



18 March 2020

### **A Joyful Conversation with Jackie Henderson**

With all of the Covid-19 responses, many parents and caretakers have found themselves homeschooling. Some people are excited to dive in, but some are feeling anxiety or like they are not equipped to teach their own children.

#### **Visitation Conversation**

In *Joyful Momentum: Growing and Sustaining Vibrant Women's Groups*, I wrote about how innately relational women are and how we run to each other like Mary went to Elizabeth to share the news about Jesus. I imagine that part of their conversation was not recorded by the Gospel writers. And that conversation probably, went something like this:

*Mary: Elizabeth, I said yes to the angel, but I have no idea what I'm doing. I've never been a mom before. I'm so young. Will you help me? I can't do this alone!*

*Elizabeth: First off, you can do this. You were made to do this. Second, I'm more "seasoned" – \*\*not old\*\* – and I'll help you. I've got your back.*

So here many of sit, never having homeschooled before, and needing a little help from someone wise. I have gone running to several homeschool moms to lean on their wisdom and share it with Joyful Momentum followers.

#### **Meet Jackie Henderson**

Jackie is a mom of 10 wonderful children ranging from age 26 to 4. She has three grandbabies and has homeschooled all her kiddos. Jackie takes a classical approach to education, and in this video she offers encouragement and practical ways to homeschool.

#### **Practical Tips for Homeschooling**

- **Relax, Breathe and Be Not Afraid!** These are Your Kids and You love them!
- **This an opportunity to have fun with learning!** This is a chance to find joy with your kids! *But it starts with you, your attitude and your expectations.* You will find what you are looking for.
- **You are already a homeschooler.** Many of you listening are taking this sojourn into home education under duress. That is ok. But know this, you are already a homeschooler. You



started off that way. You taught your child to talk, to potty, to do chores, manners...etc. YOU did it. And you still can!

- **Be present. Put away the screens.** Remember that this will be relational education. You and your kids, not your kids and screens. So, I am not going to give you a list of programs or apps. In fact, put the screens far, far away!
- **Read. Read. Read.** Lots of time for reading! Everyone in the same room, reading. Better yet, read aloud! So much language, grammar, vocabulary, and imagination can be gleaned from books being read aloud. I totally get that you don't want to read for hours and hours.
- **Use audio books.** This allows everyone to have busy hands while listening. For me this means I can sew, cook, clean, etc. My kids can color, draw, craft, build, drive cars...etc. Any type of quiet "work" while the story continues. While the hands are busy, the imagination can grab the story and mull it. This activity can go on for hours. Get books that are classic adventures! Don't think you have to do picture books! Get the big 10-30-hour stories! You have the time! [Here are some great children's classics.](#)
- **Play games!** Games teach so many different skills, not the least of which is structure, turn taking, logic...and more! Some skills actually build a lot on math, science or economics. Take the time to play these games with your kids. Some of my favorite games that emphasize math: [Prime Climb](#), [Zeus on the Loose](#), and [Quirkle](#). Science: Einstein, Evolution, and Valence. Economics: [Raccoon Tycoon](#) and [7 Wonders](#).
- **Walks!** Walks provide so much opportunity for observation and conversation. Make lists to research. Or bring a notebook for sketches. Ask questions of your kids to reinforce their ideas and have them present at dinner. Or just walk in silence and enjoy the time together.
- **Fitness!! Work out together.** Play some basket ball or volleyball or see who can jump rope the longest. Figure out double dutch! Four Square. Take it up a notch by adding memory work like math facts! Combining memory work with physical activity actually makes it stick better!
- **Poetry.** Speaking of memory work...poetry! Take the time to fill those minds with more than movie and song lyrics!
- **Retellings** This is a little more formal, but it can be a lot of fun and create a great memory or gift. Give your student a prompt and have them tell you a story. Listen to the story and write it down. Ask questions as needed depending on their age. When you write THEIR story in THEIR words you will be using proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. But it is their story. The next day, they will recopy the story. They then practice the proper spelling, grammar and punctuation as they copy in their own handwriting. The next day they can add an illustration. This exercise also works well having them listen to a story and retell it to you, especially Bible stories! By the end of the quarantine, they have their own special book of stories!
- **Have the kids cook with you.** Life skills and MATH. And yummy!



- **Free, unstructured play.** (Screen FREE) Much of the time just set them to play, build, create and be bored. Boredom is OK, its where most creativity comes from! This, too, is learning!

### **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton as an Intercessor**

When St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a young mother, she traveled to Italy with her daughter and her husband, who was suffering from tuberculosis. When they arrived in Italy, the family was placed into a travelers prison, called the *lazaretto*, for quarantine because Elizabeth’s husband was visibly ill. The *lazaretto* was dank and cold. But Elizabeth schooled her daughter during their days there. She would teach her to reach and write using the Bible. She taught her to pray. She even taught her to jump rope. Elizabeth wrote that she and her daughter would jump rope to keep warm.

While we are facing a unique isolation due to the corona virus, we can look to St. Elizabeth’s example and for her intercession to make it through.

### **Keep the conversation going with a mentor.**

People crave good mentors. This is an opportunity for experienced homeschool moms to mentor new homeschool moms. If you are willing to be a mentor, or would like to be matched up with a homeschool mom mentor, visit JoyfulMomentum.org and click on the resources tab. There you’ll find two forms. One is for new homeschool moms who would like a mentor. The second is for experienced homeschool moms who would be willing to walk this road with a new homeschooler. We’ll link you up with a Joyful Momentum friend and let you all get started.

**\*\*\*As a common sense disclaimer**, Joyful Momentum is merely making an introduction. I make no warranty about the mentors or new homeschoolers. I'm leaving it to the individuals to link up digitally and **take precautions about exchanging personal information or meeting in person.**\*\*\*