

241 Podcast, Family Activities – Camp Fires and Hikes

Let's continue discussing family activities this morning. This past weekend, Sandi and I had the pleasure of hosting our granddaughters at our cabin in the mountains. We paddled around a lake, played at the beach, and made camp fires in the evening where we roasted marshmallows and made s'mores.

Let's Pray

Father, thank you for family. Thank you for the benefits to the children as well as the benefits to adults that you've created when you designed family. In Jesus name, Amen.

Camp Fires

A great family activity and about as easy as you can get is making campfires. The first night of our weekend getaway, it rained. We built a fire inside in our fireplace. There's something so edifying, soothing, and calming about having a fire in the fireplace. I like the heat, I like watching it. I have a friend who calls a fire a "thinking man's TV."

Not only is a fire peaceful and a great place to gather your thoughts, fires have attracted and encouraged fellowship for millenia. It is easy to envision days gone by, before electricity, hunters and frontiersmen, sitting around a campfire. In many parts of the world, fires are still a popular meeting place.

I have a friend who serves as missionary in Africa, and he uses the format of men gathered around a fire to spread the gospel. The tribe he was working with have herds of animals, and the shepherds wander around the country finding pasture and water. In the evening they gather around the communal fire to talk over the events of the day and connect with one another.

These men are great story tellers and travelers. Our friend, began sharing stories from Scripture, of Abraham, Jacob, David, etc. IN the morning, each man would move to a different location to care for his flock, and end up at a different fire the next night. When it was his turn to share, he would offer relate the story he had heard the previous night about Abraham, Jacob and the other saints. IN this way, the biblical narratives spread around these nomadic tribes.

Since storytelling was their way of communication, they were good at remembering the details and faithfully passing on what they heard, and it bore good fruit. The campfire is a special place where people come together at the end of the day, process, reflect, and discuss what they've learned.

Sadly, in our modern culture, we need to make an effort to get away from the electronics and have a campfire either in your house or your backyard. Nowadays if

you don't even have a place for building a fire, you can buy a piece of metal with a little screen over it at the Home Depot and voila, a fire pit!

When our boys were younger, Sandi and I got the idea of having an indoor camp out. I think the boys were reading books about horses and cowboys and we decided to reenact it. We used the fireplace to make a little fire, made a little tent by nailing a string into the mantle, and draping put a blanket over it. The boys got their sleeping bags, and Sandi brought out a dinner of baked beans and hot dogs in a little red wagon. We sat around on the floor pretending we were cowboys out on the prairie. What a special memory!

You don't need to have a lot of preparation to have a fire. You just need wood, heat, oxygen, and maybe a couple chairs. I met one family that had a fire every week which they called "Friday fires." And everybody looked forward to this night, sitting around the campfire, and processing life together.

Hiking

We also take hikes. During this pandemic, Johnny, Sandi, and I have been taking more hikes at local parks and nature trails. There is something special about getting outside. When our kids were younger, and we made a plan for a hike, our boys would come alive when we were outside.

If you have boys, you may think that they are always "alive" but some of our sons were what I would call "sedentary." They would rather sit in the house and read books or play board games. To encourage them to be outside, one summer I made a rule that you weren't allowed to be in the house from 8 AM to 8 PM except for meals. As a result, they had a great summer because they learned to explore the woods near our house. They would build little forts, and carve stuff from sticks. It was a great summer. I am grateful that I was serious and intentional about getting them outside

Taking a hike is a wonderful way to be outdoors. Our family was together on Mother's Day hiking and I observed two different people on the trail with hand-carved hiking sticks. I wish I had done more hiking when our kids were younger, because walking has so many benefits, not only health-wise, but it also stimulates the brain.

I was talking to a family that has some kids with learning challenges. Hiking stimulated their brains while walking on uneven surfaces. I live in Pennsylvania, and while we have some nice trails, which are flat and perhaps covered with small gravel, we also have a lot of rocky trails. As the Appalachian Trail winds through our state in the Appalachian Mountains, it is littered with rocks. I've been told this section of the trail, is the most arduous, especially at the high elevations. It seems, these uneven trails have a hidden blessing of organizing the brain.

For this podcast, I did some research on the overall health benefits of walking. Besides burning calories and strengthening your heart, walking lowers your blood sugar, boosts your energy, improves your mood, and helps you to think creatively. I

think we can all agree that being outside, connects us with God's creation, as we hear the birds, observe the trees, look at cloud formations, and feel the wind. Maybe we should have a book entitled: "The Family that Walks Together, Talks Together" or something like that.

As we wrap up this episode, consider hiking and building campfires, two really simple activities, that can enhance your family. Some of my fondest memories of being a child were not in the everyday routines of going to school, after school clubs and sports, but our humble family camping trips. I enjoyed sleeping in a tent, having a campfire, going for hikes, being outside, eating meals on a picnic table, cooking meals over a Coleman stove. Those are good memories. It's those kinds of memories that leave a lasting impression on kids.

though that your kids, I'm just telling you, when they get in their twenties, you'll be sitting around, they'll say, "Do you remember this time when we went camping when the tornado came?" You're building memories, and I think that it's part of the Moore chemistry. You can call yourselves the "disaster family" or something.

All of our camping experiences were not idyllic but they became a part of our family legacy. The we were first embarking on camping trips for our annual vacation, we should have been called the "Drought Breakers." It would have been sunny and dry for weeks, until the Demmes pitched their little pup tents with the black plastic on clotheslines covering the kitchen area. It would rain all weekend. However we laughed and reminisced for a generation about those experiences.

Let's close in prayer.

Thank you, Father, for wonderful experiences. Thank you for camping, as well as hiking, and as well as building campfires. Simple things, and yet sublime things, and I pray that you will bless us now as we think of things we can do as families. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you have a question for the show, email Steve at spdemme@gmail.com. If you have a question for Scott Moore, you can reach me at scott@unsocializedmedia.com. Thanks for joining us! Have a great week.