



Waldorf Homeschool U Module 6: Transcript **Don't Homeschool in a Vacuum: Support & Community**

Hi! This is Donna with The Waldorf Connection and welcome to lesson 6, our final lesson of the Waldorf Homeschool U and this is all about support and community.

I just want to congratulate you first if you've been plotting your course along through this program with me and we've kind of come step by step, starting off with the basics and then just adding up as we've gone along. Even if you just got through lesson 5, you'd have a really good foundation for homeschooling and getting things set up, working on your rhythm and your planning, your presenting, communicating with your child through temperaments and all the things that we've talked about in the previous lessons but I didn't want to leave you thinking that you have to do this whole thing by yourself because it can really feel like you are kind of isolated and out there and just from me going through my inexperience with my children and just, the way things were before I really created the Waldorf connection and without there trying to figure things out on my own and sometimes

I felt like I was sort of swimming upstream and even though we had a local homeschool group and still do have a local homeschool co-op or group here where I live, none of them are following the Waldorf philosophy or method. I kind of think about Waldorf homeschool as sort of on the fringe, we're like the red headed fat child of the step children. We're already homeschooling, right? That's sort of off the beaten path less and less, as the years go by more and more people now homeschooling and I remember when I first started talking about homeschooling people were still looking at me a little odd and now when I tell people I'm homeschooling, I usually get some kind of a remark like "oh yes, my sister does that" or "so and so I know does that."

There's somebody now that they know that homeschooled. I think it's becoming more and more accepted and people are seeing it for what it is but yet there still is a lot of people out there who've never heard of Waldorf education and don't know anything about it. At least in the community where I am, there's no one following that philosophy so you may or may not be in a situation like this. You may have a nice Waldorf co-op or group of moms, like-minded moms or playgroup or something and if you do, I just want to let you know that that's a very precious gift that you have.

We're going to talk a little bit about support, getting your family support, creating a group if that's possible in your area and then talk a little bit about festivals, how you don't have to do that festival alone, kind of band together and sharing a lot because the experience of doing any of these things, festivals, even classes and just getting together with others who are on the same path as you makes a huge difference. There's ups and downs, there's good days and bad days and some days you just want to throw the towel in and say "I just don't think I can do this anymore" and it's nice to have somebody there in your life, whether it's a spouse, sister, mother, friend, someone who understands or who can say "it's alright, you're going to be fine" kind of help you and support you and to give you that encouragement when you need it.

Let's talk a little bit first about family support because probably that is most likely will be your biggest influence if you're married and if you're single then there's still maybe the ex-spouse or perhaps a mom or sister, someone that you're close to and they can really be your biggest cheer leader and supporter because they're close to home and either live there or have lot of involvement with the child and they can also be your biggest obstacle. Hopefully they're in support of you and I know I hear a lot about this from the moms in my group, those we are interested, who want to homeschool but a lot of times their husband or someone in the family is against it, perhaps their mother-in-law is a teacher or something and a lot of times there's some flack there from teachers in the family. I think really a lot of times it's just that they don't understand.

I've had this many times with people in my life that they don't see how you could possibly be enough to educate your child and in the beginning you may feel that way as well, "how can I possibly do all of this?" but as we've discuss, it's really a progression. You don't have to know chemistry to teach your first grader to read. It's all taking things step by step and it's a process. I think most of you probably have children on the younger side. In those early days, as long as you can read and have skills, you can teach your children and you don't have to be a mathematician or a scientist to teach.

I think the number one thing to getting your spouse or close family members on board with you is that they really need to be well informed. They need to understand what you're doing or what you're trying to do and why. Just like you, have spent all this time going through this course, have been reading, have been researching, looking at blogs and trying to find out the whole process behind Waldorf education, why it works and why we do things we do. Why are these things a little bit different than you may see in a mainstream society and different things going on? They need to understand what that's all about and the whys.

It's hard maybe to try to keep them totally in a loop but to giving them as much as you can, sort of a shortened version, explain why you're doing it and it helps because otherwise they really don't have a clue and I can just say we kind of went through this a little bit and I think that you will probably understand this when I tell you the story but I think this thing about reading, that was something. My kids not reading when I have my sister, my niece is pretty much the same age as my girls and so she was in public school and within kindergarten learning to read and everything and of course that started to be sort of an issue with my family, like questions started to come, "how come your girls aren't learning? When will they be learning their ABCs?"

I remember one holiday, my sister cornered my girls in the room and grilling them about their ABCs. Sometimes people just don't understand and they see that what you're doing is different and it's not that they're trying to be nasty or they're trying to do something, they're trying to help and they're trying to figure out do they need to step in and what's actually happening. I think by keeping them informed, explaining to things ahead of times then there's sort of a level of "okay, she sounds like she knows what she's talking about and we're going to trust her" because that's kind of what happened with me and my mom.

I remember saying "listen, my girls are not going to be learning to read and our niece over here is learning to read so I don't want that to be issue. They will be learning to read when it's time" and now that we're on the other end of all of that, it's really easy to look back and say "I'm so glad we waited" my girls are amazing readers now, totally not only caught up to my niece but love to read whereas she won't even pick up a book because she's burned out already in the school system and really just has had a lot of struggles in her academics and I'm not trying to bash public education or anything. All I'm saying is that my girls are not behind because they learn to read 2 years later and they're in fact probably on a higher reading level and are reading more thicker, voraciously reading books.

There is a little bit of faith there in the beginning. You may not see these fruits of your labor, it may take a few years before things start to fall into place and there is a little bit of that, like "okay I'm just going to go with this is the way it's going to work" and like I can say I can look back now and say "I'm so glad I didn't skimp and start teaching them too early." I waited until they were just turning 7 when we started first grade and then I still didn't pushed the reading.

I think you probably heard my story where one of my girls was reading way before the other. Her teeth had fallen out a year ahead of the other one and the one that hadn't lost her teeth had no interest in the reading and now she's the one who I can't even keep a book less than 600 pages. She's read just about everything in the library so there's no "oh she started too late and now she's behind for the rest of her life" or anything like that. In fact she loves to read but I think if I had pushed that issue, if I had made her try to keep up with her sister and do it when she wasn't ready, it could have been something that turned her off to reading and it could have been something where she just would have been, I don't want to say scarred for life but there are some things that happen in our childhood that could really shape the way we feel about things in the future.

Let me stay on with the support so basically what I'm just trying to say is to keep your spouse informed. Let him know what's going on, let him see the progress that you're making and my husband was pretty quiet about it, I remember for the first two years and then I overheard a conversation that he was having with someone else and he didn't know I could hear and it was so interesting to hear how proud he was of the progress and what his girls had learned that they were sewing and they could knit and they could play their instruments and they were singing and they were sculpting and painting and all of these things.

It was really nice for me to kind of hear it and he was trying to explain how Waldorf education work from just what he's heard from me, explaining to him in what we've been living here of course. Trying

to keep them updated, trying to keep them informed of what you're doing and why you're doing I think is a really big key and however you feel you want to do that, like a monthly, I don't want to say a progress report but if you have some kind of a planner or you're jotting things down and it's charting your progress then you'll have everything right there and when somebody is asking "what are you guys doing?" you've got your planner right there with all your notes and everything and a lot of it may look like art, it may look like painting and it may look like games but of course we know that a lot of those things are the stepping stones to the reading and the math and the sciences and the things that will come in later, it's developing and the big children are playing and all of that.

I think it's just understanding what you're doing yourself, a little bit at a time here. You don't need have to know everything but just know what you need to know and to be able to explain that sort of in a shortened version to your parents or spouse or whoever and just have that and so that they know what's going on. It's really nice to have your spouse supporting you because there will be those days we're you just feel like "I don't know if I can do this, the kids are acting up. I'm tired, I'm sick and I need some help" having a cheerleader is really nice, somebody in your corner who supports you no matter what is nice and as much as possible. I know we've had somebody in our group even who was letting her husband listen to this program so that they can understand what's going on and why we're doing what we're doing.

A lot of times there may be some flack with the limited TV and screen time and the toys and all of that and that comes in with the family again. With family we've had issues with people giving gifts and things even though that I've said we don't do these certain things and it creeps them, we're going to talk a little bit about that in a minute but again trying to explain to your husband and sometimes you'll have to make compromises. The girls never liked watching TV or anything, they had videos when they were young and then when we found Waldorf I pretty much stopped all of that.

They do watch a video, maybe once a month or something that I've had and I've had to work with my husband on that, the TV does not come on until the girls are in bed and sometimes he wants to watch sports, some things and then I just take the girls in another room or take them outside or whatever. There is always compromises and if it was up to me I would just say "fine let's get rid of the TV" but he doesn't want that and so I have to honor that and so we just come up with a compromise and again we'll talk about that a little bit more when we start to fit in this pop culture but again understanding why and trying to know that this is the reason that we're doing this and trying to explain that to family and having them to understand, even if they don't always agree, at least having them understand why you're doing it so that they can hopefully finally support you and that's always good if they at least understand why you're doing that.

Another thing is try to come up with and make decisions together. Again I just talked about compromising, coming up with the thing about "okay we're going to watch TV but not until the girls come to bed" try to get their input on things. The support will go a long way if they feel like they have some sort of input on what you're doing, maybe even like a monthly; my husband and I have like a weekly date night where we reconnect on Saturday nights and so a lot of times I'll discuss what's going on with the kids in school, this and that and sometimes I'll be stuck on something to do for the lesson or whatever and he'll have a really great idea and I think it kind of gives them their input into their

children's education.

If there's something that you know they have skills with, that they could really help or in my case my math skills that I'm not really great with, I'll go to my husband and say "I'm having a hard time with this. Do you have another way you could help me explain this to them and he usually does, I'm like "that's awesome, I think I'm learning that too" just having that input, having them kind of come up with decisions, whether it's bedtime, you're working on rhythm, talk with them about "what will be a good time do you think the kids should be in bed? 8 o'clock in bed gives us time or 7:30 gives us time to spend at evening together." When you're doing things like that, get their input. Ask their advice and come up with things together because that way you'll feel you've done it together and they'll be a lot more apt to help and support if they felt like they've been a part of that as well and that goes of course with other family members that you're close to as well.

We talked a little bit about just keeping them updated on your progress, letting other family members know what's happening and so just going to do a quick recap here. Number 1 thing to get your family support is to help them understand the what and the why. Number 2 make joint decisions and compromises if possible and number 3 is to keep them informed in your progress. Those are 3 key ways to get your family support and get them on board. You may be like "how is all this going to support me?" everything will just feel more relaxed, you'll feel like you're just not out there by yourself doing it when your husband is glaring at you, wishing you had your kids in school or the same thing with your family.

If you've got the support, it will just make everything a lot more relaxed, you'll feel like they're on your side and like I said sort of a cheerleader and it really helps even, like I said to get their help, they'll be willing to help teach if you're sick or if you have a mom who's a great musician or something, maybe she would be more willing to come and help teach the children or whatever if she's all on board with what's going on.

Let's kind of move on to the next subject and that's about, we talked about it a little bit about this pop culture, we'll talk a little bit. Now we talked a little bit about close family, now let's move out to be your everyday friends and acquaintances and neighbors, people that you kind of see quite often and talk with. It's not as necessary to go into as much depth I would say with them as is it like your really family members or really close friends but still it's nice if they kind of understand a little bit about what you're doing because things will come up and if they kind of understand what's going on then they'll be like "oh okay" we don't want you to be living in this Waldorf bubble and I think this is what a lot of people think they have to do.

They have to live in this bubble and they can no longer be around their other neighbors and friends because their kids can't watch TV and they can't play with toys that aren't wooden and all of that and it is hard. It's hard to kind of integrate the life that we want and it seems like there's all these rules or things that we want in our children lives and it's hard enough to do it in our own homes but then to kind of venture out, what do we do when the kids want to go to the neighbors or the neighbors want to come over. I want to talk about this so how not to isolate yourself when living a Waldorf lifestyle and this really is a huge topic.

We could probably have an entire course on this but I just want to touch a little bit on this because it is probably in your mind. If you haven't already come up across this, you will down the line. I think the first thing that I want to say here is to know what you can and cannot or what you won't, will and will not compromise on. That's sort of a good place to get started. For me there are some absolute NO's and so what I'm thinking about what I will or will not let my children and I think about this because I know my children will go with my parents out of town to visit my sister and things and I know there's going to be some things that they'll do that we don't normally do here and I can't watch them 24 hours a day and I can't control everything that's going on.

There are a few things that I kind of put my foot down, no TV and no this and that. There are a few things that I just want to say there's an absolute no and I will not compromise on that and then there may be some things that you think "I don't really care for that but if they do it once or twice, it's not the end of the world" and this is different for everyone so I can't say "here's what you need to do and here's what you won't" everybody is different and everybody's level of compromise is different. I guess you just have to make that decision and once you go on a little bit then you'll try to see.

I'm just going to give you an example, for example no matter where we go there's always like foods and sweets and even at our local homeschool co-op, they're always having party day for whatever, Valentines party or something and there's always a lot of sugar and things. We try to eat healthy and organic here as much as we can but obviously I'm not going to send them to the Valentine party with carrot sticks or whatever, they don't have any allergies so there's no real reason other than I don't want them to have it. It's not healthy. In that case, I will compromise and let them have some cupcakes or whatever they're going to have but they need to drink water. No soda in top of it. They can easily drink the water and at least that makes me feel like they're getting something and it's not extra sugar or whatever.

Every time we go out to dinner or do something like that, if they're going to have desserts they get water. They don't drink any soda or juice and that kind of thing for the added sugar. That's one compromise I'll make. They can have the cupcake but they need to drink the water that goes with it, depending or they can watch a video that I've approved but not TV. This is what I mean about trying to come up with things that you will or will not do and that you may just have to flush out on a case by case scenario. I don't know if you're going to sit down and make a list of these things out like after you listen to me but just kind of keep it in your mind whether that's an absolute no.

Bedtime was a huge stickler and I just now started to soften a little bit as the girls are 10 ½ but bedtime was my stickler. They need to be in bed to keep our routine. I always stuck with that. There were a few very, very, very few times where they missed their bedtime and it was maybe the 4th of July, we watched fireworks or whatever. I would say 99% of the time they were in bed on time, no matter we were traveling or whatever because it's the help at all. I was a real stickler for them getting rest and to have that bedtime. It may be just things as you go along that you say "no, absolutely they need this or they need that." You'll be tested out and you'll see and you may make a decision and say later "I wish I hadn't done that. This really is one of those things that I will not compromise on" and the next time you can stand and say "no, this is not one of those things. This is an absolute" I don't

want to do that.

Find your hot buttons, find those things that you just really want to keep and that you really feel comfortable and it depends as your children get a little older, things will change, things may change for you. Like I said at the bedtimes, now they're getting older and I realize that's fine for them. They don't need as much rest and they start to make different decisions as they get a little bit older but again it's the boundaries that we are making that kind of creates the foundation and honestly now that my girls will see something that they experience that's different or feels odd to them, they'll come back and tell me and they might say "this is really weird when my friend did this or their mom said we could do that" kind of a thing and it feels weird because they're not used to that and it gives me an opportunity to talk with them about it, "that's how they handle things in their house and this is how we handle things in our house" because you can't control what your children are doing when they're in other people's houses. You're not going to call their mom and say "they're not allowed to watch TV. They're not allowed to play video games" that's when things kind of might get a little hairy. You just have to decide whether they should even go, do you want them to go over there because probably if they go and the other child is doing it, they're going to do it too. They're going to watch it too or whatever.

I've had this come up when I've been on another family member's house where we stayed for a weekend and they were and they do have a video game room or something and I was like "were are my girls? I don't hear anything, it's very quiet" and they were in there watching and I just said "come on girls, let the boys play. I don't want you to watch this stuff" so I just try to keep them out of the room. I want going to tell the boys to stop but I didn't want them playing some of the games or seeing some of the things they were doing. Again, you just have to make those decisions as you go. You don't want to be totally isolating your children from not playing with others but there's sort of a fine line but you want to keep those boundaries and keep their innocence and things as much as you can.

If you have kids over, a lot of times the Waldorf families are the ones where the kids end up playing outside. I know we do that here, even when my niece comes, it takes her a day or so but then suddenly she's outside. First she's bored, she doesn't want to do anything, she wants to watch TV. The next thing I know she's outside and she's a kid again and she's playing like my girls play because they're just used to doing it and the imagination comes back and they're jumping and they're running and they're playing outdoors with sticks and whatever and they're just all into doing things that they don't normally do and they're in their own homes. Yours could be that outdoor place where the kids can hang out and do things that they don't get to do like bake cookies or play tag and be outside in nature and all of that.

That's one way to sort of navigate through being with others and again it gives you the opportunity to just talk with your children, "this is the way we do it in our house" I say that a lot. "This is the way, they may do something different over here but this here's the way we do it here" and so if they do come home with something that you've not really desiring for them to say or do or something they've done, it's an opportunity and again this is based also on the age of your child. My girls are a little bit older now, of course there's more discussion. In the younger time, we don't do that or however you want to say. In our house this is the way we do this or whatever because I've heard my kids say "so

and so gets to stay up until 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock and how come we have to go to bed at 8 o'clock?" I mean you get that I guess from anyone and you just say "this is what we do in our house."

Let's talk a little bit about playgroups and co-op. Where do you find these like-minded people, if you can find a group of people who are on the same page as you, of course that's ideal because you don't have to explain everything and everyone is sort of trying for a common goal and like I said earlier, if you've got a group, a playgroup or a Waldorf-inspired group of some kind then it's awesome because you can get together with the moms and talk about everything, talk about the skills you're learning and what you're learning and about rhythm and about baking and festivals and everything and you're all pretty much on the same page and you don't have to worry as much about the media and toys that you wouldn't really want your children to play with and video games, that type of thing. So, how do we find these people, right? That's the key.

If there isn't a group or you don't know anyone or you don't know if there even is a group, a lot of times you just have to be a little proactive and kind of look out, look around. Of course you can talk to friends and neighbors and see if they know of anybody. If there's a Waldorf school nearby then there most likely or a Waldorf preschool or morning garden, most likely there's other moms who are sending their children there. Obviously you've got a group right there and maybe you can get the phone numbers of the moms and create a group outside of the preschool, like a monthly thing you get together, a weekly playgroup where the children get together or a weekly handwork group for the moms to get together.

I've heard of that a lot of times where they do a weekly handwork group for the moms or a singing group for the moms because a lot of times it's the moms, especially in those early days that really need the support of each other like I was saying, and to be able to discuss these things that you're doing, openly and freely and to have someone who understand what you're talking about is really priceless. Really I think it's just kind of going out there and looking, asking friends. If you have a latte week, a holistic mom's network, maybe an organic food market.

I've heard of moms putting out fliers, looking for other like-minded moms who wants to start a natural playgroup or something. I had a friend of mine who put in an ad in the natural magazines that you get, the Natural Awakening magazine in the town looking for some people, the library will be a good place to put up a flier or to just even ask the librarian if there's other homeschoolers. I know we've got a library that everybody goes to here, that's like the homeschool library. She was very informative and gave me a couple of names of some moms who she knew was "oh they checked this book out too, maybe there's somebody you can hang with or whatever."

A local homeschooling co-op even is a good place to start, even if your child is not yet in the grades. I know we did this. I started with our local homeschool group when they were probably about 4, we just went to kind of check it out and they did usually have some children their age, siblings of the older ones or those who are kind of getting ready and there may be some other, they have like music classes and art classes and things like that.

Even if it's not totally Waldorf or isn't Waldorf at all, there's still many opportunities where you can

meet with others and find a group. There may be somebody in that group that's doing Waldorf or maybe has never heard of Waldorf but is looking for something and you may be the one that talks them into using Waldorf if they'd never heard of it before. I think it's just going out and being a little proactive and searching and just finding a group, really it's just wonderful if you can get that, even a few families in your area that you can meet together. For festival, like I said just sort of get together. I know unfortunately in my area there really isn't. The closest family that we do have is about almost an hour away and so we really don't get together. We do see them during like school functions and stuff sometimes for our homeschool co-op but that's too far away to do a weekly thing.

We've gotten together for festivals and things before but our area is very small and very touristy so there's not a lot of homeschooling families anyway but there's a few families you can find if you just keep looking and be persistent and then once you got that, you only need a few families to really make a big difference in your life right now. I'm talking a lot about the support but it really does make such a difference when you can share all of this and share these festivals and we're going to talk about that in just a minute and share just the ups and downs, "what did you do about this?" I know when I do, like I just went to Atlanta, I call it my honorary homeschool group in Atlanta.

I've got several friends there and it's just so nice to get together with moms and to talk about it and they really understand and get so inspired and just kind of "oh that's a great idea". Other ideas from other moms, it's great for people who kind of been there ahead of you to kind of pull you along and give you suggestions. That's why I encourage you guys who are a part of this group; again if you just don't have anyone and can't find anyone, to use the Facebook group here to meet other moms and they're right here, even if it's a virtual group.

That's the whole reason I started the Waldorf connection, is because I just didn't have anyone here and I needed some help. Creating this virtual group where I can talk to other moms and other teachers and other Waldorf gurus or whatever to kind of get the information that I needed was really the whole catalyst behind the Waldorf connections and there's a great group of people on the Facebook group for the Waldorf Homeschool U.

There are tons of moms on there. Please feel free to ask questions, just share ideas, anything you want or just lurk and read and get inspiration on there but we are here and I try to answer all the questions and respond back, it's been a real active group so thank you guys for those who are on there, making that group because again it is really vital and really important to have that and sometimes you get just that one little idea that someone gives you or you hear and you're thinking "oh my God, that's perfect! That's exactly what I need" and sometimes it's questions and things you didn't even know to ask but you just happen to read the question that someone else asked and that is just awesome because you're like "gosh, great! I didn't even know I have that question and now it's been answered." Utilize that resource as often as you'd like.

We love if you come on and chat and that's really what it's all about and you don't have to do it alone really. That's what I want you to feel like, that you've got some people there who are supporting you through your journey no matter where you are, if you're just getting started or you're already in the grades and you just have questions, we're here.

Let's talk a little bit about festivals. Again if you've got a group, I'm going to talk first about that, if you've got a group or a small, even with a few families, to do festivals is really nice to have. At the beginning I did not know this. I just did all of our festivals in our yard and with just us and it was still great and it was still wonderful. It's a lot more fun if you have other moms and you don't have to do all the work. You get to share in the food and that kind of thing and you can make it a little bit bigger of a get together if you've got others and even if there's people, I've people just hosting like, we did this one year for mid winter.

I'm just trying to think of the word but anyway, where we did our spiral and my family was all in for the Christmas holidays and they didn't know anything about any of the festivals we were doing but we all went through and did the spiral and did the festival and everything and it was great. They didn't mind that they didn't really know what we're talking about but it was just amazing and I think if you have a couple close friends or neighbors, even if they're not actually Waldorf, that would like to participate like a May Day thing.

I did that one year where I had a couple friends come over with their daughters and we did the maple and we had a little tea and we did a maple. They had a cake and we danced the maple, we picked some flowers. It was great. It was fun. It didn't matter that they were Waldorf or not. I was just sharing that. Don't feel like you have to have a Waldorf family in order to do a festival. Of course if you have some it's great because they understand what's going on and you can kind of share that. Festivals are just a great way to bring in these traditions and celebrate the changing times of the year. The four main turning points are the autumn equinox, the winter solstice, the spring equinox and the summer solstice.

As far as the seasons and the celebrations, there's a lot of festivals, kind of sprinkled in and mixed in here and there. There's usually something going on almost every month but you don't have to do all of the festivals and you don't have to do one every month and if you've never done any festivals, I recommend just picking something that sounds interesting to you or something that you may already be familiar with that you want to do and then once you get used to doing something and like "oh yeah" then adding something else.

This is another mistake that I don't want you to make. I was like "we're doing Waldorf, we have to do Waldorf festival" and I thought "you've got to be kidding me" like I was doing festival after festival plus on top of that schooling, the regular holidays, Christmas and thanksgiving. There are a lot of going on in the fall and in the winter on top of everything else. Please don't make that mistake, feeling that you have to do all of these festivals. Just pick something that feels right.

When we did third grade last year we decided to do Hanukah and Passover. I know it wouldn't really be considered a festival but it was something that we were celebrating that we don't normally do and we did it because it was based on the curriculum and so we decided to do this. We backed off on some of the other stuff that we would normally do and then we were doing that. What felt right, we did the St. Lucia 2 years ago for the first time, when my girls were old enough and we not have done that before and we didn't do it again this year.

You don't have to do them every year. Sometimes you might have favorites, like I love the winter solstice. It's my favorite. We always do the summer solstice because there's really nothing else going on right then and we do different things, Michaelmas we do sometimes and we usually do something. We don't have a big thing for Michaelmas. We just make the dragon bread. We always do the Martinmas lantern walk. I've got a listing here. It's a festival template that talks about how to setup your festival and then there's a listing of all the more popular Waldorf festivals and kind of a little blurb about each one that will kind of just give you a little hint and again you can find a lot of information online about the festivals once you decide you're going to do this one, you can just researching it and looking into it.

I created a festival notebook which is a separate little 3-ring binder and every time I decided that I wanted to do this festival, I will print out some songs or a story or something from the internet. I just start putting them all into the notebook, 3 hole punching them and then sticking them in there and then after a year or two I had everything in there and then it was time for me to do winter solstice, I just turn to the section on winter solstice and I already had everything I would use the same story, the same song, everybody recognized it and love it.

I didn't have to reinvent the wheel every time. I may add a different recipe or something but for the most part my festival notebook is done and then I just pull it out and go "oh yeah, what was that cute story about the bunny that we did for the Easter or whatever?"and it's all right in there and you can just keep it in one spot so you have it and there you go. You made it easy just to keep it all together in one spot. I tried it that way. I tried to keep everything organized so I don't have to dig through papers and all of that.

Start with what festival might resonate with you, start with something you know or attracted to. You're really the key to the festival so if you're stressed out about it, that's really going to come off for the family or for whoever is coming so I just try. I know a lot of times you feel like you already got other stuff going on and then you've got to have the festival on top of it; if it's too much then I would say just don't. I'd rather have you not do it than bring a festival in a way that's really stressful and like I said, the one thing when I started to do these festivals, I felt really strange saying these verses and telling stories and stuff, especially with other people around who didn't really know what I was doing and I thought my family doesn't think this is weird but they really stick to it and now it's like if I don't do something or skip something they are like "what happened to the story about that?"

It really becomes a rich pool and it becomes just now something very comfortable and easy to do but it does feel a little odd, sometimes if you're outside and doing that in the beginning if you've not done it before. Don't feel bad. I felt that way, I will say. I felt odd but then everybody just seem to kind of go along with it so I just kept going and didn't make a big deal about it and again I've got this common Waldorf festival days on here where I go through, starting with Michaelmas, all the way around to midsummer and I've got some pictures and things on here you can check out, as well as the simple festival templates that really kind of helps you "what do I actually need to do for these festivals? What do I need to do to pull off a festival? What's involved?"

Like I said, it can be just from the most simple thing of lighting a candle and saying a verse to food and neighbors and music and stories, like a lantern walk and that kind of thin and anything in between, it can be anything that you want. I think it's just the reverence that you bring, the joy and the ritual that you bring to it and the enthusiasm and if you're not interested in that particular festival and you don't really want to do it, then I'd say don't do it. There's no should and have here, you can choose to do the ones you want and maybe next year add another one. If it's too crazy or that doesn't seem like something you want to do then don't do it. That's the whole thing.

Feeling confident about it once you start doing a few of them or done it a few times, then you feel like, again just like anything else, it seems "oh this isn't really that hard at all" you can check out that and I'll be happy to take any questions on the festivals and really any questions as we're kind of wrapping up. I'd love to get your feedback here on the course, on what we've talked about here, how this has affected you and your family and any additional questions that you might have as we're sort of wrapping up. Sometimes questions will pop up from earlier lessons, "oh I forgot to ask about this" feel free to ask on our forum as well as on the Facebook group because there's a lot of information here, I don't want to try to overwhelm you too much, just try to get the basic points so that you can kind of take that information and run with it and then move on to the next step.

I thoroughly have enjoyed walking you through this path and through your journey. I'm so excited and proud that you have decided to embark on this journey and I hope that the information that is in this program is helping you or will help you to become a successful homeschooling family and I just want to thank you again so much, alright, bye.

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