

Enjoying Family Relationships

We would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a joyful, peaceful Christmas and a happy, restful and safe holiday.

We so look forward to the holidays, but in reality it can be a crazy, stressful and overwhelmingly busy time. It can be tiring, lonely, financially difficult and, for many, emotionally painful. We have members of our own school community who are experiencing or have experienced loss and grief, relationship breakdowns, terminal and chronic illness, separation from loved ones, job loss and hardship and our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

One of the biggest challenges at this time of the year is to keep focus on the really important things, namely, our relationships with each other. Gift your children with your time. It is the greatest thing. Spend precious time playing with them, relaxing with them, reading to them and letting them know how you love them. Every moment spent with your child is an investment in your relationship with them. Where possible engage them in the preparations for Christmas. Let them make cards and decorations, stir the pudding mix, decorate the Christmas biscuits, wrap the present for Nanna or write the gift tags. This can be a challenge when you are pushed for time and want everything to be “just so”, but being involved enhances your child’s sense of belonging and connectedness to the family. It also builds self-esteem and fosters responsibility.

Christmas is the perfect opportunity to foster in your children the joy of giving. Let them choose a gift to take in to the Giving Tree, your church or local charity. Allow them to use their own money if they suggest it. If not a gift, an act of kindness; visit an elderly relative or bake a cake for a neighbour. The act of giving helps your child find meaning and value in Christmas. It promotes happiness and helps your child to feel good about themselves.

Make a special effort to be “in the present moment” with your family from time to time. This means trying to enjoy the time you spend together without racing ahead in your mind to the next 5 or so tasks you need to complete before the day is out. Meal times are a perfect time to practice this. Slow down when you can (and slow down when you can’t, because that’s when you really need to.)

The holidays are also the perfect time to practise the things we’ve talked about during the year; catching the children out being good, trying not to sweat the small stuff with your moody teenagers, practising forgiveness and kindness, and performing those rituals and traditions together. Model the behaviours and the Christmas spirit you most want to see emulated in your children, for they will take your lead. Laugh a lot and love more.

Finally, thank you from us for your support and feedback throughout the year. We hope you have found our articles useful and of interest, and we look forward to continuing our blog next year.

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