

# the Ultimate Homeschool Planner

a planning system designed by

*Debra Bell*

count your

blessings

encourage

independence

record your

progress

# Monthly Planning Sessions

Note any exceptions, such as, your spouse being home that may break your routines.

Pass on tasks that consume your time to older children as soon as they are ready. This will benefit both of you.

Reduce gridlock by becoming more efficient. Fill your freezer with prepared meals at the beginning of the school year to reduce the time crunch around dinner time.



Follow these steps in filling out the **Monthly Planner** pages:

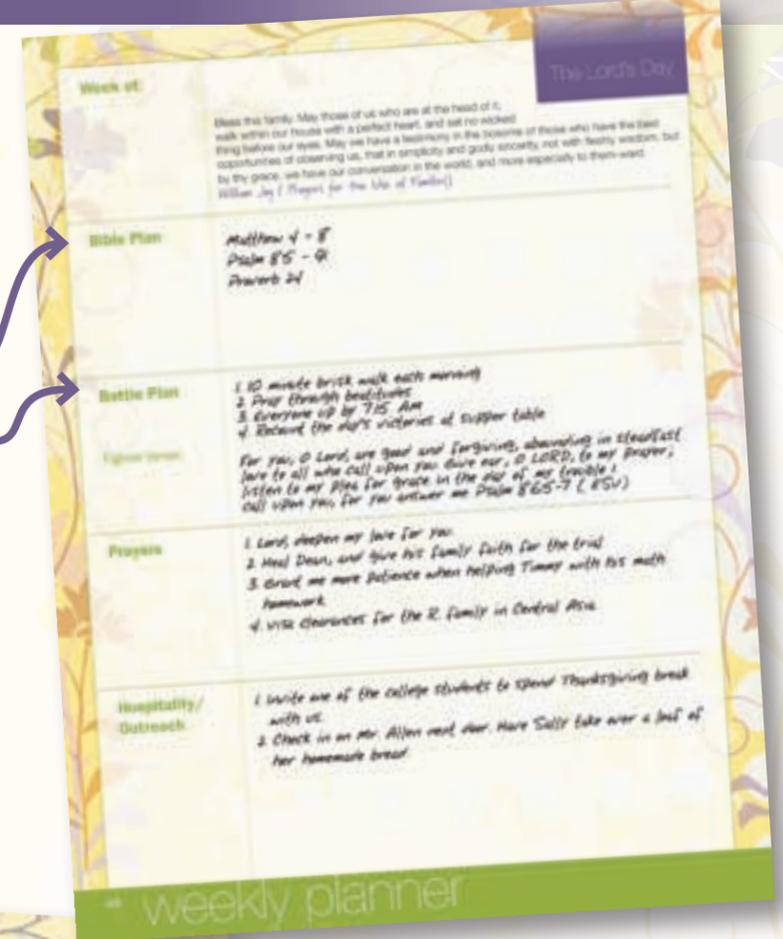
- ✓ Review the prior month's plan and recall God's specific demonstrations of faithfulness and grace.
- ✓ Cultivate thankfulness for His activity.
- ✓ Schedule down time. God designed us to need rest.
- ✓ Use the **Family Priorities** form as your prayer list—ask God to supply the growth in these areas over the next month.
- ✓ Next, block out time on the new month for your priorities.
- ✓ Troubleshoot scheduling gridlock.
- ✓ Prayerfully consider if all your commitments are from God.
- ✓ Thank God for the abundant grace He will give you to faithfully complete these commitments.



# Weekly Planning Breaks

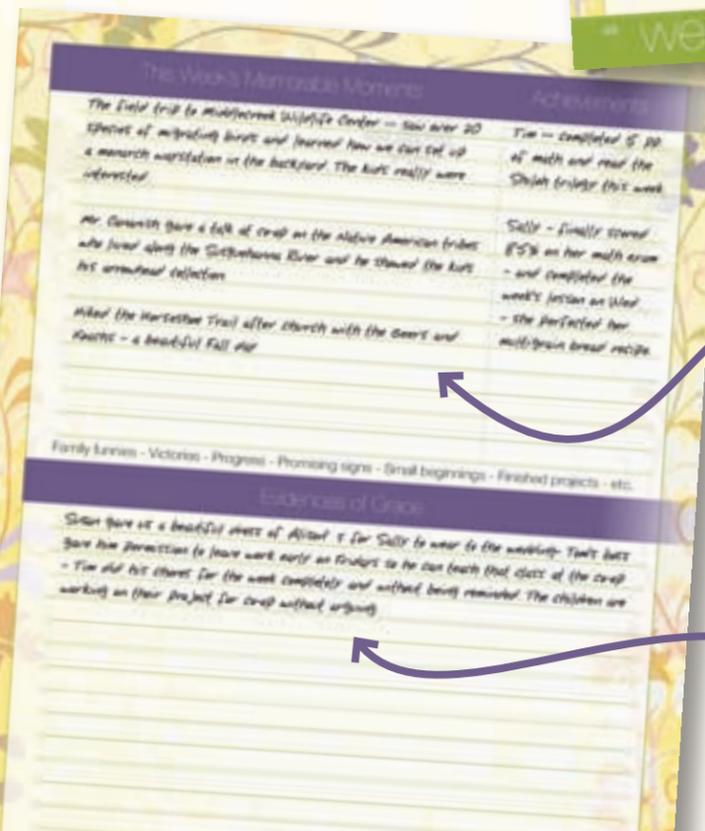
Follow these steps in filling out the **Weekly Planner** pages:

- ✓ Begin each week with a planning session in a quiet place.
- ✓ Start by recounting God's faithfulness during the prior week.
- ✓ Make a commitment to God's Word a central part of your plan for peace.
- ✓ Consider the areas where you are most vulnerable. Prayerfully outline a battle plan to overcome temptation.
- ✓ A list of fighter verses is available free of charge at [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org).



Write down all signs of forward momentum. (Your kids are going to peek in here to see what you find noteworthy.) Show them how to celebrate small beginnings and promising signs.

Taking time to document God's particular kindnesses and evidences of grace in your family's life will build your faith for the future and create a family heirloom for future generations.



# Weekly Planning Breaks

The **Weekly Planning Grid** is designed for maximum flexibility. You can organize the rows across the top and columns down the left-hand side by day of the week, subject area, or children. If you live in a state that requires documentation, then you can track the number of school days in the cells as well.

Week of 11-07-2011	Reading (Tim)	Math (Sally)	Ancient History (Family)
Tim (Child) or MONDAY (Day of Week) or DAY #/5 (# of School Days)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finish Shiloh	<input type="checkbox"/> Do pp. 44-45	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark trade routes of map on ancient world
Sally	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapters 1-3 of David Copperfield	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIL practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Research trading partners of ancient world
Together	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible study of James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Practice for co-op class		
Julie	- At Grandma's till 1pm - Nap after		
Me	- Make dinner while Tim does math at table. - check Sally's first 5 math problems before she goes to History together at 10am		

In this example, the cells show what an individual child must complete in one subject area that week.

If you use a unit study curriculum designed for multiple grade levels, then designate one column or row for work completed as a family.

Plan for little ones as well. Think through what they will do while you are helping an older child.

Put your own daily duties on the grid, too. Then you can see scheduling conflicts in advance and plan to negotiate them. If your kids can also see your time commitments, it will help them anticipate when you might be available.

In this example, the grid is organized by days of the week, and the cells contain what a student must complete that day. This is a good approach if you are not teaching any subjects together or if students need daily accountability for their work.

Week of	Tim	Sally	me
Monday 11-07-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Tutorial @ 8am <input type="checkbox"/> Reading-Finish Shiloh <input type="checkbox"/> Math Lesson 19 <input type="checkbox"/> French - Teach me Lesson 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Tutorial 8:30 am <input type="checkbox"/> Reading-David Copperfield <input type="checkbox"/> Math-FOIL review <input type="checkbox"/> French-Lesson 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Tim math lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Look over Sally's FOIL review <input type="checkbox"/> Get ready for history test
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading - start The Cav <input type="checkbox"/> Math - Check lesson 19 <input type="checkbox"/> History trade route	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading DC <input type="checkbox"/> Math-Start lesson 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Start of research of trading partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Teach history lesson in afternoon
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Science Lesson Am with Mr Allen <input type="checkbox"/> History discussion pm <input type="checkbox"/> Math review for unit test Fri	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Science Lesson Am with Mr Allen <input type="checkbox"/> History discussion pm <input type="checkbox"/> Math review for test	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Science Lesson Am <input type="checkbox"/> History discussion questions during naptime <input type="checkbox"/> Midweek math check
Thursday			

Ask students to check off work as it is completed. Then you have a quick way to check their progress.

If your kids can also see your time commitments, it will help them anticipate when you might be available.

Key	Children/Subjects/Activities
S.A.	Sally Anne
R	reading
FT	field trip

Maximize the space in each cell by creating a coding system for common entries—e.g. names of subjects, children, texts.







# Teaching Tips

## IDENTIFY YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING STYLE

### Type A: (Actual-Spontaneous Learner)

must do to learn autonomous flexible risk-taker competitive	inventive outgoing seeks adventure and variety short attention span does not like boundaries impulsive
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### Type B: (Actual-Routine Learner)

methodical likes rules, routine and tradition compliant desires your approval thoughtful and helpful	a nurturer by nature dependable not flexible not inventive feeler
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### Type C: (Conceptual-Specific Learner)

serious-minded inquisitive satisfied being alone independent learner strong powers of concentration	focused interest easily frustrated perfectionistic detail-oriented thinker mathematical
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### Type D: (Conceptual-Global Learner)

thinks big picture creative interested in people enjoys groups outgoing	verbal peacemaker ambitious intuitive forgetful careless
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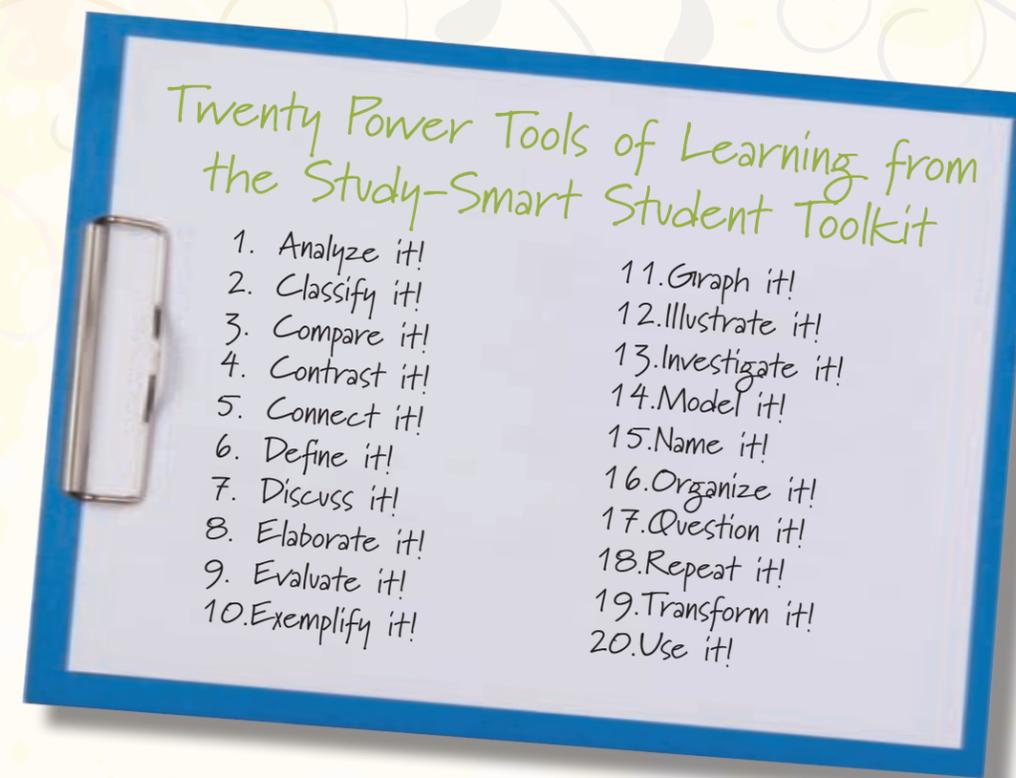
*Learning Styles Inventory* (Golay, 1982)

You will find tips for teaching to your child's learning style in chapter 9 of *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling* (Apologia, 2009).

## Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills

When children use higher levels of thinking (i.e., analysis, synthesis, or evaluation) to learn, what they learn is stored in long-term memory and therefore readily recalled.

<b>Knowledge</b>	I remember, I know, I recall, I define, I name, I recognize, I memorize, I repeat, I identify, I list
<b>Comprehension</b>	I understand, I summarize, I explain, I reword, I exemplify, I discuss, I describe, I draw, I match
<b>Application</b>	I use what I know, I research, I demonstrate how, I solve a problem, I perform, I organize, I practice, I calculate, I operate
<b>Analysis</b>	I break down information, I compare and contrast, I note relationships, I categorize, I explain cause and effect, I deduce, I investigate, I experiment, I classify, I discriminate, I probe
<b>Evaluation</b>	I form and support opinions, I justify, I recommend, I predict, I critique, I appraise, I conclude, I choose, I argue, I estimate, I consider
<b>Synthesis</b>	I use what I know to create something new, I plan, I infer, I propose, I invent, I write, I compose, I collect, I modify, I formulate, I arrange, I design, I construct, I generalize



### Study Smart Student Toolkit

What's the difference between an expert learner and one who struggles to process new information? The study-smart student employs learning strategies that I call the Power Tools of Learning. When students use the tools shown on the chart above, many different parts of the brain fire up and come online. And when students are both cognitively and emotionally engaged in what they are learning, they process information more effectively and at a deeper level and can later recall more details of what they've learned.

Our job as parents is to create an environment that allows our students the time and opportunity to use these power tools. Here's how:

- Focus on the three P's—projects, papers and performances. These types of activities (as opposed to rote memorization, for example) require kids to organize their time, think through multiple aspects of an assignment, and stay focused on the material over several days or even weeks. This approach fosters total immersion in the new information, and that's when deep processing occurs.
- Trigger positive emotions. We learn more when we are laughing, happy, experiencing pleasure, or lost in awe and wonder. Curl up on the couch together daily and read aloud. Integrate learning into the relational moments of your family life such as dinner time, vacations, and extended family visits.
- Build leisure into the school day. While we are at rest, our brains continue to process and store information recently learned. Teach your children to value daydreaming, chasing after rabbit trails, playing outdoors, and watching clouds. A good motto to adopt is "Rigor and rest, rigor and rest." By supplying each in equal parts, your kids will prosper.

Yes, these strategies do require more time than simple memorization. But this is the stuff of deep cognition, and the process cannot be rushed. However, you will find you pick up speed over time for two reasons: First, your children will understand more fully what they have already learned, so re-teaching and reviewing will not be necessary. Secondly, your children will find they love to learn, and this motivation will transform them into independent and lifelong learners, making your job much easier.

Download the full article for the Study-Smart Student Toolkit at [DebraBell.com](http://DebraBell.com)