
The Method

Mason's philosophy of education is based on her 20 foundational principles, including the idea that a child is born a person fully capable of wrestling with ideas and not merely a receptacle into which facts are poured. Her methods, revolutionary at the time, included short, varied lessons, narration, nature study and hands-on science integrated with art, early introduction to foreign languages and Shakespeare, and delayed formal grammar and composition instruction. She believed that children possess a natural appetite for education and it is the job of educators to lay out a "feast" for them. She believed every subject deserved equal time in the curriculum, that all knowledge comes from the Holy Spirit, and that the job of the teacher is to put the child in contact with great minds and let the child do the work. Students are provided the finest quality literature available for all the subjects, even science, and are expected to narrate, or tell back, what they read. Ms. Mason wrote the 6 volume series collectively known as the Home Education Series between 1890 and 1923.

Mason comes to the U.S.

In the late 1980's, the work of three pioneers introduced Mason's methods to US homeschooling parents: Susan Schaffer McCauley (*For the Children's Sake*, 1984), Karen Andreola (*A Charlotte Mason Companion*, 1998) and Catherine Levison (*A Charlotte Mason Education*, 1996). We in the Northwest are particularly indebted to Catherine Levison for making her work accessible, and this weekend we have the opportunity to meet her and hear her reflections on over 30 years of homeschooling.

The Great Blue Heron

The Great Blue Heron has one of the widest ranges of any heron, nesting in colonies located in tall trees near large bodies of fresh and salt water where they are able to catch a wide variety of prey: mice, fish and insects. Its bill can grasp smaller fish between its two mandibles and spear larger fish as well. This adaptability allows them to overwinter in northern states, particularly along the West Coast where winters are mild. If you look up as the leaves fall from the trees, you may see a collection of their saucer-shaped nests. On your walk today, listen for the short, guttural squawk that announces its presence.



Northwest Charlotte Mason Educators Conference



September 25-27th, 2015

Federal Way, WA

Conference Schedule

Friday

4pm-6 pm Registration	Lobby
6 pm Welcome and Grace	Dining
6:15 Supper	Dining
7 pm "What's Love Got to Do with It? Cultivating your Child's Affinities"	
Brandy Vencel	Water View
8:30 Evening prayer	
An Introduction to Contemplative Prayer	
Catherine Levison	Chapel

What's Love Got to Do with It? Charlotte Mason said that at the end of a child's education, it doesn't matter how much a youth *knows* but rather how much he *cares* and how many orders of things he cares about. This was a revolutionary idea for her time, yet completely in line with the Christian classical tradition. In this session, we will discuss the development of affinities, why they are central to a true education, and what we can do to help order our students' affections.

Contemplative Prayer is not a practice borrowed from Zen Buddhism, it was a form of prayer used by the earliest Christian mystics. Catherine will speak about using this form of prayer to draw near to God.



Saturday

8:00 am Breakfast	Dining
9:00 am "How do You Want to be Remembered?" Catherine Levison	Forest View
Looking back on over 3 decades of parenting and home education: exhausting, demanding, and ultimately deeply pleasurable.	
10:00 Break	
10:30 "Start Here: A Survey of Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles"	
Brandy Vencel	Forest View
Learn the meaning of Mason's principles and how they fit into a well-balanced whole of her grand philosophy of education	
12:00 Lunch	Dining
1:00 Nature Walk & Handicraft Time	Water View
3:30 Afternoon Tea	
4:00 Breakout Sessions	
"Scheduling for Peace: Group Discussion"	
Lisa Kaufman	Library
Share your schedules and talk about the principles for scheduling multiple children in one homeschool.	
"Transformation & the Special Needs Child"	
Kathy Wickward	Water View
Adopting and adapting Charlotte Mason's methods for the child with learning disabilities.	
6:00 Dinner	
7:00 "Nature Study through the Ages"	
Naomi Goegan	Forest View
Nature study in the early years is not only the base for "serious" scientific study in high school, it IS serious study, the difference being in the synthetic approach.	
8:30 Book Group Discussions	
<i>The Idea of Nature Study</i>	Library
<i>A Charlotte Mason Education</i>	Upper Room
<i>The Living Page</i>	Water View

Sunday

7:30 am Mass with Fr. Gallagher	Chapel
8:00 Breakfast	Dining
8:45 Morning Prayer	Chapel
9:45 West Coast Organizational Meeting	Forest
10:30 "Aquinas' Big Picture: Charlotte Mason's Great Recognition"	
Brandy Vencel	Forest
Almost every Sunday , Charlotte Mason had her college students ponder the wisdom in this Italian fresco. This Sunday, we'll do the same.	
11:30 Pack up and check out	
12:00 Lunch	

SO many thank yous! First, to Lisa Kaufman and Christine Wood, my partners-in-crime, for helping to organize and figure this stuff all out. To our speakers: Catherine Levison, Brandy Vencel and Naomi Goegan. To Patty Leinweber for her crafty expertise, to Marianne Stenlund and Joy Davidson for sharing their gift of music. For all the helpers who pitched in at the last minute, thank you!!

