




Dear Parents,

Congratulations on your choice to homeschool your Kindergartener! What an exciting venture. Twenty years of teaching this age in the classroom have proven to me that five and six- year-olds are highly motivated to learn and have minds like sponges! As you consider what is involved, I imagine you may agree with me that the teaching of reading is one of the crucial elements. I'd love to partner with you for this challenging and rewarding component. Although "FUN Steps" was originally created for the Christian school Kindergarten classroom, it can be easily adapted to teaching one student at home. Let me share with you some thoughts with this in mind.

First, don't be overwhelmed by the amount of material you see in this manual. As the author, I often couldn't find time to do it all in my own classroom! Rather than being rushed or pressured, you want your homeschooling experience to be enjoyable for both you and your child. And, as the "FUN Steps" name suggests, that's a goal of this program, as well. In light of this, you may want to consider the Phonics sections of each week's ("Step's") lessons as a priority. Then, as time allows each week, include Literature/Language sections, which are full of other age-appropriate activities to excite your child about words and reading. In both sections you will notice stopwatch icons,  which indicate the approximate number of minutes needed for that entire section or for that specific activity. Of course that varies with the child, so use it as a guide. There are also "Trimming the Training" icons  to show activities that can be omitted without losing key teaching.

I have added many "AHA!" ideas ("Adaptation for Homeschool Activity") as suggestions for changing whole-class activities to fit your needs for the single student. Look for the  icons. Remember, these are just suggestions. You will probably come up with much better ideas yourself! For some of these activities you may want to create an imaginary class of stuffed animals or dolls. (I remember a few invisible classmates adding to the fun, when I homeschooled my daughter for preschool.) Beginning on page xi, more general "AHA!" suggestions for various "FUN Steps" elements are included in the manual introduction. The original comments for the classroom teacher are still included, for the use of a homeschool co-op.

As you look through the manual, be aware that each Step is designed to be one week's set of lessons and, beginning in Step 2, focus on one letter/sound. In general, new material is presented in the first two days, and reinforced the rest of the week with games and literacy activities. Note the general introduction page for each Step, which, as well as showing the phonics and language material to be taught, includes ideas for web sites, sign language and God's attributes related to the week's letter. The "Sneak Peek at the Week" overview of each day, which follows, shows in red any preparation needing to be done ahead of time. The standard activities in the Day 1 - 5 pages are explained in the manual introduction. Let me clarify that "Work-Outs" are worksheets and "Mile-Markers" are written assessments. (I had fun with the "FUN Steps" exercise theme!) A couple additional things to look for: "Truth Ties" provide ideas for connecting the lesson with biblical truth, "Kids' Cues" suggest sometimes silly, but effective, memory joggers and "Help Links" give ideas for clearing confusion (child's or teachers!). You will notice basic supplies to which reference is often made include a white or chalk board and a pocket chart. These are great, if you have them. But you can sequence pictures and spell words with letter cards on a table or floor, as well as on a chart. Finally, the "Ties Across the Curriculum" page that ends each Step provides ideas for you to use connecting the week's letter or focus skills to other areas of study.

So, ready, set, go - start browsing! Then check out my web site www.teachingkinders.com for more information or contact me at teachingkinders@hotmail.com.

Many blessings!

Ruth Morris