



Getting Started with Mater Amabilis™

A Catholic Charlotte Mason Curriculum



What is Mater Amabilis?

Mater Amabilis (MA) is a free, Catholic Charlotte Mason Homeschool Curriculum. The Mater Amabilis™ curriculum is placed under the patronage of The Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Mater Amabilis and Blessed John Cardinal Newman. We are faithful to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church..

How is it different from other curricula?

Mater Amabilis is a complete, Catholic Charlotte Mason homeschool curriculum. It relies on short lessons and living books rather than textbooks and workbooks. Students read these books and then narrate or “tell back” what they have read after a single reading. Oral narration is the backbone of the Charlotte Mason method and is the most efficient way of developing a child’s ear for language, habit of attention and composition skills. The students eventually move on to written narration and then other, more structured forms of composition. The plans are designed to be used as written, however, there is also room for you to substitute books as you see fit and tailor the curriculum to the specific needs of your family. While our syllabus provides the suggested books, you will still need to provide your own resources for Math and Reading instruction.

Do they only read books?

Charlotte Mason believed that, "an observant child should be put in the way of things worth observing," nurturing the mind with the best ideas in living books, and ensuring rich experiences and tools were "put in the way" of the child. MA seeks to spread a full feast of ideas before the student(s). This includes but is not limited to picture study, art, regular time spent in nature, music appreciation, map drill, hands-on science experiences, handicrafts, poetry recitation, and the singing of folk songs and traditional Catholic hymns in the home.

"IN THE NATURE OF THINGS THEN THE UNSPOKEN DEMAND OF CHILDREN IS FOR A WIDE AND VERY VARIED CURRICULUM; IT IS NECESSARY THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF THE WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS PROPER TO THEM AS HUMAN BEINGS, AND FOR NO REASONS OF CONVENIENCE OR TIME LIMITATIONS MAY WE CURTAIL THEIR PROPER CURRICULUM." - CHARLOTTE MASON

Getting Started:

1. Determine Your Child's Level

Mater Amabilis is arranged in levels, each covering 2-3 years, often using many of the same spine books and with plans that carry over from year to year. We recommend starting at the beginning of a level when you enter the curriculum, particularly when a suggested resource is used across several years (see Table 1.0) When in doubt, our Facebook group is a great place to get more tailored suggestions.

<i>Mater Amabilis Level™</i>	<i>Approximate Age Range</i>	<i>Corresponding Grade Level</i>
Prep Level	4	Preschool
Kinder	5	Kindergarten
Level 1B	6-7	1st Grade
Level 1A Year 1* Year 2	7-8 8-9	2nd Grade 3rd Grade
Level 2 Year 1 Year 2	9-10 10-11	4th Grade 5th Grade
Level 3 Year 1 Year 2**	11-12 12-13	6th Grade 7th Grade
Level 4	13-14	8th Grade
Levels 5 & 6 ***	14-18	9th -12th Grades

Table 1.0 Overview of Ages and Levels

**start with 1b history plans for a full, three year U.S. History rotation*

*** start at the beginning of level 3 and skip level 4. Continue on to the full four year high school plans*

**** if beginning with an 11th or 12th grader, it is highly suggested you go to our High School group for further support/discussion*

2. Visit the MA Website. Review the introduction and overview ; familiarize yourself with scope and sequence as well as how to approach subjects such as CM style language arts.

3. Select Your Child's Level at the top of the web site to access the plans (see Image 1.0)

4. Review and print the syllabus

5. Review and print any other study guides or lesson plans for that level

6. Families with more than one student will want to decide what subjects are best accomplished together (i.e. composer, folks songs/hymns, picture study, nature study and Shakespeare)

7. Review the book lists and determine what you will need to purchase.

8. Download/print the 36 Week Lesson plans. These can be edited as necessary (download the .doc instead of the .pdf file)

9. Plan your copywork selections: some users opt to pull selections from the term's readings while others find it more convenient to buy a ready-made copybook

10. Print any necessary maps to complement the term's geography studies

11. Create daily or weekly checklists to keep you or any independent students on track. Refer to Outline and Sample Schedule for help/information on lesson frequency (see Image 2.0)

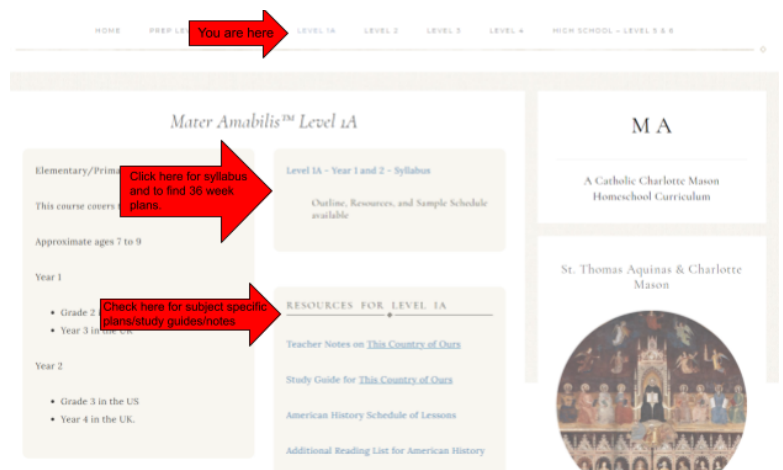


Image 1.0 Level 1A Landing Page

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of support is in place for new parents?

MA is a not-for-profit curriculum and is run on an entirely volunteer basis. This means there is no funding for a full time administrative staff to field questions. The MA Facebook group and the High School groups are very active, and full of both new and experienced homeschool parents who graciously make themselves available to answer one another's questions.

What about math and reading curriculum?

If you join the MA Facebook group, you can search for other members' curriculum suggestions. While not all are marketed as "CM" they tend to align with the overall philosophy and lifestyle that this kind of education embodies, and have worked for other Catholic families.

What about larger families, with multiple children close in age?

Parents have opted to combine in various ways to meet the needs of their families. The goal of MA and most CM style programs is to encourage students to eventually be able to work on their own, usually by about Level 3. We encourage you to consider the plans and your unique children when grouping students together. A good rule of thumb is to combine anyone who would be in the same level, but in different years. There are also several subjects that lend themselves to family style learning no matter the student's level, as noted in the "Getting Started" section.

I have younger kids, and we've already read through the Prep and Kinder booklists. Can we begin Level 1b?

We encourage families new to the method to give their students the "quiet growing time" that Charlotte Mason recommends for children under the age of six. Younger children should spend lots of time outdoors, learning family routines, and otherwise enjoying direct, hands-on experiences of the world around them.

What additional supplies will I need, other than the books themselves?

Other items you will need include basic school supplies, quality materials for art and handicrafts, hands-on science kits as required for your level, any additional supplies required by the science or geography plans, notebooks or binders for the following: copywork, written narrations, a book of centuries and nature study.



Some books scheduled in level 2

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

I'm on a limited budget. How do I prioritize which books to buy?

Some resources are available for free online or at reduced prices for e-readers. Many of our users prefer to own hard copies of our main “spine” books at a minimum, but will utilize their local library for read-alouds or supplemental picture books. There are several sites online where you can purchase books secondhand. Additionally there is an MA Buy/Sell/Trade Group on Facebook.

Are you planning to create a forum for families who are not currently on Facebook?

Due to the voluntary nature of the administration of this curriculum, we currently lack resources in terms of time, money, and people to expand beyond the existing Facebook group(s). Some of our users have opted to create accounts that exist solely for maintaining a presence in such Facebook Groups, without divulging much in the way of personal information. We understand this does not work for everyone, but at the moment it is the best we are able to offer.

MATER AMABILIS Level 1A - Year 1 - Curriculum Outline Elementary/Primary (approx. ages 7 to 9) Grade 2 in the US. Year 3 in the UK.		
+Religious Education	Daily	New Testament – weekly Catechism – weekly Saints & Liturgical Year – 2x-3x/week
+Mathematics	Daily	Lesson & Drill
+English	Daily	Reading Writing: Handwriting, Written Narrations, Copywork and/or Dictation -10 min. daily Grammar 3x/week
+Literature	Daily	Tales – 2x/week Classic Children's Literature – Ad lib.* Poetry – weekly
+National History	2x/Week	Year 2 study of the history of your nation*
+Ancient History	2x/Week	Bible History
+Geography & Earth Studies	3x/Week <i>plus mapwork</i>	Europe Maps & Plans Weather
+Science	2x/Week	Study of the Natural World
Nature Study	Weekly	Nature walk, journal and reading
Foreign Language	Weekly	Optional
Music Appreciation	Weekly	Introduction to Classical Music
Picture Study	Weekly	Impressionists
Art	2x/Wk	Painting & Drawing
Music	Daily	Singing Learn an Instrument
Practical Work	Daily	Chores Skills/Handicrafts
At this level most lessons should last around 20 – 25 minutes. The curriculum is designed to fit into thirty-six weeks, with many subjects broken down into three blocks of twelve week terms. Often the lessons can be covered in ten or eleven weeks, allowing a little leeway in the schedule. +Subjects considered to be essential at this level. *Each term one classic children's book and the recommended additional history book should be read aloud outside formal lesson time.		

Image 2.0 Level 1A Outline

Additional Resources:

Books Our Users Frequently Recommend:

Home Education Series (Vol. 1-6) by Charlotte Mason*

When Children Love to Learn: A Practical Application of Charlotte Mason's Philosophy for Today by Elaine Cooper

In Vital Harmony by Karen Glass

Know and Tell by Karen Glass

Real Learning Revisited by Elizabeth Foss

A Charlotte Mason Education: A Home Schooling How-To Manual by Catherine Levison

A Charlotte Mason Companion by Karen Andreola

Minds More Awake: The Vision of Charlotte Mason by Anne White

*Note: this is available for free online. For new families with young children, we recommend starting with Volume 1, *Home Education*. Older families will get the most from starting with Volume 3, *School Education*. Everyone can benefit from reading Volume 6, *A Philosophy of Education*.

Blogs to support you on your Charlotte Mason journey:

Abandon Hopefully Homeschooling (Sally Thomas)

Wildflowers and Marbles (Jen Mackintosh)

Our Home on the Range (Jill Papsdorf)

Continue the Conversation:

Our Facebook Group is where you can go to find out the latest:



Some books scheduled in level 3

- Curriculum updates (we post sneak previews to the group before they go live on the site, to assist our members who are planning their next academic year.)
- General discussion of Mason's philosophy as it applies to a Catholic home education and the MA Curriculum in particular.
- Living Book Recommendations, including specifically Catholic resources.
- Member's favorite resources for copywork, math, picture study and more.
- Clarification and support as you navigate your family's homeschool journey.

We'd love for you to find us there!



Scan QR code to visit
our general Facebook
Group



Scan QR code to visit
our High School
Group