



## Buried Curriculum Treasures

By Penny Ross

Rumors and legends abound about treasure dating back to the days of Blackbeard or Captain Kidd! What do these stories share in common? Treasure buried deep in the ground which is found only after an arduous search following a complex map. Why can't treasure hunting be easy? Because, DUH, then the prize would have been found already!

What does treasure have to do with homeschool curriculum? More than you might imagine!

As you begin to consider next year's teaching resources, you need look no further than your mailbox stuffed full of curriculum catalogs, your email or Facebook messages advertising discounts and special offers, or your homeschooling friends who are happy to share what is working well in their family. As you begin to compare notes, you will likely see and hear the same dozen or so names, over and over again. Plus you will see these same resources in multiple booths in the Exhibit Halls of homeschool conventions and in full-page advertisements in homeschool publications. They are popular and pricey. They are the easily found treasure.

Have you ever tried to find these popular resources used? You have to be continually searching the online sites and forums or else you have to arrive early at the used curriculum sales because these resources go quickly! In my used curriculum shop, one popular book about a 6 year old boy learning math was snapped up just moments after it was brought in. It never even made it onto my shelves! Even used, these resources will command top-dollar in the resale market.

But don't be discouraged! There is hope for those who get to the party too late to grab the most popular resource or who don't have the budget to buy the trendy curriculum with all the bells and whistles. You can look beyond the most popular, easy-to-find teaching materials to find a buried curriculum cache!

How do you find the map to this treasure? Talk to veteran homeschoolers – especially those 5-10 years ahead of you. Ask them what was popular and effective when they were homeschooling the grades you are teaching now. As those moms finish their homeschool journey, they are ready to unload the boxes and boxes of resources in their closets and garages.

And many of them are selling at garage sale prices – five or ten cents on the dollar! I know -- because after they fail to sell them at their group’s used curriculum sale, they end up in my shop, heartbroken. Sadly, they bring in beloved books and materials that hold such wonderful memories.. They beg me to find good homes for their resources; they just can’t bear the thought of those particular books ending up in a dumpster somewhere.

These resources have lots more life in them. Their methods and approach have been validated as the students who originally used them now move on to jobs or higher education. As one meme says, “this book has been used but its words are still good.”

Do you want more value for your curriculum dollar? Look for buried curriculum treasure. It may be hiding under a layer of dust in a nearby garage or closet, but its riches are ready and waiting for you. Just ask a veteran homeschooler how to find it!

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