

*Raise Them
Well*

*Spiritual
Maturity*



Teaching the Way of Love

because humanity passes by way of the family . . .

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PLEASE PRAY
THAT

- Moms and Dads will waste time with their children.
- Parents will provide their children with joy, safety, and security.
- Parents will love their children in the same way that God does; selflessly, consistently, unconditionally.
- Parents will show their children the joy they experience by knowing, loving and serving God.
- Families will cultivate deep friendships within their extended family.
- Parents will make time to pray daily with and for their children.
- No child (or parent) will ever find themselves beyond God's love and mercy.
- Families will desire to have holy homes.

Expand Your Faith This Summer - Take a Break from School NOT God

Summer vacation has finally arrived and I bet you are giddy with excitement that your evenings will be free from homework, practice spelling tests and hours of reading assignments. School is out and you have 10 weeks to enjoy a slower pace of life with your kids.

As the Bible reminds us in Ecclesiastes Chapter 3, *there is an appointed time for everything* and that there is *a time to enjoy the good of one's toil* (verses 1, 14). When you read this, doesn't it almost seem as if God wants us to kick it back a few notches, relish in less structure and get comfortable with downtime? It certainly does to me.

Summer affords you a longer stretch of time to play and enjoy activities with your family and friends. But, have you ever considered that it also affords you more time to be with God and deepen your relationship with Him? Summer can shape us into the people that God wants us to be. It can be a time that helps us deal with the stress and chaos because we take the time to rest in God, to be with God and to recognize all of the gifts that He daily provides us.



God gives us the season of summer to show us that He is good and can make everything beautiful in its own time. The question everyone needs to ask themselves is, "Am I willing to invite God to capture my heart and expand my faith before the season of Fall rolls around?"

As you contemplate this question, remember that summer days are longer. The sun wakes you up far earlier than it does in any other season. As long as you are

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awake, why not start your day by greeting God and sharing a short prayer with Him? The sun also sets much later in summer which allows you more time to reflect at day's end. Why not share a portion of your evening with God and tell him about your worries and struggles or ask Him to forgive you when that is needed?

Summer calendars are typically less booked which means you have more time to engage in activities that you normally choose to delay. Might it be possible to schedule time for the Sacrament of Reconciliation or go to Adoration? (You could even invite family members to join you.)

Many people like to find a good read for the summer. Instead of diving into a novel about human love, consider reading something that deepens your understanding about Divine love. There are many great books that explore Catholic spirituality!

Summer might also be a time for travel. Take a rosary with you and recite it with your traveling companions. And, as you travel, consider including visits to various shrines and missions that you pass by.

Finally, every week during the summer months includes a Sunday; the day that we are called to worship God in community. Whatever you do, keep your obligation and attend Mass each and every week. Never let a sporting activity or a vacation derail your opportunity to be with God and your fellow Catholics. (Remember to bring the entire family with you!)

Fill Your Summer with God's Spirit

Summer is NOT the time to take a break from God. Rather, summer makes it easier to share time with God because you have more unscheduled time to be with Him.

1. Pray daily—both as a parent and as a family. This can be done formally or informally.
2. Spend more time around the table eating and talking. Don't rush your time together.
3. Celebrate rituals and holy days like 4th of July and the Feast of the Assumption (Aug. 15th).
Make both of these BIG deals this summer.
4. Pick a spiritual book to read. You might even do this as a family.
5. Limit your media by spending more time enjoying the out-of-doors. Replacing video gaming with baseball, softball, soccer, fishing, biking, kite flying, swimming, hiking, picnics...
6. Worship together with other families each week by attending Mass and regular reception of the Sacraments. Sundays do happen in the summer and God wants to see you at His house.
7. Check in with your neighbors. Does anyone need help with their lawn care or assistance with pet care? How can you serve your neighbors this summer?

This challenge is just a small part of good Catholic parenting. Visit www.twl4parents.com for more strategies that will help you become the best parent you 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.