Loving Living Math by Cindy West



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By Cindy West

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About Loving Living Math

Have you ever wondered what in the world 'living math' is? Do you know what it is, but have no idea how to incorporate it into your schedule? Or, maybe you're a skeptic and think the idea of living math is silly and not worthwhile?

In any case, you're in for a treat! *Loving Living Math* will answer all your questions, ease all your fears, and bring skeptics at least closer to the idea. **This is a book for parents who would like to learn more about living math - a "how-to" book of sorts.** In 46 straightforward pages, you'll understand what living math is, learn why it can be so effective in your homeschool, and consider various ways to incorporate it into your homeschool schedule. Don't get the impression that Cindy wants you to get rid of math textbooks! Although some parents use living math lessons and shows you how to effectively do that.

The book is jam-packed with encouragement and ideas! It will set veterans and beginners alike on a clear path toward adding more living math! Explanations, examples, resources and several sample lessons are provided on the topics of:

logic problem solving manipulatives skill and drill living literature games everyday opportunities math projects writing incorporating other subjects technology

Appropriate for ALL ages and ALL grade levels, *Loving Living Math* helps parents interested in adding more living math to the schedule do so successfully!

"I can truly say, [Loving Living Math] has not been a disappointment! It is chock full of ideas on applying living math to your homeschool. There are so many practical activities to use as well. I have already implemented some of them and they have been a hit." Read the entire review by Karen DeBeus of Simply Living...For Him <u>here</u>.

"I love Cindy's ideas and can't wait to get started! I've already added in some fun games randomly, and they've been a huge hit with the kids!" Read the entire review by Erica at Confessions of a Homeschooler here.

Table of Contents

Loving Living Math: How to Teach Outside of the Textbook	6
What in the world is living math?	6
Why would I want to use these principles?	7
What about the textbook?	7
What about the flashcards and timed drills?	8
A Few Skill and Drill Ideas	9
My Favorite Skill and Drill Resource Books	9
My Favorite Skill and Drill Websites	10
My Favorite Skill and Drill Games	
The Juicy Part – Adding Living Math to Your Homeschool	11
Logic	12
My Favorite Logic Resource Books	12
My Favorite Logic Websites	12
My Favorite Logic Games	12
Some Logic Puzzlers for You	13
Problem Solving	
My Favorite Problem Solving Resource Books	17
My Favorite Problem Solving Websites	17
My Favorite Problem Solving Games	17
Some Problem Solving Ideas for You	17
The Rest of the Story	21
Manipulatives	
How to Start with Manipulatives:	
My Favorite Manipulative Resource Books	25
Some Manipulative Ideas For You	25
Literature	

How to Integrate Literature into a Math Lesson	
My Very Favorite Math Literature Books	
My Favorite Math and Literature Resource Books	
My Favorite Math and Literature Websites	
Some Literature Ideas for You	
Board and Card Games	
Everyday opportunities	
Math Projects	
My Favorite Math Project Resource Books	
My Favorite Math Project Website	
Writing and Math	
Infuse Math into Other Subjects	
Technology and Math	41
The Best Part – Watching Your Child Learn & Enjoy Math	
Answers to Worksheets	45
About The Author	46

Loving Living Math: How to Teach Outside of the Textbook

Living Math are two words that often strike fear in the hearts of homeschoolers. Many homeschoolers can't imagine straying from the math textbook for two good reasons.

- 1. The textbook is the be all and end all of math curricula and must be completed in order from start to finish or our children will grow up missing something big.
- 2. If we even dare to consider stepping off the pages of the textbook, we wouldn't have any idea what to do in its place.

Do these concerns sound familiar? I've heard them time and time again. In fact, I can teach parents about almost any homeschooling subject and have heads nodding in agreement enthusiastically, unless I happen to be talking about venturing even ever-so-slightly away from the math textbook. Wide eyes of shock and wrinkled brows of disdain begin showing up all over the room. Many people firmly think to themselves, "She can talk about being creative in any



other subject - except math. There's no way I'm going to close the math textbook! My children would be scarred for life and never be able to regain all the knowledge lost to them in these fanciful lessons called living math!"

By the end of my workshops, however, many of these doubters are cautiously considering living math lessons. Through this book I hope to show you, like I show them, that living math not only adds zest and excitement to math, but it actually brings things to the table that most math books leave out!

What in the world is living math?

Living math is just what the name implies, math that is living. It stems from real-life, and is natural and relevant to the student. Often, living math is hands-on and even playful. It can easily tie into other subject areas since real-life usually doesn't segregate subjects. Worksheets are rarely necessary because children tend to create their own products during living math lessons.

I tend to use the term living math broadly. Just about anything outside of the textbook is included under the umbrella of living math by my definition, including board games, cooking, logic puzzles, creative skill drills and so much more. Why? Well, my children find math "living", exciting, enticing and relevant when it's out of the ordinary. So, for me, the term living math encompasses everything that makes my children lively when it comes to math.

Why Would I Want to Use These Principles?

Many parents begin to consider living math when a child isn't learning the traditional way or whines each and every day about textbook work. Sometimes parents get frustrated with the monotony of textbook math and want to infuse more fun into math time.

More importantly, though, most textbooks aren't the be all and end all that people think they are. Sure, they offer a sequential method of building math skills, but they often leave out real-life problem solving and logic. I'm not just talking about solving word problems. I'm talking about solving life problems like: How much carpet do we need to buy for the bedroom? What is our budget? What's the best carpet we can buy within our budget? Have we considered the extra cost of taxes, stain protections and installation?



Logic is another aspect of math that develops problem solving and critical thinking skills in a way that can't be compared to anything else. Most textbooks never even touch on logic.

Our children must certainly know the basics of arithmetic as taught in textbooks. But, they must also develop real-life problem solving skills that will inevitably be part of their lives in the future!

What About the Textbook?

This is a good place for me to stop and tell you that I USE A MATH TEXTBOOK! I always have and always will. Incorporating living math into your schedule doesn't mean you have to ditch the math text completely. Textbooks do a wonderful job of teaching sequential math skills!

From the time my children were in kindergarten, I have followed the same basic weekly schedule for math. We typically complete three textbook lessons per week and two living math lessons per week.

For you math whizzes, you'll realize that my children have never finished more than 100 lessons in the textbook for any grade level. (This is the point during my workshops when I hear gasps and watch a few people as they consider leaving the room for a more sensible workshop.) But guess what? It has never mattered that my children don't complete the entire math text!

Let's take just a moment to consider textbooks. I taught in the public schools for five years before coming home to be with my children. Never once did I, or any of my fellow teachers,



Mrs. West's co-op class took a field trip to the nature preserve. The children had so much fun, especially observing the bears. The preserve had four bears - two females and two males. At snack time, the children watched each bear choose a different fruit and sit in its favorite resting place. Use the clues to determine the name of each bear, what kind of fruit each bear ate, and where its favorite resting place was?





	Banana	Apple	Orange	Pear	Grass	Rock	Stump	Stream
Bob								
Buck								
Beverly								
Bonnie								

About The Author



Cindy is wife to Steve (for 16 years) and momma to Mahayla (14), Caleb (10) and Eli (4). They live on a cattle farm in Central Kentucky where they work hard, play hard, take nature walks, garden and preserve, read, homeschool, and take part in numerous church and school activities.

Cindy is co-author of the NaturExplorers nature studies that can be found at <u>http://ShiningDawnBooks</u>. She's also written a grammar program for 3-4th graders that uses living literature and ties in a comprehensive set of

grammar activities which can be found at Shining Dawn Books, too.

Currently, she's working on a book for Prufrock Press about homeschooling gifted children that should be available in the fall of 2011. Besides book writing, Cindy can be found writing on her blog, http://OurJourneyWestward.com, writing curriculum reviews at http://TheCurriculumChoice.com and The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, and speaking regularly around the state of Kentucky.