

Ideas For Teaching “Living History”

by Jan Hunter

These are only ideas. Different things work for different families, ages of children, etc. Some ideas may be helpful to you in using this history. Some ideas may help you come up with ideas of your own that better suit your family. If you would like to share your ideas and successes with us write to us at the address above. It’s fun to share ideas with each other.

Memorize key date, key personality, and key event:

This information is found in the front of the book, behind the introduction on page x. The page is titled The Nine Key Dates, Events, and Key Personalities of ... Each volume has nine dates, personalities, and events to memorize. Get colored 3"x5" cards. (I use one color for *The World Before Christ*, a different color for *The World After Christ*, and another color for *United States History/Ancient American History*. You may want to make it more challenging by using the same color. Using *The World Before Christ* as an example, you will need 27 cards for volume 1, 27 cards for volume 2, and 27 cards for volume 3, all of the same color. Using volume 1 as an example, get 9 cards and write one date on one card, another date on the next card, and continue until you have a different date on each card. With the next 9 cards write a person on each card, and with the last 9 cards write the event on each card.

Using the date cards, lay them out on the table or floor in order and say them out loud together going in order. After saying the dates a number of times, remove 3 cards and say the dates all the way through a few times, now having to remember the ones that are removed. Remove 3 more cards and repeat the process. Then remove the final 3 cards and say the dates a few times. Now have everyone write the dates on a paper as fast as they can. In one day you have memorized the dates.

On the second day have everyone write the dates in order as fast as they can (mom too!). Then say them out loud together. Now learn the people the same way you learned the dates lining up the cards in two columns with the date on the left and the person to the right of the date. Now say the date, and person that goes with it, in order. At the end have everyone write down the dates and personalities in two columns (date on one side, with the person next to it) without seeing the cards.

On the third day repeat the process above by first reviewing the dates and personalities from the previous day and then adding the events. You should now have three columns as you see it on the Key Date, etc. page.

Once all 27 cards have been memorized you can now play some games to keep them fresh in your mind. This should be done every day at the beginning of history. Find different ways to use the flash cards. Here are a few: (A) Put all the dates face up in order. Put all the other cards face down. Take turns picking up a card and putting it where it belongs with the date. A variation to this is keep the person face up, or the event face up, with the other cards face

down. (B) Keep the date card face up and the rest of the cards face down. Now play the memory game by turning over 2 cards, but now the person and event need to match with each

other, and place them next to the correct date. (C) From the whole pile of cards let everyone take a turn picking one of the cards, then see who can give the answer for the other two. Involve your children in coming up with other games.

Some days just have everyone write down the date, person, and event in three columns on a piece of paper as fast as they can, or try saying the date-person-event backwards in order.

Teaching around ages 5 to 11:

These books are written at a high school reading level, so you don't want to go through all the details with younger children. When you teach younger children, still read the whole Epoch for your own knowledge and understanding, then for teaching pick and choose those stories and facts that would be interesting to your children. For me I have an easier time telling a history story (even if it's just a portion of it) if I myself understand the whole picture, with the background of what was happening at that time.

All children can make a "History Notebook," which becomes their own history book. I won't go into a lot of details here since there is a pamphlet for a small cost on "How To Make A History Notebook," but I will give you some information to get started. After teaching one Epoch, let each person choose a person they would like to write about, and an event they would like to write about, that you taught from that Epoch. If your child is not writing yet, or is limited in their writing skills, you can have them dictate to you and you can write it down for them. Use one paper for a person, and another paper for an event. Include a picture, either a copy of a picture, a picture cut out of old (thrift store) encyclopedias or history text books from the thrift store, or they can draw a picture. (Some of the people or event pages make good talks for church.) Have them store their papers in a 3-ring notebook (used only for history) with a divider for each Epoch. Mom, don't miss out on all the fun - make your own history book along with your children. They should keep all their papers so that when you have completed these histories (it's designed for six years) you start over again, and now the children are older and will learn the history at a deeper level. They will continue to add other people, events, and other papers (see teaching the older ages) to their notebooks.

Teaching around ages 11 and up:

These ages are just a guideline. You know best what your child is capable of. Now children can help with some of the teaching. Make a list of who and what you will cover in an Epoch and let them choose what they would like to study and report on. They can use the Living History book or other books.

Have everyone make their own "History Notebook" (see information on this in [Teaching around ages 5 to 11](#)). In their notebook each Epoch should have a person page(s), an event page(s), a time line, and map(s). They can write about more than one person and event for an Epoch, and also when you study volumes 2 and 3 they will add more people and events to the same Epoch. One page to write about a person may not be enough. Add the lined only page

behind the person page (or event page) or have them do a research paper on their person and event. If they help teach they should put their notes in this notebook. Any notes taken during class should go in their notebook.

There are many magazines that have history articles - National Geographic, Ensign, The

Friend, Highlights, etc. These articles can be put in their notebooks, as well as handouts from Seminary and other classes or speakers that go with history. This way it is all organized in one place, and now each person has their own history book that they will refer to over and over again. It is a great place to get information to give a talk in church, and the person or event page is a talk already put together.

Teaching multiple ages:

When you have different ages and learning levels, teach to the highest learning level. Somehow the younger learners seem to be able to stay up enough that everyone learns something. If you have a big age span, like ages 7 to 16, you might want to divide the children into two groups dividing them at around age 11 and teach the two different age groups separately, or give the story you would teach to the younger ones (in a shorter time period), then dismiss them and continue on in detail with the older ones.

How much to cover in a day:

Decide how much time you want to spend on an Epoch (include time to work on Person and Event Pages, and if you are going to watch a video you need to include time for that, too). Take the total number of pages in the Epoch and divide it by the number of days for teaching. This will give you the amount of pages you need to cover each day. It should be around 5 to 8 pages. We have history every day for about an hour (this includes discussions and working on maps). Sometimes I only have 30 minutes the night before to read over the history lesson for the next day, and so it is very helpful to have the pages divided up to know how much I need to read to stay on target. Sometimes we end up having a good discussion about the lesson and we take extra time or we don't cover as much. These discussions mean the children are thinking, so don't discourage their involvement. Be flexible.

Videos:

When you use a video in history be sure the children watch it after you have done the teaching. This way everyone (including the teacher) will get more out of the video. As a rule of thumb show a movie for about 45 minutes, and a documentary for 30 minutes. Preview the video to make sure it will be good for the ages of your family.

Audio Tapes:

Use the same guidelines for tapes that are suggested for videos, only time needs to be shortened to 15-20 minutes.

Maps:

I hand out the map outlines on the day I'll be teaching about it. I take the time at the beginning to go over the geography of where the water is and where the land is. Then while I am teaching I let the children color in the water areas. This way it is easier to figure out where the places are that we are talking about. While teaching, when I come to a place that we can locate on the map, we fill out the map with that information and add on as we come to it in our history story. We use different colors of pencils for boundaries or land owned by different countries, etc.

Make it colorful. I have my map filled out before so the children can use my map for a guide.

Coloring books:

My children like to color while I teach history. I have found some coloring books by Dover that cover a number of historical events that go along with what we are covering in history. Just to give you an example they have Life in Ancient Greece, Life in Ancient Rome, Life in Ancient Egypt, Story of the Civil War, Story of the Vikings, Airplanes of WWI, Airplanes of WWII, Castles of the World, Columbus Discovers America, Exploration of North America, History of Space Exploration, Lewis & Clark Expedition, Indian Tribes of North America, etc. The only drawback to this is they don't take many notes, but they do listen to what we're talking about. These can be found or ordered from many bookstores.

Time line:

Each person can make a time line of the Epoch being studied. Put on the people and major events being studied about. Put it in their history book and when you study that Epoch again, in volume 2 or 3 and study different people and events, you will add more people to it. There is a time line with each Epoch in the Living History books.

Pictures:

As you can see, there are no pictures in these history books. There are many books available to add pictures for your history stories. Just a few places to look are books from the library that cover a historical period or event, encyclopedias, history books from thrift stores or garage sales, National Geographic Magazine has articles about The Byzantine Empire, Columbus, The Mayan, etc.

Tests:

There are no questions or tests in the Living History books. That is so that you can teach what your family most needs. If there were questions or tests you would teach to the questions. Instead everyone writes about a person and an event for each Epoch. (See [Teaching around ages 5 to 10](#) for more information.)

Literature:

Bring literature into the history Epoch. Read literature books, biographies, autobiographies, history books, etc. The book comes more alive because you have been studying something about it - the time period, events, and people. Also, read a book aloud. Children never seem to tire of this. Discuss a book you read together or have them give a report on one they read on their own, but not on every book. Let them read some just for fun. Many books that have been out of print are being reprinted. There are some suggestions in the "Suggested Reading Books" in each Epoch. If you know of a book to be added to the list, let us know.

Recall:

Everyday do recall at the beginning of history. In 10 minutes everyone should write everything they can remember about the lesson the day before. Tell them they don't need to

worry about spelling, writing complete sentences, or putting it in chronological order. At the beginning they will have a hard time coming up with things to write about, but before long 10 minutes will not be enough time for everything they want to write.

Another way for recall is for children to tell dad at dinnertime what they learned in history that day. When dads take the time to listen to them, children will be more interested in learning and paying attention each day so that they can share it with dad. Dad should only give praise - no correcting wrong information unless the child asks. Make history a family discussion during dinner.

Guest Speakers:

Have a guest speaker come (maybe invite some other homeschool families you know). Do you know someone who has studied about an event or person in history? How about someone who is Jewish and can tell you about some of their religious celebrations, or someone who has lived in Saudi Arabia or another foreign country?

Field trips:

Every state has some historical sites you can visit. Also, don't forget about historical museums - like a place that has WWII airplanes, covered wagons, an old time printing shop, candle making, pottery making. These are just a few ideas, but once you get thinking (and praying) about it ideas will pop into your head. Invite other homeschool families to come along with you.

What takes most of my time with teaching history:

The preparation time is really not bad (I know, we're all busy with our families). The thing that I end up spending a lot of time on is now that history has become so interesting and fun to learn about I find myself wanting to spend my afternoon reading more about the people and events we learned about in class. I don't always get to have that time, but when I can it has been rewarding. The following is an example of my own studying. Squanto is mentioned in the *United States History*, volume 1 book. But I wanted to learn more than the story that was there. Children also may want to study more on a particular subject of history. Have them write a paper about it to include in their "History Notebook" or at least write down the books they studied from so they can refer back to them again in the future. This is what I learned about Squanto:

Squanto ***by Jan Hunter***

Did you know that Squanto lived with the white men, twice in England before the Pilgrims ever landed at Plymouth? Did you know that God had a mission for Squanto, and that He preserved Squanto's life and guided him for this mission?

Squanto was born near what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts around 1585. He was a Patuxet Indian. In 1605 some white men from England sailed into the bay on a big ship, bigger than anything Squanto had ever seen before. The white men were coming to trade with them. Squanto went to meet them. One of the men, Charles Robins, could speak Squanto's language. They had been north, trading with the Massachusetts Indians, and Robins had learned their

language. Their captain was George Weymouth. Squanto took the men to see his chief who was pleased to greet the white men. The Indians prepared a feast for the white men. Captain Weymouth gave the chief a gift of a strand of blue beads. The chief was pleased. They traded beads, knives, and cloth to the Indians for their animal skins.

After the feast, Squanto walked with the men to the shore. He looked at the ship and wanted to ride on it. The men would be leaving and invited Squanto to come with them. The chief told Squanto it would be good for him to go with them so he could speak to the Indians and also learn many things from the white men. He learned their English language. They visited many Indian tribes and did a lot of trading. Soon it was time to sail back to England and Squanto agreed to go with them. There was no time for him to say good-bye to his family, so he told the Indians to get word to his family that he was going to England and then would come back home again. It took a long time to sail to England. The men on the ship were very kind to Squanto.

There was so much for Squanto to see in England, things he had never seen before, such as buildings and houses with smoke coming out a chimney, clocks that ticked, and books with pictures in them. Many people were frightened to see an Indian from the New World. Squanto stayed with Charles Robins. There were many things for him to get use to, like sleeping in a bed, wearing more clothing, and eating different food. Captain Weymouth put Squanto on a stage with Indian decorations and people paid him to see and Indian. The people were nice to Squanto, but after some time he was homesick for his family. There were no boats going to the New World so Squanto had to wait many years.

Finally in 1614 Squanto sailed back to the New World with Captain John Smith. Another ship traveled with Smith, captained by Thomas Hunt. This is the same John Smith who had earlier been to the New World, met Pocahontas, and helped establish a colony in Virginia. On this trip Smith was going to Massachusetts to make maps for the king. Once the ships reached the New World, they separated with Captain Smith traveling north and Captain Hunt traveling south. Smith was farther north than Squanto's village, so Squanto still had to be patient and wait to see his family.

Then it was time for Squanto to go home. He said good-bye to Captain Smith and started a three days' walk to his village. He could hardly wait to get home. Then tragedy struck. He ran into Captain Hunt. His men pushed Squanto to the ground and tied his hands and feet. They carried him to a small boat, and rowed him out to the big ship and lowered him with a rope into the dark hold of the ship (in the bottom of the ship). He found there were other Indians from his tribe who were tied up, also. Captain Hunt was kidnaping the Indians and taking them to Europe to sell as slaves. After weeks of traveling with little food, they finally landed in Spain. The Indians were led to the slave market in the town square of Malaga. One by one the Indians were being sold. Squanto was sold. As his new master was leading Squanto away, Squanto broke free and ran to two monks he saw. He spoke to them in English, asking for their help. The two monks understood him, then talked to the new master in a language Squanto didn't understand. The man left, and Squanto followed the monks to the church. Squanto was sick after the long trip on the ship, so the monks cared for him until he regained his strength.

All he could think about was getting back home. He sailed on a ship to London, since there was a better chance of a ship sailing to the New World from London. The streets of London were covered with snow. It was Christmas Eve. He found his way to Charles Robbins house, but was told he had moved away. Walking the streets of London, Squanto was getting cold and

hungry. He found a house with lights on and many people moving around inside. The man who lived there was John Slanie, and he recognized Squanto from the Indian Show years earlier. Squanto was invited to stay in their house until he could go back to his home. John Slanie was a rich merchant, and hoped to some day send a ship to America. But it would take a long time. Squanto worked for Mr. Slanie, cleaning the stable and taking care of the horses. Mr. Slanie also had two young children who befriended Squanto.

In 1619, Captain Thomas Dermer was going to America to trade with the Indians. First Squanto would help him talk to the Indians, then Dermer would take him home at last. For the second time, the day came for him to go home. As he walked closer to his village, things seemed strange. The trail was covered in tall grass, and he had not seen anyone. When he got to his village, he stopped and stared. The village was gone! Squanto found an Indian from another tribe who told him two years earlier the Patuxet Indians all died of the white mans sickness of small pox.

Since Squanto no longer had a home, he lived with Ocomo, of the Wampanoag tribe, led by Chief Massasoit. But he found he didn't enjoy living with them. He was use to living like the white men. So he went into the woods to live. After some time, Ocomo came looking for him. It was now 1621 and there were more white men again, and the Indians needed Squanto to come speak with them. This time the white men were building houses, and they had women and children with them. They were here to stay. They were Pilgrims who had come to America to have religious freedom, which they couldn't have in Europe. The Indians and the white men had a meeting and decided they would be friends. Squanto stayed and lived with the pilgrims. He showed them how to fish, hunt, and grow corn. They would have starved without his help. One year later, in 1622, Squanto died from a fever. God had a hand in Squanto being in England at the time his family and tribe died from illness. He needed Squanto to be at Plymouth when the Pilgrims came, so they could survive to begin the building up of the United States.