

Charlotte Mason Method Overview

An educator ahead of her time, Charlotte Mason (1842-1923), firmly believed that the child is a person and we must educate that whole person, not just his mind.

Education is three-pronged | An Atmosphere. A Discipline. A Life.

An Atmosphere | The surroundings in which the child grows up. A child absorbs a lot from his or her environment. Mason believed that the ideas that rule your life as [the educator] make up one-third of a child's education.

A Discipline | The discipline of good habits—and specifically habits of character. Cultivating good habits in a child's life make up another third of his or her education.

A Life | Academics. Mason believed that we should give children living thoughts and ideas, not just dry facts. So all of her methods for teaching the various school subjects are built around that concept.

Living Methods

Living Books | Usually written in narrative or story form by one author who has a passion for his topic. A living book makes the subject “come alive.”

Narration | Students tell back in their own words what was read, in order to secure it in their minds. No fill-in-the-blank or multiple-choice for Charlotte Mason students. Rich language is used as ideas are pointed out as well as any mental connections made between the reading and other ideas already residing in the students' growing minds and hearts.

Copy Work | Mason taught handwriting and spelling by using passages from great books that communicate great ideas rather than using just a list of words.

Nature Study | Mason encouraged spending time outdoors, interacting with God's creation firsthand and learning the living ways of nature.

Art Study | Mason introduced the work of great artists and composers to her students and let them spend time with each, getting to know their works personally.

She spread before her students **a feast of ideas** from a wide variety of sources—from Bible to tramping through field and stream to algebra to singing to foreign languages. **And woven throughout it all, she emphasized the habits of full attention, best effort, and learning for the sake of learning.**