

# 2026 Homeschool Iowa Conference Workshop Descriptions

**FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026**

## **8:30-10:00am – Conference Opening & Keynote Address**

### **However Imperfectly: Lessons Learned from 30 Years of Teaching – Andrew Pudewa**

In this talk, Andrew Pudewa shares many humorous experiences (and painful lessons) he has learned over 30 years of teaching and homeschooling. You will be challenged, reassured, and sure to leave with an expanded vision of your calling as a home educator.

## **10:30-11:30am – Workshop Session 1**

### **Christ-Centered Homeschooling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Kevin Swanson**

Are we holding strong to the vision? Are we allowing secularism to creep into our homeschools? Are we allowing worldly standards to establish our definitions of success? Have we clarified the differences between a man-centered education and a God-centered education enough? Kevin Swanson gets back to the basics on a biblical worldview in this presentation.

### ***Starting Homeschooling Special Track:***

#### **Homeschooling: Starting Off Right – Trisha Pull**

Starting the homeschool journey can be an overwhelming and intimidating process. How do you decide which curriculum to use? How should your home be set up for learning? What does the law require of homeschoolers? Is there a right way to homeschool? This session is designed to address beginning topics like state homeschool laws, how to choose curriculum, understanding your children's learning styles, finding support for you and your homeschool, and making learning a lifestyle. You'll leave this session feeling equipped and confident for your homeschool year ahead.

#### **Training Character into Your Children – Kathie Morrissey**

Character is the most important fruit that parents can nurture in their children, and it is the foundation for academic learning. Discover how character is learned and how to establish a plan for teaching it to your children. Kathie will give several creative ways you can encourage your children to develop in this important area. After hearing this, you will be motivated and full of ideas to use with your own children.

#### **Building a Solid Math Foundation Because Confidence Matters – Kerri Williams**

Just like a house needs a strong foundation to stand tall, children need a solid base in math to tackle more complex ideas with confidence. Without a solid foundation, things can start to crumble. In this session, you'll learn simple, effective ways to teach math from the ground up, helping children understand the basics in a way that builds their confidence. When kids have a solid math foundation, they don't just get the right answers. They feel empowered to keep growing, trying, and even enjoying math as they advance to more challenging concepts.

## 11:45-12:45pm – Exhibitor Workshops

### **You can do it! The Church and Education Ministries – Herzog Foundation**

Looking for ways for your church to serve local homeschooling families? At the Herzog Foundation, we believe that YOUR church can start an education ministry, and we have the free resources to get you there. This workshop will explore practical steps, legal considerations, and space-sharing frameworks necessary to establish a thriving co-op within a local church. Attendees will leave equipped with actionable strategies and inspired by real-life stories from churches that have successfully integrated education ministries into their mission.

### **No Need for FOMO (Fear of Missing Out): Creating Homeschool Traditions – BJU Press Homeschool**

Homeschooling is more than academics. It's a chance to build a rich family culture filled with joy, connection, and meaning. This workshop will share creative ways to celebrate milestones, establish traditions, and adapt familiar school customs to reflect your family's values and unique homeschool journey. Leave inspired with practical ideas to make your homeschool effective and memorable for years to come.

### **Cultivating Confident Communicators: Building Skills & Character – NCFCA Christian Speech & Debate**

NCFCA Christian Speech and Debate is a nationwide competitive league dedicated to helping students learn real-world communication skills that equip them for life. Their students become confident orators, inquisitive researchers, and steadfast advocates for a biblical worldview. This workshop will showcase how NCFCA empowers our competitors to excel in both competitive public speaking and everyday communication with poise and purpose.

### **Forge & Form: The Wild Path to Discovery – Upland, Inc.**

Reframe how you and your students look at nature and your own backyards through a lens of adventure, resourcefulness, wonder, connection and unhurried observation. Learn what to look for and exciting ways to use or transform these finds into one-of-a-kind creative learning tools. You'll go home equipped with new ideas you and your family can't wait to explore.

## 1:00-2:00pm – Workshop Session 2

### **The Heart of the Home – Heidi St. John**

Did you know that God places a high value on the role of homemakers? If you're wondering if the work of making dinner, keeping the house clean, changing diapers, and doing dishes carries eternal significance, this workshop is for you. Mom, you're irreplaceable. Come join Heidi St. John as she infuses your heart and home with the joy of homemaking. (Bonus! Heidi will be sharing some of her favorite recipes and tips for creating a home that your whole family will love to come home to.)

### ***Starting Homeschooling Special Track:***

#### **Leveraging Learning Styles – Trisha Pull**

One of the great benefits of homeschooling is the opportunity to personalize your children's education. A key ingredient in tailoring education is understanding each child's individual learning style. This facilitates easier learning, adds fun to school, and aids in choosing curriculum. This workshop will give you the tools to determine your child's learning style and ideas for how to better teach them. Additionally, you'll be able to learn about your learning and teaching style, too!

#### **Dealing with a Difficult Child – Kathie Morrissey**

*Do you struggle with a child who is difficult or challenging?* Do you have one child who causes you exasperation and takes more time and energy than all your other children put together? How do you respond

to the resentment and anger he stirs up in you? How do you respond to him? There IS hope and help!! Get answers to these questions that will encourage you and help you deal wisely and lovingly with that child.

### **Teaching Life Skills: Preparing Kids for Adulthood, Not Just Graduation – Andi Elliott**

Homeschooling isn't just about finishing textbooks. It's about preparing kids for real life. In this workshop, we'll explore how to intentionally weave life skills into your homeschool: from daily chores and time management to financial literacy, problem-solving, and even entrepreneurship. You'll learn practical strategies to help your children grow in independence and confidence while still pursuing academics. Walk away with a clear vision for raising capable, resilient young adults who are ready not only for graduation but also for the responsibilities and opportunities of adulthood.

## **2:30-3:30pm – Workshop Session 3**

### **Cultivating Language Arts – Preschool Through High School – Andrew Pudewa**

Listening and reading well, speaking and writing clearly, and thinking and debating effectively are abilities that most parents hope to cultivate in their children. With that goal in mind, Andrew Pudewa explores various environments and activities that accelerate the development of these language skills, beginning with the youngest students and continuing into the high school years.

### ***Starting Homeschooling Special Track:***

### **Homeschooling with Confidence: Understanding Iowa's Homeschool Law – Scott Woodruff**

This session covers everything you need to know about your state's homeschool law so you can homeschool with confidence. It includes a thorough presentation of the basics with plenty of time for questions.

### **Set the Math Worksheets Aside: Let's Play Games – Kerri Williams**

Set the boring worksheets aside and say "Hello" to joyful learning through games! In this fun-filled workshop, you'll discover how simple math card games can make math something your child actually looks forward to. These games are powerful tools for teaching and reinforcing key concepts like addition, multiplication, and fractions. They encourage critical thinking, build number sense, and allow kids of all ages and abilities to learn together. Games turn solitary work into a social, interactive experience that boosts math skills and infuses learning with laughter and joy.

### ***KIDS Program:***

Kids will enjoy an action-packed missionary adventure program filled with songs, scripture memorization, and drama. Admission based upon available space. Children must be accompanied during the program by at least one parent.

## **4:00-5:00pm – Workshop Session 4**

### **War of the Worldviews: You Can Do Better for Your Child Than Public School – Heidi St. John**

By now, it's clear that the agendas of woke ideologues have infiltrated almost every major institution in Western civilization. This begs these questions: "Does the public school deserve to have your children for 8 hours a day?" "Should my children be salt and light in the public schools?" Join Heidi St. John, mother of seven and well-known advocate for parental involvement in education, for an eye-opening, excuse-smashing exposé on the agenda for our public schools. See how the schools are pushing gender ideology, homosexuality, Critical Race Theory, and pro-abortion propaganda. Learn the true history of public schools, the real agenda of the National Education Association (NEA), the National Library Association (NLA), and more. You're not helpless in this battle for the heart and mind of your child. We'll discuss why an "exodus" from our public schools is happening and why homeschooling is growing in leaps and bounds.

***TEEN Session:***

**Design Your Own Character – Chad Stewart, The Animation Course**

***(Advance pre-paid registration required – Limited Spaces Available)***

In this workshop, students will learn about the basic principles of design and how to apply them to the creation of their own original character. We'll touch on shapes, structure, and movement and how all of these will affect the overall final design. Bring your pencils, we're going to draw!

**5:00-6:30pm – Homeschooling 101**

**Homeschooling 101 – Homeschool Iowa Regional Representatives**

*(This session is open to the public, with no admission fee.)*

Considering homeschooling? Not sure where to begin? This session will cover the basics. We'll offer a brief presentation of the Iowa homeschool legal options and a comprehensive overview of the essentials of home education. There will be a time for interaction and questions at the end.

# SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026

## 8:00-9:00am – Workshop Session 5

### **Renaissance Education OR Renaissance in Education? – Andrew Pudewa**

Would a renaissance education help bring about a renaissance in education? What sort of training and life did a young Shakespeare or da Vinci have? What elements of that can we recapture and apply in our tech-driven modern world? Andrew Pudewa contemplates craft, attentiveness, stock, imitation, constraint, freedom, and more!

### **The Ten Secrets for the Best Education for Your Child – Kevin Swanson**

Don't miss the essentials! These are the most crucial and the most basic, age-old biblical principles for the education of a child. Faith and character are preeminent. The principle of individuality is the most liberating principle. Relationships lie at the heart of it. Life integration turns knowledge into an extremely useful and powerful tool for success. But how many of these elements are missed by conventional educators and by many homeschoolers as well? These are the basics, coming from Kevin Swanson's 53 years of experience in the movement, and his book, *Upgrade: The Ten Secrets to the Best Education for Your Child*.

### **Beyond the Bubble: Guiding Kids to Thrive in the Real World – Andi Elliott**

As homeschool parents, it's natural to want to protect our children. But keeping them too sheltered can leave them unprepared for life's challenges. It can even lead to rebellion, pushing them toward the very things we hope to shield them from. In this workshop, you'll learn how to guide your kids through honest, age-appropriate conversations about feelings, choices, and real-world experiences. We'll explore practical strategies to build resilience, confidence, and sound judgment that will help your children become capable, self-assured, and ready to navigate the world beyond home.

### **Managing Multi-Level Teaching – Kathie Morrissey**

Teaching multiple ages at once is no small task. It can feel overwhelming, exhausting, and frustrating. But with the right systems and mindset, it can become one of the most fruitful parts of your homeschool. In this session, Kathie Morrissey, homeschool mom of eight, will show you how to turn the chaos into calm. You'll learn practical strategies to structure your days, foster independence, and keep everyone on track, even when you're juggling toddlers and teens. You'll walk away encouraged and equipped with tools to make schooltime more peaceful, productive, and purpose driven.

### **Finding Curriculum to Fit Your Family – Trisha Pull**

How do you choose wisely among the seemingly thousands of homeschool curriculum options available today? Can it work to have students of different ages use the same study materials? What other options are there for managing students at different levels? Let this workshop save you hours of research through a guided tour of popular teaching methods, learning styles, and resources for evaluating curriculums. We won't tell you what to use, but we will help you make choices that fit your individual students, and probably save you some money along the way.

## 9:30-10:30am – Workshop Session 6

### **Legacy and Influence: Three Ways to Focus on the NOW to Influence the Future – Heidi St. John**

Did you know that you have influence? You do! The question is: What are you doing with the influence that God has given you? You have influence with your children, your friends, your family, and your co-workers. What are you doing with it? How is your faith influencing those around you? In this powerful presentation, Heidi will share six character traits of leaders who have successfully navigated the ups and downs of

leadership and used their influence to make a difference in the lives of those around them. Your legacy is already being built. What will it be?

### **Homeschool Dads: Leading, Supporting & Engaging – Panel Discussion**

Homeschool dads, you are *more* than a principal or substitute teacher. You have a key role to play in your family's homeschool journey! This informal Q&A panel of seasoned homeschool fathers will share their experiences, their wins and losses, and their words of encouragement. This session offers a chance to ask honest questions and to receive practical insights from those who have been on this journey for a while. Discover how you can shape the vision of your family's homeschool, how to support your wife, and how to take an active, meaningful role in your children's education. Join us for real-world perspectives and connection with other homeschool fathers!

### **Nurturing Competent Communicators – Andrew Pudewa**

Many teachers and parents assume that good readers will naturally become good writers. Others think that writing talent is a natural ability. Some have it. Others don't. Both are myths. History and modern research demonstrate how good writers develop the two most critical skills needed for a high level of aptitude in writing. With humor and insight, Andrew Pudewa explains these two easy, but powerful skills, that build language patterns and nurture competent communicators.

### **Kids Who Learn Differently and the Parents Who Want Answers – Kerri Williams**

Teaching math can be tough, especially when your child learns differently. Whether your child has a learning difference, struggles with math anxiety, or simply doesn't grasp math the traditional way, you're not alone. In this encouraging and practical workshop, you'll discover strategies that truly work for kids who need a different approach. Learn how to teach in ways that build real understanding, reduce anxiety, and foster confidence. With the right tools and support, success is not only possible, it's within reach. Come gain insight, encouragement, and a clear path forward for your child's learning journey.

### ***KIDS Program:***

Kids will enjoy an action-packed missionary adventure program filled with songs, Scripture memorization, and drama. Admission based upon available space. Children must be accompanied during the program by at least one parent.

## **10:30am-1:00pm – Extracurricular Showcase**

Learn about extracurricular opportunities for homeschooled students across the state in this special session offering presentations and one-on-one discussions with various program providers. These include homeschool sports teams, music groups, drama organizations, and art programs from across Iowa.

## **11:45am-12:45pm – Exhibitor Workshops**

### **Learn Together—Do Life Together – Classical Conversations**

Classical Conversations empowers you to guide your child's educational development at every age (and teaches you, too!). Its Christ-centered homeschool curriculum is rooted in the classical model and is in tune with the way children naturally learn. Classical Conversations believes education is best experienced together, and that's why community is the bedrock of its homeschool model. Their homeschool program helps you cultivate an inquisitive, thoughtful child through an intentional, community-based approach. Learning together with families like yours, you're equipped with the tools and support to teach a Christ-centered worldview that's rooted in the classical model.

### **Blind Chance or Creation? – Solidify Your Faith**

Get equipped to stand up to the godless dogma of evolution that permeates society. Simple questions can expose the shaky foundations of evolutionists and atheists. Also learn how to spot the logical fallacies that are commonly used.

### **Eight Ways to Cultivate Their Love of Learning – Faith Baptist Bible College**

Ultimately, one of the desired goals of homeschooling is to cultivate your child's love of learning. However, there are times when butting heads, subjects outside of interests, demands of a rigorous lesson plan, or an over-zealous parent's drive to cross things off of a long to-do list will kill your kid's natural desire to dig deeper and learn more. In this workshop, we will take a deep breath and look at eight ways to turn around the frustration, and encourage their natural love of learning.

### **Practical Apologetic Life Lessons – Anderson Homeschool Academy**

Experience this practical presentation of Christian apologetics based upon Dr. Anderson's creation devotional book. In this workshop, God's incredible creative power will be illustrated with unique props, including a plumb bob, a sand tube, and a spinner top, to demonstrate lessons in biblical truths.

### **Teaching Math Without Burnout: How to Add Structure Without Losing Flexibility – The Math Gift**

If math is the subject that quietly drains your energy every single day, you're not alone. Math can quietly become the hardest part of homeschooling, especially in the early and elementary years, because it requires so much daily attention and decision-making. If you're wondering whether your child is really making progress, how much help is too much, or why math seems to take so much energy, this workshop is for you. Designed for homeschool parents of children in grades 1–6, this session will show you how to bring helpful structure to your math time without locking yourself into rigid schedules or losing flexibility. You'll learn what steady progress actually looks like at these ages, how to reduce daily stress and guesswork, and how to teach math with more confidence without feeling like you have to be the expert.

## **1:00-2:00pm – Workshop Session 7**

### **Help and Hope for the Overwhelmed Mom – Heidi St. John**

Parenting. It's exhausting and exhilarating. frustrating and fascinating. Like all things that are God-breathed, it's a Kingdom-building exercise. It's a masterful strategy, this idea of using all-night feedings and miscarriage and labor and teenagers (see how teens and labor go hand in hand?) and even homeschooling to teach us to trust the heart of the Father. But that's exactly what God wants you to learn to do. Join Heidi St. John for an hour of encouragement and inspiration that will lift you up and remind you of the WHY of homeschooling.

### **How to Divorce-Proof a Marriage – Ebon Carter**

Is your marriage facing challenges or obstacles? Do the problems seem overwhelming or too big to handle at times? This workshop will clearly define God's intention for marriage but also outline three very simple, practical habits that you can use right away. These habits can strengthen your connection, build resilience, and help "divorce-proof" your relationship. Ebon's goal is to equip and inspire you to build something lasting and deeply rooted in God's plan for marriage.

### **The Homeschool High School – Kevin Swanson**

Kevin's parents graduated six children from their homeschool, and now, Kevin and Brenda Swanson have just about graduated their five children as well. All parents want their children to be successful. We will take a careful look at the word "success" and touch on our children's calling and purpose in life. Let's clear the deck and consider basic goals for the life preparation each of our children will need. We'll examine two tracks (the entrepreneurial track and the college track) and offer to parents and young people an exciting array of options

and ideas that accommodate an array of unique needs. Special mention will be made of the power of mentorship.

### **You CAN Teach Science! – Ben DeFord**

Science is messy and expensive. Ever wonder whether you're "doing it right" or "doing enough"? In this workshop, Ben will offer his insight as a middle school science teacher on where you should probably splurge and where it's okay to cut your science budget. He will also describe some of his favorite science tools that you can buy once and use for years with multiple scholars. Hopefully, you'll walk away from this workshop feeling encouraged and equipped with new ideas, resources, and the confidence that you *can* teach science!

### **Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, and Dyscalculia – Dana Huss**

This comprehensive seminar delves into three common learning differences—dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia—affecting students' reading, writing, and math abilities. Educators, parents, and tutors will gain a clear understanding of how each condition presents in the classroom, their underlying causes, and how they can often overlap. The seminar will provide practical strategies for identifying these learning challenges early and explore targeted interventions that support student success in reading, writing, and math. Participants will leave equipped with effective instructional techniques, accommodations, and tools to help students overcome these barriers and achieve academic growth.

## **2:30-3:30pm – Workshop Session 8**

### **Reading Strategies for the Struggling Reader or Nonreader – Andrew Pudewa**

As schools have made reading their new god, they believe that producing good readers will solve all their academic problems. As a result, many children—the dyslexic, the easily distracted, the auditorily challenged—are left behind in the rush to improve test scores. What schools do not know (but what many parents and teachers discover) is that reading is not simply being able to rapidly decode symbols with the eyes. With humor and insight, Andrew Pudewa shares stories and strategies for helping students who need to engage the cognitive processes of reading but who are more likely to excel through a wider variety of practical, creative, and imaginative approaches.

### **A Biblical Worldview for History – Kevin Swanson**

As the author of six books on world history, American history, missions history, and the history of Christian liberties, Kevin Swanson shows how a Christian view of history is so very different from an evolutionary, materialistic, and humanistic view that is taught in schools today. Most of the Bible is history. Jesus appears in history. The Gospel is a historical event. If you are passing on the faith to your children, this will be a critical element of it. It is essential that we pass on "the mighty acts of God" as recorded in history, and see them as just that: the mighty acts of God.

### **Homeschool Iowa Legislative Update – Jeremy Vos**

Receive a first-hand report on what happened in the 2026 Iowa Legislative Session from our Homeschool Iowa lobbyist, Jeremy Vos. You'll learn about Homeschool Iowa's advocacy efforts on behalf of Iowa homeschooling families and hear the inside scoop about all things legislative affecting home educators in our state.

### ***TEEN Session:***

### **Hands On! Animation Flip Book – Chad Stewart, The Animation Course (Advance pre-paid registration required – Limited Spaces Available)**

In this workshop, students will get a chance to create their own animation by using the tried-and-true animation exercise of "The Bouncing Ball." This exercise was first used at Disney Studios in the early 1920s and 1930s, and the lessons it teaches are still applicable today.

### **From Loving to Cherishing – Ebon Carter**

Do you remember your first date with your spouse? Take a moment and think about how you felt while holding hands and gazing into their eyes. God intended for marriages to maintain that cherishing nature throughout the entire journey. In this workshop we will discuss the distractions and barriers that arise and how we can successfully tend the garden of our relationship to always treasure their presence.

## **4:00-5:00pm – Keynote Address**

### **Prayers for the Battlefield – Heidi St. John**

Are you weary? Today's parents are up against a lot. We're shepherding children in a time when the war for their hearts and minds has reached a fever pitch. And, yes, the battle is real, but so is our God! Come spend an hour with mother-of-seven, Heidi St. John, as she offers hope and teaches parents how to pray for their kids at every stage of development. We'll get real about the struggle, but we won't focus on it. You're raising a special generation of warriors! Don't give up. You were born for this!