustration after a woodcut, itself based on an 1850 watercolor by Eduard Bendemann.



"Creation of the Animals," 1550–1553, by Tintoretto. Oil on canvas, 5 feet by 8 1/2 feet. Academic Gallery, Venice.

SACRED ART

An Empty World Explodes With Life

TINTORETTO'S 'CREATION OF THE ANIMALS'

YVONNE MARCOTTE

It's an immense task to try to capture the essence of God's creation, although one artist made a powerful attempt.

Jacopo "Il Tintoretto" Robusti (1518–1594) apprenticed in the workshop of the leading Venetian artist at that time, Titian. A 2019 retrospective exhibition of the artist's work at the National Gallery of Art in Washington marked the 500th anniversary of Tintoretto's birth.

"Legend has it that when Jacopo Tintoretto was 12 years old, he was so good at drawing that he rattled Titian," Susan Stenberg wrote in an article covering the exhibit for National Public Radio's Oregon Public Broadcast. "As the story goes—the old master gone away for several days, and when he came back he found some of Tintoretto's drawings."

According to Frederick Ilchman, co-curator of the exhibit: "He saw these drawings and said, 'Who did this?' The young Tintoretto was nervous, thinking he'd done a bad job ... and was going to be corrected. No, they were not bad—in fact, they were too good."

After the young artist left his apprenticeship with Titian, he was soon recognized among the greats of Venetian artists.

God Fills the World

A painting that highlights Tintoretto's dynamic style was completed for the School of the Holy Trinity in Venice: his "Creation of the Animals" (1550–1553). The painting is large, at 8 1/2 feet wide. It depicts the Biblical story of God filling the world with an abundance of animals.

The artist painted a scene of great action and tremendous power. The upper and lower sections of the canvas are dark and barren, barely more than a void. The composition swirls with an exciting rhythm as the Creator, in a halo of light, appears out of the darkness.

Then, God gets to work.

"God flies across the canvas, animating the animals, who fly, swim, leap, and gallop in the same direction at the very moment of their creation," the web journal Taylor & Francis Online states, and goes on to say that "in this painting Tintoretto, may have been laying claim to a sort of inspired, vivifying divine velocity."

The Divine Creator wears a wrap of brilliant red, which flows and snaps excitedly around him. He floats over the ground near shore, with a foot against a large tree.

On this day of creation, the world is being populated by wonderful creatures.

Like an archer, God seems to bend the bow of a small tree, shooting his finger like an arrow. As he extends a hand, fish and birds explode forward as if in a race. He has only to have a thought and they come to life, immediately rushing to fill every corner of the earth. The animals are painted in dynamic lines, rushing to fulfill their roles in the newly created world.

The sea is filled with marine animals of every kind: sturgeon, salmon, and red mullet (a species of goatfish found in the Mediterranean). Their eyes seem to communicate an understanding of where they are going: They are enriching the world of humanity.

According to Answers in Genesis, ornithologists estimate the number of living bird species in the world to be about 10,380. Abundance indeed. In Tintoretto's sky are, just created, an array of winged fowl: swans, ducks, possibly long-beaked pelicans. They are in full flight after just coming into

being. With just a thought, God does everything quickly.

In muted browns, land animals await God's instruction. A dog drinks at the shore, and rabbits cavort under the feet of God. On the right, there are some common creatures that one would expect: a deer, cow, and a turkey. Yet there are some that are unexpected. An ostrich is in the background. "Exotic creatures like the ostrich walking on the shore were much admired as gifts from guests to the princely courts of northern Italy," according to the Web Gallery of Art website.

Most unexpected of all is an animal thought to exist only in myth—a unicorn. The mythical creature, mouth open, seems to be straining to be set free into man's world. Amazingly, unicorns are mentioned in the King James Version of the Bible and were well known in ancient classical culture. The tusk of another mammal, the narwhal, was sought and valued in Tintoretto's time and in previous centuries as a medicinal cure.

On this day of creation, the world is being populated by wonderful creatures for man. The Divine Creator must have been pleased with what he had just made.

"And God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:25)

Tintoretto's Adept Brushwork

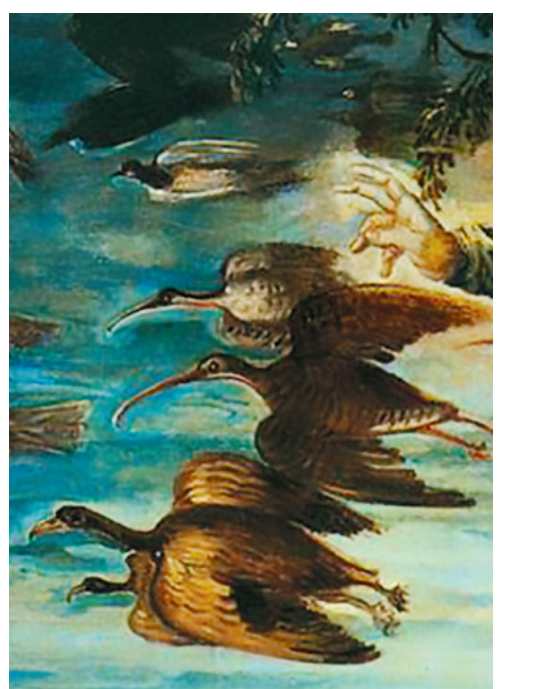
The School of the Holy Trinity in Venice commissioned Tintoretto in 1550 to do a cycle of paintings inspired by the stories of Genesis. The paintings highlighted his technique of painting with swift brushstrokes.

"In this work, Tintoretto also emphasizes his famously rapid brushwork, which picks out the multitudes of animals, God's beard, and the furls of his cloak with quick flicks of white," according to Taylor & Francis.

And he learned from the best. The work of Michelangelo and Titian guided him throughout his career. The artist greatly admired Michelangelo's genius of depicting the human figure. He studied Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling, especially the figures of God creating the sun, the moon, and Adam. Tintoretto learned how to use brilliant color from his Venetian master, Titian.

In fact, Tintoretto installed an inscription over his studio to remind him of the source of his inspiration: "Michelangelo's drawing and Titian's color" ("Il disegno di Michelangelo ed il colorito di Tiziano").

In a bow to both of his masters in this painting, Tintoretto dynamically portrays the sacred human body with a joyful nod to the natural world. The "Creation of the Animals" is now at the Academic Gallery in Venice.



(Top to Bottom) The artist included a unicorn in his painting of the Genesis story. Detail of "Creation of the Animals," 1550–1553, by Tintoretto. Oil on canvas, 5 feet by 8 1/2 feet. Academic Gallery, Venice.

Many species of birds fly off as they are immediately created in this detail of "Creation of the Animals," 1550–1553, by Tintoretto. Oil on canvas, 5 feet by 8 1/2 feet. Academic Gallery, Venice.

The figure of the Divine Creator resembles Michelangelo's depiction of God on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling. Detail of "Creation of the Animals," 1550–1553, by Tintoretto. Oil on canvas, 5 feet by 8 1/2 feet. Academic Gallery, Venice.



Fish of all kinds are depicted in "Creation of the Animals," 1550–1553, by Tintoretto. Oil on canvas, 5 feet by 8 1/2 feet. Academic Gallery, Venice.

THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

Shen Yun Takes You on a 'Spiritual Journey'

New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts is the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company, established in 2006. Aiming for an artistic revival and celebration of China's rich cultural heritage, the company performs classical Chinese dance, ethnic and folk dance, and story-based dance, accompanied by orchestral and solo performers.



"[Seeing Shen Yun,] I had goosebumps. I felt like I went through a spiritual journey. I felt ... calmness, inner peace, and tranquility.

JESSICA TOMASONE,
choreographer, Mississauga, Canada



"[Shen Yun] went beyond the intellectual to the spirit and the soul and the heart.

RICK RISO,
studio singer, Northridge, Calif.



"It's a [way] to connect to heaven. You feel like you're connected to different dimensions.

RENATO MOSCA,
consul general of Brazil, Vancouver, Canada



"[Shen Yun] is the most creatively purposeful thing I have ever experienced.

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5 Activities to Celebrate National Poetry Month in April

Teach your kids a love of wordsmithing during National Poetry Month with these easy, fun activities

KAREN DOLL

*O sweet wild April/ Came down the Lea,
Dancing along,/ With his sisters three:
Carnation, and Rose,/ and tall Lily.
Sing hi,/ Sing hey,/ Sing ho!*

—William Force Stead

April is National Poetry Month—sing hi, sing hey, sing ho! Poetry is such a fun way to spark your children's interest in words and wordplay. Poems have magical, lyrical rhythms and beautiful, descriptive language that will arouse your kids' curiosity and captivate their senses.

Sprinkle some of these fun activities into day-to-day family life for a month-long celebration of the joys of poetry.

Read Poems Aloud

Start simple and start with humor. Read a few nursery rhymes aloud to your kids. Even older children will appreciate the good-natured humor, fun rhymes, and melodic flow of the words. Keep the momentum going and choose a few longer poems that will definitely tickle your kids' funny bones, such as "I Should Have Stayed in Bed Today" by Jack Prelutsky and "My Sloth is Supersonic" by world-renowned poet Kenn Nesbitt.

Visit your local library and borrow some books of poetry, such as "Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young" selected by Prelutsky or "Favorite Poems Old and New" selected by Helen Ferris. You can also visit Nesbitt's site at Poetry4Kids.com, where you'll find a variety of poems organized by type, subject, and grade level; videos of Nesbitt reading some of his favorite poems; and more.

Throughout the month, choose from a variety of poetic styles, such as haikus, free verse poems, odes (which celebrate a per-

son, place, thing, or idea), verses from Shakespeare, acrostic poems (where the first letter of each line spells out a message), and more.

Create Poetry

Give your kids the freedom to create poetry throughout the day. When we were home-schooling, my two kids enjoyed creating different kinds of poems from the magnetic words on our refrigerator. You can download lists of common words for free from Home-MadeLovely.com or the Magnetic Poetry website, then print the lists onto magnetic sheets using an inkjet printer. (Laser printers generate too much heat for printing safely.) Then, simply cut out the words and stick them on the fridge. For inspiration, try creating a short poem and sticking it in the center of all the word magnets.

Even older children will appreciate the good-natured humor, fun rhymes, and melodic flow of the words.

For a more positive writing experience, introduce your kids to some of the easier, more child-friendly poetic styles such as free verse, couplets (which have successive lines that rhyme), acrostic poems, haikus, concrete or shape poems (where the poem's shape on the page adds to its meaning), and cinquains (which have a five-line pattern). Free verse is a great style to start with because there are no rules. Your kids have the freedom to experiment with words and wordplay without needing to follow a specific pattern.



Kids can not only enjoy reading poetry aloud to each other, but also creating verses of their own.

If you need a little inspiration or help, look to Nesbitt's Poetry4Kids website, which offers free poetry writing lessons for all of the above styles and more.

Illustrate and Dramatize Poems

Encourage your kids to expand their study of poetry by illustrating their favorite poems. My kids had a lot of fun making illustrated couplet poem booklets. If your kids are game, gift the completed booklets to emerging readers. Longer poems could be made into picture books.

Also, your kids will have great fun hamming up as they act out their favorite poems, especially the funnier ones. Nursery rhymes make great choices because they're familiar and most are short. Or maybe you're looking for a new idea for family night; for a fun-filled evening, play poetry charades.

Host a Poetry Tea Party

Hosting a poetry tea party is the creation of fellow homeschool mom, curriculum designer, and parenting author Julie Bogart. Inspired by her fondness for a relaxing afternoon tea time and her desire to share her love of Shakespeare with her children, Bogart created Poetry Teatime and wholeheartedly believes that "there are few practices parents can adopt with their children that have as much power

to transform the family dynamic with so little effort as this one ritual."

For inspiration, visit Bogart's website, PoetryTeatime.com, for tips, oodles of poetry resources to delight your kids' senses, and some yummy recipes to add a touch of sweetness to your afternoon.

Participate in Poem in Your Pocket Day Poem in Your Pocket Day is celebrated annually in April; in 2023, this unique holiday occurs on April 27. Poem in Your Pocket Day is an easy and fun way to share a love for poetry and introduce friends and family to its beauty.

The idea is simple: Your child chooses a favorite poem, writes it out on an index card or card stock, and carries it in his or her pocket throughout the day, sharing it whenever possible. Alternatively, they could write out multiple copies of the chosen poem or poems and then gift the poems to family, friends, and neighbors.

The more you share poetry with your children, the more they'll learn to enjoy it.

Karen Doll is a freelance writer and homeschooling consultant based in the small village of Wassergass, Pa. She enjoys writing about homeschooling, gardening, food and culture, family life, and the joys of chicken keeping. Visit her at AtHomeWithKarenDoll.wordpress.com

DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

Hard-Won Lessons for Family Relations

Marriage lessons learned the hard way, including nuggets of wisdom from my third wife, also in her third marriage, this one lasting 25 years:

1. In a "trial marriage" the one on trial is the one who cares the most, and there is nothing right about that.
2. Learning lessons the hard way can result in lifelong consequences; learning the easy way (heeding wisdom) can result in lifelong blessings.
3. Give up bad habits/behavior.
4. The one thing you will ever do perfectly in life is prove God right, one way or the other.
5. Learn God's ways and adopt them as your own; join a church and attend regularly.
6. Keep God the mainstay of your marriage. Pray together often.

7. Become friends with couples who strive to do things right.
8. Consider your spousal partner before self in thought and deed.
9. Grant each other veto power over major decisions—rarely, if ever, invoked. This will encourage effective communication and win-win compromise.
10. Share your thoughts/feelings freely and honestly; but learn when to keep your mouth shut. Good timing saves bad.
11. Forgive easily; never carry a grudge or weaponize past mistakes.
12. Never let your spouse go to sleep at night without knowing he/she is genuinely loved.

—Ken Webster, Oklahoma

Dear Epoch Times,
My father, Fred Marvin, who lived to be three days shy of 99, only gave me one piece of advice my entire life: "Always do the right thing."

The only rule I ever was given to live in his house was: "Don't ever tell me a lie."
Those two sentences led me on a life-long journey:

I must be able to discern Right from Wrong. I can never lie to my father.

—Doug Marvin, Pennsylvania

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations? We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: **Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001**



A tried and true piece of advice for a successful, happy marriage is to always consider your partner before yourself.

MissNTD

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