

# Catholic Homeschool Podcast

Humor in Your Homeschool – With Susie Lloyd

Do you take yourself a little bit too seriously? I know how it is. Homeschooling is tough and some of those days you feel like the weight of the world is on your shoulders. Well, I'm here to tell you that we need to add a little bit of humor and I found just the person to teach us that. Susie Lloyd is my next guest on the Catholic Homeschool podcast.

Welcome to the Catholic Homeschool podcast and I am your host Paola Ciskanik, I am so happy to have you join me today. I get to have a nice cozy fireside chat and if you'll notice there is no fire, but then I mentioned that because today it's all about humor. Yes. Humor. One of those gifts from God and I am pleased as anything to be able to introduce you all.

And many of you already know her Susie Lloyd, I'm going to begin with her bio so we can get that out of the way super quick. So, Susie Lloyd is a Catholic Homeschooler from Pennsylvania with 27 years of homeschooling experience and still homeschooling. She is married with 7 children and 12 grandchildren so far. Yay. Love that. She helps new and struggling homeschoolers through personal consulting services, such a blessing to those families. I am sure. And homeschoolers also enjoy her award-winning humor books, her articles, her practical conference talks. So, without further ado, welcome Susie, how are you today?

*Hey Paola! Great to see you. Thanks for having me.*

Oh my gosh. Thank you for saying yes. So, when we first talked about this, you know, I've known Susie years ago from homeschool and because she really was one of those people I had heard at conferences when I was homeschooling, but more importantly, I really think it was this sense of lighten up Paola. You know what I mean? Like there are other people out there homeschooling. It isn't all doom and hardness. There are mothers out there who are struggling, and Susie has this gift of articulating that in such a beautiful way.

I wanted to share that with our audience, Susie. So how about you tell us a little bit about yourself, you know, your little homeschool journey to bring us up to date what you're doing today, and then we'll dive into humor.

*Well, the thing about me is, you know, I think I started writing the books at a time when I was shut in days at a time. I think we had one car and it was, it was somewhere else like with my husband at work and the kids were little and you know, come winter you'd never go anywhere. And so, you know, you get like, this is really doesn't seem very ideal, you know, and plus, nobody realizes this, but growing up, I was definitely not a genius. I was a C student, I'm just going to put it out there and it's like, you know, what have I signed up for? I'm in over my head. And you've gotta find the funny in that. And, and it is funny, you know, it is funny that God puts you in a certain place and says, no, no, no, you're going to do this. And how I'm going to prove that it's not about human pride is I'm going to pick you.*

Absolutely. I do. You know, two things. I think, we were talking earlier today about humor and in terms of, for all of us... we need to tap into this part of us. That is our saving grace, you know? And like you said, God picked you. He called you. So, what would you say... And we're gonna dive into that advice but tell me a little bit about that journey through the years.

So, if people don't know, show up the books, I'm going to have you show, Susie has written three books and even the titles alone are funny. So go ahead.

*Is this coming up backwards?*

No, it's showing up perfect.

*This is the one that won a Catholic press award, and it's the first one that people usually know, this one, **Please Don't Drink the Holy Water**. I'll put this one back. And now we have 7 kids, but this is my favorite one and it's called, **Bless Me, Father For, I Have Kids**. So, these are just funny stories. Like, I don't know if anybody reads Erma Bombeck anymore, or Dave Barry. I was inspired by them as a writer to tell my story... but it's not my story only and that's why the books are popular. It's a universal experience of being home and committing yourself, but they're cheerful, you know, it's not just about like the things that go wrong. It's about the things that go wrong and then maybe you lose the battle, but you win the war. You know?*

So, one of those things that we can really all relate to is a rosary time, like praying for us. What was that like for your family?

*Well, that's in the first book and that's one of the favorite chapters, because you know, you have these dreams of all this piety that you're going to have in your*

*family. And then when you kneel down to, to really do it, it just comes on unraveled, you know, and, and everybody's distracted. And the little baby is like doing all this clowning around and everybody's laughing.*

*And you know, I had a lady, and the funny thing is, you write this stuff, and you get the odd person who takes it seriously. I had a lady offered to send me some tapes to get the kids to pay attention better. I mean, it was, this is how old I am. I'm calling them tapes, but it was tapes. But you know, even that is funny!*

It is funny. It is, you know... Thank you for saying that because, I think that as I was going through the years, Susie, I don't know about you, but I took myself way too seriously at the beginning, you know? That could have easily been turned into a total confidence drain. You know, somebody is like, oh gosh, I really messed up. I don't know how to do rosary with my kids.

*Well, I still take myself too seriously. And no, I mean because I am tired. I've been doing it for 27 years. And you know, there are days when I just wish everybody would just obey me perfectly. And you know, you get down into a slump feeling like, you know, everybody takes me for granted... but that's just fatigue. That's not necessarily indicative of your real way of handling things. It's just fatigue.*

*And so, what I do is I always plan some way out. You know? So, you go to your happy place, and you say, you know, what is the opposite of this? And for me, it's always the same thing: silly fun.*

*I once invited our associate pastor over when I was first getting to know him. I said, "Do you want to come over on Friday night for some silly fun?" And he goes, "I love silly fun." Silly fun is stuff like Pictionary it's stuff like, you know, goofy parlor games where everybody's screaming like spoons. And some of our best memories are like playing these silly games with our family or our friends, or just, you need to sort of let the wind come in and push all that serious, hard work out just to release it all, you know? Yeah.*

Yeah. I know that, talking about the things that, you know, you use, silly fun and inviting your pastor. Our homeschool life kind of extends to more than just our day to day homeschool. Doesn't it? And I think in many ways, we kind of like have this, you know, label on us that when God blesses you with multiple children and you decide to take this heroic path of homeschooling, I don't know about you, but I would get these remarks. "You must be a saint; you must be able to do all this." And you're like, you need to come to my house and see how unlike a saint...

*Well, sometimes I feel like I'm racking up purgatory time, you know, I'm not supposed to be, it's supposed to be the opposite and you should see my desk right now. So, you know, talk about what things are supposedly look like. You must be so organized; you must be so brilliant. You must be so... whatever. It's like... I should flip the camera around and let you see what's behind this computer. So, I'm like, okay, I gotta be on this podcast. Let me move everything out of the picture. You know, it's like, how do I hide the fact that this is my bedroom? And my office is in my room. You know? It's like, it's, you gotta be aware that there's a saying, I live by this, it is: "Don't judge the inside of your life by the outside of someone else's."*

Yeah, that's beautiful.

*That is. And again, like if you only could see what I'm surrounded by, like this package that I opened yesterday is here and, oh, a battery over here, like in front of me. Yeah. This is how it really is. And I think you have to kind of just be glad of it, you know, and okay with it and okay for people to know it.*

I know recently, I've been just a pondering again for myself, even just at this stage where, you know, theoretically my house should be clean because all my kids are basically launched out of the house... but it's still far from it. Now I'm left with all their leftovers from dorm life and my parents downsizing so it's still not neat. But it still is the ability for us to really be able to pause and reflect on what's really important, you know? And, and I think that having a sense of humor and having silly fun is part of that. Isn't that a gift from God? I mean, what does God say about humor? You know?

*I think you have to plan for the things that you need. And not just expect things to change, you know? And so, one thing that always made me happy too, was I've always written things down. I've always been a writer ever since I was a little kid, I was into it. I was thinking about writing and I had baby books for my kids and the kids enjoy them so much. They'll flop down and read all their old stories you know? Cause they're so funny.*

*And a lot of them, some of them ended up in my books, but some of them didn't, but that's just, it's fun to go back and revisit all those wonderful moments, you know? And even now I have two kids left at home and they're both teenagers. So, they're kind of past the goofy age when they're little, well, actually my son's still pretty goofy. He's so goofy. I was going to say, he's still goofy. They'll take home videos of each other. And he's like, making monkey noises, you know, it makes me laugh and, and reminds me of like when all the kids were little being silly, you know?*

*And now there's all these grandchildren and my daughter, Katie, she sends everybody on the family thread all the silly things her kids are doing. And especially the oldest one, who's like eight. And it's like going right back there, you know, to those days when, when we were, when we were living that way ourselves.*

*And I always said, even then, I knew it was the golden years. I wasn't sorry about it at all. Like, being with the little ones, I said, these are the golden years, Greg. And I knew it from that back then and we appreciated it.*

That is awesome. I remember my mom saying that to me too. She was like, "You know, Paola, you really need to savor these moments." Because I know that in the busy-ness of it... And then I think it's layered on it in the fact that again, we feel this extra responsibility because we're homeschooling, you know, God forbid that we do it wrong. We're gonna ruin our kids. There's this overlying feeling of that.

But she would always pause and just say to savor the moment, savor the moments.

*Well, you're going to do it wrong. You are going to do it wrong. That's something I tell my clients, you know, "What if something slips through the cracks?" And I'm like, something is going to. Okay. But it's not like the kids died. You know, the kids, you give them a good work ethic. Right?*

Ha-ha, the main goal is we just have to keep them alive?

*Yeah, they're not going to always have you there and they're gonna make it. They're gonna learn how to do what they gotta learn how to do. What you want to avoid is having everything slip through the cracks or having the most important things slip through the cracks.*

*So yeah, I've got an article on my website about how my kids never learned to speak German. And Greg is fluent in German! Fluent in German and was teaching German and was translator! And we lived abroad and the kids don't know German. And... it's one of my funny ones. It's called **The Homeschooling Husband, When Your Spouse Helps Teach Nichts.***

*And it's a good intention, but it doesn't happen. I wanted that so bad. And I speak a little German too! So, there's no excuse for this. Except it didn't happen because it just didn't work out. The schedules just didn't work, what can I say? I can't undo it.*

Yeah, and from this lofty position we can say with confidence and pass that on to those who are starting... It didn't matter. It wasn't supposed to happen, then it's no big deal.

*And then you can look at things you did achieve and... you know, one day it occurred to me. Okay. So, they don't know foreign language. All right. They, they muddled through in Latin, in college or whatever. But they do know a foreign language. Our kids, I figured it out, they know music. Because they all took some piano lessons and we've sung for years in this polyphonic choir. So, we sing all this Renaissance music and it's like, that is not a small thing. That is huge. And it may not be something you go out and leverage and market and whatever, but it's totally enriching your life. And it's like, you got to appreciate what you did do, you know?*

And music is an expression unlike anything else, you know what I mean? It's very mathematical and it's got all of these elements, the fact that you even did it as a family. Yeah. That's huge.

*And we use it in, in Mass. We go to the Latin Mass, and we sing there, and we've sung for lots of weddings and funerals. And it's enriched other people too, you know? And so, itself something that is a gift that we were given that we were able to give. We recently came back from Rome last October and we sang in Saint Mary Major for the 450th anniversary of the victory at Lepanto.*

*And I never, never knew that was gonna happen. That was just something that came along. We were Gifted this trip by God basically. And so, we did it, but it wasn't anything I planned. And so, God sometimes is just like here, you're not going to do this thing that YOU think is really important, but you're going to do this other thing that I think is really important. Yeah.*

Right. So, there's two things I've been hearing... One is I think a sense of openness to the moment, Susie, and the second is making memories.

*Absolutely. Because even now when we get together, if we want to pull some polyphony out and sing it, like we do on my birthday... So, I've been doing this thing where like, when I turned 50, I threw myself a big birthday party and it went all day and all night. And so, I did it again last summer when I turned 55, I was like, I'm doing it again. And then I was like, you know what, I'm doing this every year. And I catered it. I made all the food and I'm like, I'm having a big birthday party. I'm in July. So, you get good weather. And all that's required was that we sing. So, we had friends bring guitars and whatever, and we sang out on the back porch and then we did pull out some polyphony just out of our heads.*

*And we sang that. And it's like... that is my happy place, you know, just, yeah.*

Right. So, discovering your family's happy place is, is again a gift. But I think the other fact is that you've modeled that for your children in that same way, your children now you can see are going back.

And that was more important than checking off all the math lessons and getting German done and yeah...

*And some of them, they'll tell you, they don't know math. And I'm like, yeah, we did our math. I was never a math brain, but we did our math, and we were diligent about it. And I, for one, learned math while teaching math and I love math now. But especially cause it's so much easier to teach than writing, which is my real specialty. Math is not my specialty and it's way easier to teach. But anyway, so I love math because I finally get it after all these years, you know. But they're going to learn it on their kids. I mean, that's what they're going to do.*

*They're all gonna homeschool. That's what they've told me, which is another kind of amazing thing. It's like really? You mean I didn't wreck your brain that badly and you really want to do this thing? Okay!*

Right, exactly. So, I know that when you're in the thick of it and you're having a hard day, do you have any kind of tips in terms of just being able to lighten up a little bit for yourself? You know, for mom.

*Well, I always take a walk everyday no matter what the weather, unless it's icy on the ground. Then you're going to find me all over the road. But I think going outside has saved me over the years. And I remember the kids were really little, like I said, we had the one car and maybe it was somewhere else. And I decided, one year when they were very little, that no matter what I had to do, no matter how long it took to pack them into, their snow pants. And no matter how long we could stay out, even if it was only for like 20 minutes, they were going out and I was going out.*

*And that really does help. You need your daily dose of nature and sun and even wind just, you've got to go out of your four walls. Okay? That's the first thing every day. And that's something I think everybody can do. And the other thing is to plan to have go out with a friend that you really click with. I still do this. I was out last night with a friend. You know... you know so many people, right? So do I. I know so many people. but there are a few that you can just talk to about anything.*

*And then the conversation just trips along, it flows along. You want to keep those friendships alive because people, and I remember this too, you get in the thick of homeschooling and you don't have time for anybody. And that's a big mistake. So, you have to stop and say, "Okay, let me find a week, you know, we usually meet at Wegmans. I don't know if you know where that is... That's just a really nice grocery store that has a cafe in it. And then, you know, it's pretty easy place to sit. We just, we just sit there and watch the people go by and talk about whatever. And more importantly, laugh about everything. And these are women in my state and life, you know, that understand all the things I do.*

*And, and so those things are really important. So, make plans to have silly fun, have people over, play silly games, and write down the funny things that happen. Sometimes things that happen don't seem funny at the time. They're kind of awful...*

True. We always remember our family took this trip up to Vermont and it is one of the most memorable trips that we ever took. You know, because we live in Delaware, it's flat. My husband and I said, the kids need to see mountains. We drove up there. It's about 10, 15 hours. You know, several kids threw up on the way. It was miserable. So, we get up there, the key wasn't in the house. Then we get in the house, the heating wasn't working. And then we said, it starts raining. We're like, well, thank God it's not snowing. Then it started snowing! And we ended up in a motel somewhere near the Canadian border. Everybody remembers that trip and we can laugh our hearts out over that.

*That's what's in these books, by the way. I forgot to mention the third one really quick, I'll just mention it. It's called, **Yes, God**. And it's a funny book but it's got a serious point. Whereas the other ones are just funny books, but in this one I interviewed all these priests and sisters about how they were raised by their parents to be in the world, but not of it. And I just wanted to get parenting ideas from them. But anyway, those stories like your trip, yeah, that's what's in here because you know, things just don't go the way we want them to go. And that's how life's not boring.*

*Like I remember, one of the things I wrote down in one of the baby books was when we had Joey, Joey's the youngest and Melanie, she's just above him, two years older. She was bored one day, the kids were all doing school, Joey was napping, she was bored. Now this wasn't what I wanted her to do at the time... But she walked right up to his face while he was sleeping and she screamed, "Joey you can wake up now!" Which he did. You know, basically, "I need something to play with, get up!"*

We know the rule in the house was always, never wake a sleeping child, you know, no matter what.

*Well... You're getting your homeschooling done while the babies are asleep, because they're interfering with the rest of the time. So, you don't want to mess with that.*

Right. I think so much of what you're saying is in terms of a lifestyle and I think that's really what I wanted to, you know, pull us together to really be able to give that encouragement to moms. And I wanted to mention too that, again, the blessings that Susie is available for one-on-one coaching. Now maybe you could talk a little bit about that? You said you love it. And so yeah.

*Well, I do love it, and this is why... I'm an introvert. And I like to talk to people one-on-one and there are a lot of things I do in this career God plopped in my lap, which started out as a writing, a writing job and then several other writing jobs and then some books and then more writing jobs.*

*And that started a long time ago, like over 25 years ago when kids were little and anyway, but I did it while they were sleeping and you know, I got it done outside of the time that they needed me to do stuff with them. But anyway, that job led to, now you have to give talks and, as an introvert, it was like, "Oh great. Now I've got to learn how to do that."*

*So, I did that for a while and, you start to go, "What's my sweet spot?" My sweet spot is, is writing. Not so much speaking, although I can do it, but I love interviews like this. I like the back and forth. But I love consulting because I've done it for years. People would look me up in the white pages. They'd read my articles and look me up and then I'd just talk to them about their stuff. So, during COVID some of my regular columns ended because the magazines closed. Yeah. And the same thing after 9/11 actually, magazines really took a hit.*

Right.

*And so, I was like, "Oh, well... Hmm. My arm's falling off anyway." I have a pain in my arm from writing for a quarter century.*

Yeah. The joys of getting older, Susie.

*That, and just like too much with the mouse. And I feel like I got arthritis, you know, like God is like "Stop writing or your arm's gonna fall off."*

Or was it nursing? Nursing also...

*Yeah. And so, I'm like, maybe I'm meant to move on, and I'll still do some writing, but not as much, not as heavily, you know? And then so many people started homeschooling. That's the thing, COVID made writing jobs freeze up, but they also made people enter homeschooling that never really were going to do it before. And so, there's a whole generation of new people. We're in one niche group of people who are weird enough to have homeschooled.*

Right. We were closer to the pioneers at that point. I was just telling my son the other day; homeschoolers were few and far between. And I told my husband, I was like, "I'm not homeschooling. Those people are in a cult. Are you trying to get me in a cult, honey?" I even had those ideas back then. But now it's mainstream and you're right, everybody who had a little curiosity got a taste of pandemic school.

But now there's more and more people coming to homeschooling and I'm so grateful that you're going to be able to talk with them, Susie. So yes. So yeah, are you consulting now?

*I am. And I'm still writing, but I do like consulting because if I like... okay, how do I sum up this, this career? It's like... okay, well really, I'm a homeschooler. Okay? This is what I spent my day-to-day years of raising children doing. It doesn't pay. Then again, I've saved a ton of money doing it, but it's still basically what I would call my career. And these other things are off shoots of it. Writing funny books about homeschooling, or writing articles about it, or writing articles about the saints or Catholic life.*

*I've done a lot of great interviews with a lot of amazing Catholics, building support groups, I've done that for years. Like I co-founded our support network here local and co-founded our co-op and teach the other kids. So, I feel like homeschooling is my way of life and I've done it with our family but also with other families and I've traveled and met homeschoolers all over the place when I'm speaking. And so, it's only natural that I would do this now. Do consulting because it's like, what am I here for but to teach? Just to help one family at a time to succeed.*

*Because I really think someday, I hope this movement of homeschooling will be seen as a very important movement, culturally, at a time when the things that we relied on to support us fell through in so many ways. And they weren't there for us or were working against us in many ways. We had to build it.*

Yes. Homeschooling is definitely more natural than people realize. And very often we try to layer on aspects that are more that schoolies and that's where we get this, kind of, rocky road. And so, I think the other element that I heard you speaking about too, is a season in life. You know, I love how you were true to yourself in the sense that, writing is something you did from a kid. So, it doesn't mean like mommy's life is put on hold. You actually brought that into your family by doing stories for the kids? Oh my gosh, that's such a precious gift. We are creative beings, so those gifts... that's beautiful, Susie.

*Well, you're who you are. You are who you are, you know? And if you want to be your authentic self and you want to give your kids your real self and they are going to develop their own way. But yeah. So consulting is part of my season of life too, because I am down to two kids.*

Yeah. So good. So, before we wrap things up, because I'm going to ask you one final question... How can people reach you, Susie? If they want to do consulting, but also, they want to get copies of your books, which I strongly recommend. You know, have a hard day? Read a chapter.

*Yeah. Well, I have a website, [susielloyd.com](http://susielloyd.com). And you know, it's funny, Paola, because you were telling me, or somebody was telling me that I should shrink the website and make it just about consulting. And I know that's how you do things in the marketing world, but marketing is not my sweet spot. I don't like it. And I decided I don't care. I don't care. I'm a creator, that's it.*

*So, I decided to put my Catholic stuff back up. It's like, I've got all kinds of stuff on my website. I've got my consulting, my books, my Catholic articles and my homeschooling articles. And even some speaking stuff. It's all, it's all there because this is who I am.*

Yes. It's like your little calling card there. That's awesome. And it gives all the aspects of you. And that is a joy for people. Cause there are different stages. Like you said, those who may want the one-on-one consulting, but also just to hear your story and I know that you also have some ideas for people to form groups, support groups.

*Oh yeah.*

Yeah. That's something in the Catholic Homeschool Community we're doing is we're going to try to get a directory up for people to find people locally. So, I'm going to tap into you.

*Oh absolutely! I always do that for my new homeschoolers. I always help them find local people. And that's always number one. It's not what books do I get? No, meet the other homeschoolers, make friends, form a network. They're going to be there for you. You're going to be there for them. That's what you need. That's number one. Yeah.*

Yeah. So, as we wrap this up and we talk about humor and again, the gift of you naturally being a funny person and wanting to inject silliness into your life. Thank you. You know because God has called us to enjoy. And laughter is one of those beautiful gifts he gives us. So, any parting words in terms of... how about when people get worried, you know, the outside world comments on your choice to homeschool? Anything that you...

*Well, the outside world is a little bit more friendly to homeschooling now than it was when we started. Right. They just thought you were whacked back then. Most people are okay with it, except your relatives might not be. So, some parting words about, let's just say your relatives, is you have to have some patience for this. Just keep doing what you're doing and, in a decade, or so... You can wait, someone on your relative's team will say, "Wow, I'm really impressed with how your kids turned out."*

*Because they'll say something to recognize that homeschooling was a good idea. Cause they will see, you know, God willing. I'm not, you're not doing it to get a pat on the back. I'm just saying it's gonna happen. It's happened to me. It has happened to a lot of people I know, where somebody stepped forward and said, "I'm glad that you did that."*

Yeah. Yeah. And that has happened to me, and I've witnessed it. And as you say... it isn't like something you're hoping or expecting or the reward of doing it... Right? It's the fact.

*And so, if someone's giving you a hard time, remember that's probably going to change. Especially if you don't go toe to toe with them and say, "No, no, no, I'm doing the smart thing, the right thing." Then you'll fail at it. Just do your thing and let it just prove itself.*

Be patient overtime. And know usually it does come from a desire to want the best for you. But we all of course don't know because it isn't perfect.

Well, I wanted to thank you again, Susie. It was so much fun for me to have you here on the podcast. Please. We need to do this again! We've got so many topics we can talk about. If anybody's interested in getting a hold of Susie Lloyd, again, [susielloyd.com](http://susielloyd.com). We will have the link below this video on our podcast and on all the channels that you can get podcasts as well as on the [CatholicHomeschool.online](http://CatholicHomeschool.online) website.

So I want to thank you. Thank you again, Susie. May God bless you.

*You're welcome and thank you for having me. This was fun.*

Great. God bless. God Bless everybody! Bye-bye!