



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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SURVIVING THE SUMMER

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52

By now more than a few parents are wondering how they are going to survive the summer with kids out of school, especially single moms who are challenged by the extra amount of time which kids have. You can't always afford to ship them off to an expensive camp. Neither can you quit work and stay home. But there are some things you can do which may make the summer more of an adventure than a challenge. The following survival tips will help you keep your sanity and even turn a summer which can be a challenge into a good memory for both you and your offspring.

Survival tip #1: Read. Turn off the computer, the TV. Discover books. "Oh, so there is a library in your town. Never been there! Check it out and take your kids." OK, they don't like to read. How about some incentive--so much money for every book, something special for every ten? Ask the librarian for suggestions; but I'd recommend some of the old classics such as *Tom Sawyer*, *Kidnapped*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, even *National Geographic*. You might enjoy them yourself.

Survival tip #2: Explore. Museums, historical sites, even scenic locations, such as parks, beaches, mountains, and--yes, caves--are great. Get out your walking shoes and start moving. Do it together.

Survival tip #3: Invent. Cook, sew, build, experiment. Encourage some small-fry business ventures. Summer is a good time to teach simple principles of business, namely the harder you work, the more you make.

Survival tip #4: Travel. Go somewhere you've never been before. Your kids don't like that idea? How about asking them where they would like to go, but have some ideas of your own before you launch this conversation. Get a calendar and plan ahead.

Survival tip #5: Learn. Summer school isn't reformatory time. Learning new skills or improving a weak area can put your youngster ahead next year. Then focus on spiritual growth as well. Find out what your church has to offer. Camps and conferences can be life-changing! Sure, they cost money, but so does a counselor when your youngster gets into trouble. You might want to hit up dad for the money. It's amazing how softhearted grandparents can be at times.

Survival tip #6: Play. Life is pretty serious, even for kids, so there's nothing wrong in having some fun. But do it as a family. Take in a ball game, but even better, round up the neighborhood kids and do weekly sandlot games yourself.

Survival tip #7: Work. Yes, I understand. Your kids don't like to work. Neither did you when you were a youngster. Blame it on a defective gene on the other side of the family, but the truth is that work is not dirty. Learning to carry responsibility is one of the most important lessons a kid can learn. But work with him, teach him, show him, be patient when he messes things up, but don't give up.

Survival tip #8: Walk. Amazingly, walking can be fun. It also gives you one-on-one time apart from your schedule, and the noise of the TV. It's great therapy.

Survival tip #9: Invest in others. As a family, paint an elderly widow's house, or put a roof on the church. Reach out and do something for someone else.

Survival tip #10: Touch God together. Having time together--whether you are on vacation or just break schedule--is a good time to talk, to pray, and to work through problems and situations together. Study a book of the Bible, read a spiritual book and discuss it. Take time on that backpack to focus on the beauty of what God has wrought, and as you build a fire and watch the stars, listen to your kids.

You can survive the summer and make it a great memory.

Resource reading: Luke 2:41-52