

Cycle 1 Morning Time Plans F.A.Q.

What is Morning Time anyway?

Morning time is simply a daily practice in a homeschool family whereby all the children come together with the parent to focus on the subjects that the family can do together in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. Too often our school day is dominated by the 'skill subjects' of language and math which can leave little time for the liberal arts of poetry, literature, art appreciation, handicrafts, dialectic discussion, and Scripture study. This can leave both the parent and child with a lack of enthusiasm for the beauty and natural curiosity of learning and discovery. Morning time allows a family to nourish their souls together and build relationship in a conversational setting by prioritizing noble ideas.

Does Morning Time really have to happen in the morning?

No! While morning seems to be the best time for many families, some prefer to do it later when the baby or toddler is taking a nap. Some families even chose to do it later in the evening while dad is at home. You really can use these plans any time of the day that fits your family best.

What is Classical Conversations?

Classical Conversations is an international company that provides support for homeschool families by building classical, Christian communities that meet weekly to instruct their children. They produce a curriculum called the Foundations Guide that each family uses, and it runs on a three-year cycle. You can get more information here: www.ClassicalConversations.com

What is included in the Cycle 1 Morning Time Plans download?

Great question! The download includes the following for all 24 weeks of Cycle 1:

- Read Aloud Schedule
- Narration and Question Asking Guide for Moms and Dads
- Poetry and Shakespeare Plan
- Cycle 1 Picture Study Plan with Copies of Artist's Prints
- Morning Time Prayer Guide and Psalms Cards
- Weekly Templates and Plans
- Memory Work Game Ideas
- Essentials Review Ideas
- Math Ideas for Morning Time
- Ways to incorporate N.A.M.E.S. in Morning Time
- Morning Time Mottos
- Ideas to Keep Hands Busy in Morning Time
- Tips for Toddlers in Morning Time
- Ideas for Using Podcasts in Morning Time
- Afternoon nature Study Tips
- And Much More!

Is Morning Time really enough?

Well, kinda 😊 When I joined CC, an older, wiser mom gave me some really great advice. She told me that if I am doing more than 2.5 hours of work each morning with my Foundations and Essentials kids then I am doing too much and not trusting the model. At first, I struggled to believe her but after six years I see the fruit and wisdom in what she advised. In our home we spend 45-60 minutes every day in Morning Time. After that we move to the table to work on our 'skills subjects' of language and math. My kids under 9 do Explode the Code and my kids over 9 do Essentials work (the language portion of CC) for 45 minutes and then we do 45 minutes of math. THAT IS IT! We eat lunch and then spend our afternoons exploring learning in non-traditional ways such as individual reading, nature study, entrepreneurial efforts, gatherings with friends, field trips, handicrafts,

spending time with grandparents, etc. Of course, my older kids in Challenge do more school work in the afternoons but for kids under 12, I strongly recommend that you trust the model and do not more than 2.5 hours a day. Remember, you are in this for the long haul, it is a marathon not a sprint so don't burn out too early!

[What is a Morning Time Binder?](#)

It is simply a 3-ring binder where you store your weekly plans, math game ideas, memory work review game ideas, poems, artist prints, etc...

[What is a Morning Time basket?](#)

The Morning Time basket holds all your read aloud books, game materials such as cards dice, Morning Time Binder, Bible, etc...

[How much prep time is required for the parent using your Morning Time Plans?](#)

Your biggest investment of preparation will be setting up your binder and basket. It will take you an hour or so to print out everything you need for the binder and order the necessary books - which could also be checked out at the library. Once you have set up the binder and basket, it really does not take more than 5-10 minutes each week to look over the plans for that week and decide if any adjustments need to be made. Oh, and you will need a couple minutes to make a yummy cup or tea or coffee to enjoy while you feast on living ideas with your kids each morning!

[What age are these Morning Time plans designed for?](#)

The concept of Morning Time is vastly popular among homeschoolers because it is designed specifically for a multi-age family. The books and activities in these Morning Time Plans are designed with kids ages 4-15 in mind however they can sure be used for older or younger!

[Do I have to be in a Classical Conversations community to use them?](#)

No, not at all. While they do compliment the Foundations Guide, you really don't even need that to make use of the resources. Cycle 1 focuses on Ancient History, Cycle 2 focuses on the Middle Ages and Cycle 3 focuses Modern & American History.

[Do these work with the new Foundations Guide?](#)

Yes, these plans were written with the 5th edition in mind but it will still work fine with older versions of the Foundation Guide.

[What is included with the plans and what do I need to purchase separately?](#)

The PDF download contains not only the weekly plans for Morning Time but also the artist prints, poems, narrations questions, math games, memory work review games, prayer cards, and much more! The only things you will need to purchase separately will be the books designed to be read aloud, a deck of cards and some dice for the games. All recommended books are available at Amazon and are very reasonably priced and in print.

[Do I need one copy for each of my children?](#)

No, you only need one copy of the ebook to put in your Morning Time Binder. Since the focus of Morning Time is to build a shared culture within your family as you feast on noble ideas together, there are no individual worksheets to make copies of. The only thing you may want multiple copies of are the artist prints as it is much easier to do an oral picture study when each child has their own copy.

[Do I use the 'Quarter-at-a-glance' weekly plans or the fill-in-the-blank Weekly Template?](#)

Well, that depends on how detailed of a person you are. For the Type-A homeschool parents who like to plan out every detail, you will want to print out 24 weekly plan templates and you can fill in the blanks as you plan out your morning time. For those of you who are a little less detailed, you will find the quarterly weekly plans to be sufficient and you will just spontaneously decide which review games, nature study ideas, and memory work to do each morning.

Can I use these plans with another family in a co-op style?

Yes, these plans would work great in a multi-family setting! One parent could plan the picture and poetry study while the other could plan the faith study and read-aloud discussions. The possibilities are endless! We do ask that each family purchase their own download for copywrite reasons.

What do I do with my toddlers while I am doing Morning Time with my older children?

Now that is a good question! My youngest 6 children were born within 7 years (and I had two older kids already whom I was trying to consistently homeschool during that season) so I know all about homeschooling with babies and toddlers underfoot! I will say that lack of consistent obedience and habit training will quickly sabotage your plans for a peaceful and rich Morning Time with your older children. Some parents choose to do a later Morning Time when the littlest are down for a nap, which can be very helpful. However, investing in your child training so that your toddler can learn the habits of obedience and self-control will produce fruit that will bless you and your family in countless ways.

I speak from experience, it is entirely possible for your toddler to learn the self-control to sit quietly (with a snack and some quiet toys) for 45 minutes to an hour while you enjoy Morning Time with your children. There is no secret trick or magic method that will accomplish this, just good old-fashioned discipline and consistency. ***My biggest piece of advice is to train towards this behavior long before you need it.*** If you plan to begin Morning Time with your kids on August 1st, then your toddler training program should begin July 1st. Start small with 5-10 minute increments. Choose a place with clear boundaries such as a rug on the floor, a large arm chair, a play pen, or a highchair for children over a year old. For infants under a year old, I would have them sit on my lap or in a booster seat (with a seat belt preferably) and consider it 'lap training'. Explain to the child that you want them to play quietly and after 5-10 minutes, they will be given their snack. Make sure you are setting aside all distractions so that you can focus on your child's training exclusively. Explain clearly where you want them to sit and set a timer that they can see for the amount of time you expect them to sit still and play with their quiet toy or book. When the timer goes off, praise them excitedly and reward them with their snack. If they choose to be loud or refuse to stay in the place you have asked them, give them a verbal reproof and explain what you expect again. After you are confident they understand what is expected, if they choose to disobey or refuse to practice the habit of self-control, you can give a small flick on the hand or even a light swat with a rod. Now I know some families may be against all forms of physical discipline. While it will be much harder to instill the habits of obedience and self-control, it is still possible to train towards that end without physical consequences. After they are consistent at 10 minutes of self-control, slowly raise it by increments of 5 until you have reached a full hour.

In our family we also used times of watching a movie, extended meal times, and family worship to train the habit of sitting still. I promise, as hard as it may be to believe, it is possible for your baby or toddler to sit still in an area designated by you and quietly play for up to an hour. In more extreme cases, you can even bring a car seat into the living room and buckle your child into it and use that to train self-control. Of course, the goal is that your child would learn to exercise internal restraint towards self-control but until they can be governed by internal restraint, a car seat can provide external restraint. Once you have trained towards this end, you will reap the benefits when you are at church, the doctor's office, or anywhere else you need your little one to be still! When I had multiple toddlers to manage during our Morning Time I would set up a few 'quiet spaces' in your living room and use them as stations. For example, I would have a play pen, a high chair and an arm chair and train each toddler to entertain themselves contentedly for 20- 30 minutes at each. Then I would rotate through the stations to give the children some variety. I know the initial investment of training is a lot of hard work, but the payoff is huge and so worth the effort because it allowed me focused time with the older children. It truly is not just a gift to the toddler to train them in self-control and obedience, but a gift of love towards the other children as well as they benefit from the peace it brings to the home. Please consider Charlotte Mason's words on this issue, read each word very carefully and let it sink in if you want to experience 'smooth and easy days' in your home...

"The mother's great stronghold is in the habit of obedience. If she begins by requiring that her children always obey her, why, they will always do so as a matter of course; but let them once get the thin end of the wedge in, let them discover that they can do otherwise than obey, and a woeful struggle begins, which commonly ends in the children doing that which is right in their own eyes. The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days."

-Charlotte Mason

"Every day, every hour, the parents are either passively or actively forming those habits in their children upon which, more than upon anything else, future character and conduct depend... What you would have the man become, that you must train the child to be."

- Charlotte Mason

[Is Morning Time consistent with Charlotte Mason's educational methodology?](#)

Yes! The Charlotte Mason method is based on the firm belief that the child is a person and we must educate that whole person, not just his mind. A Charlotte Mason education is three-pronged approach. In her words, "Education is an Atmosphere, a Discipline, a Life." Morning Time allows us the privilege to educate the full person of the child, not just in the 'skill subjects' of math and language but also in the arts of poetry, faith study, art appreciation, handicrafts, literature, and discussion. By creating an atmosphere and discipline in our homes, we can enjoy these living ideas with our children and homeschooling becomes less of an arduous chore and more of a refreshing feast!