

*Simply Charlotte Mason presents*

# *Planning Your Charlotte Mason Education in 5 Simple Steps*

*Shakespeare • Math • Bible • Nature Study • Grammar • Art • Music*



*Create a custom plan for your family.*

by Sonya Shafer

*Literature • Science • Geography • History*

# *Create a custom plan for your family in 5 simple steps!*

*Planning Your Charlotte Mason Education* takes the guesswork out of planning for your Charlotte Mason homeschool. In this book you'll find clear instructions and examples that walk you through five simple steps, from determining the big picture all the way down to planning your day.

Easy-to-use charts and lots of practical tips and ideas will help you get organized and feel confident with your schedule.

- *Real*—Helps you succeed in your situation, using Charlotte Mason principles and guidelines combined with a healthy dose of homeschooling reality.
- *Flexible*—You decide what to teach and when to teach it.
- *Easy to Use*—Gives you the tools and a step-by-step process for creating your own plan for your unique family.
- *Helpful*—Offers plenty of reproducible charts, suggestions, and sample schedules.
- *Complete*—The companion DVD lets you watch and listen to Sonya talk through the step-by-step process.
- *Printable Charts*—Buyers of the printed book will receive a link to an electronic PDF copy of the charts and forms found in the book.

The companion DVD will talk you step by step through the book and your plan. It's like having Sonya as your personal guide.

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*Planning Your  
Charlotte Mason Education*

by  
**Sonya Shafer**

Planning Your Charlotte Mason Education  
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*Dear CM Friend,*

*I remember feeling so overwhelmed my first year or two of homeschooling. It can be especially intimidating when you've decided to use the Charlotte Mason method, because there is no set CM curriculum-in-a-box that will tell you what to do in every subject every day. Instead, you get to make those decisions for yourself. And as Charlotte reminded us, "The effort of decision is the greatest effort in life" (Vol. 3, p. 20).*

*Well, now you can take a deep breath and relax. We're here to walk you through those decisions one at a time, step by step. Whether organization and scheduling come easy to you or seem to be other people's gifts, the simple steps in this planning kit will help you feel confident and sure that you're doing the right thing. And you'll soon hold in your hand a plan custom fitted just for your family. In fact, you'll probably even come to appreciate the CM freedom to make your own decisions.*

*Are you ready to begin? Get yourself a nice cup of tea (or Coke) and find a comfortable place to work. You're going to do great!*

*Grace and peace,  
Sonya Shafer  
Simply Charlotte Mason*



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# Christy's Story

Meet Christy—wife to Scott, mother of Emily and Ethan. This is Christy's first year homeschooling. Her older sister Julie has been using the Charlotte Mason method for several years, so Christy asked Julie to help her plan a Charlotte Mason education for her children. She did. And now Christy is moving ahead with confidence as she leads Emily and Ethan through their learning each day.

Today is Monday, and Christy and the kids are just finishing up breakfast. As they prepare to do their Scripture Memory work, the phone rings. It's Scott.

"Hi, honey. Guess what. I finished my project and I'm coming home early. Thought maybe you and the kids would like to go to the park and do a little hiking this afternoon."

Christy glances at her Weekly Schedule hanging on the refrigerator. *That's easy, she thinks, I already had Nature Study scheduled for this afternoon.*

"Sure, Scott, that would be great," she replies.

"Oh, and honey," Scott sounds excited. "I've got a little surprise for you. We can talk about it at the park. See you soon!"

After lunch, the family drives to their favorite wooded park. As they explore the trails, Scott reveals his surprise: "I've been assigned to a project in Washington, D.C., the first of the year." Scott's eyes sparkle with enthusiasm. "It should take about two weeks, and I thought it would make a really great field trip for Emily and Ethan! What do you think?"

Christy quiets her racing thoughts and focuses her attention on her plans. She mentally calculates when that trip would fall within the terms she has scheduled for the year. The children watch her face expectantly.

*The way Julie showed me to figure out a term will work just fine, she decides. I can easily make that trip be the central focus of Term 2 this year.*

"I think that's a wonderful idea!" she announces. "You kids are in for a treat!"

That evening Christy arrives at a homeschool meeting. She joins a group of her friends near the coffee pot.

". . . and then I realized that we hadn't done Ancient Egypt," one of them is saying. "Here we are in the 1800s, and I just don't know when we'll be able to fit it in."

"Could you skip it?" another asks.

"Well, I suppose we could," the first one replies, "but I just found that free set of notebooking pages. They cover all kinds of great stuff—like pyramids, mummies, and the Nile River—and I really want to use them."

Christy's heart skips a beat. *Uh oh, I don't want to get caught in that situation.* She pictures her overview plan in her head. *Oh, yes, I've got Ancient Egypt on there next year. Good.*

She sees Julie coming in the door and waves to her. As Julie joins the group, Christy gives her a hug and whispers, "Thanks again for helping me do that planning. It's been a lifesaver today!"

Julie walked Christy through the same five steps you will find in this book:

1. Big Picture
2. Your Year
3. Your Term
4. Your Week
5. Your Day

As they worked through the steps, they determined

- what subjects Christy would teach during which grades,
- then what topics Christy would teach this year,
- next, which resources she wanted to use,
- and when she would use each resource,
- finally, on which days of the week she would do each subject,
- and how she would fit everything into her day.

Sound complicated? It isn't. We'll walk you through step by step and break down those steps into even easier To-Do points. You can take your time, maybe doing one step each day, or you can buzz through the whole book at one sitting. You do what works best for you.

This book will not dictate to you what to teach and when to teach it. This book will give you the tools and step-by-step instructions to help you put together your own plan for your unique family. Yes, there are plenty of suggestions and sample schedules to help you. But you won't find Bad Mommy Syndrome here. This book is about helping you to succeed in your situation, using Charlotte Mason principles and guidelines for planning combined with a healthy dose of homeschooling reality.

And when you've finished the simple 5-step process, you'll enjoy the same confidence that Christy experienced, knowing that you've planned *your* Charlotte Mason education.

Let's begin with the Big Picture.

# Step 1

## *The Big Picture*



*Sometimes it helps to take a step back and regain your perspective on what is really important. Charlotte Mason knew that. She advised, "Do not let the endless succession of small things crowd great ideals out of sight and out of mind."*

*This chapter is a chance to remind yourself of your great ideals.*

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### **This Chapter Will Help You**

- Outline an overview for your child's education.
- Record your personal goals for your home school.
- Determine which school subjects you want to cover during which years.

### **What You Should Already Know**

Nothing

### **What You Need to Have**

- A pen or pencil
- This book
- A computer with Internet access



## ☐ To-Do #1: Do a little brainstorming and research.

The best place to begin is at the end: What do you want the “end product” to look like? In other words, what is your goal? When your child stands before you, having completed your program of study, what do you want to see? Write your description below.

*My Goal for My Homeschooled Child*

*Notes*

*If you would like some suggestions and detailed ideas, take a look at page 103. Completing that chart is not required at all, but if you're stuck on this page it might help you get moving again.*

## The 5-Step Process

### >>1. The Big Picture

2. Your Year
3. Your Term
4. Your Week
5. Your Day

*Your preferences will come back into play as you plan each year's studies and select resources for them. If you rate a subject lower on the Importance scale, you will probably use a shorter or easier resource to just touch on that subject rather than a lengthy, in-depth resource that reinforces it every week.*

Take a look at the list of subjects below. How important is each subject to achieving your goal? Rate each one according to its importance. You'll probably rate most of the subjects pretty high, but it's a good exercise to see if there are any that aren't as important to you.

For example, Christy and her husband aren't too concerned about their children learning Latin, but Christy is a wonderful artist and wants her children to have lots of opportunity to learn drawing and painting. So her ratings will reflect those priorities.

You may have a different set of priorities for a special needs child or a child with gifts in a particular area. Feel free to create a separate chart for each child as desired or just make a general one for all your children. (You will find more blank charts in the back of this book.)

Child \_\_\_\_\_

Subject	Not important		Very important	
Math	1	2	3	4
Reading	1	2	3	4
Science	1	2	3	4
History	1	2	3	4
Geography	1	2	3	4
Handwriting	1	2	3	4
Composition	1	2	3	4
Grammar	1	2	3	4
Spelling	1	2	3	4
Bible	1	2	3	4
Foreign Language	1	2	3	4
Latin	1	2	3	4
Poetry	1	2	3	4
Shakespeare	1	2	3	4
Physical Education	1	2	3	4
Drawing/painting	1	2	3	4
Art Appreciation	1	2	3	4
Handicrafts/Life Skills	1	2	3	4
Singing	1	2	3	4
Music Appreciation	1	2	3	4
Play an Instrument	1	2	3	4
Citizenship/Character	1	2	3	4

Now that you've determined what is important to you, let's take a look at what is important to others. You will need a computer with Internet access.

Do a search on the Internet for "homeschool laws" along with the name of your state or province. You can also check Home School Legal Defense Association's Web site at <http://hsllda.org>. Look specifically for any laws that detail which school subjects you are required to teach in your home school.

In Christy's area, she is required to teach reading, language arts (writing, spelling, grammar, etc.), mathematics, social studies (geography and history), and science. Of course, she can teach other subjects, but she needs to make sure that she has those covered.

Are there any subjects that you are required by law to include in your home school? List them here. Also note if any subject is required in a particular grade.

*Subjects That Must Be Taught  
in My Home School*

Compare this list to your ratings on page 12. Increase any subject's rating as necessary to comply with legal requirements in your area.

## The 5-Step Process

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### >>1. The Big Picture

2. Your Year
3. Your Term
4. Your Week
5. Your Day

*If you are not planning to homeschool all the way through high school (or you simply don't want to think about high school right now), you can skip to To-Do #2. You can always come back and do the rest of To-Do #1 later.*

You will probably also want to do a search on the Internet for “homeschool credit requirements” along with the name of your state or province. Look specifically for any laws that detail how many years or credits might be needed in certain subjects in order for your child to graduate in your area. For example, is a high school student required to have three years of math and two years of science to qualify for a diploma in your area? Be sure to check whether those laws apply to homeschoolers. Not all areas legislate home school graduation requirements. You may want to check the Web site of a local home school association; they usually have this information. Check <http://hsllda.org> for some home school associations in your area.

Christy's area has no special requirements for high school graduation. She can simply issue a diploma from her home school, saying that her children have completed that course of study.

What about your area? List any homeschool graduation requirements you find here.

### *Legal Graduation Requirements*

Compare this list to your ratings on page 12. Increase any subject's rating as necessary to comply with legal requirements in your area.



If your child is planning to attend college, you need to get an idea of which school subjects are required to gain entrance into college. You may not know exactly which college your child will attend, but many entrance requirements are similar and you can fine-tune as the time gets closer. For now, take a look at these general recommendations.

### *General Recommendations for College*

**English:** Four or more years (grammar, composition, literature, etc.)

**Mathematics:** Three or more years (Algebra I and higher—does not include general math, business math, or consumer math)

**Natural Sciences:** Three or more years (Earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, etc.)

**Social Sciences:** Three or more years (history, economics, geography, civics, etc.)

**Additional Courses:** Some colleges require other classes as prerequisites for admission, such as two or more years of the same foreign language or courses in the visual arts, music, Bible, computer science, etc.

Compare this list to your ratings on page 12. Increase any subject's rating as necessary to comply with general college requirements if desired.

## **☐ To-Do #2: Look at Charlotte's big picture.**

Now that you have an idea of what subjects should be included in your home school, take a look at the big picture for Charlotte Mason's schools. We researched four different sources to compile this chart of what subjects were taught during which years in Charlotte's schools.

One word of caution before you turn the page: Don't panic! You will see a lot of subjects that Charlotte taught in every grade. Keep in mind that this chart shows all twelve years of school. You don't have to teach it all tomorrow. In fact, you don't even have to teach it all this year. You will be looking at a twelve-year plan. So please don't feel overwhelmed.

# Big Picture Chart

	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Subjects												
Math												
Reading/Literature												
Science												
Nature Study												
History												
Book of Centuries												
Geography												
Printing/Writing (copywork)												
Composition (written narration)												
Grammar												
Spelling (dictation)												
Bible												
Foreign Language												
Latin												
Poetry												
Shakespeare												
Physical Education												
Drawing, Painting												
Picture Study												
Handicrafts/Life Skills												
Singing, Hymn Study												
Music/Composer Study												
Instrumental Lessons (Piano, etc.)												
Citizenship (Personal Dev.)												

**SAMPLE OF ONE OF THE MANY  
REPRODUCIBLE CHARTS PROVIDED IN  
PLANNING YOUR CHARLOTTE MASON  
EDUCATION**



*This School Year's Calendar*

Month	# of Days in School	# of Days Year-to-Date Total

**SAMPLE OF ONE OF THE MANY  
REPRODUCIBLE CHARTS PROVIDED IN  
PLANNING YOUR CHARLOTTE MASON  
EDUCATION**

**Term Dates**

Term 1: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Term 2: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Term 3: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacation/Break Dates**