



SONLIGHT

HOW TO SET GREAT GOALS FOR YOUR HOMESCHOOL

*Created from research materials provided by
Sonlight Curriculum Consultants
Jill Evely, Judy Wnuk, & Kelly Lutman*

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8042 South Grant Way
Littleton, CO 80122-2705
USA

1 (800) 903-1675
(303) 730-6292
Fax: (303) 795-8668

main@sonlight.com
www.sonlight.com

1. Choose Your Mission



Have you heard the analogy about goals and ladders? It's a classic illustration because it really holds true. Goals are like rungs of a ladder. To get where you want to go, you need to lean your ladder against the right wall.

As you prepare to homeschool, take time to set up your ladder. Create a *homeschool mission statement* to clearly define your reason for homeschooling. Where do you want to be when you finish climbing your ladder?

*Homeschool Mission Statement: A clear and concise explanation of your family's big-picture homeschool goals

Many homeschool families use a verse about Jesus' childhood to guide them: *"And Jesus went on advancing in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and men."* Luke 2:52 (Rotherham's Emphasized Bible)

As a child, Jesus grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. You may want to incorporate a verse like this into your homeschool mission statement.

To create a mission statement, zoom out and think big-picture:

- Why are we homeschooling our children?
- What do we hope to accomplish?

Pray about these questions and talk about them with your spouse. Take time to write out your answers. Your written statement can provide much-needed direction and encouragement as you move ahead.

To get started, look at these examples of homeschool mission statements:

- *Our goal in homeschooling is to raise children who follow Christ, love to learn and are equipped to do whatever God calls them to do.*
- *The H Family's Homeschool Mission Statement: To value each unique family member while helping each child excel academically and grow into a flourishing, independent adult.*

2. Create the Rungs: Set Specific, Measurable Goals



Now that you know where to set up your ladder, it's time to make some rungs. Use your homeschool mission statement as you create specific goals.

Draft 1-2 goals *for each child* in these growth areas (or other areas you define):

- a. Academic goals (growing in wisdom)
- b. Physical goals (growing in stature)

- c. Spiritual goals (growing in favor with God)
- d. Social goals (growing in favor with men)
- e. Other family goals (such as chores, money management, etc.)

3. Evaluate and Adjust



Keeping your homeschool mission statement in mind, it's time to whittle down your goals to help you achieve them. Look at your goal lists and refine each goal (if necessary) as you answer these questions:

- a. Is the goal specific and measurable?
- b. Is the goal realistic, reasonable? Is it reachable?
- c. Is the goal compatible with this child's natural bent and abilities?
- d. Is the goal more or less important than other goals?

Try to make each goal clear, realistic and focused.

4. Your Goals Are Here to Help (Not Overwhelm)



If your goal lists get intimidating, simplify things with this quick five-point test for each goal. Ask yourself:

- a. Does this goal support or reflect our mission statement?
- b. Is this goal important to work toward now, or can it wait?
- c. Is this goal worth the time it will take to reach it?
- d. Is this goal worth what we may have to give up to reach it?
- e. Is this goal essential – does it really matter in the long run?

Use your answers to make another adjustment to the list of goals, so that only those that you can work on now are on the list. Save the others to review again later.

If it feels like you're building a rigid plan, remember that homeschooling is all about flexibility. Re-evaluate your goals at least once or twice a year, and adjust them to keep your homeschool on track for success.

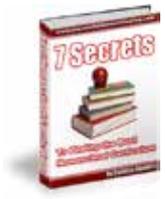
Know that this goal-setting work is worth it! You'll have a much easier time moving forward with an intentional "ladder" of goals instead of a scattered mishmash of high hopes.

5. Plan Your Move: From Goals to Actions



Look at your academic goals for your first child. Write down a specific, doable task to help you reach that goal. Repeat this for each goal for each child.

Note: You might find this step easier once you have an idea of what of curriculum style might fit your family well. For example, you could choose textbooks, literature-based curriculum or an unstructured “unschooling” approach.



For a helpful overview of different curriculum styles, [click here to look at a free e-book: 7 Secrets to Finding the Best Homeschool Curriculum](#). Once you’re in the e-book, head to “Secret 4 - Learn About Different Homeschooling Methods.”

Whenever you’re ready, start creating tasks for your goals. These tasks will help keep you focused on your goals. For example, one academic goal could be:

- I want Mary to be able to read 3-letter, short-vowel words by Christmas.

Your tasks might include:

- We will do Sonlight® Language Arts four days a week
- We will play phonics-based games (like “I Spy something that starts with a ‘B’ sound”) two days a week

Each goal should include at least one task, but don’t add too many.

6. Keep That Plan in Sight!



Your homeschool plan may be crystal clear and rather exciting right now. That’s great!

But ask any homeschool parent and you’ll discover that the road is not always smooth. When Johnny throws a tantrum and insists that multiplication facts are completely irrelevant to his life, you might be grateful for quick reminders about “the big picture.”

Post your homeschool mission statement where you can see it daily. Hang your written goals in your homeschool area. Make sure each goal has at least one specific task listed, which will help keep you moving toward meeting that goal.

Consider hanging scripture and other inspiring quotes around as well. Here’s a verse that keeps many homeschoolers going:

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care; serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

– 1 Peter 5:2-4 (NIV)

Peter’s advice to the elders of the scattered early Christian Church can certainly apply to you and me as shepherds of the children whom God has entrusted to us.

Recommended Resources for More Help:

- *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon MacDonald
- *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* by Richard Swenson
- *The Way They Learn* by Cynthia Tobias
- *Help for the Harried Homeschooler* by Christine Field
- *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully* by Dr. Ruth Beechick

Contact Us

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Email

Curriculum Advisor: advisor@sonlight.com
Customer Service: main@sonlight.com