

Homeschool Super Heroes

Speakers:

Ashley Beck

Linda Hobar

[audio start]

Ashley: Thank you so much for joining me. I'm Ashley with Homeschool Super Heroes and I'm so excited to have Linda Hobar on our call this evening. She has 17 years of homeschooling three children, as well as 17 years of ministry with Campus Crusade for Christ. She sends us God's calling on our life, as well as Linda brings enthusiasm, warmth, and inspiration to the subject of world history. She's a native-born Texan. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Baylor University, where she first fell in love with world history.

She presently resides with her family in Memphis, Tennessee, where she enjoys fitness and kayaking adventures with her husband, and continues to research, write, and further her education. In addition, Linda and her husband, Ron, manage the Mystery of History Incorporation to oversee the shipment of books all over the world, as well as self-publish the Mystery of History audio book series.

Ron concurrently ministers to youth through inter-sex sports, utilizing competition, instruction, and Christian discipleship to build a total athlete. Be it through sports or world history, Ron and Linda strive to pour biblical truth into families that are seeking to live for the kingdom.

Thank you so much for joining me today, Linda.

Linda: Well, thank you, Ashley, it's good to be here.

Ashley: Yes, just to get started, if you don't mind just telling us a little bit more about your family and maybe, I know there's not a such thing as a typical day of homeschooling, but sort of what that might look like in your house.

Linda: Sure. Well, right now we're actually a family of grown ups. I am officially a retired homeschool parent because my youngest child is 19. She graduated from high school a year ago and is now, will be a sophomore at the University of Memphis this coming year. Then next up the chain, our 23-year-old son lives with us, who is a college graduate, and he is just buying time until he gets married month after next. And then I have one child older than that, and she's 26 and she's married and lives in Jackson, Tennessee. So besides that, it's me and my husband, so really we're a house of four grownups right now with four very busy lives.

So a typical day at our house as far as homeschooling goes, I could describe it years past what that looked like, and that was typically me at home with the children. I was very, very privileged to be a stay-at-home mom. My husband has been a missionary for many years so sometimes he worked at home, sometimes away from the home, and I was primarily home with the kids. And we would typically start our homeschool day about 9:00 in the morning, I'm not a real early bird, and then we would try to be done by 12:00 or maybe 2:00 in the afternoon. And we just worked hard, that was probably one of my, that would be the theme of my homeschool days.

Now that my kids are grown up, everything's changed. I probably spend half my day working on my business, the other half developing products, and all while I'm kind of fighting errands and meals and chaos.

So that's our lives right now.

Ashley: Perfect. Now, back when you were homeschooling, what was your approach to homeschooling?

Linda: My approach. I would say we were very eclectic. And what I mean by that is that, I think above all, I just tried to find the things in each subject that worked the best for me, for my kids, and so it really was a hodge-podge, depending on what materials were available, you know, my children's learning style. So we were never ones to, you know, we certainly were not a box curriculum family. And generally speaking, I'd say we were loose and very unschooled when it came to certain subjects. When we could be hands on, we were, I was particularly that maybe with science and history. We tried to streamline those, keep the kids all together in the same subject matter. You know, having kind of some fun with it.

But then on other subjects that to me were much more concrete, I'd say we followed more rigid textbooks and just bookish on, you know, as a whole. And that worked for certain subjects, I think math dictates a very black-and-white subject, etc., etc. So, you know, we were all over the place.

What it really boils down to it, was I discovered was that my personality and learning style was really very different from my children's, and maybe some families out there can relate. If you knew me personally, you'd know I'm pretty, well, what is the word? Pretty free spirited. I don't do well with structure, I'm not task-oriented. So all that for a homeschool mom is challenging. You know?

An my children, on the other hand, they actually liked structure, they craved routine, they would have done well checking boxes and following lists, if I could have provided those things. So I'll just say, I was kind of the Charlotte Mason teacher with kids that wanted to check boxes.

So when it was all said and done, I think we found a middle ground that pulled on both sides. You know, using my strengths and catering to their strengths. I hope that that makes sense.

Ashley: Yeah.

Linda: But that's definitely something I learned along the way, was that I needed to sometimes really get it together for the sake of my children, I needed to create format for them. If that's how they were going to thrive, that's what I needed to provide. Even though it wasn't how I wanted to learn. I could have been very unschooled, I think, had it just been me and me alone.

Ashley: Well, I think that's a great point though to remember and not only are you sometimes different than your children, but each child is different in the way that they learn as well. Being a teacher myself, I don't have kids yet, but at least from my teaching perspective, you have to sort of vary the lessons, depending upon which children you're speaking to at that time.

Linda: Absolutely. And even though my kids, like I said, they all seemed to crave a—they seemed to all be a bit more structured than I am, just naturally speaking. Still, they were different from each other in that some of them worked independently really, really well, where like one of my other kids really wanted my involvement. So I had to give and take there, too. You know what I'm saying?

Ashley: Yeah.

Linda: So. Anyway, that kind of sums this up.

Ashley: Perfect! Well, I know that you've also written a series called *Mystery of History*. If you wouldn't mind just sort of explaining what that title means and sort of what it looks like.

Linda: Oh, sure, I'd love to talk about that. Well, many years ago, it's been about 12 years now, there was a point in my life, my children were getting older, a new season of life was approaching, and I was in prayer for about a year over really what was next for me. I was sensing the Lord leading me to something, and I didn't know what that thing was yet, but I had been struggling with finding like the perfect history curriculum and I had some ideas and, you know, all sorts of different things were going on, but there came a day when I feel as if the Lord really spoke to me the title of the book which was, and is, the *Mystery of History*.

And I'll tell you what, Ashley, it was so powerful to me when that happened, I stopped what I was doing, I was working in my kitchen at the time, and I went downstairs and I went to my computer, and I typed a dedication page for this book! It's a true story, I feel like that day was kind of my calling. And I'll tell

you what the Mystery of History meant to me immediately. When I heard it, I felt like, and believed, that the mystery would be the gospel, again, my husband and I had been career missionaries, so the gospel is very dear to me. And then world history was also a subject I was passionate about. So when I felt like I heard the Mystery of History, I was like, “Oh! That’s what I’ve been praying for, that the Lord would lead me to.” And I thought, teaching the gospel through the context of world history, what a beautiful blend of some of my passions in life.

So I was very excited, I feel very privileged to have been given that title, and, you know, the rest of the work has all been him. Because I do not feel adequate, which sometimes is a good and a bad thing, that way I certainly know it’s all him at work. But anyway, that is how that whole series started and I’m almost finished with volume four and there are three that are presently out and available and I’m finishing up the last one.

Ashley: Perfect! Why do you think it’s so important for homeschoolers to even study history?

Linda: Good question. Why is it so important? Well, there’s so much to learn from world history. I think common sense tells us, for one, that if we don’t know our history well, we’re certainly destined to repeat parts of it that aren’t so good. So we certainly need to know our roots, we need to know other struggles of other people of other times of other centuries, that we might learn from them. We certainly have seen dictators run over our world and we don’t want repeats of that. And so we need to pay attention to what has happened. You know, what were the warning signs, what were the red flags, when did people lose their liberties, etc., etc.? So certainly it’s relevant to our time to know our history.

I will tell you that a lot of parents will share with me that they don’t feel qualified to teach world history because they didn’t get world history growing up. Well, I’m here to comfort them and say, “Most of us, if we were in school in the ‘60’s, the ‘70’s, or the ‘80’s, okay, so about, you know, three decades of people who today are parents, most of us did not get a strong world history background.

I know for myself, I was in school part of those years during the Vietnam era and I think as a backlash to the poor taste of war in our mouths, that world history was very glossed over and hardly addressed.

So my encouragement to parents is that you can easily continue to learn world history. We can easily pick it up today, even older, we can read it along with our children. You do not have to already know world history to teach it. You can learn it along with your children.

That’s what I, I really feel I’m teaching far more than just children with my series, I’m teaching a lot of adults. And I’m teaching myself, like I said, I didn’t get a lot

of this. So it's never too late, it's not rocket science. If you can read, you can learn world history.

Ashley: Perfect. I know that's something that I was very blessed with, that my mom was able to provide history and not only that, but make it fun and entertaining at the same time, because I hear a lot of people talk about, well, it's just dates and dead people or textbooks that I had to read through.

Linda: Yeah.

Ashley: And yet, when you make it fun and interactive, your kids will actually enjoy it and be thrilled to learn about it.

Linda: Yes, yes, I agree. And what little world history I did have growing up was rather boring and dull, and I have a theory for why that is. You might agree with me, I think most world history textbooks, for one, they put the entire history of the world in one book, meaning that there's not really room to tell the stories that make history fascinating. You know, you do wind up with a lot of dates and events.

And furthermore, most world history textbooks are written by committee. And so you have like eight or ten contributing authors, and so this sense of personable, you know, if any personality is removed from the book, you know, almost to a fault. So my books are considered and labeled a living book, because it's a single author. And so while there is some bias in my work, it's through the lens of a biblical world view, so ultimately it's not my opinion, it's opinion based on the Lord, you know, on God's word.

Ashley: Great. That's awesome, I like that idea.

Linda: Anyway, but that's, yeah. So moving on, go ahead. What's your next question?

Ashley: I know you talked a little bit about, you know, parents that haven't necessarily had that background of history and that they can learn along with their children as they're doing it. Is there anything practically that they can start with, let's say someone wants to get started right away with that. Where would you suggest that they start?

Linda: Well, one thing a person could do, and this is any individual, young, old, homeschooling or not, but I do provide audio books of my work. And sometimes that's just a simple way, maybe you're in the car or, you know, on a trip, and you can pop in an audio book and I'm reading my own stories. And, you know, while they're written on a fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh grade level, really there's still a lot that adults can learn through that. So that would be one place to start. You know, pick up a book to read or invest in an audio book.

I also sell them, you know, as mp3 files so you can download them and have them in no time flat.

Ashley: Yes, perfect! Okay. And what do sort of feel like is the best approach to teaching history? Sort of on the flip side, when the moms do want to start imparting that information to their kids, how do you feel is the best approach to that?

Linda: Well, I think one very important approach to teach in world history is to do so chronologically. And there's so many reasons for that. For one, it just makes common sense. I would encourage most people to start at the very beginning, which for me is creation, I do believe in the Bible creation story, and if you start there with God's word as a basis, it's beautiful to grow and build on top of that.

And I feel like when we approach history chronologically, what we do is we feel so much more clearly the cause and effect of things. Again, let's just talk about the collapse of the Roman Empire—well, not again, we haven't talked about it. Let me bring up the collapse of the Roman Empire. When we learn about that event, what we will see that follows is the Dark Ages. And then it's like, all of a sudden, "Oh, well, one led to the other, this makes sense then."

I believe that Noah's flood was a precursor to the Ice Age. We have some cause and effect.

You know, we could go on and on about that, but it's just, certainly makes history more meaningful when we can look at it from the big picture. So when we go chronologically rather than say, you know, "Here's the eastern hemisphere, here's the western hemisphere," but if we can look at it all at the same time, I think we can see God's hand in it, much, the evidence of that. And just go from there. So that's one thing I would say.

You know, in addition to that, I always encourage people to add historical fiction, and add stories and biographies to always enhance learning and, you know, continue to bring things to life.

But sometimes we just need that groundwork first, we need those tracks to run on, and to me, that's chronological world history.

Ashley: Perfect. Well, sort of a little more of a personal question, is there a certain time period in history that's your favorite?

Linda: Oh, what a question! A favorite! I think my favorite always becomes whatever I'm working on, so it's changed. I believe when I was writing volume 1, ancients were definitely my favorite. And then I went to the middle ages, and that became my favorite. And then I really do love the Renaissance, because of the art history, I'm a big fan of that. And at present, because I'm working in volume 4, I'm finding myself enamored with the Civil War in a way I probably never was

before, as well as World War I and II. And really, the Cold War. I've been fascinated by the Cold War and that's just because it really helps explain my own lifetime.

Ashley: Yeah.

Linda: It helped explain why there were spy movies growing up, about the Russians, you know. And so, yeah, I'm at present a big fan of modern times.

Ashley: Perfect! Well, changing gears just a little bit.

Linda: Okay.

Ashley: I would like to talk a little bit about the trivium. I know that you divide kids into younger, middle, and older students. How would you define each of those levels and sort of what is expected at those different levels?

Linda: I like that question.

Ashley: It's a big question.

Linda: Sure, sure. And I probably have a long answer, too.

Ashley: Good.

Linda: First, I will say, I really don't claim to be an expert on the classical model. But I will tell you one way I like to look at it is picture making a healthy smoothie, okay? Now, I'm saying, healthy smoothie because we want it to be good for your kids in the long run. So not a milkshake, we're going to look at a healthy smoothie. And it starts with an empty blender, right? So this is your younger child, this is your child in a grammar stage. And what you're going to do with this child first is just add ingredients.

And what I mean by that is you're going to talk about like who, what, and where. You're going to add basic facts and pour them into this blender. But then as this child grows older and they're in the logic stage, which is next, this is when you're going to turn the blender on and you're going to start mixing all these ingredients together. And you're going to be answering the questions of like when and how and, you know, like deeper questions.

But then when it's all said and done, eventually you want to pour out this smoothie, right? So you can use it and feed someone with it. And that's really the last and final stage, which is the rhetoric stage. The rhetoric stage is when a child is older and he's been able to take all these ingredients that have been mixed up and divided and, you know, like dissected, and this child can articulate his beliefs. This child can take the ingredients that you've given him and use it to, for

discernment, use it for apologetics. And, because, you know, ultimately there is a reason behind learning. Lord willing, you know, we're seeking to glorify him, but one way to glorify him is to know him, to know his world, to know his purpose in our life. So as this child grows, that's really, hopefully, you know, what we're doing. Like I said, we start with this kind of empty cup that we're filling up and then we're going to mix it up and then we're going to pour it out.

So that's one easy way to look at it. Can I give you an example of a, with a character in history?

Ashley: Yeah.

Linda: It's always, you know, more fun to talk about a character in history. But let's look at Abraham Lincoln. I feel like a young child, when they're going to first learn of Abe Lincoln, you know, what they're going to see is certainly the concrete and evident things first. They're going to see him as a tall man, he'll have a hat and a beard. They may learn he's the 16th president of the United States. They may learn he's from Kentucky and that he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation, which they can barely even pronounce that yet, right?

So here's the facts, you've just given this child the facts. But now that they're older, let's move them up to the logic stage. The child in the logic stage is going to be able to connect some dots now. And he's going to realize that, "Hey, if this guy served as the 16th president, that means that he served through the start and the close of the Civil War, and how did he do that? He led the nation carefully and very dramatically through all of its brokenness. You know, as the Commander in Chief of the Union." So that's where the middle child has gone with this.

But then let's go to that oldest child in the rhetoric stage. This child should be able to draw some conclusions about the character of Abraham Lincoln by answering, you know, by taking all that other information and realizing, you know, this appears to be a man of great wisdom. He obviously had strong convictions based on his actions that he did, issue the Emancipation Proclamation, this man appeared to have faith, based on comments he made about Christ following the Gettysburg Address, etc., etc.

So I'll just say at the end, the end result is that you have a character sketch of a person that's based on substance. That's based on fact, etc.

So anyway, that's my example of the trivium.

Ashley: Perfect!

Linda: When I put all that in the Mystery of History, basically it looks like this after each and every lesson, I provide activities for younger, middle, and older students.

And really in a nutshell it's simple, the younger student is certainly using his senses. He's using, he's going to taste, touch, smell, bite, eat, act out, he's going to use his senses to remember some of the facts he learned.

Whereas the middle student, who's now in the logic stage, is going to have a mixture of some hands-on work, but also I'm going to start to challenge him to do some little reports or re-sort things, maybe you need to create a chart or a poster or again, he's just going to like do something with this material.

And then the older student, who I'm also saying can be high school, I'm going to be encouraging them to, for additional research, and again, to be drawing conclusions out of these things.

So, again, it's through the activities in the Mystery of History that I feel like this is all fleshed out. And it's not a perfect science, you know, some of these things are going to overlap, because I'm going to try to appeal to different learning styles. Even some older students would still like to do really concrete things and, you know, blow up Mt. Vesuvius in their back yard, and make certain things, they're welcome to do that. But on top of that, he also needs to know where Mt. Vesuvius is and how it was different from other volcanoes and everything else, because he's older.

Ashley: Perfect.

Linda: So, that's my answer there.

Ashley: A question about the vision, I guess, of the younger, middle and older. Are there certain ages that you would think it breaks or is it very dependent upon the child or how does a mom look at that and decide where they think their child should be?

Linda: Very good. I think that in some ways the child's interest will help you determine where that child is. And like you said, it's not that there's a strict division, but generally speaking, I'm going to say kindergarten through about third grade, may be your younger student. And then four through eight could be your middle, and then high school is really the older student, ninth grade and up. Where you're going to have some overlap is going to be with gender issues. Let's say there are some boys who in sixth, seventh grade are still very hands on because maybe their fine motor skills aren't well developed, they don't want to write a report, but they'd be happy to build you a Lego fort, I'm all for that still, you know, I don't think we need to push him to all that additional writing yet if he's not ready.

Whereas some little girls, even in second and third grade, sometimes girls show signs of being able to do some higher thinking skills or maybe just because, again, maybe their handwriting's better, you know, something little like that.

And even some older students who might have some learning challenges, they certainly might learn better, you know, picking out some of the younger or middle student things and I think that's fine. I do like students and teachers to kind of work together through their choices of activities. And as a whole, families need to be careful choosing any activities because of just their season of life. Let's say it's a bad year, you know, unfortunately we all have those. We have some years where maybe we're caring for aging parents or, you know, we have unemployment, or just something significant, you know, a life crises that we're fighting. Then on those years or days or months, what have you, I hope families will choose, you know, easy things, mainly get their lessons read, maybe listen to them by audio book, and then reserve their energy for whatever the Lord has given them to deal with.

But let's say in a more ideal scenario, a family is moving along, they've kind of got their act together, the mom is organized, looking ahead at her activities, I hope she will choose them wisely and challenge the non-writer with some writing projects, if he hasn't already had to do 15 other writing projects that day, well, then here's a great time to pull it out.

It's also very significant with your older student to be choosing activities that will help provide them with a high school credit. Because we need them spending four to five hours a week on the course to count it as a credit. And so, you know, if he's gotten the basic work done and the Mystery of History is say, three hours, well, then he needs some challenging activities, where he's researching, writing, or reading additional literature.

So that would be my reason for not putting strict age, you know, divisions on these.

Ashley: Wow, that sounds great. Well, you talked a little bit here at the end about as far as high school credits and making sure that we're staying on top of things like that. I know several moms also sometimes can have issues for grading. So what are your thoughts about grading in homeschooling?

Linda: Well, I give an entire workshop on grading, as a matter of fact, because I am passionate about it. I find, you know, there's so much I could say, I better just summarize. But a few things, I definitely think grading changes, the older the child gets, the more necessary, that's kind of obvious. I think when students are young, the most important thing is acknowledgement. And I'm not going to use a poor grade with a younger student to motivate them, I'm going to use a poor grade of a younger student to show me that maybe I need to make some adjustments. Maybe I'm seeing a learning problem, I'm seeing that they just didn't get it. But there's no need to give this child a D or F, I'm just going to, you know, maybe use a grade to realize where they're at. But mainly acknowledgement, I want them to, you know, be getting rewarded for turning things in and things like that.

So grades barely exist for the younger student. But the middle student, grades are a whole other matter. I recommend keeping fractional grades. By that I mean, let's say there's 15 problems on a page and they miss 2. Well, rather than slap a -2 at the top of the page, I would prefer to write at the top of the page that they got 13 out of 15. Now, you know, that's really a little thing, but it right away shows the positive, which is that, "Hey, you got 13 right."

And then the other thing is, if you took the 13 and plugged that into a calculator and divide by 15, you do wind up with a numeral and a decimal. Drop the decimal point and you'll really quickly see that that's like a 94, I think, or something. And then you know, oh, I know what that is, that's an A. And so you can work with fractional grades, I think, very easily at any given time to come up with a grade.

So I do find that once they're in middle school, I was probably grading about half of my students' work at least with fractional grades. Meaning that, you know, the more concrete subjects got more concrete grades. I didn't grade the less concrete subjects, because I still had a bit, again, of an un-schooler spirit in me, I also knew my limitations for how much I could keep graded and stay ahead of them. And so I probably graded about half their work by middle school. But that was all in preparation for high school where then everything's different. We certainly, for integrity's sake, are needing to keep real grades, you know, so that we can, you know, count their credits and help determine where they might go after high school. Whether it is to, you know, an upper higher education or not.

So, yes, I'm big on grades, but not because I think grades will always show us what they're learning. Certainly I think most of us would agree, there's a lot of things we will learn in life that grades will never, ever reflect. But we do live in a very performance-based society, so there is a place for them. And I think we do our children a good service to at least, you know, help them, you know, earn grades and work for grades, it's a work ethic issue.

The other thing I could say about that is that, you know, there's no free lunch and no free ride and so, you know, if we ever attempted to, you know, pad grades, I think we need to be very cautious of that. It doesn't help them in the long run. I think there can be temptations to do that, to help, you know, an older student with a GPA. We really need to guard against that. And have real high standards and if you feel like you're kind of a softie about the grades, you know, the student's really begging to retake and retake and retake, you know, have other accountability in your life. You know, maybe you assign Grandpa to do some grading, or someone other than you, if that's a weak area for you. That's just one idea.

Ashley: Yeah, no, that's some great advice. I know the first day of school is really coming up quickly for most homeschoolers. Is there any advice that you have for

both new homeschoolers, as well as seasoned homeschoolers, to really be able to start the year off right?

Linda: Oh, let's see, now that question wasn't written down in front of me, so I'll have to think off the top of my head. How would I answer that? Honestly the first thing that comes to my mind is prayer, and maybe in addition, prayer and fasting. I'm a big proponent of that, maybe just because I know of my own weaknesses, my own propensity to sin, and I know that in addition to prayer in my life, whenever I can set aside time, maybe if it's one meal or a whole day or three days or a week, when I can set aside time to fast, I really can hear the Lord loudly, more loudly, and clearly in my life.

And I highly recommend that teachers, before they start the year, set aside some of their time with the Lord to just be focused, to, you know, get back in touch with his word and his spirit and just hear what he's saying to them. Because, you know, when we're filled up, we do a better job of him pouring into our children.

So that would be my first answer, get that time, if at all possible. You know, get away from your home and your other responsibilities. Almost a little personal retreat. I did do a lot of those over the years, my husband was gracious and would give me some time. I actually took off one day a week quite often, or one night a week, I would call "Mom's Night Out," was usually on Monday night and that was a night my husband just allowed me to slip away from our home, without having necessarily to cook dinner and I would get away and use that time to regroup, or to plan my week or to write a note or a letter, to call a friend. But the point was, I was away from my immediate, you know, screaming household. And I'm really grateful, looking back, that I had those Monday nights. I know that doesn't work for everybody, sometimes, you know, our hours in the day won't allow for that. But even if you could get it once a month, it'd be a start, I think, for refreshment. We all need it, we're not superwomen. Though ya'll call us the Super Heroes, how ironic!

Ashley: I know!

Linda: Not necessarily are. We struggle, it's hard.

Ashley: Well, you talked a little bit about having that night where you could plan, if you needed to. Do you have any advice for moms on lesson planning?

Linda: Yes, I do. I have funny stories about lesson plans. Again, if you could picture my personality here, I am the free-spirited one, and I think that works well for me for quite a long time, that means I'm not lesson planning when my children are young, right? Now, I'm organized ahead of time, because I've put thought and prayer into it, but I don't have it all written out necessarily on paper. I just know which books we're going to hit and which subjects I'm going to teach, etc. And I'm pretty good at winging things, right?

Well, here's what I discovered, is that by the time my oldest one hit about fourth or fifth grade, she was writing her own lesson plans. Because, again, I have children that actually like lists and checking boxes and routines.

And so, after evaluating that, I'm like, "Okay, Mom needs to really get it together and it's time, now that I have all three of you in school, that I need to really write lesson plans." So I started, it was a lofty goal, but I did it, I really stepped up the notch, you know, I started lesson planning. But what I did with my original lesson plans is that I attached a date. You know, if you can picture most lesson plan books, they have columns for all the subjects, and at the top of the column is a day of the week. So I filled all those in, and then I became like this evil taskmaster because, you know, it was such a big deal for me to even like get out these lesson plans, but once I wrote them down, the last thing I wanted to do was change them. So if somebody was sick or we forgot a field trip or something came up, well, you know, I really would push my kids to catch back up to get on these lesson plans.

Well, I'm sort of drawing this out, but here's the moral of the story. I had a stroke of genius one day after torturing my children for a few years with these very rigid lesson plans, and I took some White Out, now I don't know if all people even remember what White Out is, because, you know, we don't have typewriters any more, but, you know, that liquid white stuff. I took White Out and I took all the dates off the tops of my columns in my lesson planner. And I looked at them all completely different. And I'm like, it was liberation. I realized that I could plan a week or a month or a year of lesson plans, but if they were un-dated, it gave me freedom. It gave me the opportunity to move the days around with the natural ebb and flow of my life, that meant that if on Wednesday, life fell apart, it didn't matter in my lesson plans, I just picked up wherever I left off.

And that, I realize a lot of people have already figured that out well before me, but it took me years to figure out that un-dated lesson plans were beautiful. So I do want to pass the word to those who may be brought into their homeschool tradition, just, you know, memories of regular school or being a teacher that always had strict lesson plans. When you're homeschooling, you basically have 365 days in the year to get 180 days worth of school done.

So I think you can keep the columns un-dated and still get it accomplished and then just allow for time and space to drift sometimes in between these weeks and months that pass by. Allow your family to breathe, allow your family to minister, you know, take care of your parents or, you know, whatever the immediate needs are around you, etc., etc.

So that's my great advice. Un-date them.

Ashley: And just sort of one, I guess, final question. If there is anything that you would do differently, what would that be?

Linda: Oh, goodness, what would I do differently? I wish we had, well, let me think, I'm torn. You know, there's a few things I wish we had done differently. I wish we had read more. I wish we had invested more time into reading together. We weren't strong, we're not a strong read-aloud family. My children read a lot and I read a lot, but we didn't always read together. I wish we had shared more of that. I think what happened is just once they became of age to read, they really enjoyed it so much, they would scamper off and do their own. And I wish I had held reins on that a little bit. Just because of the memories of it. You know, like I do remember, for example, the time we read *The Indian In The Cupboard* out loud. You know, we still talk about that. I wish we had enjoyed more literature out loud together.

Let me think, and as a whole, I wish I had found a better balance between my personality and theirs. As in, I still would have preferred to have been a more hands-on teacher all the way through and I wish I could have found, made that more appealing to my children. You know, you just assume all kids would like that. But mine didn't, mine really liked routine. Especially my oldest, is a very task-oriented person. So at the end of the day she felt good when she had, you know, you know, check, check, check things.

But I wish we had found a better balance there. I'm not sure what that would've looked like. And overall we did find a balance, but I feel like their older years almost got more rigid and maybe that was just necessary because they were older and they were more concrete subjects and there was, you know, credits to meet.

But my personal feel probably would have been a less structured homeschool.

I know, great question!

Ashley: No, I think that's some great advice for people to just realize that it doesn't have to be one way or the other. Just because one speaker says this or another speaker says this, it's okay to mix and match and figure out what works best for your family.

Linda: Right. And you know, it's funny that you did ask me that question, because I don't know how many of your speakers are retired, but now that I am, I think what I'm describing that I might want to change, would just reflect the fact that I think I miss the days that I had the kids, you know, be able to cluster around me on the sofa and read. Those are the things I miss the most. I don't miss the worksheets. You know, I don't miss the pages of math problems, I don't miss the concrete stuff. I guess because that's still a part of life everywhere you go. You know, we still have bills to pay, there's always stuff to do. But I think I miss the relational side of my children just being done and right under my wing.

And so I hope that my words will just inspire the young mom right now who is kind of like, she's like, looking forward to the days they're more independent, but I just want to remind her that they're going to grow up fast. So enjoy those times when they're still, you know, wrapped around your knee because they're a toddler. Because I miss them, I miss the little guys.

Ashley: I know. My mom, I got married a couple years ago, but she's been sure counting down the days until we have grandkids because she's ready to have the little ones back around again.

Linda: I think that's me, yes. I am looking forward to that. And then my grandchildren will be getting, you know, those later volumes of the Mystery of History, because my children grew up before they were finished.

Ashley: Perfect. Well, Linda, I want to thank you so much for joining us today. I don't know if there's a way, or if you have a website that maybe our listeners could get back in contact with you if they'd like to find out more information about your products, as well as if they want to be able to get in contact with you.

Linda: Yes. There's a couple of ways they can. First of all, my website, it is www.TheMysteryOfHistory.com. You don't want to leave out the T-H-E at the very beginning, it is The Mystery Of History. And that is, you know, a wealth of information is there regarding the actual series.

And besides that, I am also on Facebook, there is a Mystery of History page, starts again with "the," The Mystery Of History Facebook page. And there's a beautiful community there of followers. I tend to have people gravitate, you know, like minds gravitate toward each other and so I have a lot of Mystery of History families that will get on there and share in fellowship and it's really nice.

I also have a personal Facebook page, if you want to see pictures of my grown up children, they're there, because I do have all that stuff.

So that's just a couple things. There is also a Yahoo group, which has tremendous support for the Mystery of History users. There's lots of files where people have just, you know, taken the material and run with it.

Ashley: Okay.

Linda: So the Yahoo files, you can access through my website.

Ashley: Okay.

Linda: That's the best way to find it.

Ashley: Perfect. Well, thanks again, Linda, I really appreciate your time and I'm so glad that you were able to join us and share some of your wealth of wisdom and knowledge that you've gained over the years.

Linda: Well, thank you. And again, I just hope to encourage all other teachers out there, young or old, enjoy them while you have them, as time goes quickly.

Ashley: Yes, ma'am. Perfect.

Linda: Thank you, Ashley.

Ashley: No problem, have a great day!

Linda: Thanks, bye bye.

Ashley: Bye.

[audio end]