

Using your Built-In Labor Force:

There are super-organized people in the world, and you can either be inspired or aggravated by them! When I try to do everything that their analytical brains come up with, as I feel I should be able to, I get very overwhelmed and a little out-of-whack. However, when I take the heart and soul of their ideas modify it to fit the Random/Global lifestyle preferred by my husband, wonderful things happen and I manage to find a sense of peace.

My favorite idea for managing the chores around the house comes from the book Managers of Their Chores by Steven and Teri Maxwell. I use a dumbed-down version of this marvelous organizational system with my only family (4 children, ages 3-8), and it really helps me cycle through the necessities. The key is allowing myself to be imperfect at the implementation without becoming distressed by it. I was raised by a detail/schedule father, but have married a relaxed & happy fellow – well, he's relaxed and happy when I'm not stressing myself out over illusions of perfection!

So, what are the basics of running an effective household? Enlist and enlighten the troops! Mama is the general, and effective delegation is the key. Everyone works for their supper – not only to lighten the load on Mama and give the children a feeling of worth & belonging, but more so to equip them with the work ethic and practical skills that they will need when they step out on their own. How will they know how to run their own homes if they don't learn in yours? Think of this as "Life Skills Training", and definitely count it as part of your homeschool curriculum!

Now, you can't lead the troops unless you know where you are going! Take time to **Plan** out what you want/need done. Then set aside several weeks (or the whole summer) to **Train** your troops in their new responsibilities – teaching them not only what and how, but why it's important. Finally, prepare to **Maintain** your system with regular inspections, encouragement, and plenty of re-teaching times.

Start by creating a plan

Plan out everything that you need to have done to maintain your sanity.

1. Take several days to identify all the things you would like to have done in your home. List everything – and keep adding to your list as more things pop up. Lists will change to some extent with the seasons. One list will be just for the parent(s), and one list will detail what the children are capable of. Feel free to dream big – you can always pare down the lists later.
2. Decide how often you would like each task done: 3 times a day, daily, weekly, monthly, occasionally...
3. Consider who is capable of doing which tasks, and label the tasks with names of potentials.
4. Estimate how long you think that chore will take the assigned child.
5. Begin assigning the chores to individual children.

Daily and Personal Care chores

- a. Decide what each child needs to do each morning, afternoon, and/or evening
 Personal Care: brush teeth, make bed, get dressed, morning devotions
 Daily Chores: prepare table for meals, helping with meals, aid younger sibling with self-care, attend to pets/livestock, set out school supplies, bring up laundry, etc.
- b. Divide up the daily chores between children according to how many minutes each one should take. It helps to work this out on a Word document, where you can cut and paste and save multiple versions – or with post-it notes on a grid chart for easy maneuvering. In my household, due to my husband’s preferences, we don’t run off of a set schedule. As a result, I aim to accomplish just 1 main chore time each day – usually lasting 60 minutes. Other chores are accomplished as needed (around mealtimes and bedtimes) as familiar routines.
- c. Next, consider the chores you want done on a weekly or monthly basis. Depending on how many of these you have, you can pile them all up on Saturdays, or spread them out across the weekdays. My preference is to give chores that unique to each day, and save Saturday as a make-up day. My children really seem to enjoy the novelty and look forward to certain days. Here’s a notion of what that could look like:

| | Gilbert | Gwyn |
|-----------|---|---|
| Monday | Pick up laundry room floor | Straighten coats and shoes |
| Tuesday | Straighten your & Vincent’s drawers | Straighten your & Owen’s drawers |
| Wednesday | Vacuum the stairways, Shake out rugs | Dusting, Vacuum around baseboards |
| Thursday | Straighten coats and shoes | Pick up laundry room floor |
| Friday | Week 1: Straighten the bookshelves Week 2: Clean out family van Week 3: Straighten the pantry Week 4: Organize the puzzle cupboard | Week 1: Clean out children’s closet Week 2: Wipe down fridge shelves Week 3: Pick up/sweep under beds Week 4: Clean out family van |

- d. Chores that are less than once a month can be written in as occasional items, and shuffled in as needed.
- e. If you are like me, you’ll have certain chores that are “as needed”. I can’t fit them into a regular day or time, because they don’t follow a regular pattern. Examples would include, “bring in groceries”, “shovel snow”, and “help with laundry”. (In our household, laundry gets done when I get around to it – usually in massive spurts over a few days, and then not for several days. I’d apologize for it, but that’s just my reality. For me, it has become a choice of being perfect and scheduled, or being a good mom. You can guess what wins!)
- f. Let go of the unnecessary chores for now. When you get comfortable with the basics you has decided on, you can always fill out your schedule with the “want to’s”.
- g. Consider the learning styles of your children before you begin training. There are many different models of learning styles, but the two I find most relevant for training my children in new chores are: the 3 ways people remember what they are learning (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), and the 2 ways of viewing the world around them (analytic and global):

Visual: Learning by seeing and watching; using strong visual associations

Auditory: Learning by listening to verbal instructions; remembering by talking about it

Kinesthetic: Learning by becoming physically involved & actually doing something with what’s being learned

Analytic: Very detail-oriented, likes things ordered in a step-by-step way, needs to know what to expect, prefers to finish one thing at a time, logical, self-motivated, finds the fact but sometimes misses the main idea

Global: Focuses on the big picture, goes with the flow, learns by discussion and working with others, needs reassurance and reinforcement, works hard to please others, takes all criticism personally, may skip steps and details

Train the children on each new job thoroughly.

This cannot be rushed, and will vary for each child according to his/her learning styles. Taking your time and exercising patient consistency here will make or break your system – so really give it time. Consider what motivates your child and use it!

1. On the first day, demonstrate. I start with 1-2 chores per child, depending on complexity and ability. Have them shadow you as you demonstrate each step of the chore and how you know when you've done it well.
 - a. For your auditory children, have them describe to you what they're seeing and repeat what they are hearing. Talk, talk, talk!
 - b. For your visual children, write out a list of the steps they are to do, and draw stick-figure illustrations with them beside each step – or create a series of hand motions connected to your words for them to see (and do).
 - c. For your kinesthetic children, practice a show-and-do method. Show them how to do it, and immediately have them repeat the actions (even if the job was accomplished by your actions, have them mimic you). Encourage them to talk with their hands by doing so yourself (pantomiming and demonstrating).
 - d. If you have a very analytic child, they would greatly appreciate an item-by-item listing of what is expected. It's a good idea to do this even for yourself - a written list of the criteria for a job well done – so you have a record of what you've told the child. It's amazing how often we'll fail to mention what seems obvious to us, but wouldn't occur to them.
 - e. Your global child will thrive on working with you, talking about the process, and basking in your appreciation and encouragement. Be ready to repeat details many times over, as they are taking in the whole picture, and will miss details during that initial absorption phase.
2. Some children need more than one day to observe, but when you feel they are ready, be it Day #2 or Day #12, it's time for guided practice. Go with them to the chore, and "hold their hand" as they do it for themselves.
 - a. Have your auditory children describe what they are doing and why. If they are forgetting a step, talk about why that step is important to the end result and ask them how it would look if they skipped that step (verbalizing to you will keep them from forgetting that step easily).
 - b. Have the visual children consult the illustrated directions (or repeat those hand motions to you) and show you that they are covering all their bases. Consider taking photographs of the steps or mounting the instructions on brightly colored cardstock – the more visually engaging, the better they remember.
 - c. Remember not to talk at your kinesthetic or make them stand still to listen. They learn by doing, so if they are missing or messing up something, show them and have them practice right away.
 - d. Don't rush your analytic child – give them time to complete all the steps in satisfying order. When corrected, this child is more likely to point out where you failed to explain something than to take it personally.
 - e. Be very positive (and repetitive) with your global child. They are straining to please you, and will automatically assume personal failure (and incompetence) if they forget a detail. Focus on the successes and how good they will be once they are familiar with this new job.
3. The next step is to watch them doing it. The goal is to get them to the point that they can do the whole task without you having to remind them of steps. Repeat the tips from guided practice as needed to remediate incomplete work.

Train the children (cont.)

4. Finally, they are ready to do that task on their own. However, daily inspections are key. Any of us is likely to get lax and/or lazy if we know that no one is going to check up on us! Save yourself the frustration of expecting your children to be independently wonderful, and instead use the daily inspections as a chance to validate their efforts and appreciate their workmanship.
 - a. The auditory children will enjoy describing their process to you (first I did this, and then I did that, but then I remembered that I should have done this first...)
 - b. The visual children will delight in seeing your approval and in pointing out any visual touches they were able to incorporate into their work (see how I positioned my doll on the pillow? She's getting to look out the window, and her dress is neat and smooth!)
 - c. The kinesthetic children will run around pointing out details, and would love a very physical high-five or pat on the back.
 - d. The analytic will appreciate a nice basic, "Good work – all is complete" as much as anything.
 - e. The global will fall over backwards to feel your satisfaction and pleasure in their accomplishments (and are very much hoping that any missed details won't keep you from appreciating their efforts).
5. As your children master the first few jobs, it's time to add more to their plate – teaching a few jobs at the time until they are experts at all the jobs you have set aside for them.

The short version of training:

1. You do it in front of them.
2. You do it with them.
3. They do it with you.
4. They do it on their own, you inspect.

Maintaining the System

1. Choose the timing of chore packs to fit your family's style. Find when it naturally fits and feels the most comfortable – when energy is high and patience hasn't been exhausted yet.
 - Does your family operate on a clock-based schedule or an event-based schedule?
 - Does it work better before breakfast, as a break in the school day, at a particular time or after a particular activity?
 - Do you want to do 1 long session, or multiple short sessions each day?
 - Do you want to do light sessions on school days and a long session on Saturday – or moderate sessions each day and take the weekend off?

Note: Research on public school children has proven that children ages 4-12 do their best thinking before lunch and need more physical activity in the afternoons - and adolescents can't really begin thinking (intellectually) until they have been physically active for 90 minutes (plus they learn with much less effort if they can sleep in until 8am and not need their brain until after 10am). We homeschoolers are blessed with the freedom to discover and incorporate each of our children's natural body rhythms into their daily schedule, though – but just remember to consider that in your timing! Chore times are a great way to keep your child productive when their brain can't handle the books.

Maintaining the System (cont.)

2. If your children are to faithfully do their jobs, they have to remember that they have them! Since there will always be distractions, and some children are more easily distracted than others, your next task is to find the best way to keep them on task and on track. Here are a variety of options to pick from:
 - a. Using clip-on name-tag holders: The easily distracted child can't accidentally escape the list if it is clipped on to them (banging annoyingly against the arm?). Simple create & number your cards, place them in the desired order in the holder, and set it in the assigned place. The child gets their chore pack, clips it on, and rotates cards to the back as each one is accomplished. Only after all tasks are done can they return the chore pack to its resting place.

Advantage: it stays with the child as a reminder and an on-site list.

Disadvantage: the cards can fall out with vigorous movement, causing cards to get out of order and/or lost without the child even realizing it. Card also needs to be laminated or frequently replaced. Mom can't know how the child is progressing without asking.
 - b. Using clip-shut rings: to solve the problem of cards falling out and getting lost, you can try punching a hole in the cards and snapping them into a ring. This ring could then be attached to a safety pin, belt loop, or other handy spot (consider child safety, and avoid lanyards). As the jobs are created, the cards are flipped to the back.

Advantage: cards can't get lost, and the chore pack stays with the child as a reminder/list.

Disadvantage: you still need to laminate them for waterproofing, and the packs swinging back and forth can get in the way. Mom still can't know how the child is progressing without asking.
 - c. What works for our family is a picture chart on the fridge. It shows each child's jobs for that day in a central location. We keep a variety of fun magnets around the chart, and the children scamper back to cover up each job with their choice of magnets as it is finished.

Advantage: This gives me a nice visual of their progress, keeps them coming back to communicate with me, and side-steps the need to laminate cards for durability.

Disadvantage: I have to be aware of how long children have been away, to know if they are getting distracted. Children have to come back to the kitchen at the end of each job unless they have the list memorized.
 - d. An alternate version of the above is to post each child's chart of the week's chores on the fridge, with columns for each day. When the child is done with a chore for that day, they "x" out that box. The parent can then take these charts around the house on a clipboard when checking, and add their own mark (or sticker) to the jobs that have been well done, and circle "x" marks for jobs that need additional attention (or whatever system clicks for your family).
 - e. While I'm not there yet, I envision using clipboards with my children when they are older – although the ones who aren't good with details might spend more time looking for lost clipboards than actually doing their chores. The most effective system for multiple children will probably use more than one of these methods – matching the method to the child, rather than trying to make one method work for everyone.
 - f. To keep the children aware of the fact that it is chore time, I like to play energetic music on the CD player – music that is associated only with chore time. Crashing cymbals, pounding drums, and expansive themes really keep them hyped up and focused on working quickly – they call it their "war music".

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- g. To encourage timely achievement of work, we plan a favored activity for the end chore time – Bible Story CD’s are their favorite, and I have time to check their work while they listen – calling them out to make corrections as needed. The children know that they may only join in when they are done, and done well. (If it is discovered that responsibilities are intentionally shirked or children have lied about being done to get to the reward prematurely, then they lose the reward completely for a certain number of days. It’s a hard lesson, but one that rarely needs repetition.)
2. Next you need to set aside a ritual time for yourself to get the chores checked. It’s most effective if you can be checking the chores throughout the work time or right afterwards – especially if there is a reward at the end of the work time. I like to carry a clipboard around to mark off each finished job (and/or score the results). When a job is found to be incomplete or inadequate, I call the child back to take care of it right away – retraining as necessary. It’s hard to find the time to get everything checked, but if you don’t, their quality is bound to slip and your aggravation will rise. The longer your training and inspections go on, the less you will need to correct and re-teach.
 3. It’s a personal choice rather or not Mom and Dad have their own chore packs. For the analytic parent, it makes perfect sense to write themselves into a master plan follow in their part of the routine. For a more global parent, it’s easier to create chore packs around the work that the children can accomplish for the family –focusing on helping the children be successful, and have a general list of the things the parent will do as time allows (rather than a regimented daily routine). If you and your spouse are different in this regard, as my husband and I are, we plan for individual preferences. Our general division of labor is simple: my jurisdiction is the soft-lines (inside of the house, mothering of the children, homeschooling), and his jurisdiction is the hard-lines (outdoors, being the father-figure, things mechanical/technical). Within my jurisdiction, I prefer having lists and schedules, but I’m just global enough that it doesn’t always happen. I make lots of lists, but since my children are more important than getting items checked off, all the lists really do for me is help me make sure I’m not forgetting something important. I would love to run our family on a set hourly schedule with all chores assigned from the daily to the yearly, but this would drive my very global husband into a state of nervous twitching – so I depend on his global need to see me happy and leave him to fulfill his responsibilities in the way that makes the most sense to him. After all, I’d rather have a happy husband than a sparkingly empty home.
 4. A note to the more global parent: If you feel the need to create a list of your own responsibilities, consider rating the chores as “must”, “would like”, and “dream day”. You’ll still have everything there to look at (and see what you’re forgetting), but it will be in a realistic and non-condemning format!

That’s it! That’s the whole idea in a nutshell.

Shall we crack the nutshell and get to specifics now?

Our Children's Master Chore List:

| Where | What | Who | ⌚ | When |
|------------|---------------------------------------|---------|----|------------|
| Outside | Pick up inside the van | Gilbert | 30 | Weekly |
| Outside | Pick up inside the car | Gwyn | 10 | Weekly |
| Outside | Sweep/shovel the deck | Gwyn | 15 | As needed |
| Outside | Sweep/shovel the cement | Gilbert | 30 | As needed |
| Outside | Get the mail | Gwyn | 5 | Daily |
| Outside | Help bring in groceries/shopping | All | V | As needed |
| Inside | Help put away groceries/shopping | All | V | As needed |
| Inside | Sort coupon flyers | Gwyn | 30 | Mondays |
| Inside | Wipe off window sills | Vincent | 5 | Weekly |
| Inside | Gather trash for trash day | Vincent | 10 | Tuesdays |
| Inside | Gather recycling for recycling day | Vincent | 10 | Wednesdays |
| Inside | Take trash out | Gilbert | 10 | Tuesdays |
| Inside | Take recycling out | Gilbert | 10 | Wednesdays |
| Bathroom | Pick up bathroom floor | Vincent | 5 | Daily |
| Bathroom | Clean bathroom countertop | Gwyn | 5 | Daily |
| Bathroom | Sanitize around base of toilet | Gwyn | 5 | Daily |
| Bathroom | Sanitize toilet surfaces | Gwyn | 5 | Daily |
| Bathroom | Organize bathroom drawers | Gwyn | 15 | Weekly |
| Bathroom | Wipe bathroom mirror | Gwyn | 5 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Make own bed | All | 5 | Daily |
| Bedroom | Strip beds | Gilbert | 10 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Organize Gwyn/Vincent's clothing bins | Gwyn | 30 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Organize Gilbert/Owen's clothing bins | Gilbert | 30 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Organize closet | Gilbert | 15 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Organize bookshelves | Gwyn | 20 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Return toys to playroom | Owen | 10 | Daily |
| Bedroom | Sweep around bedroom baseboards | Gwyn | 5 | Weekly |
| Bedroom | Clean out under beds | Gilbert | 15 | Weekly |
| LR/Hallway | Return toys to playroom | Vincent | 10 | Daily |
| LR/Hallway | Return books to bedroom | Owen | 5 | Daily |
| LR/Hallway | Dust entertainment center | Gwyn | 5 | Weekly |
| LR/Hallway | Sweep around baseboards | Gwyn | 10 | Weekly |
| Kitchen | Help clear breakfast table | Vincent | 10 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Help clear lunch table | Vincent | 10 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Wash table/chairs after breakfast | Owen | 5 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Wash table/chairs after lunch | Owen | 5 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Breakfast helper | Owen | 30 | M, W, F |
| Kitchen | Breakfast helper | Vincent | 30 | T, Th, S |
| Kitchen | Lunch helper | Gwyn | 30 | M, W, F |
| Kitchen | Lunch helper | Gilbert | 30 | T, Th, S |
| Kitchen | Supper helper | Varies | 30 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Clean under sink | Gilbert | 10 | Weekly |

| | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------|----|-------------|
| Kitchen | Pick up floor | Vincent | 15 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Sweep around cupboards | Gilbert | 10 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Sweep under breakfast table (afterwards) | Vincent | 10 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Sweep under lunch table (afterwards) | Vincent | 10 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Take compost out | Gilbert | 5 | Daily |
| Kitchen | Wash dishes | Gwyn | 45 | Alternating |
| Kitchen | Wash dishes | Gilbert | 45 | Alternating |
| Toy room | Pick up legos | All | 30 | Weekly |
| Toy room | Pick up big toys | All | 15 | Weekly |
| Toy room | Pick up animals, train tracks | All | 15 | Weekly |
| Basement | Return toys to playroom | Vincent | 10 | Weekly |
| Laundry Room | Pick up laundry floor | Gilbert | 15 | Weekly |
| Laundry Room | Pick up laundry floor | Gwyn | 15 | Weekly |
| Laundry room | Organize coat rack | Vincent | 15 | Weekly |
| Laundry room | Help with laundry | All | V | As needed |
| Personal care | Bible time with story CD's | All | 30 | Daily |
| Personal care | Bath/shower | Gilbert | 30 | M, W, F |
| Personal care | Bath/shower | Gwyn | 30 | M, W, F |
| Personal care | Bath/shower | Vincent | 30 | T, Th, S |
| Personal care | Bath/shower | Owen | 30 | T, Th, S |
| Personal care | Brush teeth & hair | All | 5 | Daily |
| Personal care | Get dressed, put away pajamas | All | 5 | Daily |

The above list went through 5 revisions between the first writing, and the final version seen in the children's lists that follow. You'll find that in order to balance chores fairly between children, you reassign some chores, invent others, and delete some.

The age of your children and the routines/physical shape of your home will greatly influence what your list looks like. Once our home sells and we move to an acreage, all sorts of outdoor and animal care chores will be added to the children's lists and the shape of my indoor needs will change as well. Don't worry about what others do (or your mother once did) – your list should reflect your needs and desires. I considered providing a master list of possible chores here, but it can be more discouraging than helpful. I've seen other people's master chore lists, and been horrified at the thought of all the sensible chores that I simply can't get around to... Then my husband gets practical and reminds me of this: When your children are all small, be forgiving of yourself. Life with little ones is "survive, maintain, and cuddle", and it's okay for the house to be neglected in favor of the children! He even created and posted the follow message on the side of my cupboards: "Our home is clean enough to be healthy, and messy enough to be happy."

More important than having the perfect list is understanding the importance of teaching your children to do chores cheerfully and routinely. Children who learn early to expect chores as a part of life have a much easier time adapting to the running their own households as adults. Those of us who were sheltered from work by our parents really have to struggle to learn daily management skills as adults, often feeling overwhelmed and resentful! I highly recommend Steve & Teri Maxwell's book on chores: [Managers of Their Chores](#) for clarity, motivation, and methods! They are more detail-oriented than I will ever be, but I love the perspective I gain from their writings.

The Older Children's Morning Chores

Gilbert:

| | ⌚ | When |
|-------------------------------|----|-------|
| Make own bed | 5 | Daily |
| Brush teeth & hair | 5 | |
| Get dressed, put away pajamas | 5 | |
| Take compost out | 5 | |
| Sweep around cupboards | 10 | |

Child's Age: 8 ½
 Daily chores: 30 minutes
 Weekly chores: average 29 minutes/day
 Daily Bible time (story CD) after chores

| Monday | ⌚ | Tuesday | ⌚ | Wednesday | ⌚ | Thursday | ⌚ | Friday | ⌚ |
|------------------------|----|-----------------|----|----------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| Pick up inside the van | 30 | Take trash out | 10 | Clean out under beds | 15 | Organize Gilbert/Owen's clothing bins | 30 | Pick up laundry floor | 15 |
| | | Organize closet | 15 | Take recycling out | 10 | | | Strip beds | 10 |
| | | | | | | | | Clean under kitchen sink | 10 |

Gwyn:

| | ⌚ | When |
|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| Make own bed | 5 | Daily |
| Brush teeth & hair | 5 | |
| Get dressed, put away pajamas | 5 | |
| Get the mail (privilege) | 0 | |
| Clean bathroom countertop | 5 | |
| Sanitize around base of toilet | 5 | |
| Sanitize toilet surfaces | 5 | |

Child's Age: 7
 Daily chores: 30 minutes
 Weekly chores: average 29 minutes/day
 Daily Bible time (story CD) after chores

| Monday | ⌚ | Tuesday | ⌚ | Wednesday | ⌚ | Thursday | ⌚ | Friday | ⌚ |
|--------------------|----|------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|---------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| Sort coupon flyers | 30 | Pick up inside the car | 10 | Wipe bathroom mirror | 5 | Organize bookshelves | 15 | Organize Gwyn/Vincent's clothing bins | 30 |
| | | | | Sweep around carpeted baseboards | 15 | | | | |
| | | Pick up laundry floor | 20 | Dust entertainment center | 5 | Organize bathroom drawers | 15 | | |

So what do you do when life intervenes, and you miss a day's chore time? Or a child is sick and can't do their chores? Be practical. If the chores can wait until next time, then let it go. If they must be done anyway, you can shift them to another day, another child, or yourself. You'll notice that we don't plan weekly chores for Saturday – this is our catch-up day.

Remember the story of Mary, Martha, and Jesus. Martha's whole focus was getting everything done – at the expense of time with her sister and Jesus. I know just how she feels, but Jesus had a different perspective. Whatever your chore system looks like when it's done, it should be a tool that eases your mind, not adds to your stress and burden. You are in charge of the chores – not vice versa.

The Younger Children's Morning Chores

Vincent

| What | ⌚ | When |
|------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Make own bed | 5 | Daily |
| Brush teeth & hair | 5 | |
| Get dressed, put away pajamas | 5 | |
| Pick up bathroom floor | 5 | |
| Return toys in LR/hall to playroom | 10 | |

Child's Age: 5 ½
 Daily chores: 30 minutes
 Weekly chores: average 12 minutes/day
 Daily Bible time (story CD) after chores

| Monday | ⌚ | Tuesday | ⌚ | Wednesday | ⌚ | Thursday | ⌚ | Friday | ⌚ |
|-------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Return toys in basement to playroom | 10 | Gather trash for trash day | 10 | Gather recycling for recycling day | 10 | Return toys in basement to playroom | 10 | Organize coat rack | 15 |
| | | Wipe off window sills | 5 | | | | | | |

Owen

| What | ⌚ | When |
|------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Make own bed | 5 | Daily |
| Brush teeth & hair | 5 | |
| Get dressed, put away pajamas | 5 | |
| Return toys in bedroom to playroom | 10 | |
| Return books in LR/hall to bedroom | 5 | |

Child's Age: 3 ½
 Daily chores: 30 minutes
 Weekly chores: none
 Daily Bible time (story CD) after chores

Routine Items

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Breakfast helper | Owen | Vincent | Owen | Vincent | Owen | Vincent |
| Lunch helper | Gwyn | Gilbert | Gwyn | Gilbert | Gwyn | Vincent |
| Clearing table after meal | Vincent | | | | | |
| Washing table/chairs after meal | Owen | | | | | |
| Dishes (once daily) | Gilbert | Gwyn | Gilbert | Gwyn | Gilbert | Gwyn |
| Bath/shower | Gilbert Vincent | Gwyn Owen | Gilbert Vincent | Gwyn Owen | Gilbert Vincent | Gwyn Owen |

Unscheduled chores

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Outside | Help bring in groceries/shopping | As needed |
| Inside | Help put away groceries/shopping | As needed |
| Laundry room | Help with laundry | As needed |
| Toy room | Pick up legos | As needed |
| Toy room | Pick up big toys | As needed |
| Toy room | Pick up animals, train tracks | As needed |
| Outside | Sweep/shovel the cement (Gilbert) | As needed |
| Outside | Sweep/shovel the deck (Gwyn) | As needed |

Mama's general chore list

Daily:

- Seeing to the physical needs of my children, including snuggling and laundry.
- Fixing three meals and giving cooking lessons in the process to an avidly interested Gwyn.
- Training my children in all manner of behavior, relationships, theology, philosophy, self-control, and several hundred other things.
- Homeschooling
- Keeping up with a sewing business, my cloth diapering website, and the secretarial demands of my husband's business

Weekly:

- Cleaning my husband's office building (in exchange for most of the rent)
- Checking my business inventory and reordering as needed
- Shopping as needed to restock family supplies and take advantage of good sale prices
- Collecting and clipping coupons for my extreme couponing efforts
- Taking my sewing products to craft shows each weekend during the fall season
- Traveling to speak at homeschool conferences during the spring season

Monthly:

- Being the detail person with the family budget
- Doing a 30-day freezer cooking day (to ease daily concerns)
- Losing my perspective for a few hormonal days ☺

So – do I wish I had a marvelous schedule that included when to dust the ceiling fan, rotate the mattress, wash the windows, clean out the closets, and wash down the interior of the refrigerator? Of course! And I greatly look forward to a day when I have 4 such highly-trained and efficient teenagers that such things might be a reality... But it is more important to be content with where and what I have now – and until/unless I lose a few of my non-mothering jobs, some of the housework I dream of accomplishing will just have to gather dust until I find a day and time to deal with them.

As you look into the chore system and make plans for your own family – remember to keep your sanity and perspective (and don't try to invent the wheel during your hormonal days). God bless!

Susan