

2011 Sonlight Training Conference



February 2-4, 2011

Littleton, CO

Competitor Product Review

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How they work

Heart of Dakota

- Charlotte Mason approach
- "Living books" read purposefully over time
- Exposure to poetry, music, art, and nature
- Language arts—narration, copywork, dictation, memorization
- Christ-centered
- Multi-level with smaller age increments
- Programs through 6th grade

My Father's World

- Biblical worldview
- Hands-on unit studies, not lit-based
- Multi-age (focused primarily on grades 2-8)

Tapestry of Grace

- Integrated studies (unit studies)
- Whole-family learning (same topic, different levels)
- Cyclical education (4-year chronological study of world history)
- Detailed lesson plans and discussion outlines

How they are different from Sonlight

Heart of Dakota

- Starts with Bible stories and then American history, rather than world history
- Short reading assignments, so students can "savor and dwell on the chosen books"
- Recommended and scheduled resources seem to come more from Christian publishers and/or reprints of old classics, rather than secular sources
- Includes suggestions for lots of hands-on activities
- Instructor's guides are paperback, perfect-bound
- Weekly schedule page in blocked format

My Father's World

- Unit study approach, not literature-based
- Packages do not include Readers and Read-Alouds. Instructor's guides provide library list
- Includes suggestions for lots of hands-on activities
- Instructor's guides offer daily schedule but no discussion questions
- Instructor's guides are smaller, less-detailed and more expensive (1/2 the size for twice the price)
- Instructor's guides are spiral-bound
- PreK level comprised of only toys (Lauri toys which can be choking hazard)
- Return policy—within 30 days in new condition

Tapestry of Grace

Strictly chronological, classical education niche
All age levels are taught from one **very large** instructor's guide
Schedules are weekly, not daily
Over 50 pages of notes, schedules, charts, worksheets each week
Recommended books must be selected and ordered separately
Suggestions for hands-on activities. Lapbook kits available for younger children
Instructor's guides are printed in full-color, or available digitally

Perceived Strengths

Heart of Dakota

Cheaper (because they schedule fewer books)
Hands-on

My Father's World

Cheaper (because they schedule fewer books)
Hands-on

Tapestry of Grace

Offers digital IGs—controlled-access pdfs, not adjustable

Overcoming Sonlight's Perceived Weaknesses

“Not as Christ-centered.”

Training our children to become ambassadors for Christ, equipped to engage their culture
Confront difficult subjects in the “safety” of home

“More expensive.”

Building a top-quality home library
Non-consumable, can be re-used with younger children
Your time is valuable. Save time by not having to hunt down resources
Love to Learn Guarantee. (No other company offers anything like this.)

“Not hands-on.”

Map and time-line activities, Science experiments
Tip sheets