

Speeches by Marcia Somerville

Beyond Books: Variety & Customization in Our Teaching Methods

Length: 45-60 minutes
Type: Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

As a homeschooler, you actually have the opportunity to give a more varied and broad education to your child than do traditional schools. Why? Reading is not the only way that we learn! In fact, some students learn better by hearing, or doing. In our homeschools, we can custom design our teaching methods to the ways that our kids learn best! Do you know how you learn best? We tend to teach from what's easiest for us, and thus get stuck in teaching ruts without even realizing it. How do you know what kind of learner your child is? And, once you do know, how do you teach to that kind of learning? These are questions that Marcia will answer in this information-packed session that will expand the possibilities for instruction that only a homeschool can offer!

Co-ops: What They Are & How to Build Them

Length: 1-2 60-minute sessions (each hour includes 10-minute Q&A)
Type: Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

Come hear answers to a variety of questions related to co-ops. Marcia Somerville has been leading co-ops for over 16 years in various settings, has been involved in other group study contexts, and has helped co-op leaders around the country work through difficult situations.

Session 1: In this overview of co-ops, parents new to the idea can get answers to a host of questions: What exactly is a co-op? What makes it different from "drop and shop" resource centers or university model schools? What are the benefits and costs of involving my children in co-ops? Do co-ops benefit younger children? Are older kids going to suffer unless I enroll them?

Session 2: Are you thinking, "I have caught the vision and I want to start a co-op. Where do I begin?" From her personal experience, Marcia Somerville details important first steps to starting a co-op, common pitfalls and how to avoid them, and sound principles to build on. She reminds women of the importance of involving their husbands in the first stages of starting a co-op, and explains how co-ops provide opportunities for the sanctification of parents as well as children. Much time is left for questions in this helpful, practical session.

Cravings and Conflict

Length: 45-minute speech, plus Q&A
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Encouragement,
Parenting, Spiritual
Audience: Mothers, Parents

Conflict is a part of life. Homeschooling doesn't generally make conflicts less frequent; rather, our close proximity to our spouses and children often provides extra temptations. Add in the fact that we really have to accomplish quite a bit every day, and you can have a recipe for constant strife! Conflicts often seem painfully difficult and confusing. However, there's a simple biblical principle at work in all conflicts. In every case, one or both of the combatants is craving his own way. Marcia speaks from James 4:1 ("What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?") and demonstrates that most conflicts can be managed better when those involved admit their cravings and work towards glorifying God by focusing on understanding and seeking to meet the needs of others, rather than self-

ishly focusing on their own desires. Marcia give practical ways that parents can use these principles with children, and spouses can use them with one another, as families seek to glorify God in the homeschool setting.

Cross-Eyed Parenting

Length: 45-minute speech, plus Q&A
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Parenting, Spiritual
Audience: Mothers, Parents

Though we may start homeschooling with noble goals of discipling our children and leading them onward in godliness, it is easy to quickly grow weary in well-doing. We can become too busy to feed ourselves before attempting to feed our children. We can be deceived into thinking that our successes and failures rest on our own shoulders. We can develop habits of speech and action that are harmful to our children. In short, we are as much in need of sanctification and growth as are our students! Sound familiar? Come learn the releasing truth of how a daily practice of preaching the gospel to ourselves can inform many common situations in our schools and reveal one of homeschooling's best-kept secrets: we are as much sanctified by the process of homeschooling as are our children!

Elements of Writing Instruction

Length: 1-2 60-minute sessions
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

No matter what curriculum we choose, there are basic elements in teaching our children to write. By starting with a general, overarching set of goals and principles, we can see clearly where we want to go with writing instruction and thus use our curriculum more effectively. In two sessions, Marcia Somerville simplifies and clarifies the goals parents should adopt when teaching their children to communicate effectively in written form.

Session 1: What are the elements of all good writing? What constitutes a well written sentence, paragraph, or essay? How much fiction should my child write? Should my child type on a computer or write by hand? Using PowerPoint slides and simple, straightforward language, Marcia outlines the process, from kindergarten through 12th grade, of teaching any child to write well.

Session 2: This session, which focuses on grading writing, builds on the previous one, and cannot be given as a standalone. Using the information she shared in Session 1 about sentences, paragraphs, transitions, reports, and essays, Marcia discusses how to actually grade our students' writing. The session includes practice in grading writing samples and gives general help about knowing where to start when evaluating our children's papers.

NOTE: Session 1 can be given alone in any given convention, but Session 2 builds on Session 1 and can't be given without Session 1 preceding it. Also, handouts are an essential part of this session; the conference must assume responsibility for providing handouts for audience members.

Embracing Humility: Preaching the Gospel to Ourselves and Our Teenagers

Length: 45-60 minutes
Type: General, Workshop
Topic: Spiritual, Parenting
Audience: Parents

Many parents do not know how to win their teenagers' hearts. Often, they are unprepared for the changes that puberty brings, and they can feel threatened or disrespected when their youths begin to question their faith and things they see in the family and the world. Parents can react by becoming overprotective, authoritarian, fearful, or permissive. How do you gain your child's trust so that you may help him through this crucial phase of life? A big key is gospel-generated humility. From her experience as a mother who has successfully raised six young adults, Marcia will share wisdom that she has gained.

Gaining a Vision for High School

Length: 45-60 minutes
(flexible; may include Q & A)
Type: General, Workshop
Topic: Vision casting, Education
Audience: Parents

Marcia Somerville explores the issues of homeschooling high school. She addresses common hesitations shared by both veteran homeschoolers and newcomers, and takes a biblical approach to sorting out the conflicting messages and emotions that many parents feel in making this monumental decision. The session is uplifting, non-threatening, and envisioning.

Love is Patient

Length: 45-60 minutes
Type: General, Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

"I wish someone had told me, back when we were slogging along, that God's main purpose for me in homeschooling was to learn to love." So said a friend of Marcia as they reflected together on what younger homeschooling moms most need to know. This outburst, coupled with counseling courses that Marcia Somerville was currently taking, inspired her to write a series of blog posts following the structure of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 to refresh homeschooling moms with gospel-centered truths about the main reasons that we do what we do.

A Toolbox Approach

Length: 45 minute session,
plus Q & A if time allows
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Parenting, Spiritual
Audience: Parents

We home educators teach academic subjects systematically; why not similarly equip our children to have daily, excellent quiet times with God? Marcia Somerville explores a variety of approaches to meeting with God

each morning. Her own experience with her six very different children led her to adopt a "toolbox" approach. She taught her children a variety of ways to approach God each day, and then allowed them to choose the tools that worked best in various seasons of their lives: praying the Psalms, chart-based Scripture studies, praying the Lord's prayer, Kay Arthur's Principle Approach, and more. Marcia provides a list of techniques and explains most of them in this highly practical, informative session. She prays that this information will give you the tools you need to lead your children in establishing rich, daily times of meeting with God!

NOTE: This session builds on, but is not dependent on, "The Nearness of God Is My Good." If both are chosen for the same conference, please place this after "Nearness."

Teaching with Tapestry of Grace™

Length: 45-60 minutes
(longer is better)
Type: Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

Do you hear about "Classical Education" and feel simultaneously intimidated and inspired? Marcia Somerville would like to help you with both! Come find out that you truly can deliver a classics-based, apologetics-oriented education to every student in your house — and love the process all the way! Tapestry of Grace, an award-winning, humanities curriculum puts you and your students of all ages on the same weekly topics so that you have time to be the teacher, not just the administrator of your school. More than a vendor workshop, this session will explain what sets classical education apart, how to build independent learners while holding meaty discussions that shape their Christian worldviews, and more.

The Nearness of God is My Good

Length: 60 minutes
(can be shortened to 50)
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Parenting, Spiritual
Audience: Mothers, Parents

For many years, Marcia Somerville failed to enjoy a strong devotional life because she did not really believe that the nearness of God was her greatest good. She also battled with the sin of craven fear. Now, out of her experiences as a homeschool mom, Marcia shares transparently about her struggles in these areas and how God has granted grace and victory. She includes a strong exhortation on the primary importance of a strong devotional life for homeschooling moms, and lists practical steps to establish and deepen it. "Very encouraging" is the most frequent response to this talk!

Tips for Teaching a Houseful

Length: 50-60 minutes is ideal
Type: General Session, Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Mothers

Are you trying to teach elementary, junior high, and/or high school students at the same time, perhaps with one or two toddlers underfoot? With six grown children graduated successfully graduated from her homeschool, Marcia Somerville's been there and done that—and has many practical tips to share. Marcia explains some overarching principles that will encourage you to make a quiet home as the foundation of your homeschool. She'll help you to look at your children's development in three areas (academic, social, and emotional) and think of your children's development in terms of stages, not ages. Following the chronological development of the average large family, this session covers the full range: birth to 12th grade.

Working With the Stages of Learning (Not Against Them)

Length: 45-60 minutes
Type: General, Workshop
Topic: Education
Audience: Parents

Understanding the basic stages of learning that your child passes through as his brain develops gives you a better opportunity to teach effectively. Some curricula will rush children into lessons for which their bodies and brains are not ready. This can cause needless frustration and waste hours of your precious teaching time. Other times, we think we need to give our kids lessons earlier than we do. Again, waiting works with their bodies for maximum efficiency and greater enjoyment for both teachers and students. Marcia will explain these stages in simple terms and then highlight the best teaching strategies for each one. As a bonus, she'll throw in some parenting tips for each stage as well!

If you would like to schedule Marcia Somerville as a speaker for your upcoming event, and would like more information about her availability and travel requirements, please contact Lampstand Press at **1-800-705-7487**. (International **301-963-0808**)