

10

ways to circumvent racist ideas and embrace diversity within our home education curriculum

1 Try not to limit yourself within the confines of a single curriculum for any subject. No single curriculum is perfect. Pick and choose what works for you and your children in keeping with your preferred educational philosophy. It is highly unlikely that you will ever find one that meets all your children's needs for a sustained period. Personally, I have never felt tied to every facet of any particular educational philosophy or curriculum.

2 Actively seek to substitute or supplement recommended mainstream education materials with Black, African, Asian or any minority ethnic literature, history, art and music that suits you. It is imperative that our children develop an awareness of themselves based on an inclusive historical and cultural narrative that reflects their identity. If you remain passive on this point, even your child's imagination will be colonised. Be prepared to do the work.

3 Offer your children stories, sayings, games and songs from your culture or other ethnic minority cultures as part of your daily home learning ritual or Morning Time*. A lot of these ethnic cultural resources are readily available so be prepared to keep at it until you find or create what you want. You may have to summon all your ancestral griot storytelling skills from your childhood or ask your parents or a relative to help you compile your own.

This month, I will be packaging my experience of infusing black literature and history into the traditional Charlotte Mason -inspired Morning Time* resources and making this available to you for a monthly subscription of £10. Please click [here](#) to sign up and pre-register for your copy. Our monthly pack will include a series of African and Caribbean folktales,

poems, sayings and songs for parents to read aloud or perform as part of a heart-warming family time ritual.

4 When you or your children eventually come across a racist or demeaning statement or symbolism in your home learning, use the incident as teachable moment. If you find the gunk before your children do, depending on their age, you might want to spare them the unnecessary hurt by moving from the issue totally. Personally, now that my child is 10 years old, I try to discuss everything in an age appropriate manner. Another thing you or your child if they are older could do is write an (open) letter to the publisher or author to express your concern and be clear on request for

5 If your children are in primary school age, try to pre-read their suggested books and curriculum materials beforehand.

It is your prerogative as a parent to decide if you wish to use a contentious racist issue to teach your child or not. You might choose to avoid the issue by guard your children's hearts and innocence for a little while longer. This is another reason why reading aloud to your children is so important.

6 Make critical thinking an integral part of your home education process. Give your children the permission to question ideas that don't sit well with them within reason.



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To do this, you have to be prepared your children will also challenge your ideas. If you empower your child to assert his views clearly without being disrespectful, chances are those skills will come in handy against peer pressure. There is a right way to facilitate healthy discussion and debate that doesn't have to lead to disrespect. Do some research and find the resource that best suits you. We use Peter Worsley's *The Philosophy Shop* book once a week as part of our Family Morning Time*.

7 As your kids get older, try to encourage them to see different sides to each story by drawing from several resources. If you are committed to a particular curriculum by all means stick with it but try to go beyond the suggested resources if possible.

8 Use mealtimes or transition times, to solicit your children's opinions on controversial topics or themes you may have come across in your learning.

Encourage them if appropriate, to articulate their opinions confidently and with clear justifications. Model and expect them to practice active listening. If they are old enough, you might even ask them to do some research about the opposite side of the debate. Make this famous Desmond Tutu quote a mantra, especially if you have strong-willed children, "Don't raise your voice, improve your argument".

9 Use age appropriate movies or black family sitcoms like *Blackish* or *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* to discuss sensitive race related issues with your children.

Make time to watch movies and social media videos with your children. These are valuable moments to learn and engage with them about how they perceive the world.

10 Encourage your children to link or apply what they are learning academically to real life situations which might include black and or urban life experiences.

Encourage your children to relate what they've learnt in one subject with a completely different subject through project work or conversation. This concept encourages synthesis, creativity and problem-solving skills. Charlotte Mason calls this science of relations. Education should be relevant to the child and his or her immediate context. This intellectual freedom is what fires the sparks of wonder to make learning relevant and enjoyable for a child.

Alberta Stevens | Homegrown Sonshine

What is Morning Time*

Morning Time is a wholehearted family learning ritual in which a parent inspires the love of learning, wonder, virtue and curiosity in their children's hearts by reading aloud, singing and discussing a varied menu of meaningful sacred and secular texts. Morning Time, also known as 'circle' or 'family' time, is widely practiced across various educational philosophical traditions. Within the Charlotte Mason and Classical Education home education circles, this much-loved family ritual is seen as liturgy of love or an intellectual feast for mind and spirit that allows parents offer meaning and context to their children's home education. It's the dessert of home education, if you like. The practice usually starts with prayer, affirmations, hymns, songs, poetry, folklore and storytelling.



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