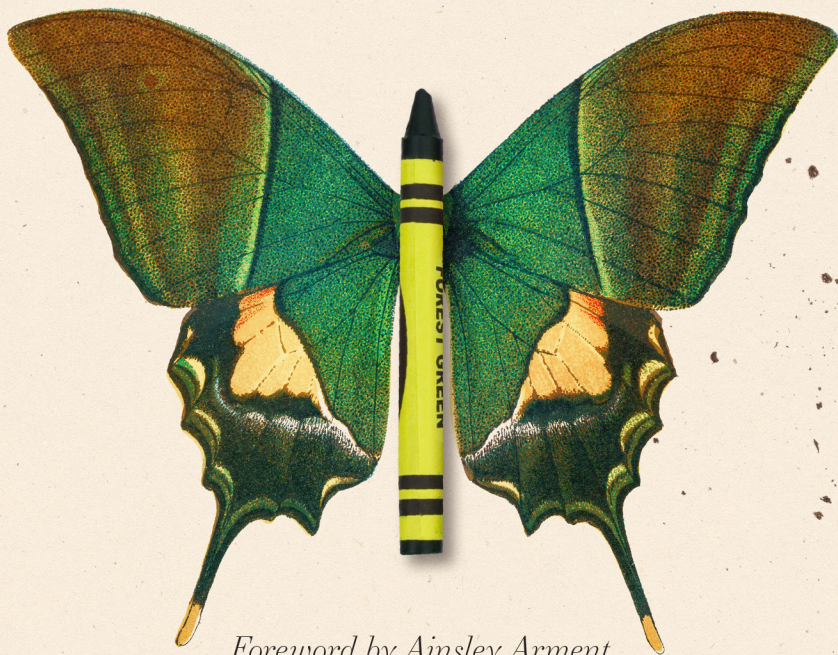


*Discover How Charlotte Mason's
Revolutionary Ideas on Home Education
Can Change How You & Your Children
Learn & Grow Together*



Foreword by Ainsley Arment

Modern Miss Mason

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Mason Moments

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TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Embedding a Born Person Approach

- Become an observer of your children; it seems obvious, but getting to know their personality traits from a young age is fascinating and fun! Take some time to write down what you see in each of your children, what you enjoy about them, and what you see developing in them.
- Speak to children about their individuality: encourage them with words such as “I love how curious/observant/creative you are!”
- Listen to a child’s questions. Write them down if you can’t answer them straight away; it’s a helpful insight into what’s going on in their mind.
- Consider your children before you consider your curriculum.
- Listen and pay attention when your children are narrating their day; as much as it’s tempting to fold laundry whilst they tell historic tales, it doesn’t convey how important their retellings are.
- Remember, one rule doesn’t fit all. Consider this when making decisions about varying aspects of your children’s lives.
- Share each child’s “story” (birth or beginnings) with them; it develops a wonderful sense of individuality and uniqueness within a family.
- Allocate time in your schedule for each child to practise something that expresses their individuality; for example, learning Adobe Photoshop, attending a drama club, or riding a mountain bike off-road.

- As your children get into their teen years and express ideas around future careers or pathways, begin to orientate parts of their learning focus to specialize in subjects relevant for their journey.
- Read through Charlotte Mason's original six volumes over an extended period to gain a deeper understanding of how seeing your children as born persons can truly transform your home.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions on How to Live Out a Motto That Matters

- Attempt to summarise what “atmosphere, discipline, life” means to you and your family. Write it down, and have it in view to review as you learn and grow.
- Take stock of the atmosphere of your home: observe the sounds, smells, conversation, and values. Note what you celebrate, what you challenge, and how you communicate.
- Have an honest conversation with your spouse or older children about the tone of your relationships in the home, where the pressure points lie, and how you can address them together. Get help from external sources you trust if you need it.
- Change doesn’t happen overnight, but if there are changes to be made, choose three areas you can see need work in the atmosphere, write them down, and work towards them slowly, preferably together. Try removing clutter, cultivating conversation around meals, and adding in some classical music to tweak a change in the atmosphere.
- To create a simple rhythm for consistent study, try looping. Loop scheduling is a fancy term I use for arranging my chosen subjects into an organised list that we can make our way through in any given day or week. I often have a loop for the day (such as mathematics, copy work, reading the Bible) and then a loop for the week. We make our way through the loop, and when we get to the bottom, we just start back at the top again!

- Remember there's no expectation without explanation. Adding a regular pattern or rhythm into a child's life may require repeated explanation, demonstration, and encouragement for motivation. No one responds to "Just do it" (except people who like Nike shoes!).
- Celebrate the wins: enjoy the benefits of an organised bedroom, a finished piece of work, or a tidy pencil tray. I still light a candle to celebrate my clean kitchen!
- Take time to learn what Charlotte meant by "living ideas" beyond just books. What can be brought to life for your children through the mind of another writer or creator?
- Decide who you want to invite to be a guest in your home, whether Shakespeare, David Attenborough, or Anne Frank, and figure out creative ways to introduce them to your children.
- Tell more stories and ask more questions.
- When education is about building relationships and connections, it takes time. Don't rush or try to speed up those "mind to mind" connections—that's down to the child, not you!
- Buy lots of books (or pick them up from the library). You can never go overkill on books if you will actually read them!





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:
Suggestions for Capturing Attention

- It starts with you—pause on one thing, wherever possible.
- Pause and pay attention to your senses when outdoors. What can you see, smell, touch, hear (and taste where it's safe to do so) from where you're standing? Encourage your children to do the same.
- Ask open-ended, interesting questions about a beautiful art scene, a story, or a natural situation, such as “Where do you think that road leads?” or “What would you have done in that situation?”
- Listen to music intentionally; be alert for instruments, phrases, or themes that you can share with children.
- Read poetry out loud with a pre-explained listening mission. Listen for a favourite word, phrase, or sentence. Encourage children to picture the words in their mind.
- When a child is tempted to give up on a book, game, or task quite quickly, say, “Just one more minute” and set a timer. Stretch it to two minutes next time.
- If your child is struggling to recollect, hold attention, and/or narrate when reading, read shorter passages.
- When visiting an art gallery or museum, encourage children to find one brilliant piece or picture to tell you about at the end. Don't expect them to pay attention to the whole exhibit. If they seem to be getting bored, ask, “Have you found your ‘one’ yet?”

- Pick a daily outdoor observation rhythm and have an allocated notebook to write down what you see. This could be cloud shapes, leaf colours, temperature, weather, etc. Focus on one for six weeks or so; do this daily and enjoy the progression.
- Encourage your children's questions; they reflect engagement and attention. Write them down, even if you can't answer straight away—foster questions about people, books, art, politics, theology, etc. Don't be afraid of them, don't dismiss them; embrace your children's curiosity!
- Put your phone down.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:
Suggestions for Standing Back

- Read and absorb as much of Charlotte Mason’s original writings on education as you can to grow your own understanding. As your understanding grows, so does your trust. It is not just about knowing the tasks; it is about trusting the truth.
- Prepare environments, resources, and short lessons that allow children to take as much ownership of their learning as possible.
- Invest in your own learning and play. Charlotte tells us it’s the secret sauce to practising masterly inactivity.
- Pause before you pounce—what you deem as a “wrong answer” is sometimes a journey towards a brilliant idea or a rich educational connection.
- Cultivate an understanding and compassion for the child’s stage of learning, rather than comparing them to a system’s expectations.
- Stop doing it for them. Observe yourself and how you teach your children. At what point do you allow them or yourself to give in too easily? Feel the stretch a little.
- Relax and enjoy your learning days—laugh together, dream together, experience wonder together. Keep childhood at the forefront, not curriculum.
- Practise active listening from when your children are young. The toddler chatter soon becomes connections and narrations.
- Make a plan but stay flexible.
- Encourage questions, and equip your children to find out the answers.

- Stock your home library with great books, then let your children pick books from your shelves. Give them agency over their reading for enjoyment and fun.
- Keep a journal of verbal connections, overheard comments, cool questions, and interesting narrations. Look back at it and reflect. Remind yourself you're doing a great job; you should trust yourself more!





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Mastering Narration

- Listen to your children’s “important” talk and chatter when they are young. We can choose to be attentive to our children’s observations before the formal schooling years by writing them down.
- Create a rhythm of reading aloud to your children from a young age. Make space in your schedule after you read aloud to allow for oral narration; don’t rush the process.
- Prepare for oral narration by listing difficult words, names, terms, and places on a board for the children to see to aid their narration. We’re not tricking or testing; we’re listening!
- Only read the text once; this encourages the habit of attention.
- If children are struggling to narrate, set an example and narrate from the text yourself, allowing them to hear what it sounds like.
- Write notes or make audio recordings of their narrations as a record of their progress.
- Try creating a book of centuries to help make learning stick. This is basically a visual timeline in a book (or binder). It’s a really simple, fun way to record anyone and everyone you meet from history during your studies and conversations. Across each double-page spread label the century and time span of years (e.g., 16th century: AD 1501–1600) and go all the way back to 4000 BC (or whenever you want). Children can write, draw, or stick in a picture representing a person or story they’ve studied in that period of history.

- Consider using narration in different circumstances: ask children to retell stories from films, YouTube documentaries, audio podcasts, song lyrics, or even interviews with grandparents about their experiences.
- Coax a reluctant narrator by using an open-ended creative question such as “Describe the characters in the book as if you were describing a good friend” or “Tell me three things you’ve learnt from this story.”
- After you have finished a story, build in time for children to go off and play out aspects of the people, places, and plotlines.
- Ask your child to try a new creative way to tell something back to you. Try LEGO reenactments. Use Play-Doh to make characters from stories. Comic book strips can retell a whole story (a popular one in our home). Make a video narrating to the camera. Record a radio show interview about the topic. Draw or paint a picture. The only limits are a child’s imagination and your patience.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Learning from Living Books

- Do the one-page test: next time you're at the library or a bookshop, take a book from the shelf, read one page, and ask yourself, Does the beginning of this book beckon me to read on?
- Remember, living books don't have to be old—modern authors are writing living literature all the time; keep your eyes open and make room on your library shelves.
- Shop your own shelves. Before you go out and buy something new, remind yourself about what you already have in your collection!
- Raid library sales and secondhand shops—over the years I've rarely paid full price for a book; it doesn't have to be an expensive process!
- Create a little shelf of living books that you can “grab and go” at any time.
- Include your children in the process; don't do it all for them. Have fun deciding what a living book is to your family.
- Use mealtimes (or even just breakfast) to gather children and to help them sit still for at least ten minutes. Keep your readings short, varied, and interesting whilst your children are munching their cereal and sipping their juice.
- Use audiobooks if you're out and about in the car, but remember to pause after each chapter so your children can process what they've heard.
- Create cozy, memorable moments around books (especially if you're getting that groaning noise when you announce, “Hey kids, let's read together.”). Grab blankets, tea, and a snack, snuggle up together, and get to work on those wonderful words.

- Have books around: line your shelves, fill baskets, and pop small tubs of them in children's bedrooms. Just having books in view is proven to engage children's interest and creates an appetite and curiosity to explore what's inside them.
- Make sure your children see you with a book in hand (or listening to an audiobook whilst you fold laundry) and talk to them about what you're reading.
- When choosing a living book, there are several key questions you and your children can answer together to determine if it is worth finishing.
 - » Do you love/like the book?
 - » Is it interesting?
 - » Does it fuel the mind and soul?
 - » Can your child find themselves represented in the story?
 - » Does the story offer an opportunity to see into a culture or context different from your own?
 - » Does it keep your attention and draw you in? Can you/your children narrate from it easily?
 - » Can you read it aloud with ease? Can a child listen to it comfortably?
 - » Is it written by one passionate author?
 - » Does it leave a mark/lasting impression, or is it forgettable?
 - » Is it a page-turner? Are you expectant to find out more about the characters and plot?





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Nurturing Nature Study

- Start small—take a daily stroll around the garden or a local green area, and observe what stands out in that season.
- Keep a basket of smooth shells, pine cones, sea glass, or other natural treasures for young children to hold and become familiar with. I still have a box of these on hand for when young children come to visit.
- Learn about what's local and in your child's eyesight: a tree that can be seen from your kitchen window, garden birds, local wildflowers, and the sky from your apartment window. Become an expert on that bird, tree, or species!
- Bring nature treasures indoors and research ways of preserving, storing, and observing beauty, even when you can't get outside.
- Find friends to walk with—children are more likely to walk further and learn from each other's nature interests amid community.
- Don't sweat the sketch! Tracing paper or carbon paper can be a great tool for journaling beginners. Work from field guides or printed pictures of things you've seen outside and record them in your own journal—with whatever medium you choose.
- Buy a bargain page-per-week diary and add into your morning rhythm a habit of writing down the temperature and a doorstep observation. Note the changes over the weeks—you could even plot a temperature graph.
- Take photos, use identification apps, or journal on Instagram—it's all a form of reflecting and remembering. There's no such thing as "cheating"; all these tools aid our connection with the natural world.

- Get up early and listen to the Dawn Chorus.
- Read diaries, stories, and poems about nature to spark interest and cultivate care for the sustainability of our world.
- Get yourself on a boat in water.
- Watch nature documentaries to follow famous naturalists and videographers into places you and your children may never reach but still care about and are interested in.
- Stop what you are doing and go outside!





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Cultivating Culture in the Home

- Keep art handy. Next time you're at an art gallery, buy a handful of art print postcards; these might not be used for your "formal" picture study, but have them around to hold, flick through, or display on the walls.
- Build up a playlist of classical music tracks that you've seen or heard your children respond to (e.g., galloping around to Rossini's *William Tell Overture*). Have a classical radio station playing quietly as children are waking up and starting their day.
- Find out what artists are featured in your local art gallery, or one you can access easily—study them, then visit the pieces in real life.
- Use a tablet or laptop to access art online; you can get up close and personal, zooming in on details that you'd rarely see from a print or postcard.
- Try to integrate poetry as a regular rhythm; read it aloud, listen to podcast recordings, try out author-read audiobook versions. Poetry is written to be spoken aloud and sounded out on the lips.
- Keep a notebook of first impressions when engaging with all forms of the arts, asking the question "What did you think of . . . ?" This is interesting to look back on and see how ideas around art, music, poetry, and plays have developed over the years.
- Do a picture study. Look at any art for a set time. Then ask the child to recall what they have seen as the beginning of a conversation.

- Plan regular real-life field trips (even if they are free) that will help bring any given topic to life.
- Invent a creative experiential way for your child to engage their five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) within any subject.
- Listen to a variety of genres of music; I create a monthly playlist that we listen to most mornings as we're starting the day together. These can consist of hymns, folk songs, classical, jazz, gospel, etc. Keep it varied, interesting, and lively!
- Copy art, play music, write poems, and act out scenes. Children will be inspired by the creators they are learning from. Let's give them an opportunity to express that.
- Go to a concert if you can, or watch one online—this is a great way to see instruments being played and enjoy the conductor shaping the sequence of music.
- Use map work to complement what you are reading or learning. Download blank or labelled maps and use them to locate where countries are or to discuss what kind of culture they have.
- Take your learning to a new location for the day. A simple change of scenery can open new learning possibilities together.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Cultivating Soul Space

- Make a list of the barriers you have in your life right now to cultivating soul space, and then think through strategies to overcome them.
- Talk to people in your family (immediate or otherwise) about how you can practically make play happen and why it is so important for everyone, not just you. It is okay to ask for help.
- Know what you love. Give yourself permission to make a list of things that you enjoy and help you relax. Recognise the activities that bring life as well as help you rest.
- Take a moment in the day when your children can see or experience you “playing.” Let them see you reading, listening to your favourite music, or dancing in the kitchen.
- Shop your local bookshop or favourite online bookstore for books that bring delight; these might be novels, photographic coffee-table books, or recipe guides. These will form something to flick through or curl up and read if you’ve got five minutes or an hour.
- Visit your own bookshelf.
- Schedule time in your diary for rest and refueling—and stick to it. Even if you’re resting at home, plan to make a luxurious coffee or steep a special tea.
- Choose an accountability friend—you can check on each other and make sure you’re making time to rest and play.
- Look after your body; it’s the only one you have.
- Go for a local walk and leave your phone at home. Listen, look, and absorb whilst eliminating the temptation to share!

- Log out of your social media account for a while, take the email app off your phone, or set up restricted timings in your settings. Protect your time.
- Buy your favourite flavour of yogurt, coffee creamer, or type of cheese when grocery shopping as an occasional treat—choose something just for you!
- Plan a nap (in bed), tell everyone that it's going to happen and when, turn off your phone, close the curtains, snuggle down, and enjoy.
- Make or create something just for fun. Bake, take photos, animate on the iPad, choreograph a dance, or write a poem. Do it, just because you can. The process *is* the outcome.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Cultivating Intellectual Vitality

- Keep a poetry compilation open and accessible in the kitchen, bathroom, or another room you spend a lot of time in! Whenever you see it, read a poem for just two minutes.
- Join or start a book club. This doesn't have to be extravagant or fancy. Find a small group of women to read along with you. Meet in real life or online to discuss what you enjoyed, disliked, or were inspired by.
- Grab yourself a simple week-to-view diary and jot down nature observations from your kitchen window every day. Note the weather, which birds you saw, and any seasonal changes. Nature journaling is about your observations, not fine art!
- Go for a walk in nature, alone.
- Keep a few books on the go at the same time; a challenging one, an inspiring one, and a delight-filled one. When you get a moment to read, see which one you feel like. Don't forget that audiobooks and Kindle count too!
- Find a like-minded friend to discuss your intellectual thoughts and findings with; even if it's online, you'll be refreshed from processing with someone else.
- Take a solo trip to an art gallery.
- Keep a growth journal with quotes, poems, and titles of music and art or great conversations with friends that have inspired you or helped you grow.

- Listen to a BBC Radio channel or Classic FM whilst you're cooking, cleaning, in the car, or just in the background of your day. You'll pick up on interesting topics of conversation and composers you haven't heard before.
- Go and see a concert, a play, or hear poetry read live; there's nothing like it, and you can often catch them free outdoors in the summer months in many cities across the world.





TAKE A MASON MOMENT:

Suggestions for Cultivating Community

- If you can't find a community, form a community. If you want to make a friend, then be a friend to someone today.
- Where you can, take a local online connection into real life. Conversation over coffee generally trumps daily direct message trails! The next best things are video calls and voice messages.
- Read a book with a friend.
- Be selective about who you follow, listen to, and align yourself with. Mixed messages can be overbearing and distracting. Avoid the comparison game.
- If you've got a local Charlotte Mason educator friend, try coming together for a shared learning experience. Call it a "club" if you want to take the pressure off having to be the perfect host! We've done nature study, science, and even mathematics with other families, and we've all benefitted from it greatly.
- Open your living room and share your story. Take the risk and share your life with someone you trust.
- Collaborate with others to share your tried and tested ideas and practices.
- Organise a mother's outing, a shared meal in someone's garden, a picnic, or a gathering for coffee and cake. These events can bring a nervous or new mum into friendships that enrich their homeschooling experience, reminding them they are not alone. You can overcome awkwardness as you open your lives to each other.

- Share your skills—if you're no good at handcrafts, find a friend who is; if you're a budding biologist, gather a family or two to learn from you. Don't keep your talents hidden!
- Send letters, postcards, and books to friends in your online communities. Anything that takes an online connection into real homes and hands is worth the work. Stock up on stamps and put a smile on a few friends' faces!
- If you're building a community of influence online, find your authentic following. Collaborate and post online to celebrate, to support, or to ask a question; avoid striving for mentions or entertaining for attention.

