

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER: Schooling Choices

The Fifth Commandment (Exod. 20:12): "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."

C. What kind of school is best for children?

1. Public school?
2. Christian school?
3. Home school?

1. Arguments for sending children to a public school

a. Positive influence

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Mat 5:13-16)

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. (John 17:15-18)

-- Still many opportunities to express beliefs, bring Bible and Christianity into curriculum

b. Better education (sometimes)

c. Stronger faith and moral character through opposition like Joseph and Daniel

d. Positive moral influence in many schools

e. Inadequacies in some Christian schools

(1) Some areas have no Christian schools.

(2) Many families can't afford Christian schools.

(3) Some Christian schools have low academic standards.

(4) Most Christian schools lack the size needed to challenge excellent students in specialty areas, esp. in high school (band, orchestra, newspaper, sports teams, debate teams, advanced math, advanced science, languages)

(5) Some Christian schools have teachers and administrators who are poor role models (arbitrary, autocratic, dictatorial).

(6) Some Christian schools can be overly repressive, legalistic, and the atmosphere will ultimately tempt many students to rebel against Christianity itself.

2. Arguments for sending children to a Christian school

a. All of a child's education should be Bible-centered and God-centered

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph 6:4)

Objection: this only applies to home and church. Answer:

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut 6:6-7)

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psa 1:1-2)

b. Education should be positive and truthful

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Prov 22:6)

c. Peer influence should be positive and Christ-like

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." (1Cor 15:33)

d. Every teacher's pattern of life should be worthy of imitation

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. (Luk 6:40)

Objection: There are Christian teachers in public schools. Answer:

e. Only God-centered education gives true wisdom

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; (Psa 111:10; also Prov 9:10)

. . . Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col 2:3)

f. Christian schooling is the best hope for transforming society

Matt. 5:13-16 (see above: salt of earth, light of world)

g. High academic standards in many Christian schools

3. Arguments for home schooling

a. The Bible assumes parents are responsible to teach and train their children

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut 6:6-7)

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph 6:4)

b. The most significant learning occurs in companionship, and parents are the best companions for their children, esp. when they are young

Deut. 6:6-7 (above)

"everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40)

c. The companions a child has, even in a Christian school, may not be the best influence

"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm." (Pro 13:20)

"Bad company ruins good morals." (1Cor 15:33)

d. Training in moral standards and in personal character is at least as important as academic training

e. Home-schooled children on average show excellent educational achievement

Objection: not all parents are good teachers, and many advanced subjects cannot be taught well by most parents (advanced classes in science, math, literature, languages)

f. Many opportunities can be created for social interaction with other children

Objection: Many home-schooled children "tend to be quiet, suspicious, and defensive" (David Smith, Supt. of Schools, Delphi, IN, in *Schooling Choices*, p. 251)

g. Families who do home schooling find great joy and family interaction in the process

4. What is my conclusion?

a. Compare apples to apples. (not a good public school to a bad Christian school, etc.)

-- compare good examples of all three types

b. What is "best" for each family will differ according to:

(1) personality and needs of each child

(2) abilities and interests of the parents

(3) what kinds of Christian schools and public schools are available

(4) the age and interests of the child

c. A great solution is promoting school choice through tuition vouchers (or tax credits as in AZ)

Tuition vouchers: OK'd by Supreme Court in 2002, even for religious schools

Remarkable gains in school choice options in many states in 2011, 2012 (due to majorities of conservative legislators elected in many states in 2010)

All of the class lessons and outlines are posted on the class website <http://www.christianessentialsbc.com>.

You can also access these and other materials at www.WayneGrudem.com