

Dare I?

by Michelle Miller



Boys! Are they real? As a schoolgirl, I remember wondering. Having just one (wonderful) sister, a dear mother, and a father from an older generation, I had never interacted with guys in a real-life way. Of course, I had male pals at school and in the neighborhood. We had a blast building forts in the sumac and playing baseball, football, or kick-the-can. But when they went home, did their mothers “deactivate” these playthings and put them on a shelf until morning? (They were playthings to me—fun opponents to tackle in a football game.) Were they real creatures who talked, hung out with their families, read, ate, and did chores? Guys’ home life was a veiled mystery.

were adorable crawlers. Still, it would become scary when they were walkers, right? Nope, they were precious then too. I assumed the two-year-old stage would be fearsome. However, that was a blast! Hmmm, maybe ages three, four, and five would be sweet also, but the school age years would be unknowable terror. Then they would be like my old neighborhood guy-pals who didn’t seem to have real home lives.

I was pleasantly surprised again. Their elementary years were joy inexpressible. There had been nothing to fear at all. In fact, it was during this period

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It’s a Boy!

Imagine my intimidation when, years later and after what *seemed* like three thousand hours of labor, the obstetrician announced, “It’s a boy!” I was about to find out what guys were like on a daily basis, in my *own* home! Four years later, a second son arrived, and I went from a girly family to an all-boy family. And I mean *all* boy, especially with a college hoopster for a husband. We teased that I actually gave birth to basketballs and incubated them until my athletic sons popped out.

But I faced intimidation. Would I know what my boys liked to do? How would they relate? Would clothing and shoe sizes stump me? What about ideas for Christmas presents? All I knew was girl stuff.

I loved their newborn stage, but how would they do in the next stage? Lo and behold, they





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that the Lord directed us to homeschool, and life become incalculably better. We had fun!

A Plausible Argument Disproved

But Insecurity lurked in the background. “Michelle,” it whispered, “you can manage elementary homeschooling, because *anyone* can. But it will *certainly* be impossible in junior and senior high! Did you get that word, Michelle? Can *you* handle *high* stuff? It is *highly* important, *highly* crucial, and *highly* technical. You *dare not* teach anything so vital, for you mustn’t risk botching this phase. You knew this time was coming, when parenting these boys would be too much for you.”

A plausible argument, but it falls short on two counts:

- 1 It didn’t matter if I felt insecure, because the Lord God had told us to homeschool these boys! The question, then, wasn’t *dare I* teach algebra, it was *dare I* disobey the King?! Until He lifted the mandate to homeschool our sons, we knew we were to continue.

After that, there really didn’t need to be a second point, but there was.

- 2 My human hesitations were *human*. The idea that high school is “technical” is secular. Our proud and fallen world insists that this planet and mankind are biochemical amalgamations and “education” is a compilation of dissected, compartmentalized, scientific, and merely brain-size factoids. But “education” is a spiritual embrace of the transcendent truths of God, the universe He has made (science and math), and His special creation of and interaction with relational humans (history, language, and the arts). In fact, the *higher* the education, the *more* this is true. The elementary grades are the ones that are about “technical” skills: reading, ’riting, and ’rithmetic.

Beyond Insecurity

As kids mature into their teens, their cognitive and spiritual maturity reaches toward adult levels. They are finally capable of grappling with

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the crucial questions of life that are conduits to the greatest eternal truths. The chance to participate significantly in your kids’ growth and learning comes in high school!

Anyone can teach them algebra and chemistry. My sons attended our local community college for some of those factual topics and earned college credit. But we sought the Lord and jealously guarded the topics of greatest spiritual import, like history, language, art, literature, life sciences, economics, philosophy, and so forth. The Lord provided many opportunities for me to get beyond Insecurity by showing me that each feared phase became sheer delight. I went through none of them alone; He held on, equipping and empowering me. It isn’t surprising that high school was no different. I was still His conduit—the face, hands, voice, driver’s license, and checkbook He used. It was still Him at work, over and above all. My part was a joyous privilege in the richest of times. Moreover, it allowed me a deeper relationship with my sons because I was meeting them at their point of greatest maturity and showing them that the Lord was *the answer* to life’s thorniest questions. No wonder, even after some challenging times, they came to us with their other grown-up questions too. I thank God He kept me home with my high school boys. I wouldn’t have missed it for the world!

Michelle Miller is in her nineteenth year of daring to homeschool. Two younger children (and hubby, thankfully!) are still at home in northern Michigan. Two older sons are now successful, married adults. Michelle has authored a spiritually focused, in-depth, literature-based history curriculum: *TruthQuest History*, one of Cathy Duffy’s “100 Top Picks” and an award honoree.