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ISSN: 0799-1711

PROFESSIONAL
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL FOR
THE CARIBBEAN
COMMUNITY
AND
BEYOND

CJET

VOLUME
20

2021

Caribbean Journal of Evangelical Theology

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**HOME-SCHOOLING STRATEGIES
FROM A SECONDARY SCHOOL
TEACHER**

Kimshaw Aiken

Author

***How to Build Your Teaching
Muscles***

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this, the COVID-19 Pandemic will have passed its worst and life will be regaining a sense of normality. However, wherever we find ourselves it is important as Christians to remain hopeful and composed.

As a teacher¹ who is aware of how overwhelmed some parents would have been, trying to home-school (and in some cases, while trying to work), I have written a few practical tips which are spinoffs from what I use in the classroom. Hopefully, you will find these helpful during the summer break, as well as a way of maintaining your children's engagement with school work, so that they will be ready to tackle the new school year in September.

The most important strategy I use whenever I am not at my strongest before a class of students of different abilities and maturity levels is to pray

¹ Kimshaw Aiken is a teacher and a writer. She has recently written: *How to Build Your Teaching Muscles: Ten Strategies to Boost the Engagement of Challenging Learners*, available on Amazon. More teaching tips can also be found on her website at <https://howtobuildyourteachingmuscles.com/>

a silent prayer that God will lend me his lenses in that moment, so I can see them through His eyes. This has always successfully defused my irritability, and enhance my drive to lead with Love.

1. Remind your child ever so subtly that you are the facilitator during school hours.

It is a good idea to set up a schedule for your child to do work which I am sure many of you have already done. It is also best to find a specific room/area for teaching to take place. How about labelling that area as well? For example, **Grade 9 Hastings** (Use your last name). This does not only create a sense of familiarity to *the real thing* but also reminds your child that you are in charge in this domain. Be firm but fair. Children respond well to consistency and have the potential to become disciplined overcomers and diligent superstars with your help.

2. Avoid pandering to their every whimper or need for 'justice'

'I need to pee', 'My brain hurts,' or 'This cannot be a healthy system of education'. The force of the complaints will vary based on the age and intellect of the child. The key is to trust your gut. Do they absolutely need to pee right now, or could they wait a few more minutes of uninterrupted time? Children can be quite strong at adding pressure so they can identify loopholes in your methods. They may even do a bit of parent shaming (a criticism of your methods). Do not give in. The reality is at their schools, they know they are not allowed to use the bathroom just on a whim. In many cases they need a pass and cannot go during class time if they do not have a medical reason. I suggest you create a bathroom pass as well and observe how it is used. Encourage them to use the bathroom before home schooling starts. As it relates to parent shaming, you need to be strong. Because you may already doubt yourself, you may not realize it, but you may show that you agree with them that you do not know what you are doing. No matter your level of intellect, you can help. Based on my years of teaching experience, there is one thing I observe, and that is, a child does better when someone they trust is beside them and struggles with them. It

is not about you being *right*, it is about you being *present*. Keep your presence there even if you are feeling a bit awkward and irrelevant.

3. Remember to timetable Games.

Interactive Games are underrated. You need to set time for educational games. I do not mean to send them off to play *Fortnite* or something on the computer- play a game that involves stimulating conversation and competition. One popular one is called 'Just a Minute'. You could select a category, like 'Fruits'. Set the timer and the player must speak about fruits for one minute without saying 'uhm' or pausing too long. Points are to be gained for getting to 1 minute. After the minute, switch roles and start the game again. This builds vocabulary and imagination. Games build relationship.

Keep thinking about whether you can stretch the challenges in the games further. If so, do it! In many cases, children are very loyal, so the next time you sit with them to do their task, they will remember how you allowed yourself to play a game with them when they know you would rather be cooking or doing something 'more important'.