

*the Organized
Homeschool Life*



**A WEEK-BY-WEEK GUIDE
TO HOMESCHOOL SANITY**

DR. MELANIE WILSON

**The Organized Homeschool Life:
A Week-By-Week Guide to Homeschool Sanity**

**Copyright 2015 | Melanie Wilson
All rights reserved.**

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher.

If you have this file and have not paid for it, please be sure to visit Psychowith6.com to pay for your own copy.

This publication is protected under the US Copyright Act of 1976 and all other applicable international, federal, state, and local laws, and all rights are reserved.

ISBN-13: 978-1519669889

ISBN-10: 1519669887

Publishing and Design Services by MelindaMartin.me

The Organized Homeschool Life

“Does your to-do list seem overwhelming? Or are your once-organized shelves bursting forth in chaos? Enter The Organized Home-school Life. Melanie breaks all those overwhelming tasks into bite-size chunks that leave one saying, ‘I can do this!’”

Kathy Gossen
CornerstoneConfessions.com

“I am so excited to do the challenges Melanie has given us in The Organized Homeschool Life. I used to be organized--I think? But, as I’ve added more kids, more stuff, and more activities through the years, I’ve become increasingly disorganized. I need a jump-start and know that The Organized Homeschool Life will do it for me!”

Gena Mayo
Blogger at IChooseJoy.org
Homeschooling mom of 8

“Melanie, a 16-year homeschool veteran, speaks truth from the trenches! She knows how challenging it can be to get and stay organized. The Organized Homeschool Life is overflowing with ideas and ways to combat disorganization but in manageable chunks that erases that sense of overwhelm. I love how her challenges are flexible and allow you to select what you feel needs most attention—as well as update with the changes in your life. Added to my list of must-reads for all homeschoolers!”

Amy Milcic
Blogger at BusyBoysBrigade.com
Homeschooling mom of 5 boys

“Homeschoolers are going to be elated to read Melanie Wilson’s newest book, The Organized Homeschool Life! In her experience of homeschooling 6 kids for 16 years (and counting), Melanie gives an abundance of realistic action steps to help organize your homeschooling experience. Her suggestions will create slight shifts with great rewards both in your household and in your teaching. This is a must read for any family seeking joy and peace in their homeschooling!”

Amy Michaels
Author of ThriveHomechooling.com
Educational Consultant

Contents

Introduction.....	9
How To Use This Book.....	11
January	13
1 Daily Devotions Challenge.....	15
2 Daily Routine Challenge.....	19
3 To Do List Challenge.....	23
4 Memory Keeping Challenge.....	27
5 Decluttering Challenge.....	31
February.....	37
6 Organized Computer Challenge.....	39
7 Marriage Of Your Dreams Challenge.....	43
8 Confident Parent Challenge.....	47
9 Extended Family Challenge.....	51
March.....	55
10 Bring On The Spring Challenge.....	57
11 Spring Cleaning Challenge.....	61
12 Organized Easter Challenge.....	65
13 Serve The Church Challenge.....	69
14 The Chore Challenge.....	73
April.....	79
15 Organize Your Finances Challenge.....	81
16 Curriculum Challenge.....	85
17 Friendship Challenge.....	89
18 Family Celebration Challenge.....	93
May.....	97
19 Organized Clothing Challenge.....	99
20 Organized Vacation Challenge.....	103
21 Organized Summer Challenge.....	107
22 Outdoor Activity Challenge.....	111
June.....	115
23 Used Curriculum Challenge.....	117
24 Homeschool Space Challenge.....	121
25 Goal Setting Challenge.....	125
26 Homeschool Planning.....	129

July	135
27 Bible Time Challenge.....	137
28 Special Study Prep Challenge	141
29 Extra-Curricular Challenge	145
30 Core Curriculum Prep Challenge.....	149
31 Elective Curriculum Prep Challenge.....	153
August	157
32 Back To School Challenge	159
33 Fall Bucket List Challenge	163
34 Organized Bedroom Challenge	167
35 Clean Out The Pantry Challenge	171
September	177
36 Meal Planning Challenge.....	179
37 Grocery Shopping Challenge	183
38 Organized Kitchen Challenge.....	187
39 Freezer Cooking Challenge.....	191
October.....	197
40 Hospitality Challenge.....	199
41 Blog Or Business Challenge	203
42 Hobby Challenge.....	207
43 Charity Challenge	211
44 Thanksgiving Challenge	215
November	219
45 Christmas Plan Challenge	221
46 Christmas Decorating Challenge	225
47 Christmas Shopping Challenge	229
48 Home Ec Challenge.....	233
December	237
49 Hot Spot Challenge.....	239
50 Curriculum Review Challenge	243
51 Company Clean Challenge	247
52 Peace And Joy Challenge	251
About The Author	255

Acknowledgments

I thank God for giving me the organizational skills I needed, but wasn't born with. He used the real needs of my family and the wisdom of mothers who've gone before me to equip me for the calling of homeschooling.

I also owe a special thank you to [Melinda Tipton Martin](#) and [Kim Sorgius](#), without whom this book would have remained in blog-form only.

Introduction

If you're anything like me, you find dozens of great ideas you could use to get and stay organized in your homeschooling and life. The problem is overwhelm. Where do you start? **It often feels like you aren't organized enough to get organized.**

I've been there. In fact, when I gave homeschooling a try by teaching preschool 16 years ago, I was convinced I had to quit because I was so disorganized.

- I was constantly forgetting appointments
- I couldn't find anything
- The laundry piled up
- I didn't follow through with my curriculum
- The stress made me short-tempered with the kids

Little did I know that homeschooling was the perfect remedy for a disorganized mom like me. I saw how incapable I was of doing what God had called me to do. It didn't happen overnight, but today people consider me an organized person.

I've come a long way, but I still seek ways to make our homeschooling, home life, and work function as efficiently as possible. I've noticed that there aren't a lot of organizing missions tailored to families who homeschool, and that's too bad. We have specific organizing needs.

If you desire more organization in your homeschool and life, I invite you to join me for a year's worth of challenges. Unlike many organizing books, this book's challenges don't all center around rooms in our homes. Instead, we'll organize aspects of our life and homeschool. Week-by-week, we can be organized enough to do all God has called us to do.

How To Use This Book

You have options. You can either go right to the section covering the area you need most or you can work on the current month's challenges. On Mondays, you can read the challenge, then spend 15 minutes doing one mission each remaining weekday. Or do an hour session over the weekend. Alternatively, you could spend a whole month or even a whole year on one challenge. It's your choice. This book is your partner, not your master. At the end of each month's challenges, you'll find a checklist of all the missions to help you track your progress.

One thing I forbid you to do is beat yourself up for not doing every mission. I hope this will help: **I haven't completed every mission in these challenges.** Did you catch that? If you're going to fret about not being as organized as I am because you're not doing every mission as scheduled, just stop. I wrote this book as much for myself as for anyone else. I am not a naturally organized person. Yet the challenges I *have* completed have given me the confidence I need to keep homeschooling. When I am ready to take on the rest of the missions, this book will be there for me, pointing the way. It will be there for you, too.

If you are determined to complete as many challenges as possible, but you aren't sure where to start, begin in January. I scheduled what I consider to be the most important challenges first. If you run out of steam in February, you will be well on your way to an organized homeschool. Progress, not perfection will be our motto, okay?

I originally shared these missions on my blog, Psychowith6, with links to great ideas, resources, and printables you can use in the process of organizing your homeschool. Register at

psychowith6.com/organize-your-homeschool

to get all of the printables created specifically for the challenges. The rest of the links are accessible through the URL listed at the bottom of each challenge.

For extra motivation, you may enjoy listening to the audio version of the challenges on *The Homeschool Sanity Show* podcast (HomeschoolSanity.com). I've also completed videos on Periscope for a number of challenges that you'll find at the challenge URL or at Katch.me/Psychowith6. Finally, if you are struggling with a challenge, ask *the Homeschool Sanity* community on Facebook for help (Facebook.com/motivatedhomeschooler).

Now if you are ready to experience more homeschool sanity, choose a challenge and let's go!

January

*“So teach us to number our days,
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*

Psalm 90:12

1

Daily Devotions Challenge

There is no more powerful habit for an organized homeschool than devotional time. We won't find the peace we want in a pretty bin, but in a relationship with the Prince of Peace.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

I did not devote time to prayer and Bible reading until I was very pregnant with my second son. At that time, I attended a Becky Tirabassi seminar as part of a Women of Faith conference. Becky told story after story of answered prayer and beseeched us to make an "appointment with the King" every day.

At the time, sad to say, I was on staff at my church, but had never read the entire Bible. When Becky asked anyone who was fully committed to keeping that important appointment to stand up, I did. I bought Becky's *Change Your Life Daily Bible* and her *My Partner Prayer Notebook* and I was on a personal mission. (Becky shares her philosophy in *Let Prayer Change Your Life*.)

I was so motivated to read the Bible through in a year that I even did my reading and prayer time in the hospital after giving birth. I don't remember anything I read, but I kept my appointment!

COUPLE DEVOTIONS

I made time for personal devotions that did change my life, but I made a big mistake. I didn't include my husband in the process. He felt left out of my new habit of Scripture reading and devoted time to prayer. He felt better when I bought him his own daily Bible. We have changed Bibles since then, but we continue to have a shared habit of reading Scripture in the morning.

We have prayed together at various times of day as we felt led, but having a regular time of praying together is a habit we don't yet have. Apparently, we're not alone. Only 4% of cou-

ples pray together daily, despite its association with the highest levels of marital satisfaction. Planning time for shared prayer is our goal for this week. I hope you'll join us!

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Christian homeschoolers usually do a great job of teaching the Bible as a part of their curriculum. In our busy lives, it can be harder to find time to pray and read Scripture as a family. We've been inconsistent over the years in using formal programs that require supplies for fun activities and more successful reading missionary biographies in the evenings or doing a short devotion in the mornings. My husband will occasionally read Scripture and then lead discussion of it, use a regular devotional book, or will join us for our school Bible time. He is not one who likes to be locked into doing the same thing at the same time. We have used *Character Building for Families* the most consistently because it's short, meaty, and requires no preparation.

The most powerful family prayer time approach we have used is to each pray about something we are thankful for, something we are sorry for, and something we need help with. We have really been able to feel in touch with our kids' hearts. Many times I have been upset about something the kids have done earlier in the day, only to be moved by their confession of it in prayer and their request for help from the Holy Spirit to avoid a similar error.

Yet another family devotional practice that has been meaningful for us is to save Christmas cards and pray over a few of them each day. We have the opportunity to share with the children more about family and friends they haven't met or don't know well, and to experience answers to prayer, too. We often hear from the prayed-for family soon after we've lifted them up to the Lord.

YOUR MISSIONS FOR THIS WEEK

□ #1 Establish a time, place, and an approach to personal devotions

You don't have to find the perfect time and place, but decide on a time when you are most likely to be able to meet with the Lord undisturbed during this season of your life. Now that I don't have babies, I have personal devotions in the morning before the kids are up. I get comfortable in a recliner with a great reading light. In the winter, I snuggle under a faux fur blanket. I often have something to drink as well. I want my time with the Lord to be the most appealing part of my day.

In years past, I have had devotional times before bed, in the middle of the night while nursing, and at lunch time. I've been in bed, on the couch, and even in my car to connect with God. The time and place that make devotions consistent is what you should choose — not what someone else is doing.

I am currently reading through the Bible using the *John MacArthur Study Bible*, reading a variety of daily devotionals (both print and digital) as I feel led, and use the Pocket Prayer Pro app to organize my prayer time. I've changed how I spend this time with God many, many times. The ingredients that I feel are essential are prayer and reading Scripture. I have enjoyed using organized prayer calendars for my husband, children, extended family, and pastors.

The Spiritual Circle Journal is a recent addition to my personal devotions. It provides space for journaling, a meaningful Bible verse from your reading, confession, thanksgiving, prayer, and more.

When I am going through a challenging time, I have been greatly blessed by *Streams in the Desert*. Before you buy something new, see what you have that you haven't read and just start. Remember that if your devotions get interrupted, the Lord Himself has allowed it.

□ #2 Establish a time, place, and an approach to couple devotions

Talk and pray with your spouse about the best way to spend time with the Lord together. Could you pray together in the morning, on the phone over lunch, or before bed? Would you like to use an organized prayer calendar or a couples devotion? Would you like to read through Scripture together and discuss it? Again, you may already own materials that you could use. Allow your spouse to lead in choosing the approach that is most comfortable for him.

□ #3 Establish a time, place, and an approach to family devotions

Connecting family devotions to established routines is most likely to be effective. Could you pray and read Scripture at meal times? Perhaps bedtime is a better option. If you'd like to do devotions that require pre-planning, when could this planning be done and who could be responsible for it? Pray for wisdom about this. The most important thing is to cover the process with grace and be willing to make adjustments until you find what works for your family.

**If you completed this challenge, you've taken the most important step toward
homeschool sanity.**

Find the links at:

psychowith6.com/week-1-daily-devotions-challenge