



### **Waldorf Homeschool U Module 4: Transcript**

#### **Creating your Successful Plans: Monthly and Yearly Lessons**

Hi! This is Donna with The Waldorf Connection and welcome to The Waldorf Homeschool U class on planning. This might be one of the classes where you've been like "okay this is what I'm ready to hear." I want to hear all about planning because there are a lot of components when it comes to homeschooling but planning is really kind of one of the foundation pieces. We talked about rhythm and the pillars and the foundation and planning is really your foundation and it could seem kind of overwhelming and I don't really know where to start and this whole thing so I'm going to break it down here for you in a couple different ways and I want you to think of it sort of like this whole to parts.

You may have heard this, Rudolf Steiner recommends teaching things whole to parts and as in math, teaching the whole number and then breaking up the little pieces, like saying what is 20?  $2 \times 10$  and  $5 \times 4$  and all kind of thing so we're going to take the whole, which is a big planning piece and try to make it doable and try to make it in little pieces and little chunks for you so that it doesn't seem so overwhelming because really that's how you get anything done. You don't sit down and just plan out. "Here I am. I'm going to do my whole homeschool plan." I guess you could do that but I don't know how you could. It rarely happens that way. There are little bits and pieces and things that you work on.

Let's talk about your yearly plan or your school year plan. The first thing that I recommend doing is, I've heard this do a different way, you can use a calendar. If you're online and like to use the Google calendar or maybe you've got another program that you use on your iPhone or something, I like to see something written out or something big enough when I'm doing planning that I can look at it and change things around. You can get a large sheet of paper or just a sheet of paper and then you can label out the 12 months of the year or if you just want to do September through May or June or whatever. You can do it either way.

A lot of people do homeschool year round or whatever months that you're homeschooling. If you're in the southern hemisphere and you're doing the opposite, whatever that would be; whatever month that you planned to homeschool or need to put on your calendar. I did the whole year because I can put on

there during the summer that it's planning time and vacation and things. We're going to talk about that next.

The first thing I recommend is to put any time that you know you will not be homeschool – holidays, vacations, anything that you know you got something coming up, a big family event or you now that's going to be happening during the year. You may not always know this when you're doing your plan but if you know that you always take a few weeks off in December or whatever it is you're doing in the summer and you take the summer time off, if you have like a spring break or the holidays, we're going to take some time off; then go ahead and mark that out because a lot of places there's stipulations for how many days or how many months you have to get in for your accountability for your school calendar. We have to go with when we won't be schooling so you can get a feel for when you have to start. If you got something going on in September, you'll be out of town on a trip or something but you don't want to get behind, then you may want to start in August, a few weeks earlier than you normally would to make up for those weeks that you'll be out of town or going to a wedding or whatever it might be.

The first thing is to kind of put down what you know and things will always come up. I'm not going to sugarcoat it. Things change and things will come up and there'll be times when you're like "I just can't homeschool today, whatever" but that's the beauty of homeschooling and then we have weekends. If something comes up during the week or you get really sick, you can get asleep for a week. Of course that's something you're not going to be able to predict. That's the beauty of homeschooling and why you can juggle things around a little bit and do extra longer lessons or do it on the weekends, cut down on the other vacation time you may have had. That's flexibility.

You probably have an idea if you want a school year round. If you don't, I know someone who does 3 weeks on and 1 week off. 3 weeks of homeschool then she takes the week off, 3 weeks of homeschool, year round. It can be done in many ways. That's why I want to give you some different, maybe you never considered doing it year round. We sort of, we grew up with those regular school calendar and maybe you like that and maybe it doesn't work for your family. Maybe it's really hard to get out of a rhythm during the summer and I will tell you, it is hard because to get back into that rhythm again takes a little bit of doing. If you rather keep it going year round and do it that way, depending again on your family and all the support that you have and how you want to do it. You can experiment. Try doing it. If you don't like it all year round, you can always go back or whatever.

I just want to give you some thinking out of the box a little bit that you can still look whatever way you want to do it. Of course make sure you keep in mind any local or state restrictions or whatever you have, depending on where you are. They may say that you have to do so many days a week, I don't know. It's different in so many different places. Ours is just 180 days so it doesn't really matter what days there are, just 180 days. I think a lot of them are that, at least in the US. I don't know what it is overseas and I'd love to hear it. If you are in a place and you want to go ahead and post it in the forum, I'd love to hear that. If you know what your regulations are for your homeschool and if you don't know, it might be a good idea for you to check it. You can just really go to Google internet, wherever you are, if you're in Georgia, Georgia homeschooling regulations and it will come up or if you're in a different country of whatever, you can check your locale.

Back to our calendar, we can put in there and then of course any holidays as we know; you'll be taking some time off. Also if you've got younger children, which I know a lot of you do, you may take a week off for festival like Michaelmas at the end of September, you may want to just have a whole week of preparing for the festival and that can also count as school, it just depends but if you want to actually get lessons done, you have to know that you may not get lessons done or that will be incorporated into your lessons.

I know in December, we don't really get much main lesson done. We do now but in the earlier days, it's all about baking and cooking and handwork, making gifts, songs and stories. We didn't do a whole lot of main lesson during December because of all the festivals and Christmas and solstice and all of that. It was less about that. We don't have a lot of work show during those months in the earlier grades but we did a lot during that time. I still count that as school but it may not be the actual main lesson entry in your book and that's okay.

We'll talk a little bit more about that as we get into more of the content. You can go out and walk in a garden and that's certainly a part of your main lesson but it may not show up in your main lesson book unless you want to take pictures and have like a little journal. It's a very good idea. When you're not actually doing main lesson, what are you doing? You can take pictures of what you're doing or drawings of what you're doing and put it in a separate notebook to keep up for accountability because after a while you might say "what were we doing?" We were doing that, there's moving and there's main lesson book for the last few weeks. You've been in the garden, plating or farming or whatever you're doing, house building. We would take some pictures when the girls were building and that kind of things so that I have something to say "yeah here's what we were doing."

You got your plans in front of you, at least the days, the calendar setup that you can see. The next thing is to figure out, this would be your blog so if you're following a curriculum which probably will have some kind of curriculum, at least there's guidance, some of them actually have a plan out like September week 1 we do this, week 2 with this and if you have something that planned out, then you may not have to do a whole lot but I would still make my own plan up, like I would transfer what you've got.

The curriculum I do has it mapped out by week, even by day if I want to use it. I don't always follow it exactly. I bring a lot of my stuff in but I will make my own plan up because there are other things that I want to bring in to my plan as well. Maybe what I'm getting from my curriculum is just main lesson and it pretty much is main lesson. It doesn't take into account the handwork projects that we're working on that tie in with the main lesson. It doesn't take account my circle time, songs and recorder songs that we're learning. We're doing foreign language, baking, any of those other subjects that you're bringing in may not be included in that homeschool curriculum plan that you have and you got to look at that and see.

A lot of the curriculums will just be looked about like 'do the block on fables', do the block on fables and it may give you the outline of what to do but it doesn't say do it in October or when to do it or how to break it up. Sometimes the blocks can be broken up. Sometimes it's a long block like friends and

fairytales. When I did it, if you're doing the fairytales, I wanted to do all of the letters. That took us until the holidays, I want to say and I could have split that up because most blocks are like 4 weeks, 3 weeks, it could go 5 weeks. Mostly when you do those blocks, base it on a 3 or 4 week time period because when it's time to let that rest, I'll talk about main lesson block, I'll talk about it right now.

Steiner believed that having it setup, okay we're going to be working on all math for the next 3 or 4 weeks or all language arts or all one subject, allow the child again to focus fully on what they're doing to lure them and to really think math, math, math and really get it. the half time to digest, doing 12 different subjects in one day, a little bit every day, a little bit every day, he thought kind of do it this way and then when you're done with that lesson, not that you're not doing other things at the same time but the main focus is that - starting fairytales, especially in the earlier grades. You're not doing a ton of work anyway.

When I did the letters, I had it planned out that I was going to do it into 2 separate blocks, that I was going to do form drawing blocks at the very beginning, just like a 2 weeks form drawing block and then move in to the letters and then have the math block, I think it was maybe 4 weeks of the letters then math and then letters. As I was going through, I decided I didn't want to do it that way. I wanted to do all of the letters and get them done so that we could move forward with the reading and they would have all the tools they need. They were really ready. They were old first graders and they already kind of knew their letters because they had gone through a preschool when they were 3 and surprisingly they remembered some of that. That was my judgment and that's what I did for us and that's what the beauty of homeschooling again.

You need to know how to move these blocks around and set them up in a way that it fits, fits your life and it also fits seasonally because a lot of these things that we do in Waldorf are outside. That's another key. You wouldn't want to do a gardening block in January or February if you live in a place where it's snowing. Animals, you have nature stories, it's really great to do them in spring where there's baby animals. You can go to farms and you can see the lambs and the chicken, that kind of thing; building.

A lot of the blocks have a lot of outdoor or could have outdoor, even like local geography. You're going to see the places around you. That's a key to keep in mind and again it's not something I can say equal. Here's the way you need to settle them, you do a math block first then you do this, then you do this because it depends on your grade. It depends on where you live but I can give you a few rules of thumb or things that have worked for me on things I have heard and seen that worked.

A lot of times you can do math in the winter and I have found that because it's too cold to go outside and try to get the subjects where you really have to be in during the time where you're in anyway and I feel like January is a good time to take the least focusing, you kind of have that break from the holidays and you're like "okay, I'm ready to jump in and get serious" and you start thinking "happy you're done. I got to really move, get things moving" and you kind of really get focus. For me it worked really well to do handwork projects that require knitting wool because it's very hot where I live and I don't want to knit when it's 90 degrees that time.

Taking into consideration where you live and if you're doing like a first grade block again, with the letters and things it's not that big of a deal but for me it was. I wanted to get through the whole block then I thought they haven't done any math, whatever but it doesn't matter. It's great. It worked out with the quality of numbers and you can do all of that in the winter time and it will be just fine and then I did nature stories in the early spring and then we did the four processes towards the end of the year and continue with the reading and things.

You know it may change but sometimes if you have no idea, then you just look at it and say "okay what do we want to do first?" There is some sort of a structure to it. If you stick to what I'm saying, like think about the outside, the inside, what do you really want to do first? If there's something that coincide with a festival like third grade when we did the old testament, then I tried to do things around the time that we would have things going on like Hanukkah and Passover.

I made sure we were doing the stories around the times of those holidays and festivals so it just made sense. Why would we study it in different time and then months later do Passover? I mean you could and it just depends but to me it made sense to group things together that would fit second grade. We're doing fables and then really kind of getting time on legends and saints, again perfect for all of the St. Valentine and St. Patrick's Day and St. Nicholas. You may not get them all done but you can keep on trying to do. What's better to do St. Nicholas than around St. Nicholas Day? We'll do the story. Look at that and that's why it's really important to start thinking about your content and have this in mind ahead of time but what is the content? Be familiar with what your content is.

Maybe I should backup stuff there and I did that call about spring planning and I'll give you guys that call because of little audios that I get about 'how to'. The start in the spring, looking through what are the blocks, the main lesson blocks that I'll have to be covering in the upcoming year; taking a look, getting familiar and knowing that you're doing the saints and the fables and whatever so that when it's time to plan, you go "oh yeah, I'm doing things. Let's look at the calendar. Let's look at the holiday schedule" and that way, how can I figure that in? If you have no idea then you're going to be like "I don't even know where to start." Being familiar, maybe that is really step 1 before even getting your calendar out, is to be familiar with the content.

You don't have to know every detail but at least be familiar with if you're doing Old Testament, you can read through some of that and start getting familiar with what the stories are about and what you'll be experiencing through the stories. Is it a lot about outside and that kind of thing or is it the animal stories and the nature stories. That will perfect. We can go to the botanical garden then you can do this, plan those farm trips when you're talking about the nature stories and the math and everything science, whatever, depending on what grade you're in of course.

Being familiar with what's happening will help you and a lot of it will start sliding into place and before you know it, you've got this block over here and this block over here and you've got sort of an outline and the rest you just fill in. let's see what am I missing? I still need fractions, that goes here and I can do that. It's a 4 week block; I can stick it right in January. February is a little short on month so maybe we'll do this and it just becomes kind of not really juggling but you just look at it and say what kind of make

sense and you can move things around if we go a little bit deeper but at first it's just kind of getting that plan, looking around what makes sense to you, for your physical location and what makes them to tie into what's happening with holidays, festival, nature times of year and all of that.

You're doing like the native American, you might be planning trips to go to a reservation or something and you would want to do that when you can go visit and to do stories at the same time. It's possible. It may not be totally possible and if you're doing more than one grade, another thing that has been recommended is that you do the same types of block within each grade, for instance what I mean is in January everybody gets a math block. If they're doing 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, everybody is doing math so that you're in a different mode when you're doing math and you might plan doing language arts and doing a lot of sewing. Keeping it all the same, so everybody is at least doing some kind of literature and story for language arts versus one's doing math, one's doing language arts and one's doing science and then you've got a toddler too. That's one recommendation I haven't had to do. I only got twins so they're in the same grade but that's another recommendation to help if you have to do more than one grade.

You might now, if you've gotten to the point where you're sketching things up, use pencil by the way so you can erase. I just don't want you to have to do it by the weeks, at this point we are just writing something for that month. For the next step is to kind of go and do it by weeks. If you have a big enough piece of paper or if you want to do it on a separate sheet, you can list each month and then week 1, week 2, week 3, week 4; week 1, week 2, week 3, week 4 on different months.

For the most part they've got about 4 weeks. That's when you start to get a little more detailed and you may have a curriculum that has some of that and then you can go to that curriculum and say "let's look at the fables block" and there's probably more than one fable block if I remember. We did maybe 3 different fable blocks when we did it, kind of a 3 week block, here, here and there and also the trickster tales, really great. My kids love those Nancy and some of those other tales that you can find from other land is really cool.

The next one like I said is to start looking. If you have a curriculum that has it laid out, go to the book, look and see how they have it and you can pretty much transfer what they thought. Maybe week 1, here are the two fables to do this week or if you're just doing it on your own, creating your own, you can start checking out your books in the library or you've got a favorite book at home and start looking through.

We're going to cover these, these 4 weeks here are the fables that we're going to cover; maybe you've got 6 fables to go or 8 fables for those 4 weeks, 2 a week that you want to cover and then you start getting a little bit more detailed. Not real detailed you've at least got the basic story that you'll be doing for that, this is how I do it or if you're doing math or whatever, this is what we're going to be talking about.

Fraction, let's say fraction, that's my block. The first week, what is a fraction? And then the next one might be talking about numerator and denominator. I'm getting a little bit more then we're adding fractions, the common denominator. It's not real detailed like actual lesson plan but you've got the goals that week, the subject that you're going to be dealing with. If you are doing it yourself, like I said you

really have to be familiar with what stories so we can start to plug that in and here's where the real planning come into play and I find that doing the very detailed planning, I usually do it over the summer.

I usually have a good idea in the spring what blocks are coming up. I'm familiar. I start to get some books in the library or maybe I have some resources already that I started to collect and I just start reading through them and I get a feel for the year and with what I'm doing and I talk about this and the other thing but I'll bring a little bit but then as you go as start seeing things, there's this great story that I'm going to be reading about the Norse myth and I just came across this great recipe that ties right in with that or whatever and so then you start making, I suggest some kind of an online folder as well as a physical note. I have a notebook, a 3-ring binder that I use for my planning. I use the same binder every year and it's got the pocket, the front pocket so if I find something online or I see something here, I make notes, start my own supplies list, what do I need to order for the upcoming year? We're out of paint, I got to go get more paint or I'm going to need main lesson books. I'm going to need those and as I realize, I'm going to need depending on what you're doing. I'm going to need knitting needles and yarn because we're going to start to knit. Depending on what you're doing in that grade will dictate what you need to add to the list.

If you start ahead of time looking, if you see a great verse that you love, "I just love that. that's going to go great with a poem or a song" you can bookmark it on your computer and you'll have it or you can print it out if it's somewhere or make a copy or make a note from the library, "this is an excellent book. I'll use this for my blog on whatever, botany" and then when it comes time for your botany block, you can look and see "where is that library book?" instead of trying to figure out "what was the name of it? Where was it?" and it's a lot of waste of time. Try to keep notations as you're going and look while you can. Online bookmarking, I know I had this great poem. I said in this other call that I love and I never found it again. I don't know what happened and it's like "oh my" it's frustrating. I spent a long time searching for it again instead if I had just bookmarked it.

Having that stuff when it comes to planning, you already have something that you've gathered. Maybe you've seen some blogs. There's so much stuff out there. You can look on Pinterest, that's a great resource that I've discovered. On Pinterest, that really gives you some pictures of things and ideas about what your main lesson books could look like and chalkboard drawings and there are verses and songs. Check out Pinterest.

There's a really great resource that you may not thought about but it gives you a real visual there and they give a lot of recommendations to where it comes from. That's another thing to start collecting. Start collecting these that you'll need down the line and I want to say that "oh yes, I can plug this right into my calendar. I wanted to make sure that I did this handwork project like I want to make a little knitted socks to go along with the fables and we do the fox and the grapes" or whatever and there's my pattern. It all starts to come together then when you start going and putting the weekly lessons. I hope that's making sense.

You've got your weekly lessons built in and that does take a lot. It really requires you to sit down and take some time. if you can have afternoon by yourself, I suggest try to block off a day if you can or at

least a few hours because for me, it's like once I just get started, if I had to stop then I have to wait another. It seems like it takes a while for my juices to start flowing and getting everything together and when I see all my books in front of me and start to plan, if I have to start and stop, start and stop, start and stop, it takes a lot longer for me. If there's a way that you could take an afternoon on a weekend and have your husband or somebody take the kids to really get time in the summer, even like you could take the weekend by yourself somewhere. I don't know if you can possibly do that. It would be excellent. Go to the beach and plan yourself.

Anyway, it will take some time and you will start juggling and still, this is not like a finished thing. It's still moving things around or adding, "that's not going to work there because I need two more extra week out of that and that's going to run into the holidays and there's going to be a lot of shuffling around" that's how it looks to me. Shuffling around, that won't work there, let's move it over here and I start to get really excited when I see it coming together and I start also to get excited when I start getting into the concept, "oh this is going to be really fun" and then once you got your week planned, again not really, really detailed but you do have a structure there, then you can search a little more and then if you're doing this in the beginning of the summer, you still got the whole summer if something else comes along or you see something else while you're planning, kind of add right in. "That's a perfect recipe. That's a perfect song. That's a perfect fieldtrip I can do that I never thought of before and I can add that right in to that week and make a note."

The weekly, the weekly plan, that is a little bit different and I'll give you a copy of the weekly planner that use and believe me I tried different things. There are all kinds of planners and you got to do what works for you. This thing worked for me so if you want to take mine and change it, you can certainly do it. There's not much. I tool someone else's and just tweaked the stuff on it and it depends on how you want to do it. Again, I use a 3-ring notebook. I know a friend who makes herself a spreadsheet and she has it all right there, her whole plan for the whole year. She can change whenever she wants.

I like writing it out and I like seeing it and I used to have one for each day, like a different page in the notebook. There was so much paper and I found it was kind of wasteful and then if we didn't get to what we wanted to do that day, I had to just keep transferring it all together. What I have is a weekly sheet and on my weekly sheet I have a big box at the top and it lists out what's my main lesson, what am I working on, what's my form drawing for the week, what's my recorder song, what are our handwork project and I kind of fill all that in and then I just sort of have my goal for the week under that, like I want to make sure we do this story and this story.

We're going to do this on fraction and work on fraction and then below I have 5 days – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. I don't even have them like that, they're open. It could be any day but I do have 5 spaces there and then I have a space for notes on the right at the top where I can make notes, things I need to get, things I need to do, just little reminder as I'm going along. We need extra writing practice; I can make notes in the margin and go back. Then I write out what I want to do for each day and that's where I say "we're going to read this story on page 39 of the fable book" be as specific as you can. You can really go as far as drawing out. Some people have their own main lesson book that they do ahead of time and have their drawings and everything already done. I don't usually do

it ahead of time as far as chalkboard drawings and what drawings we're going to do but I have an idea what I wanted to do in my head and we'll talk a little bit more about that like weekend planning.

Here's where you fill in a lot more of the details. The story, the page the story is on and I have a separate circle time like word talk if you will where I write our main circle time stuff on, where I used to do it especially on the younger years but then I still include circle time on my weekly plan because we do recorder on Monday, we don't do recorder everyday but on my Monday I'll write recorder for circle time.

As you go along in the grades, we do a lot of spelling and mental math, times tables and things like that. I do those extra on main lesson thing, then I write it. This is what I want to concentrate this week in circle time; I add that to my weekly thing. I don't write out my circle time routine everyday because I have it on a separate thing and it would be too much to put it on the paper but I just put circle time and I know that's what we're doing. I'll be happy to give you the examples to them and show you what mine is. And then I go back, I don't always do it every day but a couple times a week then I write notes and I spell in like a check mark "we added this" I make notes right on the paper, "we did this, we did this, we didn't get to do it this week" so I circle it and then it goes on next week so I know I have to do that.

If you have a curriculum you're following that really just follows out all the lessons, you may not have to do anything except for lesson number 50, page 78 in the book and then you turn to your other book and that's where you are. I think the thing that I like about it and that's fine but then what you can use your notebooks for whatever plan you decide to use it, to bring in those extra thing – the handwork project, "we're baking the Challah bread this week when we're doing the Jewish Old Testament" adding those other things.

Maybe your main lesson has all of that and if you have, that's great. If it doesn't, then you need to have a place to tract and to have all those other little things that you really want to do or they won't get done, the handwork projects that go along. I tried to do like a monthly handwork project for each block. We don't always do that, there's not always one going on. The girls are always crafting a lot so I don't worry. We're doing beeswax and your painting day too; you want to make sure you add that. What day will you be doing your painting on the week? You put that and what are we going to be painting? It's the place to add all those little specifics.

The weekly plans, this is how I do it. Once a month or before the next month is coming, I take a look and say "what's coming for next month so I can start looking?" Maybe I have to get some supplies from the craft store, if I'm out of yarn or I need something here, maybe there's something special that we're doing that I need to get, there's anything I need to get. You don't have to always order all your supplies at the beginning of the year for the whole year. I don't always recommend that. There may be some main things you need to have like pencils and crayons but if they're special projects, you can spread that out so it's not expensive in ordering one huge order and just do it as you need it.

If you're not doing handwork until January, you can wait and order your stuff in December or the beginning of January to get your needles and your yarn and all of that. I take a look, "I've got the Norse myth coming up. What are my stories? Do I have all the books? Do I need to check a book from the library that I need to have for them?" I try to gather all my stuff that I'm going to need for that whole month block or however long your block is and get my supply and then what I'll do, in a perfect world what I'll do is to really make sure that the whole, my weekly plan is all done up.

If I didn't do it out at the beginning of the year, I sometimes don't do it all out like that specific until the full the block. You can do either way and I recommend try to get as much planning done as ahead of time as you possibly can and as detailed as you can but for me, a lot of times I want to be a little more organic with it and I want to kind of bring where are right now and what feels right here to bring in? I have a basic structure but then I want to bring in some other stuff and that kind of comes with confidence too. In the beginning I was very, very focused. I had all my stuff and I followed the plan and that was that.

You can do it in whatever way that feels good for you and you may not know and it may change like mine did where I kind of loosen a little, like what inspiration flows to me flow, that kind of thing. At worst case scenario, you have the following week's plan. I usually take a look at it on Sunday; you could do it on Saturday. What's actually coming up for this week? What do I need to know? Especially if you're doing the stories in the early years where you're telling the story instead of having them read the story and that story telling is a whole separate thing really. I can't really get into all of that.

I've got some audios on my website, we have some of the how to do storytelling to really be effective because this is really amazing and there's a lot of storytelling those early years, it's really all story, telling those fairytales and what fairytales are you doing? You may have or may not have heard to read each story 3 times before you present it. First time you just read it through. The second time you kind of digest it and third time you're kind of making notes like a mental outline of the story.

I'm going to get a little bit more into that when we get into presenting but I'm just trying to give you a feel for what it's like on a weekly basis that you need to do because you have to factor all of this time into your life on your planning. You don't want to spend your weeks planning and planning and planning. If you want to do it all at once and get as detailed as possible, do it in the summer or you could do it, I try it for months, for me that's kind of what worked that I go "this month we're going to do this" and I really blast out the whole month and then I've got my sheet for the whole month and then I've got my sheet for the whole month already done.

We don't always do it exactly that way but at least it's planned and I've got that. We may add or change or subtract but I've got the plans, I know what songs we're singing, I know which stories we're going to do, paintings are going to go with what, I have a handwork project, I have the supplies and I'm ready to go. Really on Sunday you just kind of looking and glancing what is it that we're doing and once you kind of get in routine with circle time, that'll become very comfortable after a few months if you're just getting started and then circle time becomes a fun thing and you don't really have to think a lot about it

because you kind of do the same thing, the same verse, the same song, may change up to the seasons a little bit.

Again, you don't have to have 45 minutes for itself, kind of 15 minutes for the younger years really and you don't have to change songs very often. The kids like consistency and it makes it easy for you learning that song and they know it, that verse and then they know it. I would really not change, I did it just like seasonally, maybe went for a holiday song here or there. I had 3 different circle times because we didn't really do school in the summer and it made it easy. I just let it done and then I don't have to think about planning out circle time. it was all finished and then I just have my little cheat sheet that kind of said "here's what we do" and I always had a little bit extra than what I thought because sometimes the kids wanted more and if you didn't, then we didn't have to do everything.

Basically that's kind of planning, taking good notes, making notes as you go along for record keeping is important. It may or may not be important, it depends on where you live, maybe a place where you have to turn something in. it's always good to keep some kind of records, just to say "here's what we're doing" a lot of months I keep a journal at the end of the day, "what does my child...how well did they go? What can I help them bring? What do they need help with?" I try to do a quarterly kind of evaluation. How are things going? Are we on time? Are we ahead? Do I need to speed things up? Are they getting it? I kind of look and see how much do I have left and kind of gauge. Then I do a halfway point, where am I? It's a little more in depth.

Here's what we did the first semester and I write it all out because by the end of the year, I cannot remember. I also start looking back at my homeschool bills and I'll give you a sheet if you want that at the beginning of the year this is something I do with my planning because I have a homeschool bill. What do I want for myself? What do I want for my homeschool? What do I want for each child? What do I think they need? I really think about that for a long time. It's not like I just sit down and do it. I may do one child; think about it this week then the next week. Where are they struggling a little? What do I think they need more practice with? What are their strength that I can help build? You have to bring that out more and build on that. What do they love to do? I really think of them as an individual and really see.

During my quarterly check in and my halfway check in, I look at that. How am I doing with my goals? Is my goal to be on track and be a little more organized, how is that going? Am I hitting that? You don't have to do that but that's just something I do for myself. I find that I get a lot out of it and I think "oh yeah I was supposed to do this and I haven't brought that in yet. I need to make sure I do that" kind of a thing, it reminds you where we are at the big picture. Sometimes we get really lost in the daily, daily details and go back to the big picture again when you want an understanding of what you wanted for yourself. Maybe you want more fieldtrip and you realize you haven't done any field trip or not enough and you really want to get out of the house and at homeschool you should be able to. The beauty of it is to go see these things and to experience instead of just reading into the book.

Record keeping, I do some of the end of the semester summary. Here's what we've done so far. Here's what I really want to keep going with or here's what I need to do for the next kind of thing and then at

the end of the year I'll do another one. I'll do it twice. Now I have it in my record. It's not a long thing but it just might be and you can do it for each child or each grade, however you want to do it. I do kind of just for each grade because you're kind of doing the same thing but at the end of the year I do kind of have a little summary of each child.

Here's what they've learned. Here's what I think they did great. Here's what they could use for next year to help in the following year's planning. I hope I'm not giving you too much here but it really isn't bad if you have time and you can start doing these little pieces. That's what I recommend. Start by learning what's coming up. Start reading your fairytales. Start reading the Old Testament. Start reading the fables and the saint stories. Which ones do you like? Which ones do you not like? Which ones do you think "Oh My Gosh! This will be perfect for my child" start making those notes.

Start bookmarking and then a lot of it can be done and it's not stress and you're not pushed upon and you'll get a real feel for what's happening and what was that whole atmosphere is for the following year. Just do it a little bit at a time. Try not to slam yourself down in the last week of August to plan out your year. I do not recommend that all at, very stressful and if you have several grades to do then you're going to need a little bit more time to go through it and if you never done it and you might be like "I don't know what to do" then give yourself the gift of time and time to change, time to chat with others.

There's forums and things you can come on our forum and there's other forums around to get ideas. If you're in the middle of it, you may have questions and when you're not here during this class, then you may have questions. "What do I do? How do I find the answer?" If you have time, then you can reach out to friends online and other homeschooling moms and see what they have to say so you can get that help. Try to keep it relaxed and fun so that you're not so like "oh my God! Overwhelmed and burned out" before you even started.

I certainly welcome your questions here. I know this is a lot to talk about. I'm going to try to give you some examples of things you can look at and I've got a planning template which kind of goes through what I just said that you can keep in your notebook or whatever just to kind of glance at the kind of the steps that I just gave you, not as detailed but just kind of the summary. That template, you could follow that template as you're going in planning.

Okay I did step 1, now I'm on to step 2; to kind of keep you moving through it or keep you going. It's really a process. It's just taking a little bit of action, taking a little bit of action and just keeping with yourself forward. You will change. Things change throughout the year. Be flexible and be okay with that. If you have to scrap the plan and say "this is not working. I need to do something else" be okay with that. I have done that. I'm like "this is now what I thought and I've got to change some stuff" and that's fine. That's the beauty of it and don't just say "I'm going to stick to it because this is my plan." If it's not working, you can have that flexible state and say "even if we have to take 2 weeks off while I re-plan" whatever you need to do and redo and rethink because you don't want to force it.

You don't want it to be...you want it to be fun. You don't want it to be something that is a chore and if you're following even a curriculum that you bought that you don't like, "I've invested in it and I'm going

to just stick with it.” you may have to do that but maybe you could bring it in, in a different way. We can talk about that when we get into presenting the material a little bit more.

Alright, I’m going to wrap up the planning. Please post your questions. I’d love to hear what else you need to know and I’ll be happy to answer all your questions in the forum. Talk to you later, bye.

**End Of Audio**