

## Conversation with a concerned mom

**Notebook:** Projects & TO DOs

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MOM:

Hi Melissa! Seriously, is this possible? Even the home school GROUP I joined have only 2 kids to homeschool, and they've hired teachers for every day of the week. I'm burned out. I'm just so ready to quit, and I feel like I've failed so badly (sob). I'm ruining my 4 beautiful children with my struggling.

MELISA

Yes it is possible.

You have not failed. Giant Hugs.

MOM

Ok..deep breath. Grade 4, currently working on Norse Myths. Grade 2, working on Trickster tales, Senior Kindy working on fairy tale stories from around the world. We seem to never get form drawing in at ALL and we are way behind on painting, and handwork. XXXX doesn't know his darn times tables yet, at 10 yrs old. XXXXX is VERY active at 4yrs old, and is a real trial to keep busy whilst schooling the other 3. So much waiting seems to be happening that I rush through the ML, stuff it down their throat, then move on to the next kid..repeat til I'm old.

The stress is going to cause me to break, or my marriage. Honestly, not sure how to even begin to change this.

can you share with me what one day looks like, time wise, for 3 different main lessons? I'm wondering if I'm not doing enough, or am finishing too early, etc.

MELISA

So first, DO NOT STRESS about those times tables. Just keep at them. If it is a matter of will then get grumpy mama... I told Ellie that if she could memorize the words to a Taylor Swift song then surely those times tables were in there.

MOM

HAHA! that sounds an awful lot like my house. Wow..you really are so..."normal." LOL

MELISA

yes normal, lol.... and tired like everyone can be.

Let me make sure I have it right:

kindy, 4th and 2nd plus a 4yo?

Please know that it DOES get easier.

how is your 2nd grader's reading?

MOM  
excellent.

MELISA  
and your 4th grader at playing with the 4yo

MOM  
not so excellent.

MELISA  
LOL

MOM  
but we can work on that, if that would help

MELISA  
well it might but we can work around that I think.

the key I found was when ordering lesson blocks, I looked at what they could do without me to make our main lesson time smoother and more enjoyable for all.

I also plan out our handwork and our painting just because if I don't plan a time for it then I am easily tempted not to do it.

So let's see... in two years or so it will look way different in your house because you oldest will be doing more on his own.

Here is a Sample of what your day could look like:

Start on time. My big kids are getting up at 7 so they can do their primping and chores, then we gather, eat, clean up, come back for school... generally by 9:30.

gather with a couple songs, verse/prayer/intention, light your candle then break.

4th grader and 2nd grader go to do personal reading... it should be on the main lesson topics (more about that in a minute)

two little ones come together for a more extensive circle with maybe more finger plays and songs, some movement and then the sr. kindy story....in general depending on your story I wouldn't stress about them being together. If it is a more mature story then see if you can get your 4yo to do something for you.... "can you build Mommy a block tower?" or something like that. They story should be a little more complex but not to the tune of 1st grade.

If you can't quell the 4yo then enlist the help of the oldest. The 4yo's own personal story time with big brother.

then:

two littles play and by now your 2nd grader should have gotten in a good 30 min of reading and be ready for you to do lessons. That lesson for 2nd grade should not take long, less than an hour generally depending on what you are including. If you are including music then add another 15 min or so.

the 4th grade goes back to reading until your are done.

the trick of course is to keep the little monkeys busy. for that I have really worked at bringing things together that they like... Sariah could play in the sand table for HOURS and then in the water at the sink for HOURS. It can get messy but I can generally get the lessons done. We have also done the bath, bubbles, toys, bath crayons.

So when you are done with your 2nd grader, your 4th grader should be done reading and ready for his lesson.

2nd grade can play with the little ones or make a snack, something useful and productive.

The 4th grade ML may take an hour or more depending on what you are doing.

Is this helping? I have more.

MOM

this is life saving..seriously.

MELISA

oh good!

so when it comes to actual lessons, I am really good at pulling reading books that either support what we are studying OR I am actually using for the lessons for instance... I love the d'aularies Norse Myth, there are 4 billion myths in there that would take you 5 months to cover, so I go through and pick a number that I think will accurately cover the topics and the stories I like. I also cheat, I pick stories that I know I could easily draw or paint from. THOSE are the ones I use. The child reads the res during their reading.

Then we get the major stories in and the rest get read too.

MOM

ohhhhh!! So \*I\* don't have to be the only one reading.

MELISA

oh my gosh NO! This isn't a school. Have you read the Mom Lessons?

Do not kill yourself duplicating the school experience! Give them Waldorf at home, a different but altogether wonderful experience!

they have brains, put them to work!

MOM

I read the mom lessons last year..perhaps I'm in dire need of a total overhaul refresher.

MELISA

Yes we have the new eCourse, it may be worth going through the lessons through the course just to refresh.

MOM

Exactly that. I've been feeling like if I don't do what they do in the Waldorf school, I'm not giving enough (doesn't help that the co-op feels 110% this way, as well, and pushes that.)

MELISA

So then I try to stagger the board drawings so I am not doing two day 1 stories a day, so you may be on a review day with the 4th grader and a story day with the 2nd grader.

MOM

ok. that makes MUCH more sense.

MELISA

the co-op will kill themselves. In a school they have help! At home it is just us. We don't have to skimp, we just have to be practical.

David Darcy once told me that they do all that reading in part to take up the 6 hours a day they have to fill!

MOM

they ARE killing themselves. And I joke, but it's true: they're taking me down with them!!

Ha! Makes total sense.

MELISA

release the perfection in your mind and be happy being Jenny

MOM

I just totally teared up reading that. I am so thankful.

Thanks for giving me permission to just do this.

MELISA

and also remember that you aren't offering a college course on say Norse myth... Steiner talks about giving them the taste, not a college level course, they don't have to know EVERYTHING

I am so glad to help!

MOM

I honestly feel like you just saved me from a total breakdown. Thank you.

even my stomach is untightening.

MELISA

you are so welcome!

as they get older it is even better, more discussion and less lecture stuff, it is so different at home.

MOM

that is SUCH a relief. This all feels so sensible and manageable the way you've laid it out.