



AMBER O'NEAL JOHNSTON

AUTHOR • BLOGGER • CURRICULUM WRITER • HOME EDUCATOR • SPEAKER

# Hi, I'm Amber...

## AKA Heritage Mom

My name is Amber O'Neal Johnston, and I live in Georgia nestled among pine trees, hammocks, and ziplines with my husband and our four children. My happy place is the back porch on a rainy day, preferably with a giant mug of hot tea and a good book. And although I was raised in the air conditioning, somehow the woods is where I feel most at home these days. When we have the chance, my family enjoys extended worldschooling trips to immerse ourselves in other cultures, and even when we're nestled in at home, we continue to pursue globally minded living and learning within our local community and beyond.

I never planned to educate my children at home, but God placed so many inspiring homeschool moms in my path that something I once considered strange slowly began feeling like a possibility and then a probability. Now I can't imagine living and learning any other way.

Years ago, I started HeritageMom.com to document and discuss the joys and trials of raising my kids to love themselves and others. Since then, I've journeyed from a cookie-cutter approach to homeschooling that left my children feeling unacknowledged and invisible to discovering the magic of using my "special sauce" to create an inclusive and culturally rich home learning environment. I write and speak about including diverse voices in traditional curricula and infusing culture and heritage into the home and beyond. And when asked about my path, I like to smile and say, "In my house, Charlotte Mason has an afro."

I enjoy sharing diverse booklists and lesson guides full of literary mirrors and windows at [Heritagemom.com](https://HeritageMom.com), and you can find me chatting about this and that on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) at @heritagemomblog.

It's nice to "meet" you, and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.



Amber





We need clear lenses, and our children deserve them, too. Through clear lenses, our families will see whole people. People who are just like us in a few ways, similar in many ways, and entirely different in big and small ways. People aren't linear. They're beautifully abstract, and our children's hearts and minds need to stretch to handle the fullness of what our sisters and brothers around the world, and next door, bring to the table.



# Get to Know Amber...

**Amber is an established authority on including diverse voices in traditional curriculum and infusing culture and love for others into an intentional home environment.** She shares her observations on education, living books, and worldschooling at [HeritageMom.com](http://HeritageMom.com), and connects with followers on social media as [@heritagemomblog](https://www.instagram.com/heritagemomblog). She is a regular contributor to the wildly successful Wild + Free homeschooling community, a frequent podcast guest on popular shows, and a coveted speaker at boutique conferences.

A product of public education and daughter of two public school principals, Amber never expected to fall head over heels in love with homeschooling. During one late-night session of perusing educational philosophies, Amber stumbled upon the work of nineteenth-century British educator Charlotte Mason and her home education principles. Convinced that homeschooling was a path to a lifegiving home, Amber embarked on a journey from stay-at-home mom to homeschooling enthusiast.

After wholeheartedly committing to follow a mainstream Charlotte Mason curriculum to homeschool her children, Amber became discouraged when months went by with little mention, if any, of the stories and accomplishments of Black people in her schoolroom. While the literary quality of the books may have been superior, she found that the cultural emptiness she experienced as a schoolgirl was being perpetuated within the walls of her own home.

Devoted to bridging the gap for her four children, Amber began uniquely merging traditional classics with “lifegiving books,” as well as creating a culturally rich home environment to ensure that her children’s education honored their background, individuality, and sense of self-worth.

Convinced that other families, regardless of their school choices, might be missing out on their inherent freedom to educate the whole child, Amber began sharing her personal stories and the resources she used to infuse her schoolroom with her own and others’ culture in a celebratory way. In addition to private consulting and running a local non-profit homeschool support group, Amber is a go-to voice on curating every aspect of a culturally rich and inclusive home.



# Work...

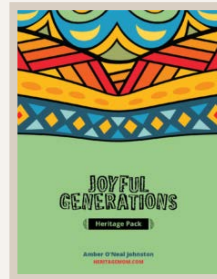
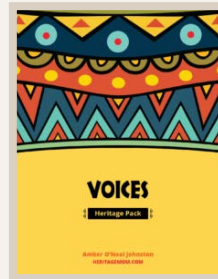
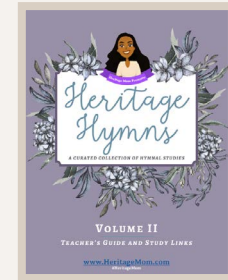
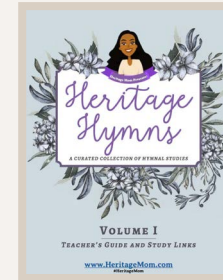
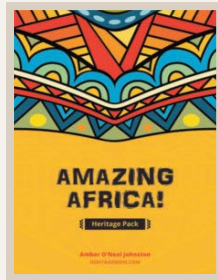
## BOOKLISTS

Dozens of [curated booklists](#) can be found for free on the Heritage Mom blog to help parents include diverse voices and build colorful libraries for their children.

## SPECIAL STUDIES

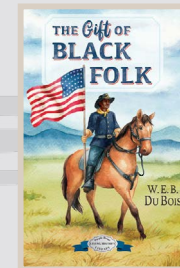
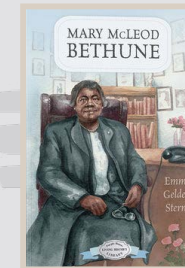
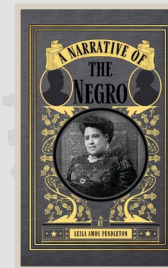
Home and school educators can find a variety of [free diverse resources](#) on the website, including studies on Black artists, composers, and poets.

## CURRICULA

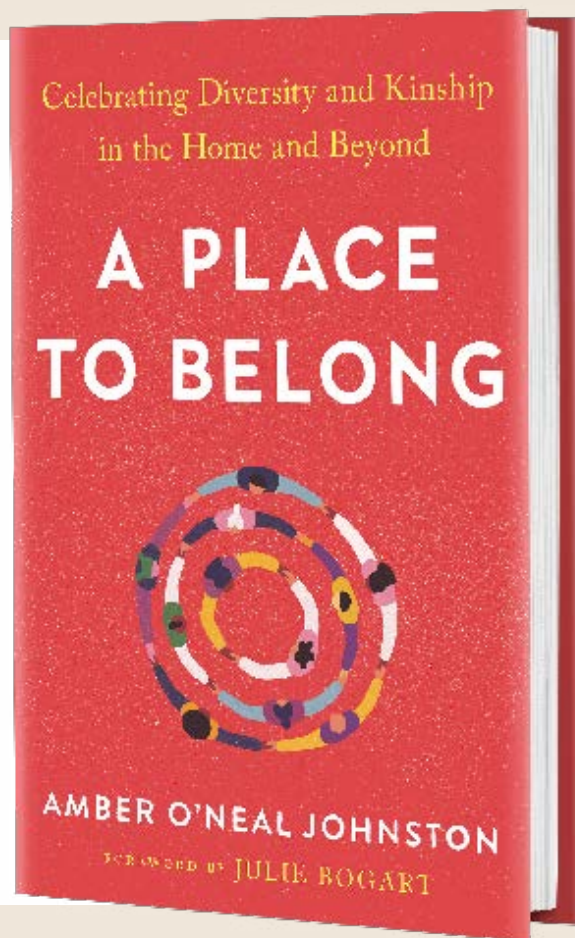


## FOREWORDS

As a committed bibliophile with a passion for sharing long-forgotten living books with contemporary readers, Amber writes forewords for lovely editions of older treasures that have been given new life by boutique publishing houses.



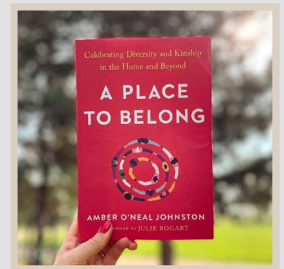




## PUBLISHED BOOK May 2022

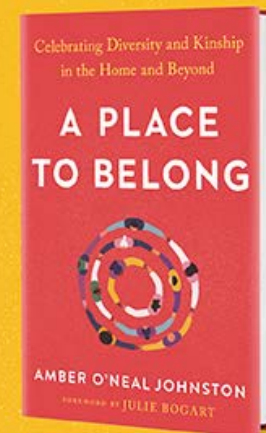
[A Place to Belong: Celebrating Diversity and Kinship in the Home and Beyond](#) is a guide for families of all backgrounds to celebrate cultural heritage and embrace inclusivity within their own homes and as they move through their communities.

Gone are the days when socially conscious parents feel comfortable teaching their children to merely tolerate others. Instead, they are looking for a way to authentically embrace the fullness of their diverse communities. *A Place to Belong* offers a path forward for families to honor their cultural heritage and champion diversity in the context of daily family life. Amber shows parents of all backgrounds how to create a home environment where children feel secure in their own personhood and culture, enabling them to better understand and appreciate people who are racially and culturally different. *A Place to Belong* gives parents the tools to empower children to embrace their unique identities while feeling beautifully tethered to their global community.

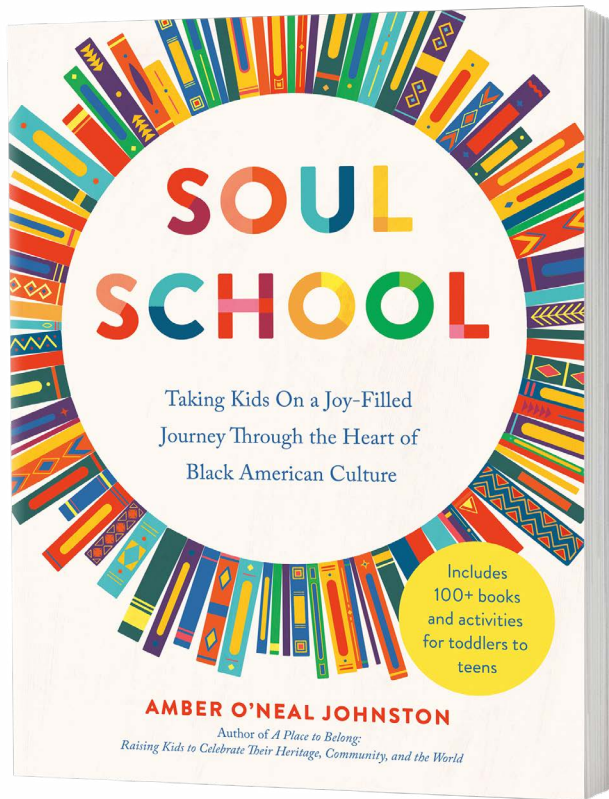


“Awakens us to some of the most important issues of our day with dynamic pluck, bold transparency, and homegrown humility. **THIS BOOK IS BOTH A REVELATION AND A GUIDE.**”  
—AINSLEY ARMENT, author of *The Call of the Wild and Free*

[APlaceToBelongBook.com](http://APlaceToBelongBook.com)







## PUBLISHED BOOK *January 2025*

Brimming with the history and culture of Black America, [Soul School](#) is a one-of-a-kind resource delivered in a package that all children find irresistible: stories. Amber offers masterfully curated booklists, sorted by age, for diving into the fullness of the African American cultural experience.

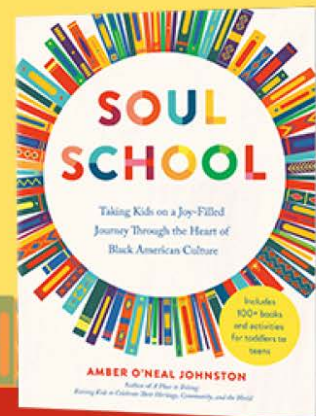
Soul School books are must-have mirrors for Black children and priceless windows for others, but first and foremost, they're captivating stories. And while they're sure to hold a special place in the hearts of Black families, they are unequivocally and without hesitation for all children.

In addition to the booklists, Johnston artfully weaves together chapters covering knowledge of the past and awareness of the present by examining cultural values, historical highlights, and the power of storytelling while teaching families what to look for and how to enjoy prose, verse, and illustrations that celebrate Black American culture. It's the perfect book for any parent hoping to introduce more inclusive books into the home, with 100+ essential titles for early readers through high school.

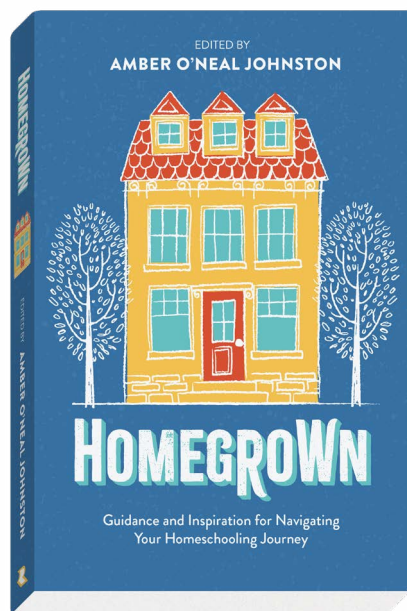


## SHOWCASING THE VIBRANCY OF BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE, ONE STORY AT A TIME.

Includes **100+** essential books and activities for toddlers to teens



[SoulSchoolBook.com](http://SoulSchoolBook.com)



## PUBLISHED BOOK *August 2025*

Homeschooling is the fastest-growing form of education in America, and it's here to stay. Whether you're a seasoned homeschooler, wrapping up your first year, or just exploring the idea, [Homegrown is your go-to resource](#) for everything you need to start with confidence and grow with purpose.

Each chapter invites you to reimagine what education can look like when it's rooted in freedom, intention, and the unique needs of your family. This collection of thirty original, thought-provoking pieces from a diverse group of contributors covers common questions such as:

- What fuels families to educate children at home?
- How do relationships, culture, and vision affect the decision to homeschool?
- What roles do spouses, friends, extended family, and communities play in our ability to homeschool?
- How do culture, heritage, history, and legacy seamlessly intertwine with reading, writing, and arithmetic?
- Why is raising our kids this way so important, and how do we prioritize it?

Whether your aim is to nurture your child's passions, support their individual learning style, or connect with a community of like-minded families, this book will be your trusted companion every step of the way. The top homeschooling voices in these essays span age, race, ethnicity, political beliefs, geography, religion, family size, educational philosophy, and more, providing parents with guidance and inspiration to kickstart or refine their homeschooling practice with creativity, connection, and confidence.

## HOMEgrown, EDITED BY AMBER O'NEAL JOHNSTON

REIMAGINE A HOME EDUCATION ROOTED IN FREEDOM,  
INTENTION, & THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY

Featuring 30+ original, thought-provoking questions from a  
diverse group of contributors





# Podcasts & Media Interviews...



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# Past Clients...



Charlotte Mason *Inspired*  
A BIBLICAL LIVING EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



CHARLOTTE  
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INSTITUTE



MOPS

*Mothers of Preschoolers*



*Renew Homeschool Gathering*  
hosted by Learning Through Literature





# Reviews...

*Amber does a masterful job of making each mother feel that she can implement positive change in her household. If you've ever felt invisible in this country because of your skin, color, language or whatever, she gives us actionable steps to create community for ourselves and our children. She shows us that it is absolutely worth it to invest in our children, and ensuring they know their worth. Thank you Amber for sharing your wisdom with the world. –William*

*Listening to Amber speak was a balm for my soul. I finally felt understood as a mother, a woman, and someone who wants to raise my children to be a respecter and lover of persons. –Ashley*

*I purchased "Sweet Tea and Cookies" for fall, and my 9 year old daughter and I previewed it. She told me several days later that she's really looking forward to fall so that we can go through this material! She's not the only one. I am using Amber's beautiful curriculum as a part of a larger year of history around family and local history. The multi-dimensional aspect of the curriculum really appealed to me. Thank you, Amber, for your thoughtful and beautiful work. –Heather*

*My gratitude to Amber for creating this enrichment guide is immeasurable. The poetry, songs, recipes, crafts and these wonderful stories and history provide a sensory rich experience that offers an abundance of opportunity for meaningful discussions and quality time with your children. We are working through the guide over our summer vacation. I hope Amber will continue to produce more bodies of work like it. –Tiffany*

*I love how Heritage Mom has taken the time to create a multi-cultural guide (with lots of links!) to help us dive deeper, and praise God in more than just one style. I am very excited about this for our family! –Tori*

*So glad to find a homeschool mom with a balanced approach. I like to know the whole truth and I don't want my kids to only know one side of history. I'm especially grateful to see more recommendations for diverse, historical literature than what I've known. –Angela*

# Speaking Topics...

## MULTICULTURAL

### A Place to Belong: Celebrating Diversity and Kinship in the Home and Beyond

Gone are the days when socially conscious parents feel comfortable teaching their children to merely tolerate others. Instead, they are looking for a way to authentically embrace the fullness of their diverse communities. In this session, families of all backgrounds will receive guidance on celebrating cultural heritage and embracing inclusivity in the home and beyond. We'll discuss how to foster an environment where children feel secure in their own personhood and culture, enabling them to better understand and appreciate people who are racially and culturally different. Parents will walk away with tools to empower children to embrace their unique identities while feeling beautifully tethered to their global community.

### Books as Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors

When children are unable to see themselves reflected in their schoolbooks, they fail to develop positive feelings of self-worth. And when they lack occasions to examine similarities and differences between themselves and others, they miss out on valuable opportunities for recognizing the shared humanity that binds all people together. A mirror is a story that reflects your own culture and helps build your identity, a window is a resource that offers you a view into someone else's experience, and a sliding glass door invites you to enter another's world. In this session, we will examine the use of all three types of books in our homes as we educate our children while embracing their individuality and honoring others.

### Soul School: Taking Kids on a Joy-Filled Journey Through the Heart of Black American Culture

In this enriching session, join Amber O'Neal Johnston, author of Soul School, as she takes you on an engaging journey through the heart of Black American culture using children's literature as a guide. Based on her acclaimed book, this workshop is designed for homeschoolers who are eager to introduce more inclusive stories into their homes.

Discover ways to use living stories to teach cultural values, historical highlights, and the power of storytelling. Receive guidance on how to use literature as a tool for cultural and historical education and walk away with practical tips for facilitating meaningful discussions and activities around diverse stories.

Whether you're looking to diversify your family's "fun reads" bookshelf or enrich your curriculum, this session will equip you with everything you need to embark on a joy-filled journey through Black American culture—one book at a time.



# CHARLOTTE MASON

## Finding Freedom in Charlotte Mason

When parents and teachers rely on intuition, reflective practice, and common sense to revise their application of Mason's principles based on the family or child at hand, they often walk away feeling as though these "departures" are separating them from the more legitimate world of CM purists. This session will reframe some of our thinking in this area as we discover that embracing freedom is not an educational or moral failure but an inherent aspect of a true Charlotte Mason education.

## Delighting in the Early Years

With children of various ages and stages – high school, middle school, and elementary, and a tagalong – Amber O'Neal Johnston has faithfully shepherded multiple children through the difficult and delightful early years. In this session, Amber will share her journey through the first years of her children's home life while highlighting the beautiful aspects that she relishes, the not-so-great things she wishes she'd done differently, and the ways that birth order and family circumstances have impacted each child's experience.

## A Living Education: Charlotte Mason and Your Family

A living education is teeming with ideas that breathe life into our lessons and spill over into our daily rhythms. Amber O'Neal Johnston will discuss some of the unique aspects of a Charlotte Mason education and how you can begin to incorporate them into your home. She'll also share how freedom and flexibility are inherent aspects of this educational philosophy, making it possible for families everywhere to embrace the principles while curating a home atmosphere filled with truth, goodness, and beauty.

## Sparkling Curiosity and Delight in Childhood

What if your home atmosphere could ignite your children's natural curiosity and bring joy to their academic journey? In this session, we'll explore how to support your kids' academic growth while embracing their unique passions and interests. Join us as we dive into practical strategies for creating a learning environment where curiosity, creativity, and enthusiasm thrive.

Discover how to encourage deep dives into topics that make your children come alive, while still meeting academic goals. Whether it's building projects, exploring new hobbies, or pursuing niche interests, this session will help you find ways to integrate their passions into your homeschool days. You'll leave inspired to reimagine your homeschool as a space that nurtures not just academic growth, but also the heart and imagination of your children.



## CURRICULA SUBJECTS

### The Joy of Making: Reclaiming the Lost Art of Handicrafts

*"We make in order to slow down. To connect with others. To express ideas and emotions, feel competent, create something tangible and long-lasting. And to feed the soul."*

These words by author Melanie Falick remind us that handcraft is more than just a hobby reserved for our most creative children. Working with their hands tethers our children to previous generations as they immerse themselves in the present, and creating beautiful and useful things encourages kids to think of others. Handicrafts stimulate creativity and imagination, provide practice for the habits of concentration and attention, and so much more. In this session, we'll explore the lost art of handcraft as part of a broad education that prepares our children for the real world while gifting them with the joy that comes from making things by hand.

### The Promises of Poetry

What if poetry wasn't something to dissect—but something to live with? Something that shapes our inner lives and brings beauty, meaning, and connection to our days? In this session, we'll explore the role and value of poetry in a Charlotte Mason education, not just as a subject to teach, but as a soul-nourishing presence in the homeschool. Attendees will discover how poetry cultivates wonder, strengthens language, and offers a powerful means of intellectual and emotional growth—for both children and parents.

Whether you're new to poetry or yearning to move beyond rote recitation and analysis, you'll leave with practical ideas and gentle inspiration for weaving poetry into your homeschool in ways that feel authentic, meaningful, and deeply human. As Charlotte Mason wrote, "A thousand thoughts that burn come to us on the wings of verse." Together, let's see if we can catch a few.

### Teaching Hard History in a Beautiful Way

Home educators are more motivated now than ever to have meaningful conversations with their children about our country's complicated past and the forces that shaped the society we live in today. But most of us never learned about the tough topics in school, and the books traditionally read in homeschool circles rarely provide much assistance. During our time together, we'll discuss how to approach hard history in our homes with honesty and compassion in an age-appropriate way.

### Beholding Beauty in Unexpected Places

Our beauty sense in literature, art, and other areas of life should be expansive – not solely based on the narrow confines of familiarity. Our recognition of truth, goodness, and beauty should also remain wonder-filled, informed, and thoughtful. It can't be left to develop entirely on its own in the wild. Rather, it must be carefully considered, pruned, and cultivated. In this session, I'll share my own path toward beauty as we discuss the various ways that our attention to beauty can breathe life into our homes.



# HOMEMAKING

## Mama Culture: Why Your Personal Growth Matters

While homeschooling, it's easy for moms to put their own personal growth on hold. But a well-rounded, intellectually stimulated, and joyfully fulfilled mother is better equipped to teach and inspire her children. By nurturing yourself, you not only grow as an individual but also create a legacy of learning and fulfillment that enriches your entire family. This workshop introduces the empowering concept of "Mama Culture," emphasizing the importance of personal development for homeschooling mothers.

We'll explore how lifelong learning, pursuing passions, intellectual stimulation, and emotional well-being can transform your homeschool journey—and your family's life. Key topics include practical strategies for balancing your own enrichment with your children's education, the benefits of modeling personal growth, and how to create a supportive network with other homeschooling moms.

## Claiming Freedom: Embracing Contradictions Amid Motherhood

Through a series of relatable anecdotes, Amber leads mamas down a freedom path where they can embrace life's contradictions and claim the ability to explore, dabble, grow, and connect without bounds. Specifically, she dives into four freedoms that mothers can gift themselves and their peers while living and loving well within community.

## The Inheritance of Homemaking

For some people, homemaking feels like a thing of the past – something pursued by grandmothers and women who lack opportunities. Full-time mothering and slow childhood are often misunderstood and undervalued in today's hurried world, but the idea of homemaking has been etched into the hearts of many women (and their husbands). In this session, we'll discuss the power of keeping a home and how approaching homemaking as an intergenerational gift and beloved profession can open hearts, minds, and many doors.

## Sacred vs. Secular: The Power of Undivided Mothering

*"We allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and 'spiritual' life of children but teach them that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their Continual Helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life."* When Amber first read these words by British educator Charlotte Mason, she was knee-deep in diapers, breastfeeding, cooking, and housework, but something called to her. In this session, we'll discuss the realities of a life lived without the defined separation of secular vs. sacred and what this means for mamas and their little ones.

## From Apathy to Joy: The Invisible Gifts of Motherhood

When starting a family, we're often full of excitement and apprehension in equal measure. We want to lean into family and home but don't want to lose ourselves in the process. Thinking that there's no room for curating a childhood of wonder and our own personal growth, we often choose to put our children first and lovingly dive headfirst into what we believe will be an entirely sacrificial path. But through motherhood, we receive rarely mentioned "invisible" gifts, and acknowledging them can be lifegiving.

## HERITAGE

### Roots & Branches: Pursuing Universal Brotherhood Through Family Heritage

Building authentic relationships across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines requires self-awareness, humility, and a willingness to sit with the tension that often accompanies the melding of different viewpoints or even competing aims. Before children can be expected to thrive in diverse spaces and relationships, they must develop agency through personal identity. Kids (and adults too) find it difficult to honor the humanity of others when they are disconnected from their own personhood. We'll discuss how we can use family culture and intergenerational history to deeply water our children's roots as they spread wide branches towards others.

### A Path to Belonging and Kinship

On the heels of protests and political divisiveness, our nation is bursting with social unrest as Americans wrestle with defining who we are and what we stand for as a disparate yet connected group of individuals. In many cases, meaningful messages get mired down in polarizing ideologies, but the truth is that we all love our children, value our communities, and want the best for both. Amid all the noise, there is a quiet call for mothers to unite as we raise self-confident children who hold genuine affection for others. As sisters by choice, we can partner as we pour into home, the treasured space where our children form their first attachments and perspectives on the world, where belonging and kinship burn brightly. We can raise children who embrace their unique identities while feeling beautifully tethered to their neighbors, nation, and global community, and we can do it together.

### Diversifying the Feast: Finding Beauty Through Culturally Rich Learning

There are innumerable ways to integrate voices of color into our children's lessons naturally and consistently through the years. Formal and informal opportunities for diversifying the feast exist within history, literature, music, art, poetry, and more. Some studies will lead students to grapple with complex stories, tragedies, and trials. But we also have a unique opportunity to highlight triumphs and joys rooted in every culture. This session will explore specific ways to shape an inclusive home atmosphere that values people of color and the ideas their stories and gifts convey to our children.

### Worldschooling: Taking the Show on the Road

Traveling abroad is a dream many families share, but figuring out how to traverse continents (or even the next state) with children while homeschooling can feel overwhelming or impossible. In this session, we'll discuss what learning away from home entails and how everyday families can make it happen on a budget. We'll also consider how to raise globally minded children when international travel isn't realistic. The answer may surprise you!



Don't see what you're looking for? [Explore additional session topics](#) or contact Amber to discuss creating custom content for your event.

## Contact Information

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