welcome to empowering

homeschool conversations

your authority in

navigating the world of

homeschooling diverse

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educational consulting and tutoring

with over seventy five years

of combined homeschooling

expertise experiences and

perspectives this group is

eager to share their wealth

of wisdom to empower your

homeschooling journey so

grab your favorite mug

settle in and get ready for

insightful discussions valuable insights and practical tips give your homeschool the power boost it needs to successfully educate the unique learners in your home Hi, everyone, and welcome to Empowering Homeschool Conversations. Today, we are going to talk about homeschooling with what you know, meeting unique needs in an uncertain journey. And my guest today is Christine Zell. Christine is a homeschool mom of four. wife to her high school sweetheart, and creator of Rabbit Trail's homeschool curriculum. You can often find her with her nose in a book and a coffee in her hand. Christine has embraced the

relaxed atmosphere that has

developed as she has

learned to let go of the small things,

enjoy her children,

and help them create a love of learning.

She enjoys encouraging other

families in their homeschooling journeys,

both through her curriculum

and her homeschooling community.

Welcome, Christine.

Thank you so much for having me.

absolutely I just love what

you're about and love that

um you're just taking one

day at a time and um it's

your life is a message that

we all need to hear and um

and that's a lot what

christine's going to share

in this next hour is just

the process of learning as

she goes about her kids how

to homeschool them and so

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um so hang on if you're
you're just um popping on to
the recording,
or if you're joining us live,
just know if you are with
us live watching on Facebook, YouTube, um,
Instagram, that you can put comments,
questions in that feed and
we will see them.
And we'd love to, um,
be able to encourage you and, um,
help you with anything that,
that you may have questions
about as well.
So, um, so yeah, that, um,
it'll kind of get us kicked off here,
but since Christine is
going to talk a lot about her story,
and I know I usually ask a lot of our,
um,
our viewers the first
question is just about you
know why they're passionate
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about this topic but I'm going to have christine talk about some something else to get us started just so that we can understand our journey and so um so I would love to know christine when you first began homeschooling what vision do you have had did you have for teaching your children? Um, was there a specific approach you envisioned or, um, did you kind of feel like, I have no idea. I'm just going to try this out. You know, some people go month by month. Yeah, for sure. So I, I had no idea. Um. we had decided when my oldest was about preschool age,

that homeschooling was what we wanted to do. Um, and so, um, So like we jumped in with kindergarten and we lived in California at the time. My husband was a Marine for twenty years, so we lived all over the country. And so they had charter schools there where you could homeschool five days a week even, but they would provide the curriculum or you could do like a hybrid type model where you could go two days and spend three days at home or whatever. So we did the five days at home where they provided curriculum because I was so overwhelmed trying to decide. And it's funny because there's so much more out there even now than there was eleven.

twelve years ago. So they provided it. very quickly learned that half the stuff they provided did not work for us. But I feel like that's pretty typical. It is, yes. Because we were trying to be very traditional. I was public schooled. My husband was public schooled. Everyone we knew was public schooled just about. So I was trying to replicate that. And so obviously, that didn't work too rate at first. Um, and so, you know, I would trade things in and get different things. And then we did learn about different curriculum that was very homeschool modeled and not so much public school modeled. Um, and so we slowly started, you know,

bringing our own things in

there until finally like a

year and a half later,

we ditched it altogether and did like,

our own thing and not what

they were providing for us

um so yeah I mean it took

me a couple of years to

really get rid of that

traditional method and to

start learning about unit

studies and learning about

just even relaxed

homeschooling and even on

home um unschooling and not

on homeschooling right

schooling and you know all

the different things that

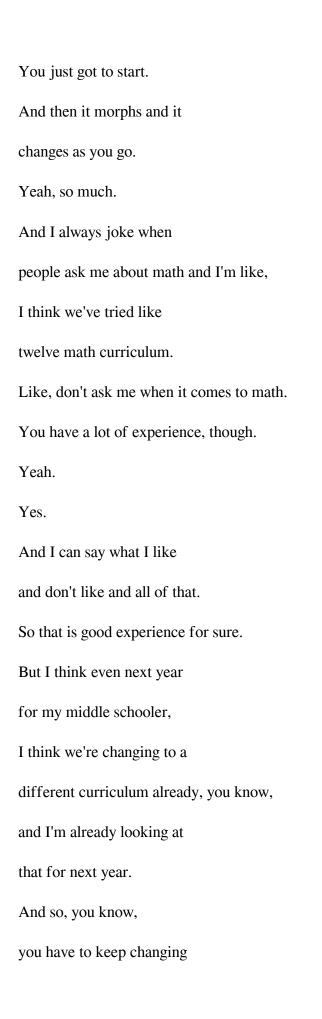
are out there and just really

trying to find what worked

for us in our own homeschool.

Because, you know,

even when you talk to your
best friend or your neighbor or whatever,
what they're doing may not
be what works exactly for you.
So just kind of finding our
own jive and figuring out
how to move away from that
traditional approach and
finding what works for us.
So.
Yeah.
Yeah.
That's such good, good experience for,
to share with others,
because I think we often
think I've got to have all
my ducks in a row before I start.
And this is what I'm going
to do the entire span of my
homeschooling career.
That doesn't
It's not always the case.
You start somewhere.



and evolving as they grow up. Absolutely. Yeah. And I think that that is the overarching theme of our discussion today is you do have to evolve. You do have to change because in the long run, you're going to discover things that are going to require that change. So I know in your story that you've been uncovering some puzzle pieces about your kids and some unique learning needs that they have. How did that start? Like where did you start observing things and what what started making you question? Should I change things? What's going on?

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You know,
all of those questions that a lot
of us have and we don't
quite know exactly if it's
a cue or a clue or if maybe
we're just I know with myself,
I always put the blame on me.
I never really thought about, oh,
maybe it was just the child
until somebody else pointed
something out.
So what is your story with that?
Yeah.
So my first,
my oldest is very average with
his learning.
But even still.
I think even with your very typical child,
you still have struggles.
Yeah.
even with him,
we were trying to follow
different curriculum,
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but we'd be getting library books. And we lived close to a Barnes and Noble, which had a Starbucks. And that was like our treats to go and get like the little four dollar readers from Barnes and Noble and go get a coffee and get him a cookie or whatever. Um, Cause it was like right by our grocery shopping. And so that was like, we've had a great week. Let's go and get these readers. Yeah. But then they'd always get pushed to the side because our curriculum dictated that we had to read this. And finally, one day I was just like, we're not enjoying any of these beautiful books that

we're getting from the library. We're not enjoying any of these cool readers we picked up because your curriculum saying, no, it's saying to do this other thing. And I'm sick of it. You know, like I just want these beautiful books to lead the way. And so that was kind of step number one for us was going, we can push this to the side and we can stop doing this and we can let these books lead the way. Right. And then with my second, I noticed probably by like, like, wasn't quite, quite right. Um, and it just took many, many, many, many years to finally figure out what was going on with his little ADHD brain.

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Um,
and to figure out that even though he
wasn't presenting in a typical way,
that that's absolutely
what's going on with him.
And it's been like,
and this was a recent diagnosis and he's
you know, ten and a half,
eleven years of going,
something's going on, what's going on?
And again, putting that blame on myself.
Maybe I'm not parenting him right.
Maybe it's my fault.
Excuse me.
And
what am I doing wrong?
Why is he throwing these tantrums?
Because it finally hit me at
like six or seven,
these tantrums are no
longer age appropriate.
Like when he's, you know, months, two,
three years old, you're like, oh, well,
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he's just throwing tantrums. He's just a normal toddler. And so, yeah. So it struck me one of those days where he was six or seven, where I was like, this isn't normal for this age to be acting like this anymore. But since we did move so much, it was really difficult to get in somewhere because it was like, as soon as we had an appointment, it was time to move. And then the adjustment period, I think it would always take us like a year to get into a new regular doctor. Um, just after getting things adjusted. And so it finally took my husband retiring and us settling in one spot for me to go, okay, I can't wait any longer. Like we need to, you know,

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get this figured out,
especially as puberty is
coming and all the changes
that come with that, that I was just like,
I need answers before
things completely explode.
Um, so,
but kind of the same thing with him was,
um,
you know,
I wanted different pieces of
different curriculum
specifically for language arts.
but how can I use all these
different pieces from this different,
these different curriculums?
Like they don't fit together
because the literature beast worked,
but then I needed hands-on,
but then I also enjoyed the copy work,
but then I also, you know, and, and, and,
and,
and there wasn't one thing that fit that.
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And so it was just how, how can I make this learning because he thrives learning this way. How can I move forward and help him learn in the way that he thrives in? And so, yeah. So then it kind of worked with both of my older ones to kind of, okay, let's get those real books. Let's get all these different pieces and so that we can move forward and learn in a way that we're enjoying too. Um, cause I hated that grumbling and I don't want to do school, you know, so just finding something that we loved. Yeah. Yeah. There is a lot of give and take and, and, and yeah, I, I, I hope that as you're

listening or watching that you realize, you know, that you, you had inclinations like at but what you said is you didn't get the official diagnosis till twelve. And I think we kind of panic when we, we don't foresee or see things or get the answers we need immediately. But the timing for that will end up being perfect. You know, you you acted on what you had. It may not have been the full diagnosis. It may not have anything. But but, you know, I as I heard you talking, you're like, I knew that this clicked with them. So I changed to this, you know, or, you know, just the eclectic part of your homeschooling approach based on that. Yeah.

We have a little guest. We have a guest. So yeah, that's really important. And just taking those small steps, trying things out. I think we kind of get scared a little bit when we think, oh, you know, I've got to switch my entire approach and just saying, you know, instead of just taking those little pieces of, oh, this works. So I'm just going to stick that in there amongst all the other things that are working or sort of working. Yeah. and we'll figure out how to make it all work together. So what were those first steps that you took? I think it'd be helpful for our community to know just

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as you were starting to see
some of these needs,
how did you start that adjustment period?
I think the biggest thing
was that I finally gave myself permission
to ditch things.
Um,
cause some things like some things were
easier to ditch than others.
Like for me, I just don't like, Oh,
are you showing off?
I just don't like math.
And so ditching math
curriculum and doing
something different was
easy for me because it's
not something that I love.
Um,
where I'm more passionate about history
and language arts is
um and so those were harder
ones especially again
coming from public school I
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had in my brain like you

have to have a workbook for

language arts or it doesn't

work yeah and so we need

these worksheets that

explain nouns and verbs or

it's not good enough you

know and so just giving

myself that permission to

ditch the workbooks and

that you don't need that proof

of written work in order to

have proof that your child

is learning has been just so huge.

And even a couple of weeks ago,

my daughter, she's seven.

And we have been going

through literature-based language arts.

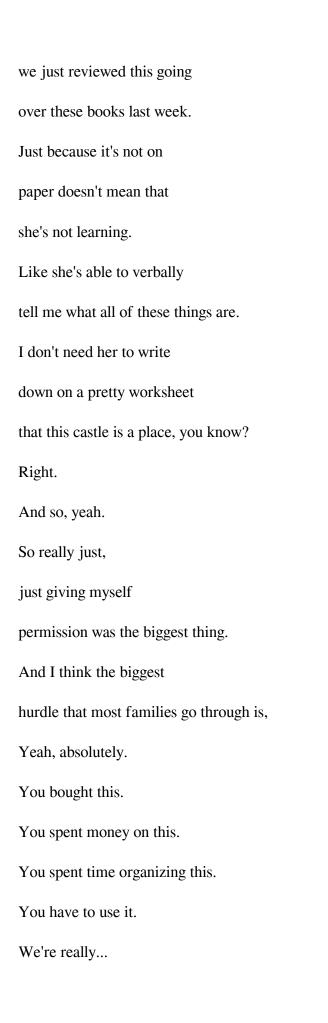
And I was just thinking, oh, man,

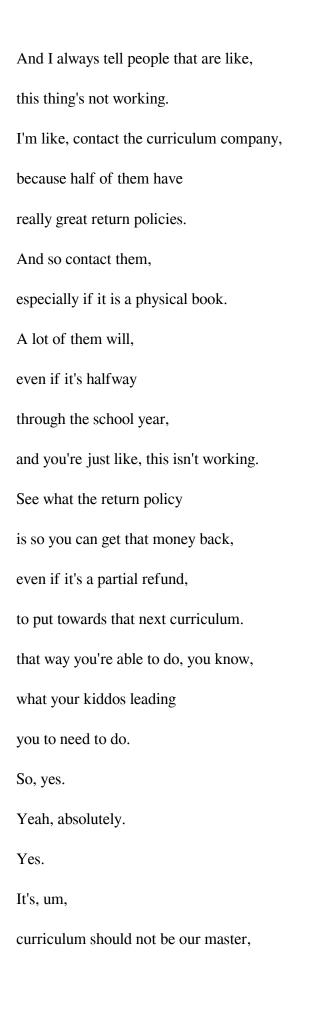
when was the last time we

reviewed a noun or a verb?

Maybe I do need to find her something.

And then I had to remind myself, no,





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you know?
Um, and,
but yet people who design curriculum,
you know, like yourself, you, you,
you think out that process,
the learning that, um,
is going to happen.
And it's.
it's good to have that because
for people like me who have
no background in teaching, um,
I relied on curriculum
providers to give me a
scope and sequence because
I wasn't coming up with that on my own.
So I liked that framework to
be able to rely on.
But sometimes you do need to
tweak and change.
And yes, if you're not too...
too much and, you know,
into it and you can return it,
that's great.
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Otherwise contact the curriculum company about, you know, do you have supplementary things or what have you seen other people who have had these struggles use in conjunction with your curriculum? Um. so there's lots of different options that you have that I think we forget to ask like you are suggesting. And, um, we just need to make those, those contacts and, and go out and say, this is a need I have. And a lot of curriculum companies don't even realize that there are ways that they can help you be successful until you let them know that this is sort of working without working. Yeah. I love when people contact

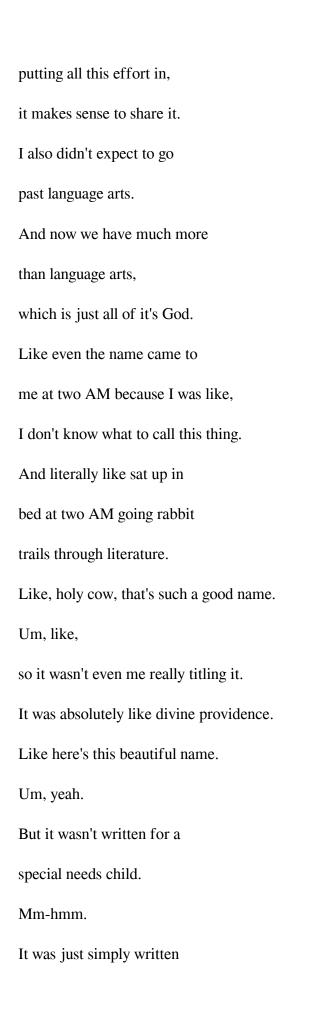
me and ask me questions because we aren't a traditional curriculum. So we don't have a pretty scope and sequence laid out because it is such a curriculum that you can very easily tweak. Um. and it's written that way as someone with an ADHD brain for a child who has ADHD that my, I don't like even though scope and sequence, especially in math, I keep going back to math, math. It's very like, I need it in math. I need to see, yes, this is what we're doing each day. But in something like language arts or history, are you moving your hands to something in like language arts and history, especially coming from a

literature based approach? yes, it lays out what books you're going to read and what topics you're going to go over, but you have the freedom to explore those topics. And that's what's really important to me because then I'm able to sit down and say, what's important to me that we're taking out of this? And that's what we're going to focus on. And so just having something that's giving you that amount of freedom to see what you're, and what your kids are interested in. You know, if you're going over, revolutionary wartime period, my favorites, Paul Revere. I want to spend weeks on him. I want to go to Boston and go back to his house.

Like I want to make this, you know,
like I want to learn and
read all of the books about Paul Revere,
but I may not care as much
about Thomas Jefferson or something.
And so we're not going to go
to Montpelier and we're, you know,
like the different things.
And so if that's how it is for your kids,
that they're super
interested in one thing,
but not in another.
that you have that freedom
to do that inside of the
curriculum without it
dictating to you on day fourteen,
you must do this page and
you must read this.
Exactly.
Yes.
Yeah.
You lose that spontaneity.
You lose their natural

curiosities that come up because you all of a sudden turn, nope, the lesson plan doesn't say this. And then, you know, you go on to something else and you may even return to that topic, but their curiosity is gone. Right. at that point because they've gone on to other things. So yes, I love that your curriculum is called Rabbit Trails because that's basically what that is. Exactly. And so, yeah, that's great. As you started making these changes and you were making changes based on some of your kids' preferences or abilities to learn, how did that affect the overall learning in your home?

and did, you know, with the other students that may you may not have seen particular maybe possible diagnoses with. But, you know, it's always interesting when you've got a mix of kids and you're teaching everybody all in one room. Right. Most of the time. How does that work? So your story about that. Yeah. So I think that's what makes Rabbit Trail so beautiful is that so I didn't realize I was making it for my children, right? Like that was my goal was I'm writing something for my own home, but I'm going to share it with people because if I'm



for both of my older kids because my youngest wasn't old enough to do that. Well, at the time, my youngest, because this guy was not there yet. I actually launched it while he was in my belly, super duper pregnant with him. So like, didn't expect that to happen either. Excuse me. Yeah, that was like really terrible timing, but of course. perfect timing all at the same time. But, yeah, so it actually works really beautifully for typical children. And I've even had families with gifted children and obviously families like myself that have children with a mix of different diagnoses. And even at the special

needs homeschool conference
or expo that we went to this past summer,
It was really great to talk
to families there because I
wasn't even like I didn't have a booth.
I wasn't exhibiting.
I just did a few sessions.
But it was really cool
because one of them was
just letting people ask me
questions about the
curriculum because I was like,
I don't have to prepare
anything for this.
Like, right.
Yes.
And I can just talk.
And right.
Like,
cause I was trying to keep it like as
low as little work on me as
possible to get back into
the conference circuit.

Cause I was trying to take a break very unsuccessfully, but I was trying. And so it was really beautiful people asking me these questions who had nonverbal children and who had children on the autism spectrum and just all these different, you know, alphabet soups, if you will, and children all over the place. And I was able to very easily answer their questions of how it could work for them because of the fact that literature-based curriculum is just so adaptable. Because if your child isn't verbal, that doesn't mean that they don't hear you reading

these stories and telling

you about these lessons. They don't have to write down the copywork. in order to be successful. You know, if they enjoy the crafty parts of it and that's all that they're doing, especially like my little ones before they're old enough to do like the full lessons with us, they're joining in on the crafty stuff and they may not do it to the, you know, where it needs to be, but they're able to join in with their siblings while they're actually getting stuff out of it. Like all of our history has an art study with every lesson. And so he's able to sit there with the crayons or colored pencils or paint or whatever.

And he's not making what the other ones are doing, but he sees them with the tablet, with whatever picture pulled up. Yeah. And he still, you know, he still is seeing the color and seeing what's going on and being excited about being a part of it and listening to the stories that he does not grasp whatsoever. And in some of them he does like some of the other like language art stuff. But right now we're doing World War II, which is a little heavy for little ones. So he doesn't know what we're talking about in World War II. But he's enjoying the fact that we're reading a book together. Yeah.

and that we're doing this

art study and he's sitting

there as his siblings are

doing copy work.

And so, so it really, I,

and it can be for lots of

different literature based

curriculum that, you know,

you can just adapt it so

easily for your family.

Yes, baby.

Yeah, absolutely.

It's yeah.

You just don't even know how

much they're absorbing

because it's amazing

because we taught the same

way with unit studies and, um,

Did a lot of like book

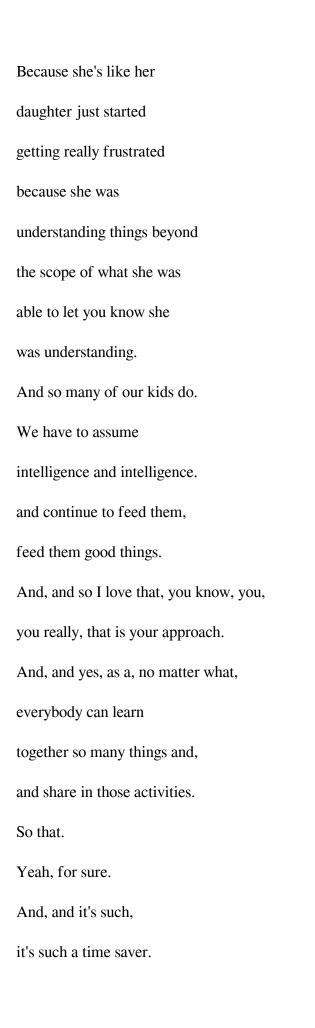
reading as a family.

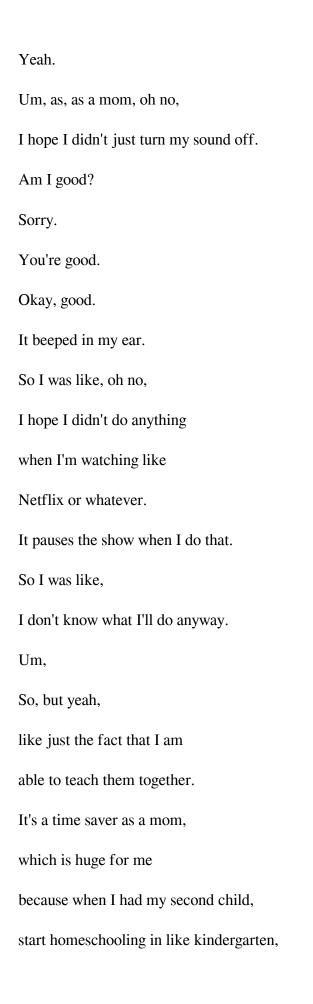
And it was amazing what those little kids,

you know, my younger ones remembered.

And we had some foster kids, too,

that and they all had learning challenges and they would still pick up on some of the things that I was like, I thought that was above their head. Yeah. And yet they still got it. So, um, so that's, that's good to be reminded of. Cause I think we often will choose a curriculum where we think our child will be. And sometimes mentally they're beyond what they can respond with. And, um, and they do need to be challenged. They, they need to go beyond the one, two threes and ABCs. I know Stephanie Buckwalter, my co one of my co-hosts talked about that a lot. Um,

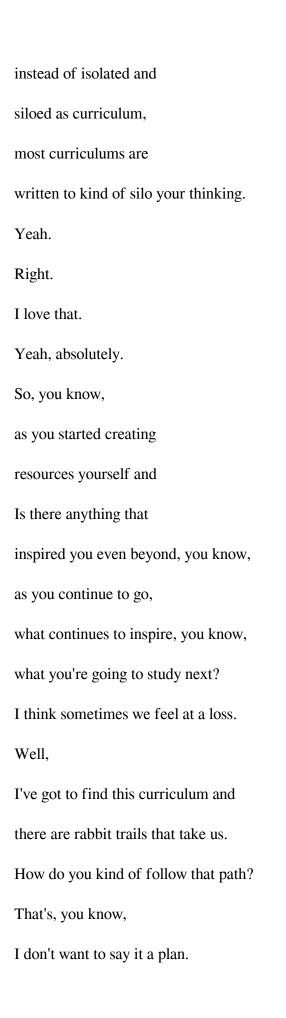


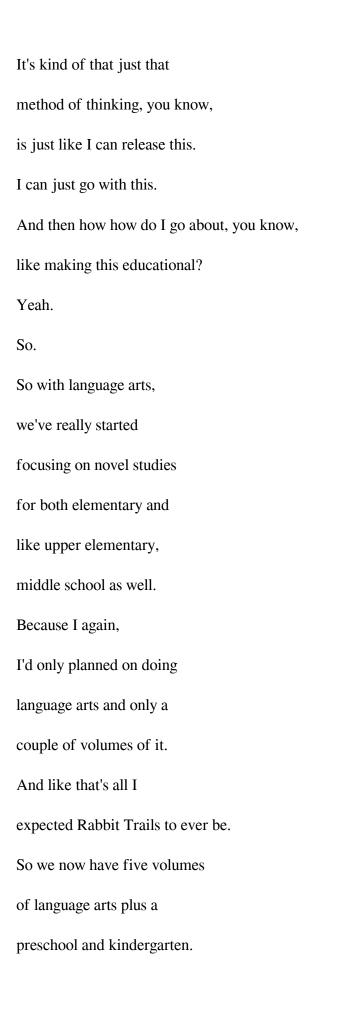


that was a struggle I had too, was how am I supposed to do two language arts and two histories and two science? Because all of my kids are very spread out. There's a four-year difference, a five-year difference, and then a three-year difference between my last two. So there'll be a little bit easier as he gets bigger. But I'm also not sure if his cognitive abilities will be... enough to make it a true three year age gap. I think it'll be more of a four or five year cognitive age gap. Right. So so they are on very different levels because when you're talking four to five year age gaps,

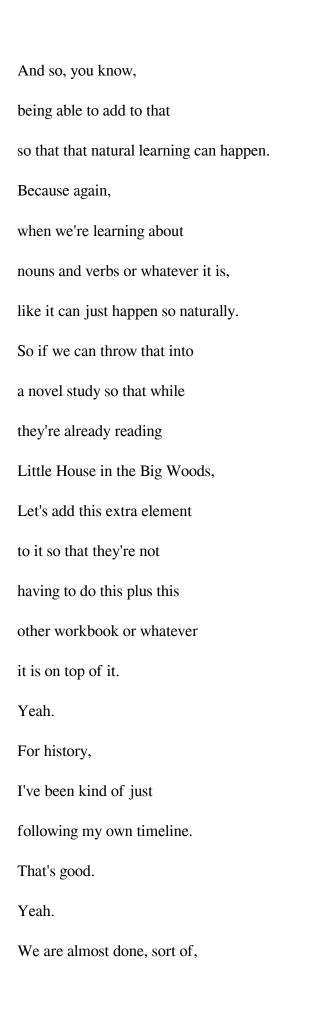
you wouldn't think that you can teach out of the same curriculum where for most of our subjects we do, and we're able to still tailor it and have that time saving. And so it's so much more enjoyable as a mom to be able to sit down with multiple kids and say, you know, we're doing this together and we're learning this together. So. Yeah. Yeah. That's, It does. It saves so much time and I greatly appreciated being able to get so many things done as a group and focus on the things that they really needed to do individually,

like math or specific language arts where they were learning to read at least. Right. But, you know, after that, you can really do everything together. And and it does teach it teaches them how to work together, teaches them how to understand each other's differences, different perspectives. I mean, when you have discussions about the things there, one child is going to pick up something totally different than another child. And so when you're talking about it, they're like, oh, you know, I didn't think about that or. you know, that that's how we learn is within community and





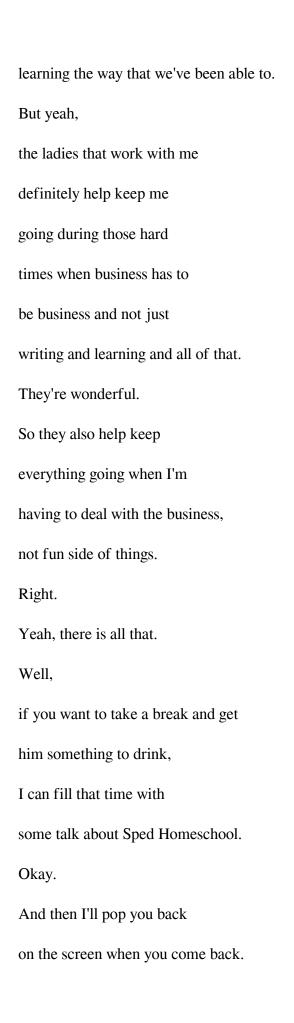
And I am like, that is it as far as the actual volumes go. But with novel studies, I'm like, we can literally write until we die and not cover all the books. Like there are so many novels out there. And so we will continue to crank those out. And so now it is kind of like, well, what are my favorite ones? And we've asked multiple times to our followers, you know, what do you want to see? And so we probably have a list of like ten books already that's going to take us forever to finally get all of those done. but really focusing on finding those great novels that families typically read anyway in their homeschool.

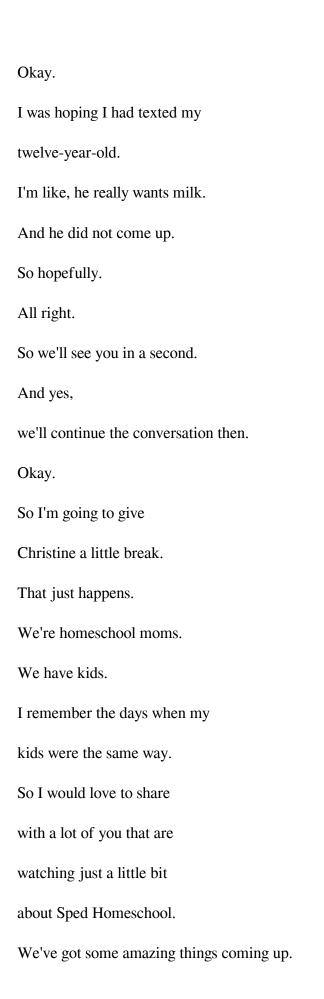


writing our history because I wanted to get through American history. I'm talking to someone, baby, OK? But if you want milk, you need to go ask Caleb. He really wants milk. Oh, um, so we're almost done with American history. And so, and we also have a few other topics as well. Um. and that was my plan was to get through these several topics. And so that's been easy because history is, you know, what we typically covering the topics that we typically cover in history. And so that didn't kind of make that easy of just, okay, well, what important

parts of this history do we want to cover? Right. And so we're almost done with modern American history and I'm really excited about it. And then science, there's so much to learn in science. And so, so much of that has just been led by my children's interests. We even did a reptiles and amphibian unit because my twelve year old loves reptiles and wants to be a herpetologist. And so that was one of our first projects. science, like nature studies that we did, because I just wanted to focus on what, what is he enjoying? What does he like? And so most of, most of our science units have been because either myself or one of my writers,

that that's what their kids want to learn. And so I'm like, then write it, like, let's go for it. Let's put it out. Because again, like it only makes sense if we want this for our family. other people are going to want it too. But that has been like, just being able to help my family and my few ladies that I have work with me, having them be able to help their families, like that is our main priority. And that's really what does keep us going. Um, and just knowing that if, if it's blessing us, like we, we love to just see that blessing keep on going and to have those other families just be able to fall in love with





And so I want to make sure that... I let you know about our, if you haven't visited our new website, over the summer, we launched Homeschool Heroes. And that website is completely different than the way that our other one was. So on our homepage, you can find a lot of information, but also up in these little tabs. toggle down menus. You can find anything from our groups. If you have a membership, you can access the member directory. You can see what our members are saying as far as stories. We have some challenges, actually a current challenge we have right now. I'll click on to that because our current challenge is if you create an account, and it can be free,

and put your profile in as well as a picture, then you can get a free two-month membership. So we'll send that to you as soon as you create your profile and update that. So go on to there and do that. That's something we have going through this next month. So we would love for you to join our community. But we have lots of resources. If you go under any of these curriculum help, teaching tools, support strategies, Thank you. you'll come to a page that has all of these different options here. If you prefer teaching things like the Charlotte Mason methodology, then you can click on that,

executive functioning. We have two hundred twenty seven people following that one right now. How do I know that? Because it says it right here and you can join those people, too. These are all of the resources we have that have Charlotte Mason resources. So you can get into those organizations that we have associated. You can find out more about them. And then these are the groups that are associated with that. And also, if you want to start, you can click over from the feed to discussion. You can start a discussion on executive functioning skills and everybody who's following it will get information about that.

So you can build some good conversations right on there. And that is all with a free membership on our site. definitely check it out. And if you are listening on the podcast, and that all didn't seem to make sense because I just described in the video, just go to our website, click under resources, and under, or on our homepage, there's curriculum help, teaching tools, support strategies, you'll find different topic areas. And under each of those topic areas, you can see resources, members groups organizations as well as from the feed you can go over to discussions and you can start your own discussion so some pretty awesome

stuff going on there and so so check that out now we have christine coming back with us welcome back thank you absolutely So, yes, kids need their needs fulfilled and it's good to make sure that happens. So I get it. All right. Well, we were talking a little bit about your curriculum and and just, you know, teaching multiple students, which, you know, a lot of us we do. We do when we homeschool, although there is a growing trend of people just homeschooling one child and sending the rest to school. I think as people realize more and more how homeschooling can be adaptable, um, they're kind of taking baby

steps into that realm, usually one child at a time. Um, so, but I think the question that's always in the back of their minds is, can we make this work for more than one or can we bring everybody home? And, um, so I love how you answered that question and, and that, yes, that, that is possible. And so, but, um, So I was thinking of a question before. And oh, so when I read your bio, you had talked about, you know, balancing just a relaxed homeschooling atmosphere and being a mom and, you know, all those things. And. How have you seen that morph throughout your

homeschooling journey and become more comfortable in, you know, just the things you're finding out as you kind of go along one day at a time, one week at a time, one diagnosis at a time? And, you know, not be too hard on yourself about what you didn't know also in the process. Yeah. Yeah. So so we like I said, we moved a lot with my husband being in the Marine Corps. And so that was something that was always drilled in us as military spouses, especially in the Marine Corps was called Semper Gumby, which is always flexible. And so, yeah.

And you think and you think of the actual Green Gumby. that was made of clay and flexible. Like that's where my mind always goes. Yeah. But we literally have to be flexible because a lot of people are like, well, we're moving. Like, how do we homeschool through a move? And I'm like, you don't like you take time off and you school year round. And so I think just having the different experiences of homeschooling in different States and having to move in the middle of a school year and even, um, deployments or my husband going, like he lived in Japan for a time, um, without us. And we were able to go visit him, um, a couple of times. So like extended vacation basically.

And so like our life was not normal.

Um, and so it definitely for us,

like it forced me to

to relax and it forced me to be flexible.

Um,

and so as hard as it was to have a not

typical life, um,

I'm always so thankful for

those experiences because it did

force me to relax um because

I'm not like I'm an anxious

person and so like it

doesn't come naturally for

me to be like no it's cool

it's good like everything's

fine um but when it comes

to homeschooling I am kind

of the opposite in that and

so it is funny when um

when I encounter friends who

are still like very to the schedule,

we can't do this because we're behind.

And I'm like, what's behind, you know?

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And so,
so it's really like just taught me just,
just to be flexible and to be relaxed.
And I also, you know,
just bringing back that
enjoyment into it that I,
I want to enjoy homeschooling my children.
I'm going to be doing this
for a very long time.
Right.
That we, you know,
we've been doing this for
starting kindergarten.
We've been doing this for
eleven years and my
youngest isn't even
starting kindergarten for
another year and a half now.
So I have a lot more years ahead of me.
And so like I want it to be
that's a lot of time
dedicating my life to
to doing.
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I don't want to look back and be like, man, that was a miserable, you know, and so like, I want to look back and enjoy my, I want to enjoy my every day. I want to, you know, be able to dive into these books with my kids and, um, and just really enjoying my time homeschooling them. So as much as I want them to be happy, like I deserve to be happy too, you know, that we all just have. Yeah. So if I don't have that

relaxed atmosphere to it, then, you know,

all of my anxiety and all

of that's going to go on top of it.

Like I can be anxious about other things.

I certainly don't need to be

anxious about what we're

doing literally every day

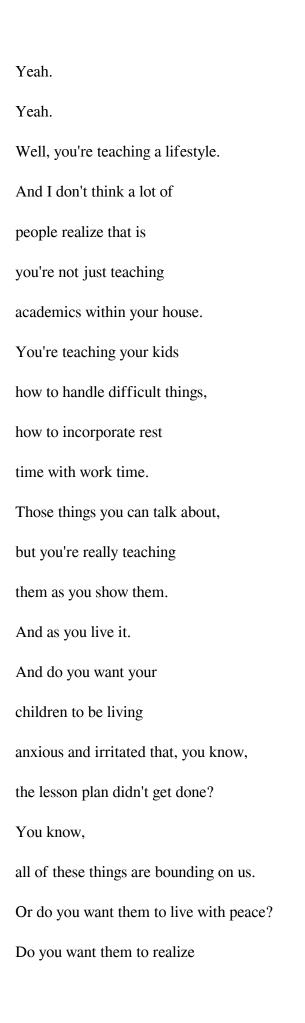
for years and years and years.

So yeah. So yeah, so just to have that flexibility. And when things come up to say it's fine, my kids are learning. My oldest is going to basically like a technical high school. So he's learning a trade. He's learning to become an electrician. Yeah. And we absolutely only did it just for the electrician part, but it is fun because he is taking academic classes as a part of it as well. And he's getting straight A's. And so it's fun to almost have that proof as a mom to be like, we did it like we were able to do this for relaxed homeschool. And he's getting like, he has an A in chemistry and algebra too. And these things that are like big, scary classes to me anyway.

And, and he's doing just fine, you know? And so it's kind of just that proof that, Um, and I still wish I could do the academic parts at home instead of having him do them there, but him getting all of his electrician stuff was much more important. And so I let him have that. Um, cause how cool to like be able to graduate and be an electrician. Um, cause not every state has programs like that. Um, but it is, it is kind of just fun, um, proof for me to be like what we're doing, taking days off for fun or vacation or going ice skating or whatever it is. Like it's fine to do that. And that all that learning

is still going to happen. And, you know, like I said, not having those workbooks, the kids are still going to learn and all of that. And it's just really fun to have that, like, And I know many other people have that with kids who have graduated college and all of that, that they're like, yes, and they succeeded and did great, even though we did have this more relaxed homeschool. So I'm finally getting to that stage where I'm able to see kind of the fruits of that and be like, we did it. Like, yay, look at us, you know? So, yeah. So it's really fun to kind of see that other side as he grows,

that it worked and we did great.



that there's only so much stuff you can do in a day? That it's okay that if our, you know, schedule took us somewhere else, it's an adventure. Yeah. And yes, I, all three of mine have graduated and, you know, I, my oldest has graduated from college already, has a career and my youngest is in college and, but yeah. And their success had more to do with the atmosphere we built in our home than it did the things that we taught. And and so I love that, that that's what you're you're stressing. That's what you're focusing on. And you've got many years, like you said, to go and that you have that perspective. Because a lot of people realize afterwards,

oh, man, I should have done this differently. And and so it's good to catch that and say, yeah, what has been done can be redeemed. But when you realize that this this is more than just teaching your kids how to read, do math and learn their history and science, it is so much more. Yeah. And that's I think, again, like that's I think that's why I love learning through books so much too, is because not only is it teaching them a good habit, but it really is teaching them how to learn for forever for anything that they ever want to learn. Is there already learning how to take that out of, out of that literature? Um,

instead of having a textbook feeding it to them, they do, they have to find those things through the different books and how to just naturally learn. So they're becoming those lifelong learners and, and that's, what's really beautiful. So. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So for families on similar journeys, you know, discovering unique needs bit by bit, what advice would you have to offer as they kind of try to piece together their homeschooling path wherever they're at? So you had mentioned earlier about how, you know, I noticed at eighteen months that something was up with

my kiddo and we did not get a diagnosis until twelve. Something that. really struck my heart this summer. So when we went to that homeschooling special needs expo, I walked in there going almost kind of frustrated that I was just like, how do we not have a diagnosis yet? How, how am I supposed to wait still through all of this? Um, and so I left that weekend with a piece in my heart that just said, just wait and Yeah. And don't even do anything because that was my thing is like, what is my next step? What do I need to do as his mother to advocate and to push and this and that and the other,

like, where do we need to go? Who do we need to talk to? Like all of these things. And I just felt a piece that said, you need to stop and you just need to let me take over. And so I said, okay, God, I'm just going to let you take over. And within a few months we had a diagnosis and And it wasn't because of me pushing. And it wasn't because of me advocating. And there are certainly times where we need to do that. But it was so great to just connect with other professionals who knew. Because all of that is still new to me and learning about executive functioning skills and all of these things. That's all brand new to me. But there were people there

that were able to feed me. And so I felt like I had those tools to say, okay, like I can surrender this because if I'm just using these tools, we don't need to know exactly what it is because I still know what he needs help with. right so let's just start with those yeah and just move forward with that and so I'm doing that with my little guy now that we're pretty sure is both an adhd and autism diagnosis that we will find out one of these days or years or months or whatever right but same thing with him while I'm waiting on our two-year wait list to see a specialist Yeah. What am I waiting for?

Like I can still start and

look up all these different things or,

you know,

go on to sped homeschooling and

have that resource where I

can ask a question on there and say,

who else has dealt with this?

What have you done to help

with this tools that I can

do as a mother and I can do as, as a,

is at home therapist, you know,

like whatever you want to title me.

Absolutely.

And so, and so to just as hard as it is,

because it's so hard,

as hard as it is to wait

and have peace in the waiting, to really,

really try to have that

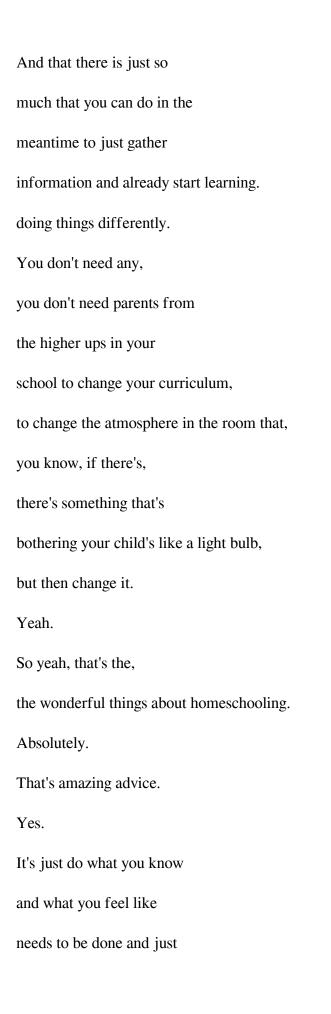
peace in the waiting,

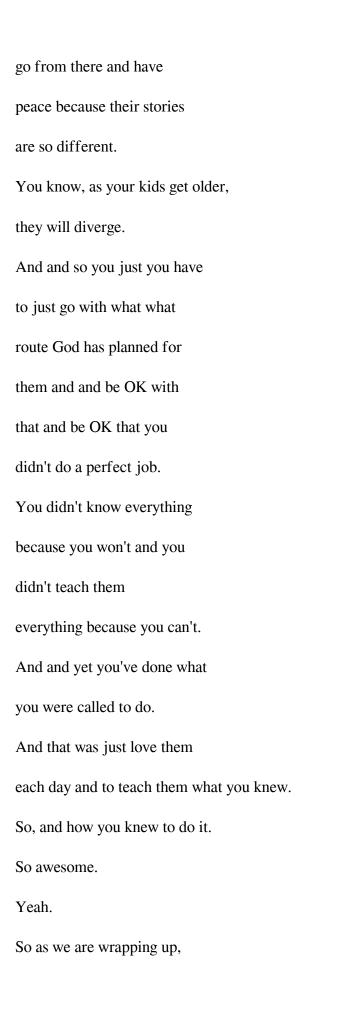
because the answers usually

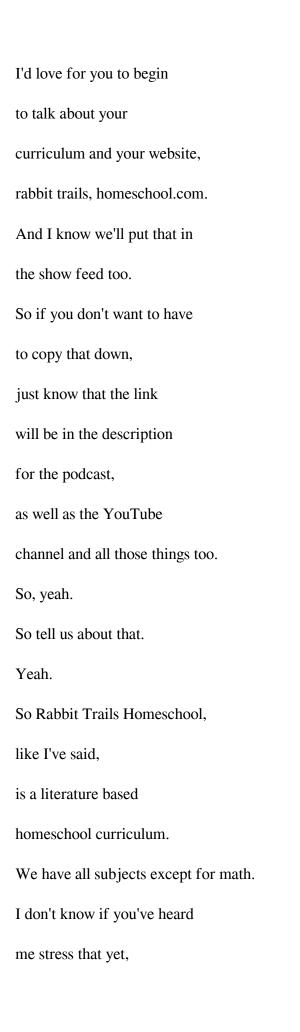
come when they are least

expected for one and for

two during the perfect time.

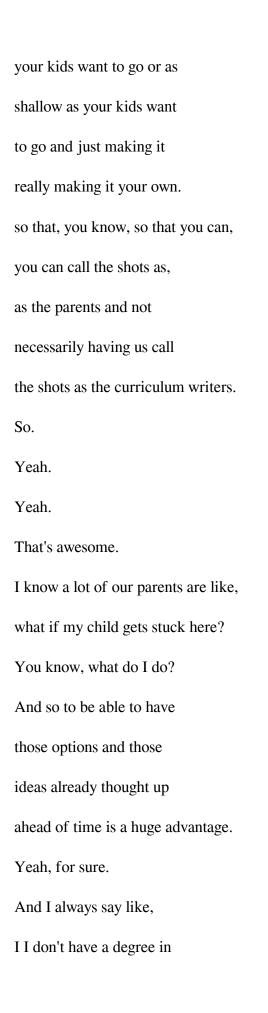






but I don't like math. We do not have math. There's lots of different places I can refer you to for math. That is not Rabbit Trails. We've talked about doing like a fun supplement where there was, you know, books about addition, subtraction and all that fun stuff. But we have not gone there yet and it is not high on my list. Probably one day, but not today. So we do have language arts, history, science, geography. We do have a writing membership where you get a new writing lesson every single month, which is one of my favorite things. And it also has a topical Bible study that's new every month that goes along with it. And then we do have a Bible curriculum.

I think that covers... Oh, and we do lots and lots of holidays too. We have a holiday bundle sale going on right now. So that's super fun to get a bunch of different holiday lessons. Excuse me. But it's all literature based. There's hands-on activities. There's copy work. And then there's just lots of opportunities for rabbit trails. So whether it is reading more books to go along with it, whether it is doing... research, whether it is doing something else, hands-on, YouTube videos, whatever it is that we always give you a list of ideas to just go further down that rabbit trail so that you can go as deep as



curriculum writing like I am just a mom who was inspired to write this um so anyone could do this but we've done the work for you and spent all of the time um finding all of those things so that you don't have to go digging for it um because I do know several moms that they they basically take this framework and they do it and I'm like you know what more power to you Where I'm like, please save me time, you know. And so like my friend who writes history, thank you that I don't have to write this and I can just take her lesson and just do it. You know what I mean? And so, yeah.

So because I get that benefit by having those those few lessons. ladies that help me that I take their lesson and I just do it. I don't have to write it, you know? Um, and so, yeah, so I'm, I'm right along with everyone who purchases it, that I'm taking it and we are going down those rabbit trails and we are using the parts that work for us and not using the parts that don't work for us and, and just enjoying it. Yes. And that's the, that's the key is to enjoy it. You know, you've got to, you've got to enjoy it. And you've got to, like you said, it's, it's a long time.

I homeschooled for nine years.

That's a large chunk of my life.

And so, so yes, you've got,

you've got to figure out a way to make,

bring joy into your house

if that is your calling.

And, and you will, if you,

you settle into that and

you really settle into that piece and,

that, you know, that's your calling,

that's where you're at.

And instead of trying to figure out,

you know,

how to get your own plan figured

out around God's plan and

call for your life,

that makes what makes it worse.

So, well, thank you so much, Christine.

This has been an amazing conversation.

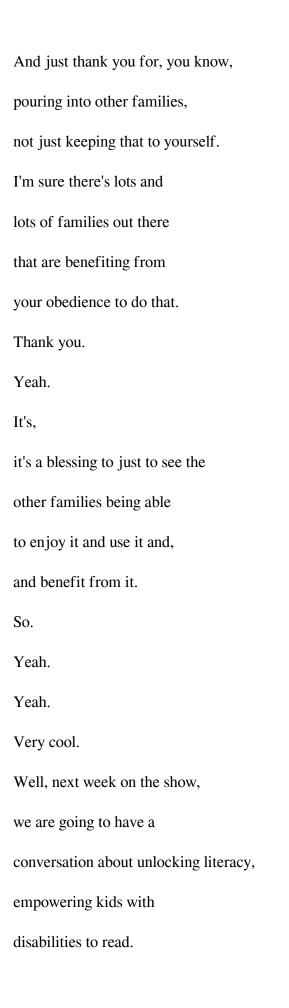
I appreciate all you've had

to share and sharing your

story is most important

because I think a lot of parents,

they feel like they're alone or that they're the only one that doesn't know everything that they need to know. And that they don't, you know, just knowing that it's okay to not know everything and that things will still work out and every day can be joyful and it can be filled with learning and the love of learning where you're at. So, so thank you. Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. I was really, really excited and looking forward to talking with you today. So. Yeah, this was great. And make sure to visit Christine's website. It's rabbit trails, homeschool.com.



And so my expert that I'll have on has some really good pointers. If you feel like your child is even below reading level ever, she has ways to help you to build their literacy skills. So you'll want to join me for that conversation next week. So thanks again, Christine. And thank you all for joining us here on Empowering Homeschool Conversations. We'll see you next time. Take care and God bless. Bye, everybody. This has been Empowering **Homeschool Conversations** provided by Sped Homeschool, a nonprofit that empowers families to home educate diverse learners. To learn more, visit spedhomeschool.com. Thank you.