

CHRISTA STERKEN

embracing the beauty
of an imperfect life



Dear homeschooling mama,

Take a deep breath. Here are 7 personally tested ideas to fill in the gaps when you are weary in the school year, or homeschooling unexpectedly during the corona virus.

You are not alone. What you are doing is important work! But it is still work. If you are weary today, step back and lighten the load while you catch your breath.

Galatians 6:9 let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up

A few options to help get you through the slump:

1. **Grab a simple notebook.** The best homeschooling tip I might have ever received was to start recording what we DID do. For example, list every activity and see what subject it might match up with. Chances are excellent you've accomplished more than you realized. For example, cooking with you. Look for all the ways learning happens naturally.
2. **Challenge thinking skills with games.** Kids learn a lot from playing. Games like *Muggins* and *Knock-Out* for math, *Bananagrams* and *Boggle* for spelling, *Where in World* for geography, *Lewis and Clark Expedition Card* game for history. There are tons of great learning games, check out all the ones from [Aristoplay](#).
3. **Take a nature walk.** We had some of our best days when the kids were small doing this. Pick up a nature and bring a sketch book. Have the kids draw what they see and try and identify it. If you live near great parks, the beach, a slough, the desert, they all have things of interest. Kids love to stop and look closely, give them the time to do it. Science happens naturally. And if the weather is poor? Pull up pictures on Google, bring a sample in from outside and have them do it at the table. There is no wrong way.

4. **Dance.** Movement is a great boredom buster and stress reliever. Put on the music and just dance.
5. **Create active learning.** I had wiggly children. One learned best by always having something to do with her hands, her feet. By grabbing some index cards (like 50 cents for 100) there are tons of options. Young kids can help by gluing on noodles to make math flashcards. We used to do a math jumping game, where each card was an equation. She would jump from answer to answer. Draw a hopscotch game and think up an addition/subtraction version. Create matching games.
6. **Read aloud.** Literature is useful for kids on so many levels. Some days you can just read. If they are too antsy, use bubbles while you are reading. For my kinesthetic learner, we had special clay just for days she “had” to move. Her hands were busy, but her mind was alert. If you can’t read put in a cd of radio theater. *Adventures in Odyssey* and *Jonathan Park* kept my kids amused for years. Even now they can tell you facts they picked up long ago.
7. **And when you just have nothing?** Are you sick or tired or both? **Educational movies** can help for a time out. Remember *Schoolhouse Rock*? You can buy the whole set for a good price. Shows like *Zoom*, *Magic School Bus* and *Liberty’s Kids* are very informative and challenge them.

I’ve come to the end of this road. 14 wonderful years, and I promise you, it does get easier. They *do* grow and learn. [Today seems hard, but in the big picture, you will see the fruit of your labor.](#)

And it is a beautiful thing.

You may think no one sees what you are doing, or cares. You might have no support or help. But your work has tremendous value. *I* thank you and encourage you to press on. **You are doing more than you know precious mama.**

Blessings, Christa

Resources that promote learning through having fun!

Geography games

1. Scrambled states
2. Brainbox-all around the world
3. 10 days in _____ (Europe, USA, etc.)
4. Geopuzzle
5. Great States
6. Sequence states and capitals
7. Worldwide Geography card games
8. Snapshots across America
9. Where in the world?
10. Lewis and Clark Expedition card game (or other local history)

Games to exercise Language Art skills

1. Boggle
2. Bananagrams
3. Madlibs
4. Scrabble
5. Story cubes
6. Hangman
7. DK Silly Sentences

Educational Math games for kids

1. Muggins
2. Knock out
3. Sum Swamp
4. The Allowance Game
5. Payday
6. Pizza Fraction Fun
7. Presto Change-O
8. Math War
9. Yahtzee
10. Shut the Box

Exciting Radio Theater CD series. All great for families. (aka quiet time for mom. Our kids LOVED)

1. Jonathan Park vol 1-4
2. Adventures in odyssey series
3. Focus on the Family Radio Theater (good selections of popular stories)