

“HOME INVASION”

As this school year comes to an end and summer vacation begins, most families will have the blessing of spending more time together. Throughout the school year we are in a busy routine and summer brings the opportunity to be more spontaneous in our activities. There is much out there to do. What will you choose or what will you permit?

Some of you may be familiar with the book, Home Invasion by Rebecca Hagelin. In her writings Hagelin discusses the struggles that we have in the world today in preserving our children's childhood as a place of innocence and in helping our teens to rise above the culture that desires to deprive them of their character and integrity. “In the 1960s there began to be a steady removal of God and His absolutes from the public square. As a nation we forgot, as President Lincoln once said when he quoted the Bible, that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” says Hagelin. “Our country permits Hollywood to put almost anything in a movie and still call it PG-13. Television's moral decline in programming and advertising; the rise of DVD players, VCR's, and the fall of ratings standards; and the ease of accessing the Internet make these media outlets the most dangerous. Many a parent who has carefully chosen a good program for the family to watch together must dive repeatedly for the remote control when an ad for, say, an R-rated movie or specific product comes up,” she adds.

The Kaiser Family Foundation states that children between the ages of two and seven watch TV without their parents present 81% of the time. Once they're over age eight, kids watch without a parent 95 % of the time. Movie critic and national radio host Michael Medved says visual imagery is a problem for everyone, but especially growing children who are watching TV alone. “Clicking on the remote control leaves children's impressionable minds open to any scene an advertiser or director wants to flash on the screen, and open any belief system that will titillate an audience enough to increase profits,” Medved says.

Throughout the challenges of raising moral kids in an immoral, sexually charged world, the best part of it all are the kids themselves. Children truly do want you and time with you more than the things you give them. And, Hagelin reminds us, “They want limits. They want borders. They want a clear sense of right and wrong. They're feeling around for those protective walls, for the steady, dependable standards they can count on in life. They will learn about the world soon enough. But, if when that time comes, they're prepared to make proper moral judgments – the judgments you've helped them learn to make - then you've succeeded in the most important job in the world: parenting.”

With that being said, what sort of activities will be a part of your “home invasion” during this summer of spontaneity and choices? I pray they will be activities that will enrich your relationships with your children. Talk with them; spend true family time doing the simplest of things in life. Look them in the eyes and hear and listen to what they have to say. Throughout my years of motherhood my mother periodically said this little poem as a reminder to me, and I believe it to be very true and rewarding:

*Listen dear parents, whatever you do,
Listen to your children when they speak to you,
and one day they will listen back to you.*

Author unknown

May you have a blessed and joyous summer with those you love!

In His Service,

Celeste L. Stevenson
Administrator