



JULY 1, 2014

## SUMMER LEARNING

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, childcare provider, or family ministry professional, summer is a fabulous opportunity for summer learning for the kids and youth that you know and love.

But don't kids need a break from school? Aren't they burned out from the rigors of the school year? Let me be clear: this is not the time for something that looks exactly like their classroom at school.

Current research should get our attention: kids pay an enormous price if they do not use their skills or continue to learn during the summer months. Kids who take a "vacation" from all learning lose three months of what they learned during the school year. That means that they only learn and consolidate six months worth of learning in each calendar year and they begin the next school year behind their peers who enjoy the opportunities to learn during the summer.

Summer is the perfect time to continue practicing skills, to refresh their knowledge, to learn something new that intrigues them, and to share what they have learned with others. You know the old adage: If you want to really learn something, teach it!

So, what is available?

- Summer school is offered by most school districts, and not just for students whose skills are lagging. Learning is often more creative and engaging.
- Summer programs are offered in community education, at the parks, by day camps, and through science, art, and history museums.
- Libraries often offer summer reading programs and story hours. Make a weekly date to go to your library, check out books, and pursue a new topic.
- Have older children read to younger ones.
- See what the churches in your area offer as



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COACHING!  
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Fall programming? This is the perfect opportunity to call or email Marilyn

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### SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHURCH PROFESSIONALS

Here is time and opportunities to build new skills and try new things. This summer,

- Do a "pilot project," a short term trial for an idea you've wanted to try. Congregations resist change, but embrace "pilot projects!" If it works, your congregation will proudly announce, "This is the way we do ministry here!" If it doesn't work, no problem, since you have a short run planned.
- Network with others in your field about "best practices."

Do coffee, face-to-face, or melt the miles with time on Skype.

- Read. You know you've been meaning to read that new book that you ordered last fall. Now is your time.
- Have conversations with your teachers, small group leaders, kids, youth, and parents about what worked during the last school year, what they'd love to have available next year, and what they believe God is calling your ministry to do next.
- Build your year's calendar. Put in all of the big events, school vacation times, schedule for each week. Don't forget to plan for previewing curriculum, ordering materials, planning for training, and registration. Also build in time to thank and appreciate your volunteers and have them evaluate your program.
- Make time for some restorative Sabbath practice. Rest in God's presence. Bathe your ministry in prayer.

vacation Bible school, sports or music camps, day camps, or overnight camps.

- Learn a new skill from a friend or neighbor. Carpentry. Quilting. Cooking. Gardening. Foreign language. Welding. Learn to play a musical instrument.
- Interview grandparents and learn their stories.
- Take family field trips to parks, the zoo, historical places, museums, lakes, or other places of interest.
- In our area, libraries have free museum passes available.
- Consider cooking and reading a recipe as a math challenge, as you cut the recipe in half or double it, learn fractions, and follow directions.
- Teach kids the life skills of cleaning and laundry.
- Have kids do a lemonade stand or put on a play. Charge for it. Decide to what cause you will contribute the proceeds.
- Learning together is an incredible gift. Adults model the value of being a lifelong learner.
- Remember, play is a powerful way in which children learn.
- All of life offers an opportunity to learn, if only we spend a few minutes every evening with our kids debriefing what we have learned that day!
- Create a scrapbook of pictures, stories, snapshots, and memorabilia of what you have learned during the summer.

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Need some help planning your summer ministry? Marilyn is available for personal coaching.

[EMAIL](#)

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