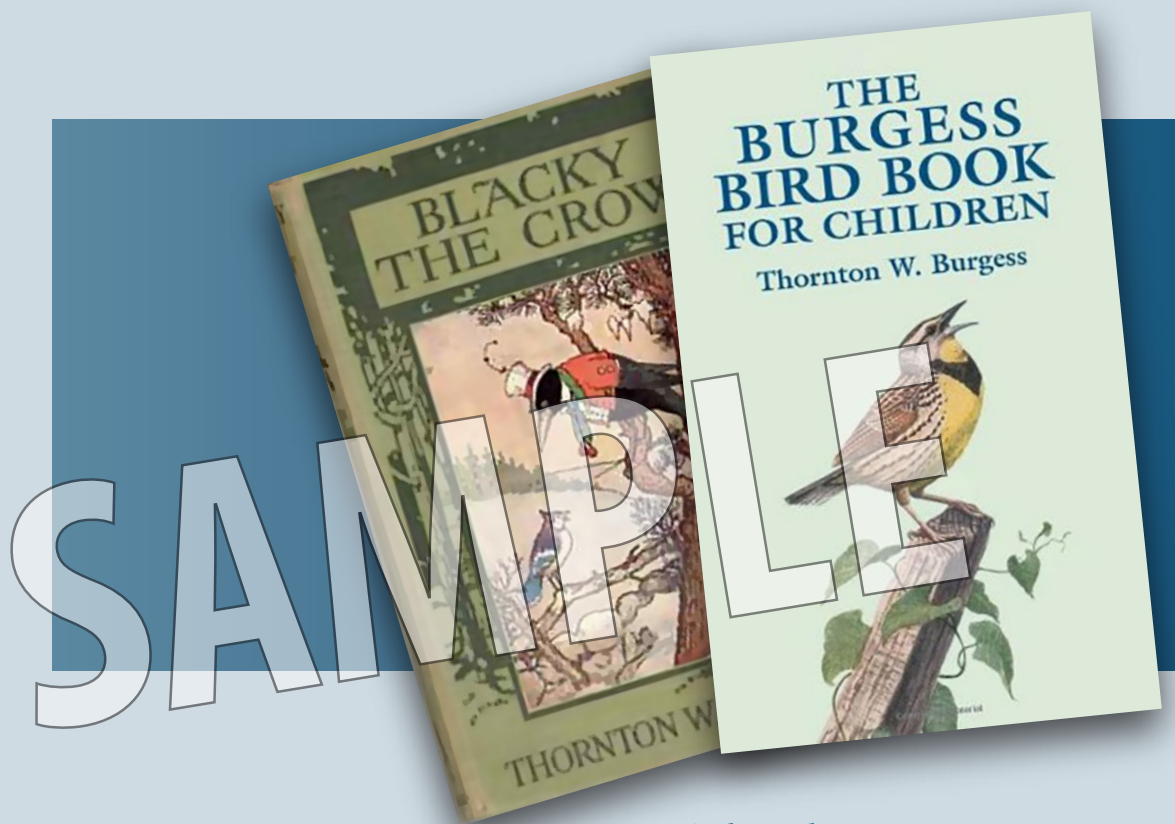


Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Learning about Birds



with Thornton Burgess

A living science handbook

by Sonya Shafer

Enjoy learning about birds *with a beloved author of nature stories for children!*

The Burgess Bird Book for Children and *Blacky the Crow* have long been favorite books among students interested in birds. Now you can use this companion guide alongside both Thornton Burgess classics to explore the delightful world of common birds and their habitats.

Learning about Birds with Thornton Burgess *gives you*

- Day-by-day lesson plans with a leisurely reading schedule,
- Nature study ideas to encourage your students to apply what they are learning,
- Master bird lists for you to record the birds you see in your own backyard,
- Bird habitat templates for an added challenge for older students,
- Cross references to *The Handbook of Nature Study* for further optional study.

Spark a lifelong appreciation for nature and good books through *Learning about Birds with Thornton Burgess!*

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by Sonya Shafer

Learning about Birds with Thornton Burgess
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Introduction

Though the children will be encouraged to learn birds by sight during this study, keep in mind that simply identifying the birds is not the end goal. Identifying a bird is only a means to the real goal: learning about its habits and what it does.

“The reason for studying any bird is to ascertain what it does; in order to accomplish this, it is necessary to know what the bird is, learning what it is being simply a step that leads to a knowledge of what it does. But, to hear some of our bird devotees talk, one would think that to be able to identify a bird is all of bird study. On the contrary, the identification of birds is simply an alphabet by means of which we may spell out the life habits of the bird. To know these habits is the ambition of the true ornithologist, and should likewise be the ambition of the beginner, even though the beginner be a young child” (Anna Comstock in *The Handbook of Nature Study*, p. 27).

“Children should be encouraged to watch, patiently and quietly, until they learn something of the habits and history of bee, ant, wasp, spider, hairy caterpillar, dragon-fly, and whatever of larger growth comes in their way” (Charlotte Mason in *Home Education*, p. 57).

Materials Needed

- *Blacky the Crow* by Thornton Burgess (Available free online at gutenberg.org)
- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children* by Thornton Burgess (Available free online at gutenberg.org)
- *Fifty Favorite Birds Coloring Book* by Lisa Bonforte from Dover Publications OR a blank sketchbook (one for each student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils
- (optional) *Handbook of Nature Study* by Anna Botsford Comstock (Available free online at archive.org)
- A bird field guide (Two of our favorites are the Princeton Field Guides and the National Audubon Society Field Guides. Also, the Audubon apps at <http://audubonguides.com> are outstanding!)

Suggested Schedule for a Year of Study

Week 1: Lessons 1 and 2

Week 2: Lessons 3 and 4

Week 3: Lessons 5 and 6

Week 4: Lessons 7 and 8

Week 5: Catch Up and Lesson 9

Week 6: Lessons 10 and 11

Week 7: Lessons 12 and 13

Week 8: Lessons 14 and 15

Week 9: Lessons 16 and 17

Week 10: Catch Up and Lesson 18

Week 11: Lessons 19 and 20

Week 12: Exam Questions

Week 13: Lessons 21 and 22

Week 14: Lesson 23 and Catch Up

Week 15: Lessons 24 and 25

Week 16: Lessons 26 and 27

Week 17: Lessons 28 and 29

Week 18: Lessons 30 and 31

Week 19: Lesson 32 and Catch Up

Week 20: Lessons 33 and 34

Week 21: Lessons 35 and 36

Week 22: Lessons 37 and 38

Week 23: Lessons 39 and 40

Week 24: Exam Questions

Week 25: Lessons 41 and 42

Week 26: Lessons 43 and 44

Week 27: Lesson 45 and Catch Up

Week 28: Lessons 46 and 47

Week 29: Lessons 48 and 49

Week 30: Lessons 50 and 51

Week 31: Lessons 52 and 53

Week 32: Lesson 54 and Catch Up

Week 33: Lessons 55 and 56

Week 34: Lessons 57 and 58

Week 35: Lessons 59 and 60

Week 36: Exam Questions

Lesson 1

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or a sketchbook (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils
- Copy of pages 46–53 if desired

Give your student a bird field guide and ask him to find a house wren in it. Ask him what he notices about the wren from its picture. Explain that the wren in the book you will be reading this year knows a lot about birds and is quick to share what she knows.

Read together *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*, chapter 1, “Jenny Wren Arrives,” and ask for an oral narration. Let the students look at and color the picture of the house wren on page 24 of the *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or draw and color a house wren in their sketchbooks, using the bird field guide for reference. Jot down in the margins of that page any notes about the wren’s habits that they discovered from the chapter. (The written notes can be optional for younger students but should be encouraged for older ones.)

Lesson 2

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or a sketchbook (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils

Ask the students what they recall from last time’s reading about why many birds don’t stay in the Old Orchard all year long and what they remember about wrens. Remind students that when they left off last time, Jenny Wren was just going to go look at her old house to see if it was fit to live in. (If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, remind the children to listen carefully for where each bird that Peter meets lives and builds its nest.)

Read together *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*, chapter 2, “The Old Orchard Bully,” and ask for an oral narration. Help students use the field guide to find the English sparrow. (They will discover that it is also called the house sparrow.) Let the students look at and color the picture of the house sparrow on page 23 of the *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or draw and color a house sparrow in their sketchbooks, using the bird field guide for reference. Jot down in the margins of that page any notes about the house sparrow’s habits that they discovered from the chapter.

Notes

Teaching Tip: If you want to include the “Bird Habitats in the World of Thornton Burgess” feature (see page 45), introduce that idea to your students and write the house wren on the appropriate page.

Teaching Tip: Make sure the students drawing the birds in a sketchbook label their drawings.

Teaching Tip: For more on the English sparrow, see pages 83–86 in *The Handbook of Nature Study*.

Nature Study Idea: Make a copy of pages 38–41 and use it to compile a master list of all the birds you and your children see during this study. You might put the list on a clipboard and keep it beside a large window or in your Nature Study bag. Take it along when you go to a park or on vacation, so you can keep track of the birds you see in those places too.

Notes

Teaching Tip: For more on the song sparrow, see pages 89–91 in *The Handbook of Nature Study*.

Teaching Tip: For more on the chipping sparrow, see pages 86–89 in *The Handbook of Nature Study*.

Nature Study Idea: Do an Internet search or use a bird app to listen to the song of Sweetvoice, the vesper sparrow. A great website for bird study is <http://www.allaboutbirds.org>

If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, record the English sparrow, or house sparrow, on the appropriate page.

Lesson 3

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or a sketchbook (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils

Ask students what they recall about Bully the English Sparrow, or house sparrow, from last time's reading. Explain that in today's reading they will discover what the wrens did for a house and hear about a couple of other sparrows that Jenny likes much better than Bully. (If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, remind the children to listen carefully for where each bird that Peter meets lives and builds its nest.)

Read together *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*, chapter 3, "Jenny Has a Good Word for Some Sparrows," and ask for an oral narration. Encourage students to look in the field guide to see the difference between the four kinds of sparrows they have met so far: house, song, whitethroat, and fox. Let the students look at and color the picture of the song sparrow on page 38 of the *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or draw and color any of the sparrows mentioned in their sketchbooks, using the bird field guide for reference. Jot down in the margins of that page any notes about the applicable sparrow's habits that they discovered from the chapter.

If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, record the song sparrow, white-throated sparrow, and fox sparrow on the appropriate page(s).

Lesson 4

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or a sketchbook (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils

Ask students what they recall from last time's reading about some sparrows that Jenny Wren likes. See what they can remember about the song sparrow, the white-throated sparrow, and the fox sparrow. Explain that today they will find out about the rest of the large sparrow family.

Read together *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*, chapter 4, “Chippy, Sweetvoice, and Dotty,” and ask for an oral narration. Let the students look at and color the picture of the chipping sparrow on page 14 of the *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or draw and color any of the sparrows mentioned in their sketchbooks, using the bird field guide for reference. Jot down in the margins of that page any notes about the applicable sparrow’s habits that they discovered from the chapter.

If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, record the chipping sparrow, vesper sparrow, and tree sparrow on the appropriate page(s).

Lesson 5

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or a sketchbook (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils

Ask students what they recall about the large family of sparrows. Explain that today they will read about two birds that they probably see just as often as sparrows. Encourage them to listen for things they don’t already know about those two birds.

Read together *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*, chapter 5, “Peter Learns Something He Hadn’t Guessed,” and ask for an oral narration. Let the students look at and color the pictures of the Eastern bluebird on page 4 and the robin on page 36 of the *Fifty Favorite Birds* coloring book or draw and color an Eastern bluebird in their sketchbooks, using the bird field guide for reference. Jot down in the margins of those pages any notes about the bluebird’s or robin’s habits that they discovered from the chapter.

If you are doing the Bird Habitats exercise, record the bluebird and the robin on the appropriate page(s).

Lesson 6

Materials Needed

- *The Burgess Bird Book for Children*
- Bird Field Guide
- Sketchbook (optional)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor pencils (optional)

Ask students what they recall from last time’s reading about the bluebird

Notes

Teaching Tip: For more on the robin and the bluebird, see pages 57–65 in *The Handbook of Nature Study*.

Teaching Tip: You will color the wood thrush on page 36 in Lesson 46.

Teaching Tip: A photograph of young phoebes can be seen on page 27 in *The Handbook of Nature Study*.