Home Education: What Is It?

by Steve Ryerson

What is home education? Does that seem like a silly question to you? You might respond by saying, "Everyone knows what it is; it is teaching your children at home." But after many years of home-educating our sons, we have come to embrace a much larger answer: we believe that true home education is not primarily an educational program; it is a family-centered plan for discipleship.

Let me tell you what home education is not. It is not an effort to replicate at home what is done in a school building. Neither is it something that is done mainly to improve academics. For Christians, it is not a way to save money that would otherwise be spent on a Christian school. And it is not a method for avoiding a short term, unpleasant situation at a school –any school. Moreover, it is not a misguided effort by a non-teacher to pretend to be an expert that he or she is not. Neither is it an effort to cut off one's family from the outside world.

Home education is a family-based effort to obey the biblical commandments to rear our children in the knowledge and service of the Lord. God has built into the family (which is the foundational unit of society) a potential for influencing future generations to serve the Lord in a way that cannot be duplicated by any other institution. No civil government, church, or non-profit organization can train up children as well as the family can.

The family can effectively protect young people against illicit drugs, sex, and peer pressure. It can help children to see who they are, where they have come from, and where they are going. The family can provide teaching, correction, encouragement, and discipline in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. As "adults in training" come up through a solid home-educating program, they will see themselves as effective contributors in the body of Christ, not as spectators in need continual entertainment.

This is what true home education is.

Steve Ryerson is the Ohio ACTS Homeschool Coordinator.