

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Gloucester County Christian Home Schoolers Association (GCCHSA) sponsors a graduation ceremony for eighth and twelfth graders. Participation in the ceremony is voluntary for member families. The ceremony and all that goes with a graduation is designed by the parents and graduates and depends on their responsible participation and service.

If you are reading this, then you and your child are approaching the end of your journey together as home schoolers, and your child is preparing to graduate high school and begin a brand new experience of college or work. Or your child might be approaching the end of the lower years of home schooling and preparing to graduate eighth grade, and you are both about to embark on an exciting journey through the high school years of home schooling. In either case, perhaps you are looking for a way to mark the end of one period in your child's life and the beginning of another. If so, we would encourage you to participate in the next GCCHSA graduation ceremony.

The GCCHSA has set policies and guidelines for the process of creating a graduation ceremony, but decisions about the elements of the ceremony are made by the parents and graduates. In order to ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible and there is adequate communication between the GCCHSA General Board of Trustees and the Graduation Committee, each year a Board Member who does not have a child in one of the graduating classes will serve as the Graduation Coordinator.

It is the responsibility of the Graduation Coordinator to conduct business before Graduation Committee officers are elected, to bring monthly reports from the Graduation Committee to the General Board of Trustees, and to ensure that graduation meetings and decisions conform to the guidelines and policies of the GCCHSA.

It is not the job of the Graduation Coordinator to make decisions regarding the graduation ceremony. Because the GCCHSA desires that each graduation ceremony be a reflection of the unique talents and gifts of that year's participating families, these decisions are to be made together by the parents and students.

The purpose of this graduation manual is threefold: first, to provide the policies and guidelines so that all those participating may know what is expected by the GCCHSA General Board of Trustees; second, to provide a suggested timeline for decision making and completion of tasks (included in this section are forms that may be used for collating information for the diplomas, program, and yearbook and may be altered each year to reflect those things that are most important to the families of the graduates); and, third, to provide ideas and suggestions for the many different aspects of the ceremony (these are suggestions only, and may or may not be used in any given year; the list is certainly not meant to be exhaustive, and each year's Graduation Committee is encouraged to add new ideas as they are conceived and used).

While it is right for parents to be in charge of the decision-making, they are urged to listen to the students' preferences. Remember that the ceremony is for the students, and is a celebration for all of the students involved. Each one has special God-given gifts to share. Those gifts may be musical or verbal and public, or they may be technical and "behind-the-scenes", but each gift will enhance the ceremony.

While the commencement ceremony for the twelfth graders is very important and special, please remember that the eighth graders also should be celebrated for their achievements. Their parents should be involved in as much of the decision making as pertains to them. All those involved should work together in unity to create a beautiful, God-honoring ceremony that will be one of the highlights of every graduate's memories of home schooling.

Being a part of the Graduation Committee is a special time to serve each other within the Christian fellowship of the Gloucester County Christian Home Schoolers Association, and to be a witness to those outside the faith who may attend the ceremony. May every detail of the graduation ceremony be a lovely time of fellowship, celebration, and joy, and may the process and the ceremony be to the glory of God.