

Homeschool Flying - thoughts from a friend

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Today I would like to share with you a wonderful reply written by my friend Angie Stone in response to someone on my Yahoo group for [Christian Homeschoolers who use Flylady](#). The person was lamenting the difficulty of getting both schoolwork and housework done. Angie has some wonderful insights into how to apply Flylady's methods to homeschooling.

Before we dig into Angie's thoughts, for those of you not familiar with Flylady, let me first give a brief explanation of some of the terms used:

- Shiny sink The first thing Flylady tells everyone to do is to shine their kitchen sink each night before they go to bed, so they can get up to a clean, shiny kitchen sink and good start to the day. The concept of a "shiny sink" - the ONE thing you MUST do - can be applied to other areas of your life or home too.
- Hot Spots Those places where clutter seems to quickly accumulate, rendering them untidy and un-useful or unattractive. A "fire-drill" is quickly working on one of the hot spots for 5 mins or so.
- 15 minute declutter Flylady says to declutter for 15 mins every day
- Zones Flylady breaks her home into 5 zones, and each zone is the focus of one week (or part week) of the month.

Homeschooling FLYing

by Angie Stone

I, too, suffered from the do I clean/do I do school dilemma. I could do a good job with cleaning the house, but I would not get school done. I could have a great day of school, but the house would be tumbling down around me. Why could I not do both? Well, I started to look at what made me successful at Flying, and how I could apply it to school.

The foundation of Flying was a shiny sink, so what is my sink in school? For each person, it is something different. I have shared this philosophy with several people and gotten several answers. One person decided their sink was their desk, and that starting their day with a messy desk was like starting the day with a dirty and cluttered sink. Another person felt like their sink was their homeschool tracker, and if it was not shined up, or

updated each evening, and reviewed each morning, that it was hard to function, so, that was their sink. My sink is my computer. Shining my sink at night is emptying my mailbox, checking my files, tidying up my desktop (I use my desktop a lot, and it gets full, lol), having my computer ready to use first thing in the morning. So, start by thinking about what is that one thing that you NEED to do to feel organized for school, that is your sink, and shine your school sink daily.

So, I took the comparison a bit further, and thought it out some more. Hot spots are a big thing with the Fly system. Now remember this could be different for each person. What are your hot spots EDUCATIONALLY? What is it that builds up, and you never get around to doing it? I decided that I had 3 hot spots: spelling drills, math drills, and copywork. These were the things that I knew I needed to be having my kids do, but it kept building up, and I did not get to it often. Hot spot fire drills are brief, but regular. A few minutes doing flash cards, a quick review of some spelling words, a short copywork passage even if it is just a sentence or two. A daily routine of quick tasks, it takes us maybe 20 to 30 minutes to do all of this. Now, you have already done at least something that is math, you have writing, you could pause a second and point something out in the copywork about grammar or punctuation, you could have a beginning reader read the copywork to you, you have at least done SOMETHING to cover the basics for the day. Now, if your whole day goes off track from here, you still have covered the basics.

What's another thing that Flylady teaches us? Declutter 15 minutes a day. I am sure we can all see an instant connection here. Everyday, just spend a few minutes decluttering those papers that are no longer needed, or file that one really cool thing that actually got done today so that when it comes time for reviews, or portfolios, or evaluations, or whatever it is that you have to do, you actually have samples of work to do it with.

And this brings me to my last comparison, zones. Know how Flylady breaks the house down into zones? I break school down into zones. The first full week is math, the second week is language, the third week is history, and the fourth week is science and health. The last couple of days of each month is arts or phys-ed, or whatever. Now, during that week, that subject is my zone. I want to give that subject special emphasis. That does not mean that is all I do. That means if I am having a really bad day, and I have just put my

49th load of laundry in the wash, and I can't find my floor, and and and...well, I did my hotspots, so I have covered at least my basics, and if I don't do anything else today, I am at least going to spend some time working on math. That means my school-day that day might have been 30 minutes doing hotspot drills, and an hour working on math, and the rest of my day might have been spent rescuing my house. But, here is the beauty.

Your horrible days will most likely fall on different days each month! So, today all you got done was math. One day next week, all you got done was language. The thing is, you have a system now, even for a disaster of a day. And you have covered all the subjects each month, and you have covered the basics everyday. And on those miracle of miracle days, when things are running smoothly, THOSE are the days when you do your hotspot drills, knock out your zone work, then go diving to your hearts content without any guilt on whatever topic or activity you choose...because you ALREADY COVERED THE BASICS!