



Teaching the Way of Love

Because humanity passes by way of the family...

June, 2014

Prayer of the Month

Dear Holy Spirit,
Be with us during this summer. Guide us and protect us. Lead and enlighten us. Bless us with time to play and pray. Prepare us to become what we are, a community of persons.
Amen.



Parenting Tip of the Month

Summertime, when the living is easy is a great time for you, as a parent, to connect as a family. Learn more about connecting as a family at;
<http://goo.gl/IEzO2k>



Summertime for Family Time

School is coming to an end and we're all looking forward to summer. What kind of summer will you and your family have together? Will you have a summer of re-creation that allows your family to recharge their energy and to focus on what is truly important? Will your summer just be filled with more busyness of a different kind? Or will you laze the summer away? The time to choose is now - before the transition from the school schedule to the summer schedule.

How can you make sure that you take advantage of the opportunity for true re-creation that summer offers? The key to using your summer months well is focus. Your family's summer can be awesome if you focus on building the community of your family, offering your family time for true leisure, and building your family's faith. Let's take a look at some practical strategies in each of these areas.

BUILD COMMUNITY

Make this summer a summer of community. Saint Pope John Paul II calls families to become a true "community of persons" whose members truly know each other, are involved in each other's lives, and who support each other. Summer gives you more time to connect as a family, but good use of this time needs to be planned. Plan your togetherness!

Plan Meal Times Together

The best gift you can give to your family this summer is the gift of time.

Meal times offer the best opportunities for families to truly get to know each other. Take advantage of that! Get into the habit of sharing family meals together on a regular basis. You might find that the habit helps you sustain the family meal once schedules become more difficult.

Encourage Deep Conversation

Summer schedules tend to be a bit more relaxed and fluid which means there is more time to chill and enter into deeper and more meaningful conversations. Encourage your family members to talk about their hopes and their fears about the year ahead. Discuss what kind of person each person is becoming - their strengths and weaknesses. Encourage them to support each other—and to deepen the trust, intimacy, commitment and love for one another.

Extend the Community Building

The wisdom, love and support of extended family is very important. Don't forget to nurture this part of your family as well. Drop in and visit your extended family. Let the cousins play with one another as the parents reminisce about the good old days.

Parenting with the Heart of Christ

TIME FOR TRUE LEISURE

Just as the gift of time is the best thing for building the relationship of your family, so it is also the best thing for rejuvenating the life and energy of everyone within your family. Take the time to remember that we are human beings, not human doings.

Just Be Together

Too many families focus their summers on doing - on cramming in as many experiences as possible. But these experiences don't do nearly as much to build family and community as taking the time to just *be* together. There is time for doing, but there must also be time for being. It is a mistake to be so busy that you end up spending your time alone even while you're together. Instead of scheduling every moment of the next 10 weeks with a variety of activities, consider booking time for nothingness. Permit yourself to sit down and daydream as a family or watch the grass grow with a glass of lemonade in your hand. When you are talking, relating, and spending comfortable times of silence together, you're truly sharing time together.

The Family Vacation

The tradition of the family vacation is another great opportunity for building true leisure. Of course, for it to be true leisure it can't be hectic and laden with work. But neither should it be seen as only relaxation. It is important to spend time to just "be" together, but families should also make efforts to use vacation time to engage the spirit and the mind. What is your family interested in? Would they enjoy a historical vacation? Maybe they'd be interested in going someplace to learn about marine life? Find a common interest and go exploring!

Mini-Vacations

Don't have time for an extended vacation? True leisure can also take place in the form of mini-vacations. Have a backyard barbecue. Go to a community event together. Read a summer classic as a family (Huckleberry Finn anyone?) Look for ways to spend time together serving others.

FOCUS ON YOUR FAITH

Too many Catholics see summer as a time to take a vacation from the life of the Church. Unfortunately this often also means taking a break from God. This is a big mistake. Instead of replacing Mass with a round of golf or a few extra winks of sleep, try to expand your faith practices in the following ways.

Make Sunday Mass a Priority

Summer is a great time to go to Mass at other parishes. If you are visiting relatives or on vacation, join in their Eucharistic feast. To find out mass times at any parish in the world visit www.masstimes.org.

Visit the Shrines of Wisconsin

Why not make a day trip to one of the Shrines of WI? There are eight wonderful holy places located in nearly every region of the dairy state. Each has a wonderful story to tell about God's grace and mercy. To find out more about the Shrines of Wisconsin visit www.catholicshrines.net/states/wi100.htm.

Pray with and For Each Other

No matter where your family goes this summer, take the power of prayer with you. Don't be shy in asking God to bless you when you are traveling or when you are sitting in your backyard playing bocce ball. Give God a shout out of praise after each fun activity. Remember to thank Him for giving you more time to gather as a family. After all, summer vacation is a gift from Him to you.

Following these recommendations can help you prepare your children to really learn and develop during their time in school. But this is just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit www.twl4parents.com for more strategies for helping your children become the best they can be. And for the best systematic approach to parenting, consider purchasing the Teaching the Way of Love program, which can be found at the same website.

This article series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, authors of the Teaching the Way of Love home study series for parents. Find out more at www.twl4parents.com/teaching-the-way-of-love.