

HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

Libraries of Hope Newsletter

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“PLAY IS THE WORK OF CHILDHOOD”

MONTHLY TOPICS

--And now **March** has rolled around again. Are you ready for a fresh list of topics?

We have a New Nation. Now we will take a look at a new level of courage and self-reliance as we read the stories of the rugged pioneer stock who settled the untamed wilderness. Look how fast we expanded westward! Of course, woven into their stories are the stories of the Native Americans. My appreciation for them grows each year as I delve a little deeper into their culture and way of life. If you haven’t yet read *Soul of an Indian* by Charles Eastman, you might consider it this round. Their story is truly a tragedy. How I wish we could have found a different way. You can’t help but weep with them. And as we look at the interchange between the two groups, we see first hand the Golden Rule in action—when they were treated with respect, when trust was honored, they reciprocated. There is no single story of either White man or Native. Both were savage at one time. Both were incredibly kind at other times. They have much to teach us about how to manage our differences today.

The World side of the rotation doesn’t directly tie into the United States topic but is similar in that we will take a look at a people whose influence expanded quickly and over a large area—it is the story of Islam. How much do you know of their story and the core of their beliefs? Will you let extremist groups color the entire Islam population? They reverence Abraham and Jesus, as a prophet and Teacher. The Angel Gabriel is said to have been Mohammed’s teacher. The 5 pillars of Islam are not far from Christian beliefs. These are things I had no idea of when I started the rotation a few years ago. You may also decide to take a look at the Crusades. Boy--were those Christian Crusaders surprised when they made it to the Holy Land. It wasn’t at all what they had been taught about the ‘infidel.’ The Saracens blessed our world in so many ways. I realize these are heavy topics for your little ones—you may want to go heavy on the American

(*Monthly Topics cont.*) side until they are a little older. There are a ton of great reads for them there. But you can introduce it with some simple retellings of *Arabian Nights* and what's there not to love about the music of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*? If you missed the newsletter last week, go take a look at the Arab view of family and guests.

In Nature, it's time for birds! As the ice melted and the sun came out yesterday, I went for a walk and couldn't help but take in all the joy of the songs of the birds, who have been silent in the cold. How many birds can your children recognize by name? How many birds can they identify by their song? It's spring—a perfect time for homemade bird feeders. Mama birds have much to teach us about the care of their young. Do check out the Enrichment suggestions on the Nature Birds page.

Finally, we turn to the Imagination in the Mother's University. I added a large selection from a book on the importance of the imagination to the Mother's Learning Library volume. If you have an edition from a couple of years ago, you can view it online. Or we recently published a supplement that has all the additions to the volumes you may want to pick up. In the push for academics in younger and younger years, the imagination is being neglected and the ramifications are far reaching. You may think your little kids have more important things to do than play all day. I can't think of anything more important for them to do in those younger years. Play is the work of childhood. And much of that play is building stronger imaginations.

--FREEDOM:

I just finished a book at the recommendation of a group member, *Children of the Storm*, which is the story of a Christian family in Russia in the 60s and 70s.

It goes along with this month's topic of Freedom. I think a really effective way of helping your children appreciate freedom is to give them a picture of what life without it looks like. And this book certainly helps with that.

I went to church today for the first time in a year. We are now allowed to come if we socially distance and not sing hymns. I couldn't help but reflect on this story in Russia--hymns were a vital source of strength to them in their persecutions. In their imprisonment, it was often a hymn that brought solace and strength to endure one more day. When the Christians in hiding gathered, they sang hymns. Hymns softened even the hearts of guards. I am really concerned that we can shout and scream at a Super Bowl game and in protest, but we cannot gather and sing hymns. Although maybe some of you don't have that restriction. I truly miss the singing of hymns together more than anything. Will they ever allow us to sing together again? 'They' keep talking about a 'new normal.' I hope this is not part of it. (*cont. on next page*)



Art credit: Johann und Anna Pestalozzi by Conrad Ermisch

From Wikipedia about our friend, Pestalozzi:

Pestalozzi's method was used by the cantonal school in Aarau that Albert Einstein attended, and which has been credited with fostering Einstein's process of visualizing problems and his use of "thought experiments." Einstein said of his education at Aarau, "It made me clearly realize how much superior an education based on free action and personal responsibility is to one relying on outward authority." [2]

(*Month Topics cont.*) The other thing I noticed was the vital connections in the sharing of stories and storytelling. Books with faith were banned. Bibles were banned. Writing was confiscated. In the precious moments they had with family members, they shared their stories.

When they could no longer gather in churches, they traveled to the countryside, under the trees and stars, by the water, among the flowers, to meet in fellowship. They would do it at peril of their lives and imprisonment, but it refreshed their souls.

I copied this passage: "After dinner we once again gathered around a bonfire. We sang, recited poems, and prayed together. To this day I treasure the memory of the close kinship that knitted us together."

Songs, poetry, stories, nature--these knitted them together and gave them hope to move forward.

There is a lesson for us all here.



Art Credit: Arctia Virgo by Louis Prang

--INSECTS:

There's a little poem about a moth in this month's My Book of Delights. The observer wants to help the moth that is struggling:

"Poor little prisoned waif," I said
"You shall not struggle more."
And tenderly I cut the threads
And watched to see it soar.

Alas! A feeble chrysalis
It dropped from its silken bed;
My help had been the direst harm--
The pretty moth as dead!
I should have left it there to gain
The strength that struggle brings;

'Tis the stress and strain, with moth and men
That free the holded wings!

What might we be doing with our children, or even
with each other, that we think is helping but is actu-
ally enfeebling them?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

--We are frequently asked if there's anything you all can do to help. Well, I'm here to cash in. Our poor Simple Joy art site has been sadly neglected for far too long because I just have not had time to tend to it. I have a list of over 700 artists I have to search through and find relevant art to add to the site. It is incredibly time-consuming. So as my mom always said of chores, "Either one person can spend 10 hours cleaning, or 10 people can spend one hour cleaning." I won't tell you how many times it just ended up being the one person...please don't make me do that...

All it takes is simple knowledge of Excel spreadsheets (you just have to know how to enter information in a field and insert a new line...very easy to learn if you don't know how already) and the ability to search Wikimedia Commons and copy/paste website links. I've provided here a link to an [editable Google spreadsheet](#). Pick an artist name, look them up, and add relevant images! Easy peasy! (*cont. on next page*)

(Announcements cont.) A couple rules:

1. Stick to Wikimedia Commons. It's much easier for us to determine if the image is in public domain. Even if the art itself is in public domain, sometimes the person/company who took the picture of the art retain the rights to that picture. Wikimedia Commons typically spells out the rights of each image, which is why we use it.
2. Stick to art that was published before 1926. If you have reason to believe something printed after that is in public domain, go ahead and include it. I'll check everything out.
3. Stick to art that coincides with the art style found in the website. You know the type, and if not, check out the website. You won't find a lot of portraits or abstract art. We want art of people living their everyday lives. And nature and animals in all their glory.
4. When in doubt, include it. When I put them in the website, I'll check to make sure everything is kosher.
5. You are not confined to the list of artists. If you know another artist you would like to see included in the website, please add it!
6. If you have art that you love and find particularly relevant, but that is not in the public domain, you can add that on the second page. I'll add it to our non-public domain Pinterest pages.

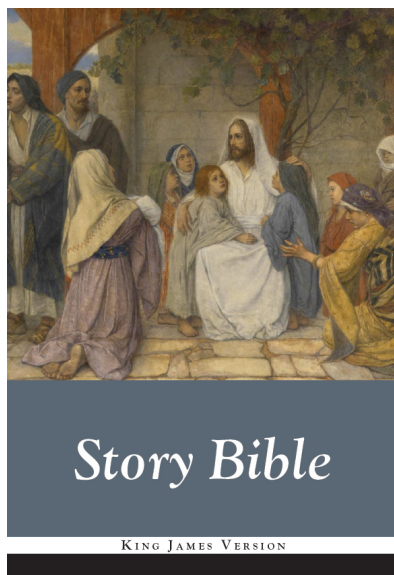
So grab your favorite artist and have at it! And let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for all your help!

Here is the [link](#) again. (You can also find it in the Announcements tab under the relevant announcement and the Facebook post was added to the Announcements there as well.)

--To go along with this month's study of the Holy Land, we have recently revised our Story Bible slightly. With our new printer, we are able to go back to the original smaller size which we hope will make it more convenient to use. Our Story Bible is comprised of short stories from the Bible using only the original King James Version language. We created it as a way to familiarize children with the Bible and its beautiful language. The Stories of Jesus is the same text but with spaces added for your children to glue in fine art images we have provided to go along with the story. We are finalizing the Old Testament version and will release it soon.

You can find it in the [store](#).



WEH IN ACTION

--Yesterday was my son's 19th b-day. During the last year, he has suffered a great deal of emotional health and physical as well, including losing pretty much all his friends. When I say our family is all he has, I truly mean that. His sister, almost 14, began the WEH journey this school year, not realizing that is what I have been implementing in our learning. We pull him into our learning as frequently as possible. Yesterday she had the opportunity to have a sleepover with 2 different friends, or at least go to hang out with them for the evening. Instead, she told me she would much rather spend the time with her brother for his birthday than go with friends, that it "would not feel right" to leave him instead of celebrating him on his birthday. She would not have chosen this 6 months ago. They spent the evening watching a show together, laughing, crying... simply being friends. Recently she expressed to me that she is okay if we never adopt (the child we have been wanting to adopt for many years) because the need for another sibling has been filled since she is now "such good friends" with her brothers (all much older). THIS is what growing the heart does... It helps siblings become friends in time, it helps lonely hearts be a bit more mended, and it helps families rejoice in just being together.

--For our family movie night this week we watched the *Black Stallion*. I know I have read the book in the past, but it's been a while, so I can't say if my comment relates to the book as well. The movie I have seen multiple times, including when I was young. But this time as I watched it with my "Well-Educated Heart," I noticed something I hadn't before. The boy's survival after the shipwreck really came about because of the story that the

(WEH in Action cont.) father told to him just before he died. He gave him the small statue of Bucephalus, then told him how Alexander the Great had tamed this untamable horse and ridden him when no one else could. Then as the boy is despairing after the shipwreck, the story is remembered when the horse reappears, and he keeps himself alive with the hope he has of taming The Black. Even later in the movie when he wants to race The Black, he recalls to his mother the moments before the shipwreck that gave him home to stay alive. The movie itself is an artistic masterpiece of cinematography, but the idea that a story saved his life just made it that much better!

--**Looking for suggestions.** I have my 10-year-old son write a short story every Wednesday, he enjoys doing this and he's always excited to read me his story, but I'm conflicted on what to do about his spelling and punctuation errors. I'm thinking it should be corrected, but I don't want to hinder his enjoyment of writing. I don't want him to feel like I'm critiquing his work. How would you go about correcting it? Or would you just let it go? I'm assuming the more he reads and writes (he loves to read)

the more he'll find his own errors. Thanks!

A: I just posted an awesome presentation on teaching children to write in the Language Arts section of the Mother's University by Brad Wilcox. It is well worth your time. The answer is, for now, let it go. Do assume the more he reads and writes, the more he'll find his own errors. Or the more he will ask for help from you in those matters. But do it too soon, you'll shut down the process.

A: My daughter read a TON and never did any grammar or spelling work and is now writing several novels and has amazing grammar and spelling. She's 14.

A: Maybe ask your son which of his stories he would like to clean up and "publish"? He can select some he's already written, and you can teach that real writers proofread and edit their work by correcting spelling errors, fixing grammar, and looking for ways to improve their writing. Start small. Look for some age appropriate corrections to teach and let the others go. Once he gets the hang of that, or you go to the next level, etc. then you can introduce new editing concepts. But this way

he can still enjoy the writing every week without worrying that it will be picked apart.

--**I was listening** to classical music on Pandora. An opera piece came on. Usually I'd skip it. But I didn't. For the first time in my life, I can say I thought it was beautiful! I really want to go to the opera now and hear one in person! Oh my heart!

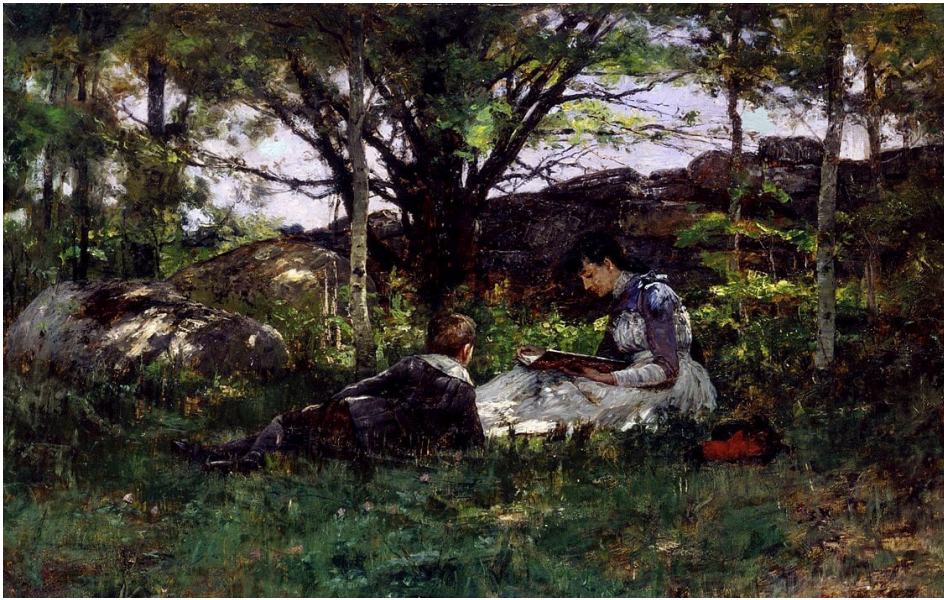
--**My favorite heart** moments always seem to be the things we didn't plan. My daughter and I did bug ballet today. Yes, we made that up. We thought of a bug and then pretended we were that bug. It was so fun, we were laughing and smiling so much. We really enjoyed becoming butterflies the most.



**"HE WHO IS PLENTEOUSLY
PROVIDED FOR FROM
WITHIN NEEDS BUT LITTLE
FROM WITHOUT."**

--Goethe

Art credit: Old Woman Reading the News
by Peder Monsted



“INTEREST AND
ATTENTION WILL INSURE
TO YOU AN EDUCATION.”

--Robert A. Millikan

Art credit: A June Idyl
by Theodore Clement Steele

MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--Someone in the group asked about a book about the methods used in the school of Louisa May Alcott's father. I was glancing through it and landed on this thought about teaching reading. It may sound familiar...

“In teaching reading, Mr. Alcott's method has also been much misunderstood; and, because he thinks a child should never be hurried into or over the mechanical part of the process, some imagine that he does not think it important for children to learn to read at all!

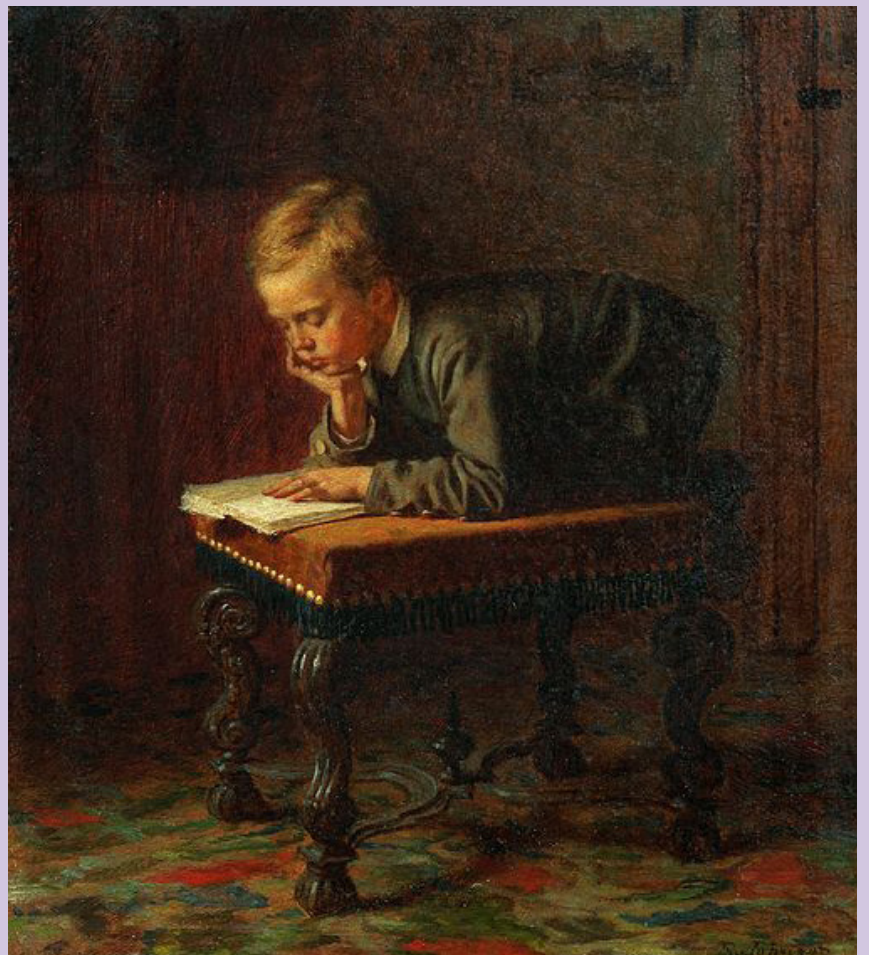
“It will probably, however, be difficult to find children who know so well how to use a book when they are eight years old as those who have been taught on his method, which never allows a single step to be taken, in any stage of the process, without a great deal of thinking on the part of the child.

“Perhaps a general adoption of [his] ideas would lead to some check upon the habits of superficial reading, which do so much to counterbalance all the advantages arising from our profusion of books.

“It is a common remark, that the age of much reading is not an age of creative power...

“...every book read should be an event to a child; and all his plans of teaching kept steadily in view the object of making books live, breathe, and speak;...

“...the best reading which children can do for themselves in the early stage of their education, cannot supersede the necessity of the teacher's reading a great deal to them; because it is desirable that they should early be put in possession of the thoughts of genius, and made to sympathize in the feelings inspired by their master-works, as well as have their taste formed on the highest models.”



Art credit: Reading Boy by Eastman Johnson

WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

FREEDOM

[Crossing Bok Chitto](#) by Tim Tingle. A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom.

[Benjamin Rush](#) by David Barton. At the time of his death, he was heralded as one of the 3 most notable men of the time, along with George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.

[We Were Not Alone](#) by Patricia Roper. How an LDS family survived World War II in Nazi Germany.

[Leonardo Da Vinci's To-Do List](#). Online article. "Giving into the Renaissance philosophy that art and science were complementary fields--not separate--Da Vinci allowed himself to be a sponge." Explore. Discover. Notebooking. It worked for Da Vinci!

[How to Think Like Leonardo daVinci](#) by Michael Gelb.

[Leonardo DaVinci for Kids](#) by Janis Herbert.

MOI MINUTE

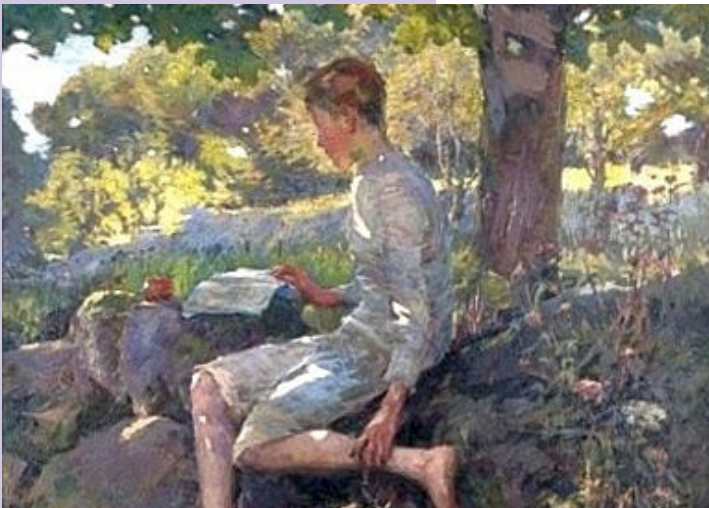


Art credit: Le Tour du Monde by Dargelas

Keeping the *Mothers of Influence* map up-to-date feels like this sometimes.

We hear from a few of you every week and love planting the new trees on the map. Some older groups may have been left off during the most recent revision, and there are many newer groups that aren't represented yet. Check the map at <https://www.mothersofinfluence.org/find-moi> and let us know of any additions or changes.

Love, Jen and Marley



**"A PERSON WHO WON'T READ
HAS NO ADVANTAGE OVER
ONE WHO CAN'T READ."**

--Mark Twain

Art credit: The Half Holiday by Elizabeth Forbes