

Help! Homeschooling is Overwhelming

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SUMMARY

The Connected Families podcast features a discussion among three homeschooling mothers—Lydia, Nicole, and Marne—who share their unique journeys and the challenges they face in parenting and homeschooling. They emphasize the importance of connection, self-care, and understanding in navigating the complexities of family life, especially in light of the increased pressures many families have faced since the pandemic.

- *Homeschooling can lead to feelings of overwhelm due to the responsibility of managing education, emotional needs, and sibling dynamics.*
- *Each mother highlights the significance of self-care and personal well-being in maintaining a calm and supportive home environment.*
- *Sibling conflict is common in homeschooling families, and the mothers advocate for teaching empathy and conflict resolution skills.*
- *The importance of focusing on relationships over strict adherence to curriculum is emphasized, allowing for interest-led learning.*
- *The mothers encourage parents to embrace the messiness of family life and to remember their core values of faith and family.*
- *They share the idea that homeschooling is not a one-size-fits-all approach and that parents should make choices that best suit their family's needs.*
- *Connection and communication are vital for fostering a positive family atmosphere and helping children navigate their emotions.*

[Music] hi friends welcome to the connected families podcast I'm your host Stacy belward our purpose in this podcast is to guide you to receive God's grace and truth and then to equip you to pass that Grace and Truth on to your children I'm so glad that you have joined us today I've gathered a stellar group of three ladies to join me today on the podcast to talk about parenting and homeschooling there are loads of homeschoolers in our community and

because of the pandemic the number actually has been even growing well homeschoolers have some unique challenges and really many of the same challenges that other parents face I'm going to be talking about this and other challenges that homeschoolers face with Lydia Rex Nicole Summers and Marne love all homeschool moms but each with a different story and a different Journey so welcome to the podcast ladies so glad to have you here you know I don't know if you guys know this but I'm a

homeschool kid that's aome awesome my claim to fame is that my parents uh when I was young and we were living in Wisconsin they homeschooled when it was still illegal that's crazy it's so crazy that probably kind of

dates me a little bit but we had to stay in the house so that nobody would see us and the police wouldn't have to pick us up so I feel like a forerunner for you all to be

able to homeschool your kids thank you for Paving the way you're welcome well I want to give you each a chance to introduce yourselves just by telling us how many children you have you know about your homeschooling their ages but then really specifically what challenges are you working through in your homeschooling so why don't we start with Lydia Lydia you are on staff here you are a parent coach certified with connected families so share about

homeschooling in your family yeah well first of all I am also a homeschool grad like you Stacy so I was homeschooled from preschool through high school and funny enough I didn't exactly plan on homeschooling my kids I have a kindergartner and a fourth grader right now and when my oldest would have been starting kindergarten was right when we had adopted my youngest and so it started out as just I wanted more time to be together into Bond and we're still

homeschooling and I don't really see an end in sight so as time has gone on with my kids we've both of them have some pretty significant um educational challenges and so that's been part of The Homeschool Journey for us is you know the therapies and making the modifications to how I teach things and in on one hand it's it's a little easier because I don't have to go through all the channels I can just change how I do

things and work around my kids strengths which is great but then on the flip side of that sometimes I feel like it's all on me and you know trying to be the therapist and the mom and and do the reading remediation and and this and that so that's been challenging as well as the fact that you know I'm a sensitive and intense mom with two sensitive and intense kids sometimes makes life a little crazy right oh

that's good I know I I sense that maybe homeschoolers feel like the weight of it all is on them and I heard that from what you said well Nicole let's go to you share with us about your journey you're you're just a connected families volunteer extraordinaire I know you've been around the things that we've done in our online courses and one thing that we've worked on together lately is being in clubhouse and our Monday morning prayer room that you have joined so

often to pray for people and that's been fantastic but tell us about your homeschooling and your family yes I have six children they range in age from 9 10 almost 12 12 two of them are 13 right now for one more month and then that second child will be 14 next month and then my eldest is 15 so the four youngers are my girls and the two older are my boys the two older ones and my four girls are actually

adopted and they are biological sisters the four of them are biological sisters so out of my six children five of them are adopted so my four girls are biological sisters and my boy my second boy is from a completely different family and then I have the one who is my eldest is my only biological child we have had a very colorful experience with homeschooling and growing our family through adoption and through all of it every step of the way I have just been

forced to cling to the Lord because I just it's been an exciting Adventure but an adventure of all of the unknowns and so God has very purposefully designed all of this so we we've always been a homeschool family but just recently we moved across the country from California to Georgia and my eldest my 15-year-old asked if he could try out public school and because I lean heavily toward self-directed education where we really

want to lean into their passions and the things that interest them most when he kind of threw that out there I don't want to be hypocrite in any way so I said okay that's where you are right now and you would like to you know try that so we want to come alongside you and support you in that so for the last four months he has been in public school and he is really enjoying it where we are

right now so the other five are still being homeschooled so that's still that's still going well go Nicole I'm sure when he came to you with that you had to take a deep breath and and think that through and pray that through I'm sure but I can hear the business of six kids and all at different ages and the chaos of it all maybe the noise and The Sibling conflict and I know from being an adopted family myself there's always

a level of trauma and loss that's just you know somewhere in there that you're you know thinking through and praying through too so yeah thanks for that introduction Marne welcome Marty you are also a certified connected families coach with connected families tell us about your homeschooling journey and your family so I have three boys um 17 15 and 11 and I was actually a public school teacher before um I became a home educator so that's a whole another topic

of just trying to deschool myself but I really have enjoyed homeschooling my kids and learning alongside them especially I have three Busy Boys and so being able to allow them to move their bodies in the ways that they need to has been really helpful I have one that has ADHD and another with sensory processing issues and so just having that space for them to sit on a yoga ball if they need to or jump on a trampoline if they need

to practice our math facts while we're throwing the football if they need to has been really helpful so I'm grateful for um just the way that they can be you know themselves and my oldest like Nicole is graduating this year he's a senior and he also decided he wanted to try school for the first time so that's been a new adventure for our family so he's going to school he's thriving I will say that I was a little nervous if

he was prepared I really believed that he was but you never know for sure so it's been great to see him just kind of grow into that and learn how to advocate for himself and learn how to work you know in a group project you know how those go sometimes you're the only one doing all the work so he's been navigating that so that's been really good for him he's um actually he only needed two classes to graduate so it kind of still

feels like for homeschooling in a way like Nicole I lean toward interest L learning and this was an interest that he had but he's also interested he worked part-time and so he goes to school half day works and he's just living his best life getting ready to get out there on his own soon well and I know from having a senior this is what I've been telling everyone you know how people say save up money for therapy for

your kids uhuh you need to save up money for therapy for yourself the year your children go off to college like that's a real deal so I feel you well I just love that the three of you have come together on this podcast because you know together we have kids of all the ages you know and we have done School in all the different ways my kids are at a private school so we have private home educating

and we have public schools and teachers and so we really have a breath of experience and wisdom and so I'm I'm just excited to dig in and the first question I have is really for you Marty because I know that you have talked with and you work with families that are new to homeschooling and I think there's just loads of them out there because of the pandemic and probably everyone listening actually feels like they're a homeschooler

after right having done school at home virtually but here's the question what are you seeing that parents are facing these days around homeschooling I think especially for people that are coming out of the public school system it's just a shock right it's just like total shock to your system and I think feeling like overwhelmed with curriculum with how to organize your day how to handle you know we're with our kids more and our kids are with each other more so

that brings conflict in you know I think people like kind of like summertime in a way where they're together more often but you're trying to get things done so you know I think it's just a whole new routine that people are trying to establish and you know it hasn't been easy even for veteran homeschoolers like us during the pandemic things were closed down Sports stopped and you know outside classes stopped and our communities kind of shut down so it's

now starting to pick back up but it can feel lonely so I think people are just you know not everything is up and roll like it was and so it is hard to find community and hard to find even sometimes kids at the park you know it's just kind of been I think a little bit difficult for not just veteran homeschoolers but brand new homeschoolers in that way too so I think overwhelmed maybe feeling a little

lonely just kind of not sure where to begin where to start this whole new adventure that's what I'm hearing a lot of yeah I think a lot of people will resonate with that really if you're a homeschooler or not I talked with a mom last night at a workshop and her kids were in a public school and she was she was just kind of feeling all the changes and overwhelmed with all of that and so yeah we're definitely we're in a season

of overwhelm I would say in our world and in families yeah well you know I want to structure our conversation today around really two key struggles that homeschoolers are facing and when I list them um I think our listeners are going to think what hey that's me too if they're not a homeschooler and maybe that's why we picked them but they are very real I want to I want to talk about one the overwhelm that we just kind of set up

and mentioned but also sibling conflict because that seems to just rise to the surface when we're talking to homeschoolers too so yeah we know all parents deal with these so I'm going to throw it to Nicole first and the question really is why are those struggles of overwhelm and sibling conflict why are they do they feel particularly intense with homeschoolers yes probably they are home with us more and so when you have

children at home more of those hours

during the day there's just more opportunity for conflict there's more opportunity for heads budding so but I'll tell literally and figuratively Nicole absolutely absolutely for sure yeah there are so many there my with my youngest being nine and then having three teenagers I'm seeing different sides of that when my youngers my younger girls are fighting over you know she took my toy and you're in my space and where my olders have moved more into

the things that I'm battling more with them they're looking for more autonomy so there more if I'm asking you to take the trash out or if I'm asking you if you've gotten your assignment done there can be some kind of P back they're pushing back right exactly and so I'm learning to first of all remember that I know that they think that Mom is old but I remember being 13 14 15 I clearly remember those years and so I'm trying

to really do more communicating less okay you know what this is what you've done you've crossed this line and here's the consequence I'm trying to really work more with communicating over consequences you know less rules more relationship yep connecting you're going into the framework Nicole absolutely for sure the second level of the framework how to connect with them over those things for sure it's everything I love it and I love how you were like hey I

can remember that feeling I'm not so old yet yeah that's really good well I think you're right what you started with just the sheer number of hours that a family is together really can lead to the overwhelm and all three of you have mentioned in your introductions you've mentioned and talked about that but let's talk about that overwhelm so I can imagine that the weight of your kids education imparting value systems their relationships their siblings relationships heck even meals getting

the meals on the table like all of the things are on on your shoulders and it feels heavy you know and also when it gets even deeper like trauma or educational differences there's really a lot to navigate so Marty I want to ask you this question what has the overwhelm looked like for you and what enables you to just push through that I think the overwhelm for me I'm an introvert and I'm a bit of a highly sensitive person

and I have three voice so there's no quiet in my house so sometimes the overwhelm just felt like a lot of noise a lot of activity and so I really needed to start right at the foundation like what's going on with me I go there a lot so I think that is like the main thing that helps me when I'm feeling overwhelmed I have to really look at my self-care practices am I getting sleep am I drinking enough water you know am I

maybe I had to give up coffee because caffeine was not helpful for me so you know am I getting coffee Mar that's so sad coffee sad why cannot do c sometimes but yeah I mean I think you know it's really just looking at me showing up to be my best self in order to you know help my educate my kids connect with my kids during the day so I really have focused a lot on my self-care practices

and have done a lot of work you know I've love connected family slowo and listen like that is my that is my my main focus many times whether it's dealing with sibling conflict or whether it's dealing with you know like Nicole was saying a conflict over chores or whether that's going through a difficult math lesson you know I really I set the temperature for my home so if I come in calm and slow low and listen then that's

going to really affect my boys in a positive way but if I'm stressed out if I'm coming in with any kind of anxiety or frustration I mean my kids see it on my face they hear it in my voice and it'll just tank the entire day so but that is a big weight that's a huge weight to carry isn't it it is a big weight but it's also a blessing like it's also given me permission to say you

know what I need to take care of myself if I need to go to bed early if I need to say we're not starting school until 9:00 because I need to get my workout in that makes me a better mom to you and I think it's good for them because it's so showing them how to show up in the world in a good way so I I've seen my boys you know start their workout routine and you

know make sure that they're getting what they need so I think it's it is a big responsibility but it's also a wonderful opportunity so I've tried to reframe it to look at look at it that way and I just really encourage mamas to like do self-care go out for a walk you know it's okay to stop the lesson if things aren't going well and go outside and throw the ball around or take the dog on a walk get on your bike like we all need

to move our bodies sometimes to change the course of our day and so I think it took me a little while to learn that and I tried I think a lot of times to push through and I think that's a big thing that homeschool moms do we got lessons to do we have our to-do list to do we're just going to push through but that doesn't help anybody and so I think just self-care practice is huge and making

sure that you're doing the work you know whether it's in you know maybe you need to see a therapist maybe you need marriage counseling like all those things affect how we show up for our kids and so I've done those things you know I've taken the time to do it and it was kind of easy to put myself on the back burner but when I saw the effect that it had on my family it was a lot

easier for me to to do the work so that's I think been the thing that's helped me the most on my personal overwhelm journey I wonder if if Lydia if you have any thoughts about what does do the work mean man yeah yeah it means to look inward at what's going on in me as a mom and there have been so many times where I have found myself struggling with one of my kids over a school assignment maybe and when I've

taken that step back to think about it it was about me it was about what was going on in me it was about my feelings of inadequacy my comparison of myself as a teacher and just you know feeling like I needed to have things all together wasn't really really about my child it wasn't really about the school thing that we were struggling with so yeah I relate to that so much Marne wow and so if you feel like you're the one that has

it all then we're back to the overwhelm it's your own thinking that is causing this overwhelm and that's about you that's wow that's really good well Nicole I know that you have continually done the work of going to Jesus when you have been overwhelmed because I've heard you talk about it a lot of times especially when we've been together on clubhouse and I heard you say once parenting is a lot more about me than about my kids as you said that I feel

like it sounds so like counter so opposite really of what we've been talking about because when I think about you know if I have children with a background of trauma or you know learning differences or something like that isn't it about them then so I want you to share more about what that means it's about me and how you go to Jesus with that being totally transparent here looking back years back in the beginning our family growing to six children there

were a lot of times where I would say because you've done this this is why Mom reacted there were days when I actually would say that to them like you know what I'm sorry that I said that but I'm sorry that I reacted in that way but and I've learned over the years where I've had to go back back and I've had to apologize I am so sorry Mom is responsible for her reactions whether I'm raising my voice or I'm I'm not

allowing you to finish explaining or answering the question or whatever is going on I've learned that it's not about them it is absolutely about me I want to have a shirt made dear moms it's more about us than it is about them and I I really really I really believe that because my own I mean it's that foundational GE right of the framework you are safe with me they can't be safe with me if I am reactive if I like

Marney and Lydia have mentioned if I haven't taken care of myself if I have if I haven't slept well or I haven't had 20 minutes to exercise I'm not the same mom I come out a little bit more like a mama bear I'm not as patient I'm much more reactive and so just taking that moment to say where am I how am I feeling and then there have been mornings where I'll go out and to my kids you know what I

didn't sleep well last night how did you sleep you know what I'm really hungry I know that you need help with that but can I go and do this first and so not only is it ins stealing in them and you know giving them permission to communicate your needs you know what Mom can I go back and lie down for a little bit I'm tired or you know what I'm cranky and that's why I just punched my

sister or whatever is going on it gives them permission to also to be human and to be um have these times where they are able to and I'm teaching them an emotional vocabulary as well you know what I'm angry because of this I'm disappointed because this didn't go the way that I thought it was going to go I'm upset because you said that you were going to come and help me and now you're helping her you know all of these things

but most of it by far it's me having my heart in a place where I'm ready to go out and be mom I've had my time I've taken care of myself and now it's about them and I've heard you take care of your yourself and it's so often going back to scripture and taking God's word and hiding in your heart and living it and walking it believing it acting out of it I have so much respect for you

Nicole in that Romans 8:28 that we're most of us are familiar with right God basically he's telling us I will use this for good I promise I will I can take this chaos and turn it into something wonderful he promises to do that I'm going to work it all for good right for those who love me those who've been called according to my purpose and so I remember that like Nicole this is a disaster right now but if you can just

take that if I can get myself to take that one breath just that one breath it changes everything the mood in our home I used to hate to hear people say Mom set the tone in the home I didn't want that pressure on me I didn't want the responsibility of you know of seven other people and where they are in their mood I didn't want want to take that on but it is true if I can remember I run

to Jesus I run to Jesus all the time and I invite my kids to do the same you're having a hard time look let's run to him together yeah I need him just as much as you do it's I used to kind of look at it like my kids are on one side and I'm on the other side and I'm trying to get them to my side one day you're going to be an adult right and I'm trying to

raise you to eventually you're going to be over here with it's not so much that it's we together need to run to Jesus we we need him equally it's not a mom versus parent versus the kid it's both of us together moving throughout the day recognizing when we're wrong apologizing and making it right you know and and like the framework says you're called incapable you can do this you've got this so good yeah and just staying

connected all day connection is just huge it's the biggest piece of all staying connected and no matter what I have no noticed I think it was Marne that touched on this when I approach my kids with love and patience they are different kids they really really are but when I don't approach them with that they are very different kids every time and so I've seen that play out over the years and that's why it's it's worth the

work that's involved to make sure that I am where I need to be before I go out to be mom now and you know and to turn on it's it's what do they say it's go time when we get up and walk out of our bedrooms it's okay come on we're doing this I got my earrings on and my high heels and I'm ready for go [Music] time oh I love that Nicole that was really really rich and I feel like we've

done a great job of getting getting very real with how we've worked through that overwhelm so I appreciate that so much we're going to go to a commercial and when we come back we're going to talk about the second thing which is sibling conflict the second struggle that many homeschool families and as we said in the beginning all home all families are are dealing with so after the break hi friends Stacy here I want to

tell you about a free resource that you can get today called Helping kids with anger anger is an emotion that all of us have well kids and parents we've all experienced it it looks different depending on the personality sometimes it's slow and simmering and sometimes it's surprising and explosive but no matter how it shows itself in your home it can be hard to know how to manage it can be especially hard when identities start to get formed around anger well if

this topic of anger hits home for you we have an ebook that integrates both biblical truth and brain science it's designed to help you equip your children children to manage their anger and emotions rather than just stop the behavior you'll also learn how to work on your own anger first so that you can respectfully and constructively help your children work through their own big emotions head to our show notes and follow the link to download our helping

kids with anger ebook and take steps towards peaceful parenting and connection [Applause] today all right ladies well we're back after the commercial and I just thank you so much for being here today we've already talked um a lot about the overwhelm that homeschoolers and many parents are feeling right now and we want to move into sibling conflict which I'm guessing we're actually just going to like maybe even add on just the plain

word conflict because I'm guessing there's just conflict isn't there in families so Lydia I want to ask you this so you know I think when outsiders look in on homeschooling families they think wait a minute aren't those kids all sweet to each other and they're all you know busy working on their science projects or building elaborate cool forts in the backyard or inventing new things together talk about how that might not be always the reality and that sibling

conflict in conflict is present talk about that reality yeah I mean it's just it's definitely not an idyllic life life sometimes it is and there's these beautiful brilliant moments of togetherness and sometimes it's a lot of craziness but you know I think one big challenge with homeschooling is we are so in the weeds so to speak um every day we're we're just in the details of of each other's lives all day long you know we're the teacher we're the parent we're

the you referee the coach and sometimes we just need to step back a little bit and have that eye for what is what is going on that's even partially good we talk about this so often that our focus is like fertilizer what we focus on we're going to get more of and we need to do this for ourselves and for our kids you know I know there have been days that I've looked around my disastrous house and thought did I even

get anything done and then I looked around again and I saw the stacks of books we had read and I thought we did get something done we had some really special moments but it's so easy to focus on the overwhelming number of fights going on between siblings or my house looks like tornado went through it every day when we finished school yeah and you know it comes back to you know it's it's easy to have this conflict

between each other because we're with each other so much and the challenge for me is how can I be my child's Advocate and Helper and resource how can they really know that I'm on their team and so when my kids are fighting instead of jumping right in to figure out who's it who's the one who started this fight and you know who needs to be in trouble I had a moment recently with my kids where they started punching each other as we

were going out the door and I don't know who started what he started it it and I held out one hand to one one of my children and the other hand to the other and I just hugged them each in one to each side of me and you

know that just a moment to slow down and breathe in God's peace and to just I love you so much and I love you so much and I know

we're going to figure this out together and it was amazing to me how they you know so often if I can help them if we can calm down together they can figure out their conflicts I just need to stop panicking so fast and just make that safety and calming down a priority and then let them walk into their relationship and repairing things really good not jump in so fast is just a throwback to the first half of our show

today it's about me I'm the mom and where am I at and what am I bringing to each situation so I loved that tie and even too with their assignments it's easy to jump in as teach your mom I gotta make sure you get this done and get that done and when we take that minute to step back and figure out what's going on with my child is she overwhelmed because she's sad about

something is he overwhelmed because his sensory needs are like you know way over his head and he needs a sensory break that enables us to be a team and to move forward together without locking horns all day long yeah that's good good Marne I wonder what is your perspective on conflict sibling conflict how do you approach this on the daily well we have lots of opportunity so that's the that's the good news I so you're an expert I'm

an expert on conflict resolution in my house you know I think it's it's been a blessing I try to remind myself that especially with homeschooling we have to leave margin in our day we have to leave margin in our day because we have to expect that there's going to be conflict and it took took me a while to get to that place I was always surprised when conflict came up why I was surprised every time I don't

know I had to leave room because that's the most important part of our home school it's not about the curriculum it's not about you know teaching them lessons it's really about the character development that happens growing wisdom in our children and so when I put when I kind of reframed it to say okay it's going to happen I've got three boys conflict is happening in our house what are we going to do so I think that's

where connected families helped me so much because it gave me a plan it gave me you know here's this step to do when this happens you come in slow low and listen and then what there's empathy right like like Lydia was saying it's not about the problem the problem's over here we're a team over here how are we going to attack the problem right and working through the peace process so that connected families just flipped our

family around because it gave us actionable steps to take when conflict happened so I could come in calm I could listen to both of the kids that were in conflict and I could show them how to have empathy for each other it's not about this thing how is this person feeling when you spoke to them that way how do you think that they felt did you see the look on their face did you see that how they their shoulders slumped

over so I think it's just been such a blessing and I try to remind myself that this is a life skill that they're going to

take into their marriages and to their parenting and it is the most important thing so I for me I think just having those steps with the peace process the empathy the attacking the problem as a team instead of attacking each other has been just so helpful The Sibling I think it's the sibling course

that talks you through the conflict resolution and I cannot recommend that highly enough it just really changed everything yeah so it's called sibling conflict and we love it right because we all start on crazy Mountain it's this you know beautiful cartoon graphic that's drawn and the family's up on crazy mountain and there's fireworks going on up there and they have to come down off that mountain and cross the river and there's just four rocks to step over to get over to

reconciliation Valley or something like that yeah so it's a it's a great one I wonder Nicole if you have any thoughts the idea of teaching your kids empathy talking to them about understanding each other empathy for me is communicating to my kids I see you I hear you and I get you because I'm a sinner just like you and so it's communicating that all day

that isn't easy Mama's cup has to be full overflowing for me to communicate that to my kids and that means having that initial time that we spoke about earlier in the conversation it's so key so that I can come out and pour out what God has just poured into me and so but yes it's that piece of me modeling for them I see that you're upset I see that this has happened let's talk about it and and really trying to get them to

carry that into their relationships with their siblings throughout the day we are at the very beginning they are not they are definitely at the beginning stages of that but we're we're steadily making progress It's can you understand why she did what she did can you understand why she's crying can you understand why she just kicked you as you were getting out of the car like you know all of these we're not making excuses but we just

really practicing that empathy piece is huge I see you I hear you I get you just I'm sorry I shouldn't have done that you know can I get a do over there's a there's a lot of that I mean you know the thing ladies is that sibling conflict kind of creates chaos doesn't it the usually can get loud and who knows things might even be flying across the room there's lots of emotion and all this stuff that's that's crazy that's

hard always to deal with it's hard to do all the things that you talked about in the beginning actually you know to stay calm to be checking in with yourself and and all of that chaos can bring disconnection so I just want to talk for a minute about maybe ways that you have worked on that connection throughout the day I wonder if just you know I don't know who has an answer to this but even just quick little ideas on how you've

connected for me it really comes the the connection piece really comes into being a student of my child so to really know like what's going on in them right first thing like just are their physical and emotional needs being met and then really setting aside I think it took me a while my homeschool Journey has been interesting we started out more structured and have lessened that as we've gone on and I've noticed when we started out so structured it was me

imposing on them these are the things that we need to do my agenda was first there's not connection happening when I'm trying to get my agenda and my checklist done but when I shift that and we kind of changed the whole way that we homeschool to a very much more interest-led path it was me getting an opportunity to figure out what this kiddo is interested in and how can I kind of you know bring that in I've got

a history buff so all of the writing that we do ties into his interests and he loves animals so everything kind of just ties into his interest and there's been such beautiful connection because they are their eyes light up when you show interest in something that they're interested in right and so it's just been a wonderful way for me to connect with my kids is allowing them to follow their interests and not only that but then me following along with them and

then getting to teach me things for our family that has been game-changing wow that the kids can teach you things that's really that's something I wonder Lydia about connection between your two kids so you said you had a fourth grader and a kindergartener first grader so there's a bit of a gap there do you just even have one tip on how you've set them up to be connected with each other in your homeschool Day from the very

beginning when my son was just little we would talk about their relationship and you know even when he was this tiny little kiddo he just loved to watch what sister was doing and he still like he loves to jump into her schoolwork or she asks him Eric how do you think you spell this and he gives an answer and we and sometimes he gets it right with her spelling words and we just think that's the most funny thing ever those little

involvements with each other and just calling out like oh look at look at how he loves to do this with you and isn't it sweet when sister reads this book to you and setting them up to be really important people in each other's lives yeah has been I didn't know if we were going to have more children than my daughter and so that sibling relationship and seeing what a gift they are to each other you know a gift and

and definitely a trial at times right both just a sweet thing that has been to see yeah just how special are in each other's day and just the laughs and the funny stuff all the funny little brother moments like we just Embrace that so you you Embrace each one's unique giftedness and then how that comes out and affects the rest of us I I like that a lot this has been such a rich conversation and I

just want to end giving each of you an opportunity for just a final thought to all of the parents out there homeschool or not that are feeling overwhelmed that are you know dealing with sibling conflict or just conflict or just whatever the Lord is laying in your heart feel free and why don't we start with Nicole Nicole what are your final thoughts today h it's just really going back for me to REM remembering the two most important pieces and it's Faith and

family for us and so things can go off course they can they will they do they do things derail about every five seconds in our home but it's just they say focus on your why you need to remember your why you hear that often in these conversations right and so for us it's been our faith and family we're doing this for our family to be close-nit we don't aim for Perfection we don't aim I did that early on doesn't

work doesn't work everything has to look a certain way and be a certain way and it did it doesn't it just was an epic fail and so I've gone way to the other side of the spectrum I'm much more relaxed with the self-led learning and focusing in on what causes their little hearts to light up and come alive and when I come alongside something that they are interested in they really respond to that beautifully because they

know that it's not about mom coming saying this is what we're going to do I'm sorry that you don't like it I'm sorry that you're not into it but this is what we have to do let's just you know get get know get through this they they are understanding wow you are doing this because I'm into it because I love it because it's my own interest even my 9-year-old she gets that and so it's been really really beautiful but just

staying in that place of why are we doing this we love God he loves us he has a beautiful plan for our lives and we want to be a close-nit family and it's gonna look different for each family every family it may be Public School it may be private school for us this season that we're in it's homeschool and it's yeah it's been such a blessing and so it's been chaotic but it's been blessed chaos amen amen I love

that Marne what are your final thoughts I love what you shared Nicole blessed chaos that really strikes the cord with me too it homeschooling is messy like there's no you know my house is we're we live here we live and play and work here 24 hours a day so it's you know I think for for me it's been really nice to be able to focus on the connection with my kids instead of like curriculum I know a

lot in homeschooling circles curriculum is the thing that people talk about but it's really not about what we're using it's really about how we're spending our time and so for me just to be able especially now that I have run graduating like not going to get teared up but I am so grateful for the times that we got to spend together learning together playing together reading aloud together playing games like all of those things are the things that come to the

Forefront of my mind and he is doing he's doing amazing like it was I think that was a fear that I had that I wasn't enough that there would be gaps in their learning that I wasn't going to provide enough I know a lot of homeschool moms have that fear we all have gaps in our learning like I'm constantly learning new things as an adult that's how God wired us right and all I really want is

for my boys to know how to learn and then they can go ahead and learn whatever it is they need whenever it is they need it and we're accomplishing that but when I shifted everything to be more about connection like Nicole was saying about faith and family when that was the lens that I looked through to make every decision in our home school things work things were good so I just want to encourage families to really

focus on relationships and re and focus on the life skills you know the sibling conflict that we talked about conflict resolution self-care because that models for our children so all of those practices are just I would say more important than any curriculum or anything we have to teach more important yeah good Lydia what are your final thoughts oh I just love what you guys shared Nicole and Marne it's like just like balm to my homeschool mom heart

there's a verse that I love just as a parent and and as a teacher for my kids it's Philippians 1 verse 4 through 6 and it says in all my prayers for you I pray with joy and then skipping ahead being confident of this he who began a good work you we'll carry it on to completion in the day of Jesus Christ and I think you know I want my kids to know that I'm making the choices I'm making because I

love and enjoy them and I'm confident that Jesus is going to walk with us this whole time and there are days in fact when I first started working at Connected families was last fall and we had the roughest start to our homeschool year that we've ever had and I I really thought you know you know I was had my plans and it was going to go great we had the toughest few weeks I emailed Lynn I'm like Lyn I hope you're not

going to regret hiring like a really hot mess of a mom I I don't even know what I'm doing right now but those tough seasons and tough weeks and tough days they happen and it doesn't mean that you're doing a bad job it doesn't mean that you're not supposed to be homeschooling but on the converse side of that if homeschooling is not bringing connection to your family and if your relationships would be better with your kiddos in school then that is a

courageous choice you need to make as a parent you know this is not a one-size fits-all there's so many different ways to homeschool there are so many different ways to school our kids and the Heart of what we want is just that confidence of knowing that God is given us these children and he's here with us right in the middle of whatever daily mess is equipping us and and bringing us to the completion of what he has planned

for our kids so yeah just that confidence piece of like God's with us in amen amen wow all three of you could just preach and I know that your words were just encouraging to The Souls of so many homeschool parents that are listening and all of us parents and so I just thank you so much for being with us today and sharing your journey we really appreciate that all three of you are a part of our community thank you sty a

blessed time really enjoy thanks for tuning in today friends you can find more information in our show notes but while you're there please rate and review so others can find us more easily and leave a comment or question I love reading them and it helps us make the podcast even better for more information go to Connected families.org I will see you next [Music] time