

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION



In this suggested exercise, writing a letter to your grandchildren (real or imaginary) encourages you to reflect on your life, draw meaning from it, and pass on some wisdom—to yourself as well as to your grandchildren.

BIBA KAYEWICH

By James Sale

## The Power of Narrative to Heal

Narrative is arguably the defining aspect of being human because narrative enables us to comprehend the world we live in; indeed, professor Brian Cox once wrote that “narrative may be regarded as a primary act of mind,” and physicist Frank Wilczek observed that “we humans are especially adapted to think in story and narrative.”

While science and technology are important and have their place, without stories, without narratives, we can’t make heads or tails of the science anyway! This also applies to the stories we tell about ourselves. While narratives can empower us to conquer the world, it’s an often-repeated wisdom that the majority of us tell very negative stories: “I’ll never be an athlete, because when I was 11, I was always picked last to be on the sports team,” “I don’t deserve this, because when I was 18, I made a mistake that ended a relationship,” or “I’m not good enough, because I failed a test at the university.” These stories mold our psyches and thereby create our living reality—the past distorts the future. So one of the primary aims of coaching and therapy is to address these often long-held inner narratives and strive to rewrite them in order to create a new paradigm.

Of course, most of us are actually unaware of our inner narratives. We repeat them so often that they become subconscious mantras. This is why coaches have to use powerful tools—hypnosis, image streaming, exercises using tools such as word association, timeline therapy, or other more overtly constructed diagnostics such as personality profiling, psychometrics, and motivational maps—in order to reveal what’s hidden from our conscious mind.

We ourselves aren’t the only architects of these narratives. When we’re children, we’re significantly shaped by those

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For the last 20 years, Katy Faust has served in youth ministry.  
KATY FAUST

## Giving Children a Voice

Katy Faust, the founder of Them Before Us, is determined to make children’s voices heard

By Jeff Minick

“I want my mom and dad to love me, and I want them to love each other.”

—Jocie, aged 7

That sentence introduces visitors to the website of the organization, Them Before Us (TBU).

“Jocie’s statement illustrates the universal human longing to be known and loved by the two people responsible for one’s existence,” the website reads. “Those longings should inform how we talk about marriage and family because children have the most at stake in these conversations.”

Yet Jocie’s voice, and the voices of millions like her, are rarely heard.

As Them Before Us pointed out, “You will seldom hear Jocie’s perspective in discussions on marriage or family. Adults dominate these conversations because they hold all of the power.”

For decades now, children have been the near-invisible victims of the sexual revolution. No-fault divorce, fatherless households, considerations about adoption, reproductive technologies, cohabitation, and more have all played to adult desires but have left children with their wants and needs out of the conversation. The consequence? These winds of cultural change have damaged untold numbers of innocent kids.

The fatherless epidemic in America provides just one example of what happens

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JESSICA ROCKOWITZ/UNSPLASH

Them Before Us stands up for the rights of children to be raised and loved by their biological parents.

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Katy Faust in the car with her 15-year-old son.

## Giving Children a Voice

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to children when natural family ties are broken. This statistical breakdown was compiled by The Fatherless Generation Foundation and is cited by Them Before Us:

- 90 percent of homeless and runaway youths are fatherless and at risk of being victimized by sex trafficking.
- 70 to 85 percent of prison inmates grew up without a father.
- 63 percent of teenagers who commit suicide have absent fathers.
- 71 percent of pregnant teenagers come from fatherless homes.
- 71 percent of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.

By compiling and making known such data; by collecting and sharing the stories of children, many of them now grown to adulthood, who suffered the consequences of decisions outside of their control; and by taking their advocacy for children's rights to the government and the legal system, Them Before Us seeks to give these children a voice among adults, awaken us to their struggles and cries for help, and make all of us more aware of their rights and needs.

### Life Provided the Tools

"I can look at my life right now and see how my work at the adoption agency and in youth ministry, my mom's situation, and my parents' divorce all worked together for the good," said Katy Faust, founder and director of Them Before Us.

Faust grew up in Portland, Oregon, where she attended public school. She was 10 when her parents divorced. Her father later remarried, while her mother has lived in a long-term relationship with a woman. In interviews and online videos, Faust explains that despite the pain of that divorce, she was fortunate in that both her mother and father remained active and influential in her life.

After graduating from college, where she studied Chinese, Faust worked for four years at a large Chinese adoption agency. "Our mantra was 'We aren't here to find a child for every adult. We are here to find a family for every child,'" she said of the agency.

For the past 20 years, Faust has also served in youth ministry.

"I still work in youth ministry at our church. I love it, and it's so important to offer youth formation. Culturally, it's a war, and it just kills me that churches aren't taking the education of teens more seriously," she said.

Combine all of these experiences with a strong woman determined to speak up for children's rights in such controversial and adult-dominated arenas as divorce, gay marriage, live-in boyfriends, and surrogate moms, and Them Before Us (TBU) is the result.

### The Mission

On TBU's website is its vision statement: "Them Before Us strives to put children before adults in every conversation about marriage and family. We seek to prioritize the rights of children in the culture and the courtroom, the personal and the public."

Alongside it is this mission statement: "Them Before Us is a global movement defending children's right to their mother and father."

In the introduction to her 2022 book, "Them Before Us: Why We Need a Global Children's Rights Movement," which she co-authored with her friend and TBU General Editor Stacy Manning, Faust lists the topics addressed within, which are identical to the issues TBU deals with

every day. These focal points include the importance of families made up of mothers, fathers, and children; the rights of all children to be loved and raised by their biological parents; and what happens when the "married-mother-father household" is abandoned and "divorce, same-sex parents, sperm/egg donation and surrogacy, and adoption impact children."

On the website and in the book are studies about the effects of these circumstances on children—data which is important—but it's the painful stories shared by adults about their childhood that move the heart.

### Voices in the First Person

From the book come these thoughts of a young woman conceived via an anonymous donor: "To my mother the whole point of my existence is to be her daughter, I feel like she doesn't really see me as a person, but more of a project she feels is completely under her control. Honestly, why would she not? She literally picked me out from a catalogue. She made sure that I would never have the option to meet my biological father. ... I hate myself for how much I regret being conceived this way."

On the website, under "Stories," we read Hannah T.'s lengthy account of her parents' divorce, her mother's turn to lesbianism, and years of marital court battles. Although Hannah escaped her bewildering and often harsh childhood to become financially secure with a family and a loving husband, her four siblings didn't fare so well. Two of her brothers are alcoholics, the third gambled away his savings and possibly participated in human trafficking, and her only sister died at age 30 from a fentanyl overdose.

"My parents were always super involved in their personal romantic relationships, but not so much [in] us," Hannah T. wrote.

These are the voices of those silenced or ignored by our media and our culture, indictments of what

takes place when parents and society leave children out of the equation of family and parenthood.

### The Touchstone of Reality

While she strongly believes that a mother-and-father marriage is the ideal vehicle for raising children, Faust is also a pragmatist. Individual children matter more than an ideology. The staff and volunteers at TBU have offered counsel and help in any number of personal and legal situations, working with real people facing all sorts of dilemmas.

When I spoke with Faust by phone, she was driving with her 15-year-old in the car. During our conversation, she teased her son a couple of times. Later, when they stopped and switched places, she was giving him instructions while we talked—"Pull around this truck." "Only stay in the pull lane if you're going over 70"—which brought me some smiles. Here, I thought, is a down-to-earth mom, balancing her duties like so many others I know, with a heart for kids.

And if we pause to consider the matter, by fighting for the rights of children, Faust, her staff, and the volunteers of Them Before Us are also fighting for traditional marriage and ultimately for the cornerstone of our civilization: the family.

For any readers wishing to become involved with Them Before Us, receive its newsletter, donate to its ongoing efforts, or share their own stories, the contact information for the group may be found on its website.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

# The Power of Narrative to Heal

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around us: parents, teachers, friends, and even superstars we idolize.

On this basis, we can identify three key questions that will help us get to the root of our inner narratives. Of course, answering these questions may still not reveal the whole truth, as seeing what lies on the "shadow side" of the self (as Carl Jung would call it), in the subconscious, is next to impossible without tools. But it may provide a good starting point in order to take things further. The three questions are:

1. What was the story the world you grew up in told you of who you should become?
2. What was the story you told yourself of who you should become?
3. What's the story life has told you of who you are?

These three angles of perception create a pyramid that forms the self: the story the world told us, i.e., the environment and the history that influenced us as children, or what we might relate to what we call our self-esteem, which is how we feel about ourselves; the story we told ourselves of who we should become (that is, our projected future), the ideal self, and who our role models are; and finally, the story life has told us, i.e., what's happening in the now, which correlates with our illusory perception of reality and ourselves (for hardly any of us see the object as it truly is), the self-image.

When we realize the power of our self-narratives, we can unlock the potential that hitherto we've been completely unable to access.

With these three perspectives—self-esteem, the ideal self, and self-image—we might better triangulate the inner narrative.

But identifying the narrative and understanding how we really view ourselves is merely the first half of the battle! We now have to work out how to rewrite this narrative.

To do this, we might try doing an "oldie but goodie" exercise. You'll need a pen and paper.

Imagine that you have grandchildren (some of you may already have them, but if not, that doesn't matter, as the exercise becomes even more

imaginative). You're going to write a letter to either one of your grandchildren or all of them collectively. The letter is going to follow the following template:

Dear Grandchild,  
The most important lesson I have learned in my long life is ...

I think you should know this because ...

I want you to ...

Now, the idea of this exercise is that it forces you to view your life in retrospect. In other words, it forces you to view your life as a complete and finished story rather than an ongoing process! This allows you to draw meaning, conclusions, and messages from your life in the same way that you might a fairy tale or a novel. This will help you to see your inner narratives in a very different light and hopefully also pass on some wisdom, not just to your grandchild but to yourself as well.

Taking the first question, what the most important lesson is will define the key event and key value(s) as well—just why has it stuck in your memory as being so important? Consider this, too: If you think to yourself that all the lessons are equally important, then clearly, you aren't paying enough attention! Many lessons have been lost to your memory, but what is it that has stayed, that persists, and that somehow influences you even now? If you have 10 answers to this question, then write them all down; once you have done it, begin to meditate on their relative importance until you decide what's the No. 1 lesson for you.

Writing is a very cathartic process. The mere act of setting words to paper begins to organize one's thoughts. You may not consider yourself a writer, but we're not asking for perfection or style here, simply something honest and heartfelt, directed at the focal point of either your real or imagined descendants. What do you want to pass on to them? What legacy do you want to leave? These are big, corny words, but fundamentally, it's ingrained in us at

the level of DNA to pass something on to the next generation.

When we realize the power of our self-narratives, we can unlock the potential that hitherto we've been completely unable to access. But we must be aware and beware of the power of negative self-narratives and address them as soon as possible if we aren't to fall into the self-fulfilling traps that they can embody when we believe them.

When we're children, we're influenced by those around us, including family and friends.

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, "Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams" (Routledge, 2021). He has been nominated for the 2022 poetry Pushcart Prize, won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition, performing in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is "StairWell." For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit EnglishCantos.home.blog



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## DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

### Always Grow and Continue to Learn

I read with great interest the article by Frank Monti about advice for young people. I believe my life is very similar but with a different twist and would also be helpful to young people just starting their careers.

I graduated from high school at 16 and college at 20. After college, I started as a statistical analyst at a small consulting firm. By age 22, I was a vice president. I got there by coming to work early, staying late, and working during weekends and holidays. I worked 50- to 60-hour weeks. I was driven to succeed and did very well financially.

At age 30, I was offered an excellent job at a large, national corporation, which was one of our clients. It was a wonderful job. I had a staff of over



"Working with young people keeps you young," writes Douglas Lonnstrom, who became a college professor at 42, after a corporate career.

20, including lawyers, accountants, and analysts, but it was demanding and left me with little personal life. I belonged to the corporation. I often had to fly on Sunday to be somewhere by Monday morning and fly home the following Saturday. I was single and played golf. Sometimes, on a weekend, the vice president of sales would call me to play golf with customers. It sounds like fun, but it consumed most of the day.

Again, I was financially successful but not fulfilled. I wasn't cut out for the corporate life. Whereas Mr. Monti turned down a promotion, I simply quit—a gutsy move, but the greatest thing I did for my career.

I became a college professor at age 42. There's a saying that life begins at 40. That was true in my case. Not only did I start a new career, but I got married to a wonderful woman at age 45, my first and only marriage, hers also. We just celebrated our 40th anniversary.

When I started as a professor, I had a bachelor's degree and an MBA. If you want to really succeed in the academic world, you need a doctorate. So I went back to school while still teaching, and with the help of my wife, I got my doctorate at age 47.

I also became a pilot at age 50 and bought an airplane.

One of my themes to young people is to always continue to grow and learn. I am now 85 and planning to learn Swedish. All four of my grandparents were Swedish immigrants.

Being a college professor fulfilled

my life. I was doing something useful for society. I have taught more than 10,000 students, many of whom became college professors because of me. Others send me emails thanking me when they get promoted in their job. You don't get rewards like this from many other professions.

I am 85 and just retired this year, and I miss it. Working with young people keeps you young!

—Dr. Douglas Lonnstrom, New York

**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



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## FINE ART

## Painting the High Seas

Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom, the 1st Dutch artist to capture sails at sea

By Michelle Plastrik

Under a gray sky, a heavily armed Dutch cargo ship powers through the choppy waters of the North Sea, in Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom's painting "A Fleet at Sea." Wind

fills the ship's sails. Sailors work hard, ensuring that the ship stays on course. High on the mast, a golden flag with a red lion motif flutters in the breeze, announcing that this ship comes from the province of Holland and that it likely was the *Roode Leeuw* (Red Lion) that set sail for the Caribbean and South America in 1597.

At the heart of the red, white, and blue Dutch flag that flies on the stern pole is Rotterdam's municipal crest, hinting at the ship's home port.

The port of Den Briel, in the west Neth-

erlands, can be seen in the distance, where the Maas River widens to the North Sea.

We may recognize the ship's silhouette as similar to the *Mayflower*, which brought the Pilgrims to Cape Cod on Nov. 21, 1620. Both ships were "fluyts," Dutch cargo ships. Fluyts are pear-shaped like Spanish galleons and have square rigs with two or three masts. The fluyt design originated in the 16th century and was created to maximize cargo space and crew efficiency.

### Marine Painter Extraordinaire

In October 2022, the National Gallery of Art acquired Vroom's "A Fleet at Sea" painting.

As the first Dutch painter to specialize in seascapes, Vroom deftly painted ship portraits and epic sea-battle scenes teeming with action. Indeed, he popularized such paintings. And, according to the gallery's press release, "Vroom paved the way for later 17th-century marine painters."

Ship owners, captains, and shareholders of the Dutch East and West India Companies commissioned Vroom's paintings, many of which glorify the Dutch Golden Age, showing Dutch naval and merchant might.

Some of Vroom's paintings highlight England's maritime might, such as when the lord admiral commissioned him to create a series of cartoons (preparatory drawings), for the now-lost tapestries, celebrating England's victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588. The tapestries were displayed in the House of Lords until a fire destroyed the textiles in 1834.

His lively, vibrant seascapes remain as testimonies of when the sails ruled the high seas and distant lands were sailors' dreams.

Vroom managed to create harmonious paintings even when depicting battles or powerful sea surges.

### Sailor Vroom

Born in Haarlem in the province of North Holland, Vroom first became a pottery and faience (tin-glazed pottery) painter, loosely following in the footsteps of his father, who was a sculptor and ceramic artist.

When he was 19 years old, he boarded a ship to Spain, then to Italy. Of note, in Florence between 1585 and 1587, the Medici family became his patrons. Traveling through Italy and France, he painted pottery, studied under Flemish landscape painter Paul Brill, and met artists such as Haarlem painter Jan Kraeck, (a court painter for the House of Savoy in Turin, Italy), gaining much inspiration for his art.

Vroom also had some adventures. On one voyage, he became shipwrecked near Lisbon, in Portugal. The natives wanted to kill the crew, thinking that they were pirates. After Vroom showed the natives some of his small religious paintings, the natives were convinced that the crew were Christians and spared their lives.

As a seasoned sailor, Vroom understood the sea elements: how the wind, water, and sunlight behaved in all kinds of weather. Having spent countless hours on the water, he knew how to render every last detail of a sailor's work and the ship's architecture.

His lively, vibrant seascapes remain as testimonies of when the sails ruled the high seas and distant lands were sailors' dreams.

"A Fleet at Sea," 1614, by Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom. Oil on canvas; 22 1/4 inches by 38 1/4 inches. Gift of Albert and Madzy Beveridge; National Gallery of Art, Washington.



"Dutch Ships Ramming Spanish Galleys off the English Coast, 3 October 1602," 1617, by Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom. Oil on canvas. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

## BOOK REVIEW

## A Triumph of a Biography

A finely written, even-handed account of President James Garfield

By Dustin Bass

James A. Garfield, the 20th president, only lasted 200 days in office before an assassin's bullet ended his tenure. Aside from being fateful, his presidency may

seem all but forgetful. This may be true. But there was a life that led to that presidency and the egregious moment on July 2, 1881; and it's a life so tremendous and inspiring that its near dissipation in the American memory is a disservice to modern Americans.

C.W. Goodyear has written a triumph of a biography on the great statesman, and indeed, he proves that Garfield deserves to be termed as such.

### Man of Character

The greatness of Garfield's statesmanship was infused less by his education and more by his work ethic. Indeed, it was the latter that ensured the former.

Goodyear notes that Garfield was a man aware of his impoverished upbringing, and that it was a driving force behind his educational, intellectual, and political pursuits.

That upbringing, founded with strong Christian roots, also formed a lovability. He had a charm that was gravitational to young and old, and it was a genuine charm. Goodyear chronicles his times as a schoolmaster, a field officer, and a political figure whom people, even in their disputes, could hardly find reason to dislike. He was, as Goodyear makes clear, a rarity.

Possibly the rarest is the seeming contradiction of a man who reached the nation's highest political office, yet went out of his way to spurn personal ambition. Like any worthy historian and

biographer, Goodyear's due diligence in research proves that the future president wished his motives to be clear. This sense of propriety, especially as a man who relied on the opinion of his constituents, was elevated the closer he moved to the most powerful positions.

His sense of duty to country, and even to his fellow political figures, would pilot his decision-making even when those decisions seemed counter to promotion (sch as refraining from opting for an open Senate seat).

### A Life of Relationships

Goodyear's biography follows the course of Garfield's life, often through his relationships. As a man prone to friendship, there are many long-lasting relationships political and otherwise.

His marriage at the beginning appears practically loveless, at least from Garfield toward Lucretia Rudolph. For the first few years, Garfield seems nothing less than cold to his wife.

Goodyear, however, threads this love

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

## Embracing Everything: The Music of Gustav Mahler

By Stephen Oles

The classical symphony—a piece for orchestra, generally in four contrasting sections or movements—was so perfected by Mozart and Joseph Haydn in the late 18th century that Beethoven, when he came along, had to shake things up to make his mark.

Beethoven's symphonies broke the classical mold—or rather, extended it with sudden shifts of mood and tempo expressing powerful, personal emotions. His Ninth Symphony shocked audiences with its unprecedented length of well over an hour, its unheard-of use of singers and a choir, and its harmonies, which were so unusual that one critic attributed the "wrong notes" to the composer's loss of hearing.

After Beethoven's death, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Bruckner, and others took the symphony in new directions, but by the time of Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), the form seemed exhausted and played out. Whatever could be done with a symphony had already been done.

But Mahler wanted to write symphonies. The challenge was especially hard because he was a part-time composer. His day job as one of his era's most acclaimed and sought-after conductors kept him so busy that he only had time to compose during summer holidays.

From 1893 onward, Mahler spent summers writing his symphonies in the peaceful Austrian countryside. Nature always inspired his creativity. During the rest of the year, he conducted in Europe and America and was music director, at various times, of the Vienna Court Opera, New York's Metropolitan Opera, and the New York Philharmonic.

### Meeting the Challenge

When the lower branches of an apple tree have been picked clean—as the

symphonic form had been by Mahler's time—one needs a tall ladder to reach the remaining fruit on top. The young composer found his ladder in two musical elements he knew he could take even further than his predecessors had: immensity and intensity.

Orchestras had already grown from about 50 players in Mozart's time to 90 to 120 by Richard Wagner's. The premiere of Mahler's No. 8 required 170 players, solo singers, and three huge choirs, for a total of 1,030 performers. No wonder it's called the "Symphony of a Thousand," although a modern performance such as Gustavo Dudamel's Grammy-winning version scrapes by with a mere 350.

As if his mighty orchestra wasn't enough, Mahler liked to add unusual instruments: a mandolin, a xylophone, even jangling cowbells, and a hammer ominously pounding a block of wood in No. 6. He knew everything about orchestras, what each instrument and section could do, and made brilliant use of them. His special effects included string players tapping their fiddles with their bows for a rat-a-tat sound, and placing horn players offstage to imitate music heard at a distance.

Mahler also supersized the length of his symphonies. Most run for 60 to 90 minutes, and No. 3 pops up in the Guinness World Records as the longest in the standard repertoire.

The emotions get bigger, too. Mahler, in his music, wears his heart on his sleeve. He expresses and amplifies every human feeling, from delirious joy to deepest despair, and all the shades in between.

This intensity is what turns some people off. To them, his excitement is hysteria, his tenderness is saccharine, and his majestic climaxes are clichés. To such critics, the symphonies are drama queens: too long, too loud, a lot of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

### Reaching for the All-Embracing Light

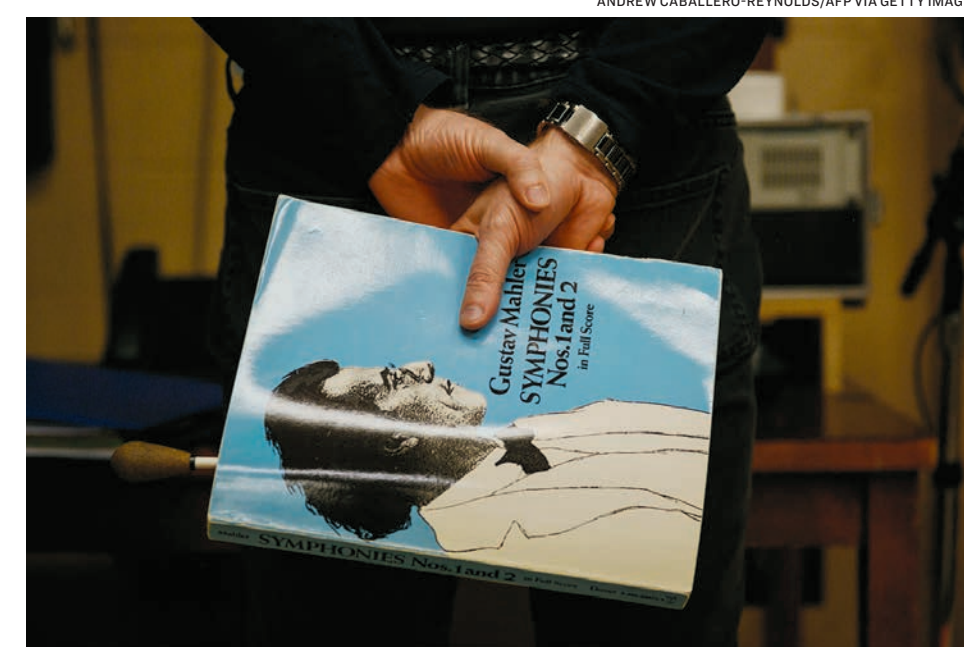
Mahler suffered more than his share of personal tragedies. Eight of his 13 brothers and sisters died in childhood. His beloved wife Alma was unfaithful, and their darling daughter Maria died of scarlet fever. No other composer probes grief and resignation so profoundly.

But he doesn't leave listeners in the dark. His music leads us through life's chaos and misery toward hope, meaning, and redemption. He turned his personal struggles into lasting beauty. All but one of his symphonies end in an uplifting major key. Even in his darkest moods, Mahler reaches for the light.

In 1907, Mahler met Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, who told him that a good symphony demonstrates "severity of form" and "profound logic." "No!" Mahler exclaimed. "The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything!" He meant it.



Cabinet photograph of Gustav Mahler, 1893, by Leonhard Berlin-Bieber.



ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

No composer is more eclectic.

What did "everything" consist of? In his biography of the composer, Jonathan Carr writes: "Mahler once compared composing to playing with building blocks gathered in childhood."

Mahler grew up in a small Moravian town called Iglau. The family lived upstairs in their house, with his father's business downstairs: a tavern. Young Gustav probably heard country dance tunes called *Ländler*, and other popular music, drifting up from below. In childhood, he learned dozens of Czech folk songs and, from the age of 4, was able to play them on an accordion.

Troops were stationed at Iglau. Their military bands must have made a strong impression on the boy, since marches, trumpet calls, and fanfares recur in the symphonies. There are passages in the colossal No. 3 that might have been composed by John Philip Sousa.

Mahler's family, German-speaking Jews, took him to the synagogue. He also sang in the choir at a Roman Catholic church. Later, as an adult, he converted to Catholicism.

You can hear all of these influences in the symphonies, along with Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart. The entire history of Western music flows through his works like a mighty river.

Although many composers use folk songs or popular tunes as source material, Mahler, even today, is criticized for incorporating "vulgar" melodies. Few tunes are more banal than the "Ode to Joy" in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but look what the composer did with it. Mahler, too, could turn a commonplace theme into musical magic.

### 'My Time Will Come'

Most of Mahler's symphonies were poorly received at first. One critic wrote, "We shall always be pleased to see [Mahler] on the podium, so long as he is not conducting his own

compositions." Even after all the disappointments and bad reviews, the composer bravely told his wife, "My time will come."

When Mahler died in 1911, a New York critic declared, "We cannot see how any of his music can long survive him." There followed half a century of neglect. Academics and critics dismissed his symphonies as old-fashioned, bombastic, and overblown. Only a few conductors doggedly kept them alive, notably Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer, who both started out as Mahler's assistants.

The modern Mahler revival was sparked by Leonard Bernstein's revelatory recordings of the complete symphonies with the New York Philharmonic in the 1960s. There's no

better place to start exploring these fascinating sound worlds. They're all different, but all unmistakably Mahler.

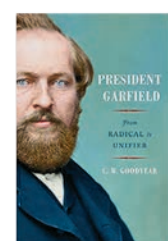
You might begin with his "Resurrection" (Symphony No. 2), which moves from a dark, disturbing fu-

neral march to a joyous celebration of eternal life. In the finale, church bells ring as a choir exults, "Rise again, yes, you will rise again!"

In 2010, the Guardian wrote: "A generation ago, you couldn't escape cycles of symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. Now it's Mahler's... that orchestras most want to play, that conductors most want to conduct, and that audiences most want to hear."

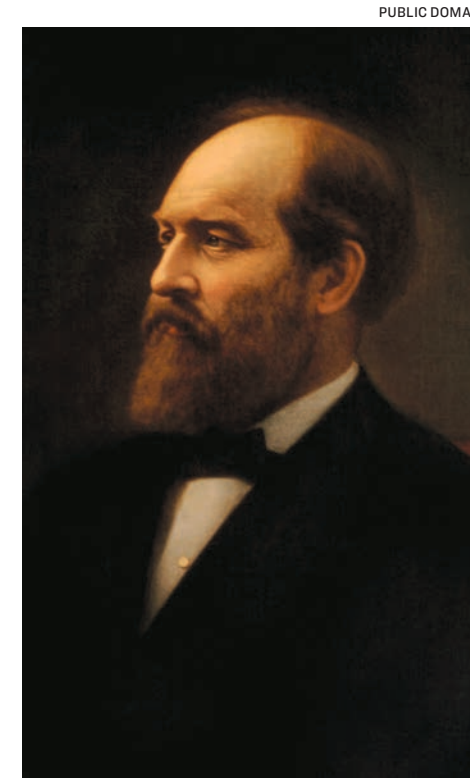
"My time will come," Mahler predicted. Today, it's undeniable. His music is here to stay.

Stephen Oles has worked as an inner city school teacher, a writer, actor, singer, and a playwright. His plays have been performed in London, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Long Beach, California. He lives in Seattle and is currently working on his second novel.



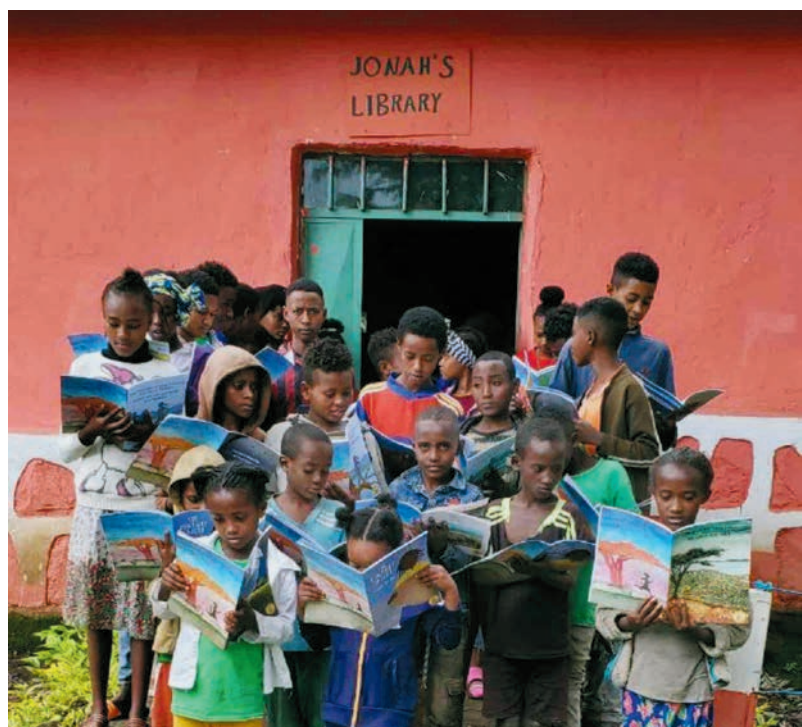
'PRESIDENT GARFIELD: FROM RADICAL TO UNIFIER'  
By C.W. Goodyear  
Simon & Schuster  
July 4, 2023  
Hardcover  
624 pages

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Official White House portrait of James Garfield, 1881, by Calvin Curtis.

▲ Jonah Larson, 15, was adopted by a U.S.-based family when he was about 6 months old.



▲ Jonah's Hands was able to raise enough funds for a library, among other projects.



▲ Larson designs his own creations, drawing inspiration from fashion trends and the natural seasons.

# Adopted Teen Crochets for Ethiopian Hometown

Jonah Larson has been crocheting since age 5, and he's doing it for charity

By Anna Mason

Fifteen-year-old Jonah Larson, whose dream is to become a surgeon one day, is a master at crochet—and he taught himself the craft when he was 5. What's even more remarkable is that he's using his skill to change the lives of schoolchildren in Ethiopia, where he was born and adopted as a baby.

Larson, who lives in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and sells his gorgeous handmade creations on his website, Jonah's Hands, has raised enough money to fund a library, a science lab, new desks, and restrooms in the rural area where he was born, partnering with U.S.-based charity Roots Ethiopia. And the crochet wonder was awarded the 2023 William R. Simms Award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy on April 18.

"Now, we're working on giving them a soccer team and all the accompanying equipment, like goals, uniforms, and soccer balls. And then our next step is to move on to fixing up and renovating the high school," the talented teen told The Epoch Times.

### A Kaleidoscope of Dreams

Larson discovered crocheting when his aunt, who likes to sew, gave him and his two siblings a bag of leftover crafting supplies to look through. In that bag was a crochet hook and some blue and green wool.

"I grabbed them, went to my mom, and asked, 'What's this? How do I use it?'" he said.

Jenn, Larson's adoptive mother, explained a little about crochet and found a simple tutorial video describing how to create a dishcloth. After an hour, the little boy was the proud maker of a blue-and-green-striped cloth, which the family still has.

Fast forward 10 years and Larson can now skillfully craft "everything you could possibly imagine," be it intricately designed scarves, hats, cardigans, or blankets.

As well as displaying his art projects on social media, fundraising, and auctioning designs for his business, Larson is studying hard at school and has big dreams for his future.

"I'm going to go on to college, and then med school, and then residency, and then become a surgeon. Academics are the priority and right at the top," Larson said, adding that education is "a major priority" for him and his parents.

Since getting a college education comes with a hefty price tag, Larson sees his crafting hobby as a way of helping fund his tuition costs and kickstarting his way into adulthood. A large part of his profits are donated to charitable projects.

"It just seemed like a win-win, and it also was a nice thing to do. My mom and I are just so proud of how far it's come," he said.

### From Abandonment to Adoption

Not a lot is known about the circumstances surrounding Larson's abandonment when he was just a tiny infant. He and his family do know that a local woman, who had gone to fetch water, heard a baby's cries and found him on a trail wrapped in a banana leaf. She picked him up and took him to her home, where she lived with her husband and several children.

"She would have kept me but she wasn't able to care for me and provide for me, which is commonly the case in that area," Larson said.

The woman took Larson to the local orphanage, from where he was transported to another orphanage and yet another. When Larson was about 5 or 6 months old, his adoptive mom and dad brought him home with them to the United States. It was an extremely tough journey, Larson said.

"It was a whole ordeal. I was sick a lot

and I got my parents sick. There's just so many different things in that country that we don't have here in the United States," he said. "But [when] I got back to the United States, my loving family and my older brother were there waiting for me; all my aunts and uncles and nieces and nephews and all sorts of great stuff. "And then at the age of 5, I found crochet."

### Cherishing Heritage

Larson credits the success of his feel-good project to his mom, his dad, and the many supportive friends who helped put the plan into action.

"It's taken all of us," he said, going on to praise the orphanage workers who took him in. "They took the best care of us they could, they just didn't have the

resources necessary to provide the standards we have here. But they did their best, and they loved all the kids they had there."

Those running the orphanage told Larson's parents not to let him forget his roots, his heritage, and where he came from. By funding projects in the area, he, his family, and many others alongside them are keeping that promise.

Larson hasn't made it back to Ethiopia yet, but he hopes to one day see the finished library and science lab he made happen and meet the people there. In the meantime, he'll carry on pursuing his academics. He enjoys playing basketball and other sports such as track and tennis, especially during summer with friends and his older brother. He also loves reading and dogs.

As for the crochet, having perfected the art so well over the years with tons of practice, Larson can complete a hat in less than an hour and a blanket in about 4 1/2 hours. Impressively, rather than just



▲ Larson received the William R. Simms Award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy.

following patterns, he now designs his own creations, taking inspiration from fashion trends, other peoples' clothes, "cool color palettes," and the natural seasons.

It's a highly inventive process and one that pays off in so many ways.

"You'd be surprised by how many times someone sees or receives one of my designs and says, 'I was having a really rough day ... [but what you crocheted] made me happy.' That's just really great to hear. Also, things like crocheting a blanket and auctioning it off for an animal shelter, because one of our dogs, Bella, she's a rescue and we all love her," Larson said.

Has he got any tips for aspiring crocheters?

"No. 1, use a chunky yarn. No. 2, choose an easy project. And No. 3, try not to learn just from starting out from a book; learn from watching someone else," he said.

"If you want to do something, there's always a route to do it. It takes a lot of effort, a lot of time, but you can do it. My mom always says never give up and be resilient.

"My idea has always been to become a surgeon, but I'm definitely still thinking about being a crochet designer on the side."

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ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JONAH'S HANDS

# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 22, 2023



“The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.”

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON (1874-1938), ENGLISH WRITER

## The Swing

By Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
Rivers and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown—  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



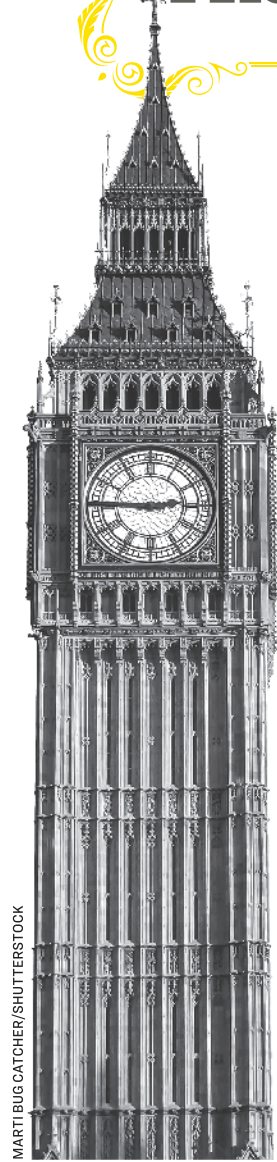
MSDIANAZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

## WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE PLAYGROUND?

TO GET TO THE OTHER SLIDE

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

# This Week in History



## BIG BEN RINGS

On May 31, 1859, England's iconic tower clock, Big Ben, rang out over the city for the very first time. The clock was constructed as part of St. Stephen's Tower (later renamed Elizabeth Tower) after a fire in 1834 destroyed most of the Palace of Westminster where Parliament was housed. Big Ben is well known for its accurate timekeeping. Its four faces are illuminated at night and when Parliament is in session, a light in the tower is lit.

MARTIN GUTCHER/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

# PALM TREES

Palm trees are an icon of seaside vacation spots. The trees can't grow in frost, snow, or ice, so they are confined to warm-weather areas. The northernmost palm trees on the East Coast grow in Cape Fear, North Carolina, which is the extreme southernmost point of the state.

north and 30 degrees south. Lines of latitude, or parallels, are imaginary lines going around the globe at varying distances from the equator. The line at 30 degrees north goes through Jacksonville, Florida, while the line at 30 degrees south goes through northern Argentina.

The distribution of each species of palm can vary widely. Some palms live all over the tropics, while there are others that confine themselves to just one small island, or even one small specific rock outcropping on one island. For example, all 32 species of palms living on the island of New Caledonia are thought to be endemic, or not present anywhere else.

Palm trees are some of the most useful plants in the world. Some varieties of plants grow dates, which are a fruit grown throughout the Middle East. Other palms grow coconuts, which are used for their oil, meat, and water. Yet others are used for sugar products, which are further processed into wine and other alcohol. The leaves and stalks are used for baskets and hammocks in Africa and the Middle East, as well.

# AMAZING ESCAPES!

START

USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

6	10	4	15	19	35		
4	7	1	7	10	20		
+	-	x	÷	+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1  
 $2 \times (9 + 0) = 18$   
 $2 \times 9 + 0 = 18$

Solution For Medium 1  
 $7 \times (2 - 1) = 7$   
 $9 + 2 \times (1 - 0) = 11$

Solution For Hard 1  
 $01 \times (61 - 02) = 98$   
 $(61 - 02) \times (01 - 98)$

### WORD SEARCH: Let's Go Outside!

P I C N I C S Q U I R R E L S  
 B R E X O S P R I N K L E R E  
 E C X B U T T E R F L Y N A D  
 T R E E T B A S E B A L L Z A  
 P I R G D W I N G S E T C I  
 Z C C R O G M O S Q U I T O S  
 I K I A O B A R B E C U E Q Y  
 N E S S R K G R F I S B E E  
 A T E S S U I H D O G S P X Z  
 T S R A B B I T S E J M A P W  
 U C G Y F E N C E S N C T E O  
 R X D A N D E L I O N S I E L  
 E A X B U S H E S R K D O D L  
 L I G H T N I N G B U G S S E  
 S A N D B O X C O O K O U T N

- |            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Barbecue   | Grass          |
| Baseball   | Kite           |
| Bushes     | Ladybug        |
| Butterfly  | Lightning bugs |
| Cookout    | Mosquitos      |
| Cricket    | Nature         |
| Daisy      | Outdoors       |
| Dandelions | Sprinkler      |
| Exercise   | Patio          |
| Fences     | Pollen         |
| Frisbee    | Rabbits        |
| Garden     | Sandbox        |

HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball  
[www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com](http://www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com)

**DEAR JUNE** *On Family and Relationships*

# Wedding Gifts for 2nd Marriages

Shopping for someone who has everything is hard, especially when it comes to picking out wedding gifts

**Dear June,**

What is the etiquette for buying a wedding gift for a couple who are both marrying for a second time? They will be getting married at the justice of the peace and then will honeymoon in the Caribbean. They are both in their 60s. Any advice would be appreciated.

*Wedding Guest*

**Dear Wedding Guest,**

The general etiquette for second weddings is that the gifts would be smaller than for first weddings. Some believe that gifts for second weddings are altogether optional, but I personally wouldn't feel comfortable attending a wedding without bringing a gift of some sort.

However, if the couple is only getting married by a justice of the peace and you haven't been invited, I don't think there should be any expectation that you give a gift. I would still send a very nice card, and if you're particularly close with either the bride or the groom, I would give a gift if you think it

will mean a lot to them.

If you have been invited to celebrate, such as by joining them for a meal afterward, then I would give something, but it can be something simple such as a bouquet of flowers and a card. One consideration with flowers is that if the couple are departing imminently on their honeymoon, you might want to send them after they return.

This is all assuming that they don't have a registry. It hardly needs to be said that if they do have one and you've

been invited to celebrate, you should choose a gift from the registry.

Absent a registry, and if you want to give a thoughtful gift, I would also

consider what you know about the couple. Unlike young newlyweds, 60-year-olds probably don't need practical items, since they have had ample time to buy these.

Are they the type who like sentimental items? There are lots of customizable items on websites such as Zazzle and Etsy. Another sentimental gift would be

a wedding photo shoot.

Some couples might like experience-oriented gifts, such as a restaurant gift certificate, a night or two somewhere special, lessons of some kind, a museum membership, or tickets to an event.

If they're homebodies, then a subscription gift such as nice tea or coffee could be nice for them to share together.

This may not pertain to your situation, but group gifting can be a good idea in some situations. This is where a group of people all give a little toward an expensive gift. With many people struggling with inflation, this can be a more budget-friendly way to contribute a gift and allows the couple to receive something they might not receive otherwise. This could be organized by a guest or by the bridal couple.

As a final thought, I think the reason for etiquette is to help keep relationships healthy and harmonious, so whatever you do decide to give, keep the joy of giving and a heart of celebration foremost. A happy marriage is such a wonderful thing, and how great it is that these two will be able to spend their golden years together.

*Sincerely,  
June*



*Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to DearJune@EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY, 10001*

*Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY, 10001*

**June Kellum** is a married mother of three and longtime Epoch Times journalist covering family, relationships, and health topics.

**Whatever you do decide to give, keep the joy of giving and a heart of celebration foremost.**

**If the couple doesn't have a wedding registry, consider what you know about them when picking a gift.**



AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

## HOMESCHOOLING

# How to Make the Most of Your Homeschool Convention Experience

Navigate the convention crowd like a pro and come away with ideas and resources to make your homeschool even better

**By Karen Doll**

It's the most wonderful time of year for homeschoolers: homeschool convention season. It's a time to peruse all the different homeschool curricula, connect with fellow homeschooling families, and listen to renowned veteran homeschool parents speak on a multitude of topics.

Depending on where you live, you may be able to attend multiple conventions because the season runs through late summer.

Attending our state's annual homeschool convention always helped to reaffirm the lifestyle choice to teach my children at home and to refresh my mind and spirit.

That being said, attending a homeschool convention can also be a bit overwhelming if you aren't properly prepared. So here are some tips I've gleaned from decades of experience.

### Visit the Used Book Sale First

Most homeschooling conventions host a used book sale. Start there. While this is a good spot to find gently used curriculum as well as reference books for yourself,

you can also find books to add to your kids' reading lists, unused workbooks, CDs and DVDs, musical instruments, and all sorts of fun extras to add a little sparkle to your homeschool.

One year, we found a Mario Brothers typing DVD for practically nothing. And another time, on the last day of a local convention, I bought a nice pair of binoculars complete with a carrying case for a big discount.

### Avoid Buying New Books, Materials

I know it's tempting to shop at these conventions. Everything looks amazing. Everything has the potential to be a must-have for your homeschool. Patience is your superpower, because it can get expensive. This is the time to look at the books and materials that interest you. Take good notes so you can compare and contrast later. Then, once you're home, you'll have time to consider what products and curricula will best suit your homeschooling philosophy and your kids' needs.

### Buy One-of-a-Kind Supplies

While it isn't wise to purchase curriculum on-site, it's savvy to shop for and buy one-of-a-kind supplies if your budget allows.

One of the first vendors my husband and I always visited was Miller Pads and Paper, to check out the fabulous sales on

their unique paper bundles. Their quality colorful construction paper, lined journaling pads, and blank maps were favorites and typically lasted the entire school year and then some.

### Plan Your Time Wisely

Visit the convention's website prior to convention day to determine which speakers will be in attendance. Make a list of those you're interested in hearing and note the day, time, and location of the presentation. This will no doubt be a long list, so you'll need to prioritize. Fortunately, most conventions record the presentations for exactly this purpose. So if you find yourself feeling like there are so many speakers but so little time, you can purchase professionally recorded sessions for just a few dollars each.

Use the time in between speakers' sessions to stroll around the vendor hall looking at curriculum, books, and materials. This is your chance to get an up-close-and-personal look at each vendor's products, to take notes, and ask questions. While many vendors offer sample pages for viewing on their websites, it often isn't enough to get a good sense of the product. Ask if you can snap photos to help you remember key characteristics of the curriculum and materials.

Take regular breaks. In fact, schedule them into your day. There is always so much to see and do at these events, it can be exhausting. Drink water and have a snack. Talk with your spouse if present and compare thoughts and notes on what you've seen and heard.

### Fellowship With Other Homeschoolers

While you wait for the speaker to begin or wait in line to view curriculum, introduce yourself to those around you. Share wisdom.

Also, introduce yourself to the vendors and the speakers. This is a great time to connect, share your positive review of a vendor's product, or express gratitude for a speaker's insights. Your words may just be the highlight of their day.

At state and local conventions, some of the larger support groups often set up informational booths. Stop by and say hello. Ask about the kinds of support they offer, such as co-op classes, field trip days, educational activities, gym time, etc., to see if these might be a good fit for your family. Thank the representatives for all they do for the homeschooling community.

### Enjoy the Experience

Embrace the experience. When you take a break, relax, and take it all in. Smile and say hello to those who pass by. Bask in the spirit of the camaraderie all around you and let it revitalize you. Be thankful for the many resources and reflect on the speakers' insights.

*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](http://AtHomeWithKarenDoll.wordpress.com)*

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