

TruthQuest HISTORY

Independent Review

Cathy Duffy – Cathy Duffy Reviews

“Many parents are insecure about using real books for history without some sort of guidance. TruthQuest History (TQH) is a great solution since it is a series of eleven volumes that serve as guides for a real-books approach to history. All TQH guides are available in either print or digital format. While the series as a whole covers grades one through twelve, each guide targets either a younger or older audience.

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TQH very much reflects a Francis Schaeffer approach to history based on his book *[How Should We Then Live?](#)* (In his book, which is published by Crossway, Schaeffer shows how historical events, scientific discoveries, artistic endeavors, literary pursuits, etc., were all shaped by religious beliefs and philosophies. Schaeffer's views are shaped by his Reformed Protestant beliefs.) In addition, Miller supports a limited-government perspective. Although she writes from her own Protestant viewpoint, from time to time she discusses conflicting Protestant and Catholic viewpoints on history, acknowledging right and wrong on both sides. I was pleasantly surprised to see this respectful balance, especially in the Renaissance, Reformation volume.

As you might have gathered by now, there is a very definite philosophy to these books. However, if you disagree with some of Miller's philosophy, you can still use these guides by skimming through the introductory material, sharing whichever parts of it you wish with your children, then moving on to the recommended reading and occasional video viewing. Some of the recommended books, particularly some of the spine books, reflect the philosophy described above. *The Light and the Glory for Young Readers* (Revell Publishing) would be one such example. On the other hand, some of [H.A. Guerber's](#) history books and *Famous Men of Rome* (from either Memoria Press or Greenleaf Press) are among others that are more neutral in their presentation. Since recommended spine books reflect a number of different philosophies, your choices of spine books will be particularly important in determining the tone of your study”.

Karen Andreola – Christian Book Distributors

“Spread a feast of good books and history is fascinating to children; biography, historical fiction, picture books, etc. Perhaps you've tried using "real" books but hit-or-miss attempts brought uncomfortable feelings of insecurity. Author, Michelle Miller takes the hit-or-miss out of history. Her guides make it much easier to be consistent, chronological, and thorough. This veteran homeschool mom and children's librarian, lists oodles of good books (and some key films.) Our choices are plentiful. But she adamantly advises that we are NOT to read them all. Each book is marked with a reading level. This enables moms to combine children of different ages into a study of the same time period. We've always enjoyed using a mix of reading levels in our homeschool. For instance, I've learned not to undervalue picture books. Even a 32-page picture book, that zeros-in on a historical character or event, can offer us more interesting detail than the typical textbook overview does. Paul Revere's Ride by Longfellow is a picture book (poem) for all ages, for example. Mrs. Miller's commentary introduces each new topic and connects important events. It is Christian and politically conservative. Her ThinkWrite exercises invite the learner to be discerning and require thinking upon higher things (ideas and principles). She suggests the method of narration be employed with what is read. I second the motion. We may wish to put on skits, make timelines, publish a newsletter, eat historical food. Or, we may simply partake of the feast of books and talk about them.

Laurie Bluedorn – TriviumPursuit.com

“These two study guides, which can be used by students of all ages, contain short, concise historical commentary along with exhaustive book recommendations (both in-print and out-of-print) for every key person and event covered. Also included are writing exercises placed throughout the commentary. These guides, which are thoroughly Christian in their worldview, can be used as your sole history curriculum for these time periods, or as a supplement to any other history curriculum. I love the cautions that Mrs. Miller gives us. At numerous points she suggests that we be careful in our study of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilization, and she shows us which books would not be appropriate for young children or even some older students. There is just enough commentary throughout the books to guide us and keep us on the correct path so that we won't leave out any important historical events or people. A family is free to spend as long or as little time at each stop on the timeline as they wish. Mrs. Miller recently revised these two guides including: citing our Ancient History from Primary Sources: A Literary Timeline and showing when to use it; adding more ancient writers and more in-print spine books; numbered the sections and subsections; included more Ambleside Online spines/books/resources; and there is a corresponding Table of Contents which makes planning and using the guides easier. With

these additions, Mrs. Miller has made a wonderful curriculum even better. I wish my children were young again so we could use it.”

Karen Glass – TriviumPursuit.com

“This is probably the single finest history resource available to the homeschooler... The guide is not full of hands-on projects or busy-work, but contains commentary that is written to the student... In my opinion, no matter what curriculum or resources you are using with your children, the TruthQuest History guides make a wonderful supplement for the parent. Would it be worth \$20 and an evening or two of reading for you to get an overview of a time period, and have a deeper grasp of what your children could be learning and looking for as you work through your material? You will get a quick overview of time period, but more importantly, a deeper look at the principles and ideas that fueled the events. And TruthQuest History guides are so easy to read – like a friend chatting over coffee and donuts – that your introduction into philosophy will be virtually painless...”

Cindy West – Curriculum Choice

“What’s taken me so long to try TruthQuest History??? I have had the mistaken impression that TruthQuest guides were only glorified book lists that I could develop myself. While it’s true that I could come up with an appropriate list of living literature for a specific time period, these guides are SO much more!

1. First, you get a complete look at the era, covering all of the important people, places and events in a general order of occurrence.
2. Second, you get a full listing of appropriate living literature which will immerse your child into the era, its people, and its events.
3. Third, and most important to me, Michelle Miller offers deliciously written commentary throughout the guide to give you an overall picture of the era, as well as tying seamless transitions from one important event to another.

Using a living literature approach to history as a Charlotte Mason style homeschooler, I have often felt a slight disconnect in moving from one thing to another in a particular era. In other words, when we’ve read a wonderful book about Martin Luther, another about the

Holy Roman Empire, then another about King Henry VIII, I haven't always known how to give my children the "whole picture" about how they fit together.

With TruthQuest guides, I now have the "missing ingredient" I've been searching for – a living literature approach to history PLUS a non-textbook, complete overview in between the living literature to tie everything together for me! (Boy, was that a long, drawn-out description!) Michelle Miller's writing style is living itself – sometimes humorous, sometimes tongue in cheek, always interesting.

Don't get the impression that you are totally off the hook as the teacher using a TruthQuest guide. You will still be responsible for attaining all the living literature and may want to occasionally throw in a project or two. However, there are open-ended question sprinkled throughout the guide called ThinkWrites which can be used for discussion and/or writing assignments.

Speaking of the literature, each section includes several book choices, many of which should be available at your library. Your child isn't expected to read everything on the list, but instead you choose one or two, then move on to the next section of the era. Additionally, since many of the guides can be used with various age levels, the book lists not only include brief descriptions, but appropriate age levels, too.

To give you a picture of how in-depth and thorough the guides are, I'll give you the table of contents from the TruthQuest History – Renaissance, Reformation & Exploration guide I am using. These are just the main headings, as each contains several specific lessons with literature choices and overviews.

- John Wycliff and Jan Hus
- Growth of Towns
- Northern Art Begins to Change
- Dawn of the Renaissance
- Early Renaissance Art
- Exploration Begins
- Fall of Constantinople

- A Visit to Italy
- The Princes of Prints
- War of the Roses
- Think Like a King
- Artists of the High Renaissance
- Ferdinand and Isabella
- Holy Roman Empire and France
- Christopher Columbus and Other Early Explorers
- Church Leaders
- Machiavelli and His Prince
- Reformation Rumble
- Francis of France
- Charles V and His Spanish Holy Roman Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Spain's New World Empire
- Early Native Americans of the Southwest
- King Henry VIII
- Reformation Spreads
- Science Takes a Leap
- Russia and Ivan the Terrible
- The French in the New World
- The Counter-Reformation
- Later Renaissance Art
- Queen Elizabeth
- John Knox
- Mary, Queen of Scots
- England Gets into the Race for the New World
- Spanish Armada
- Walter Raleigh
- William Shakespeare
- Later-Counter-Reformation Figures
- The idea War
- Holland Yearns for Freedom
- Battle of Lepanto
- El Greco
- Scien-a-rama
- Mystery of the Roanoke Colony

Wow. See what I mean? You might not be able to tell from the list above, but a focus on Christianity is prevalent throughout the book. The author strives to make God's Providence a main focus, as history is HIS story."