

NEWSLETTER

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VACATION, RECESSION STYLE

Millions of families have been affected by the economic crisis. Parents are losing jobs, health benefits, homes, funds for their children's college education, dreams of retirement in the sun.

Everybody I know is cutting back on spending. That includes summer vacation.

What is a vacation? My dictionary says, "A period of time devoted to pleasure, rest, or relaxationa holiday." The word, deriving from Latin, "to be empty, at leisure" implies freedom from occupation. But the best part of the definition is that it means a family can BE TOGETHER. The kids are out of a school, the parents are not working. It doesn't mean you have to be at a resort or a theme park.

The challenge this summer is to find pleasure, rest, and relaxation for the family without spending money especially money you don't have or should be put to a better use.

If you ask kids what they want their answer is more time with their parents. But they add that they want their parents to be RELAXED and having fun with them instead of always thinking about work or errands.

Suggestion: Design your own vacation week at home. Get plenty of rest--no alarm clocks needed. Relax, put worries aside. Find unique, family-centered ways to be together. Be creative: a picnic in the back yard, a surprise trip to a nearby tourist attraction or museum. Rent movies complete with your own home-made popcorn shaken with M and Ms (that was how my chocoholic daughter liked it). Get out the board games. Do fun work on a project together like making your own Christmas cards or organizing the photos in albums or on the computer. Get pleasure out of being together and relaxed, unpressured..

Involve the children in designing this special stay-at-home-vacation week. Maybe have each child plan one day. Also get pleasure out of helping others. Look through the kitchen cabinets and make a family trip to the local food bank.

You might all like this concept so much that you will continue Family Day once a week or month after everybody is back at school or work.

By the way, if you were planning a trip that you have to cancel, tell the children why. Explain that life is about making choices and spending money/getting in debt is not a good choice. Yes they will be disappointed but will take it better than if you make fail to explain the truth. Children need honesty--even a painful honesty-- so they know they can trust you.