

## Podcast 250 Edutainment

When it comes to family activities there's a word that I have always sought to employ, and I'm thankful somebody came up with this expression – edutainment. I like to learn, and I like to have fun learning. One of the things we're going to talk about today is some games that we played that I think are not only fun and competitive, but they're also a learning experience.

Lets pray. Father, thank You for minds and things to learn and a spirit of being a lifelong learner, and I think I got this from my grandmother and my mom, but I appreciate it. But I pray that You'll plant seeds in all of us so that we can pass on things that are important things to our children, while at the same time have an enjoyable time doing it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

One of the first lessons I learned when I married Sandi was how to say "Good game dear" when I lost. I'm highly competitive. I'm getting older, and I don't know if it's a result of age or sanctification or both, but I don't feel the need to win all the time anymore. However my wife has observed that if we're playing a game and it gets down towards the end and the score is close, there's a certain look that appears in my eye which she calls "The look." Apparently I take my competitiveness to a higher level. She sees it especially when we're playing ping pong. Most of the time I win, but she has beaten me. One of my worst losses ever was when she was seven months pregnant and beat me. She's a good ping pong player, but still.

Sandi is the one who has introduced being a good sport into our home which is full of men with testosterone. When we play a game, whoever wins, we are required to congratulate them and say, "Good game." She's serious about this! I've got four boys almost as competitive as me, maybe even more so. At the end of a game, she'll look around and we all have to congratulate the winner by saying, "Good game." This is a life lesson that we can all learn. It's okay to play hard, but at the end of the game don't make excuses and don't say, "If I had only...." Just stop, look them in the eye, and say, "Good game."

I played basketball, high school, college. Over the course of many years, I played thousands of hours of basketball. When I went to seminary, I discovered there was a couple of really good players from Division 1 schools and others from Division 3 schools. There were also a lot of guys that participated in intramural basketball but they weren't at the same level that I was used to playing. I had only recently recommitted my life to Christ before my last year in college, so when I went to seminary, I was a big work in progress. I remember playing intramural games where I would just kind of go through the motions until the end of the game, and then I would take it over because I wanted to win. Sadly I didn't always play with the best sportsmanship and I was convicted by my behavior. I decided to quit playing altogether for I was convinced that the way I was competing was not in the Spirit nor healthy.

One of the ways that God helped me to learn how to play in a good manner was to sing hymns while playing. Later I learned that Orel Hersheiser, who was a pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers and a Christian – found out he did the exact same thing. With this new strategy I began playing basketball again and to keep my spirit in check, sang hymns. I learned

that it's okay to compete, it's okay to play hard, but it is important to play with honor and sing or do something to keep your spirit in check so that the flesh doesn't rise to the occasion.

When it comes to pure edutainment, think of playing Fish with Composers. Or any of a series of games with Historical Figures, Nature Information, or Authors. Even as a kid, I probably know more composers from playing Composers, which is just Fish with information on the cards in place of just numbers.

Risk is another game which helps learn world geography. It is low key today compared to the kind of games my kids play. They play board games about settling on Mars, Terra Forma or something. Then there is Settlers of Cataan. The thing I liked about Risk was you really learned geography. Most Americans don't know much geography in my experience.

Scott: That's how our generation all knew where Madagascar was. And Irkutsk, if that's how you pronounce it, and Kamchatka! The only reason we know those is from playing Risk. So I thought Risk was a great game.

Monopoly is another good game which teaches a ton of economics. You own properties and pay rent and taxes. Monopoly is a fascinating game. Have you ever played the Farming Game? I'm going to put a big recommendation on that one. This game was developed by a farmer sitting on his tractor out in Washington state. The board's divided up into four quadrants, and in the first part, you're planting, and then you're harvesting, and you buy corn, you buy wheat, you buy orchards, you have cows. And every time you roll to see if you get something good, you also have to pick up an expense card, because being a farmer is expensive, and it's fascinating.

Then there is the Train Game which has some good geography in it, as well. So there are a lot of excellent board games out there. Some games try too hard to be educational, I think, and they're not even fun, so it's nice to find a game has a nice blend of educational as well as being fun.

Then there are the games that are, to me, purely fun, like Uno. My granddaughters love to skip Papa or give him a Draw 4, and I expostulate and say, "Oh, no!" And then they giggle and laugh. But you are learning patterns and colors and your numbers.

Dutch Blitz is a unique game. It is a kind of Amish game because the figures on it are Amish boys and Amish girls. There are four different colors, and two of the colors have an Amish girl, and two of the colors have an Amish boy. And the best part about Dutch Blitz is there are no turns. I get impatient easily. I found that when we were playing Risk, Monopoly, or the Farming Game, it was always me saying, "It's your turn. It's your turn. It's your turn." Dutch Blitz has no turns. When they were younger we were at similar levels of expertise, now some of my kids are so good at it that I won't even play with them anymore. They tear me up.

I'll recommend one more which is called Set. I'm sure you've probably never played that one, but it's an interesting game. Again, no turns, but you're looking for geometrical patterns with different colors and different shapes and quantities.

Here are some indoor activities that you can do as a family. Hide and Sleep. It used to be Hide and Seek, when I play now I look for a little nice cozy spot where I can catch a nap. When our kids were teenagers, we'd play Hide and Seek in our house and turn all the lights off. Sometimes we'd just play on the first floor, sometimes the basement, other times we'd use the whole house. There can be different rules, like the first person caught gets to join the person who is it, so then you've got two people looking for everybody. The dog used to help us out a lot, too, because he's always telling us where Joseph was. We played charades.

Charades itself is a great game. Also Taboo, where you learn synonyms, and you learn, yeah. So we played Taboo. We shocked one of my daughters-in-law one time as we were playing Apples to Apples. There is a legitimate amount of intellect involved in this game because it helps to know a little bit about the people and events. But then you start learning how to read people who are playing, and you can see who's going to vote for certain things. Johnny always wants to play, and Johnny can't read very well and doesn't know who the people are, but yet he wants to play. And so I hope I don't shock too many of our listeners with this, but he likes police officers. He likes pretty girls, and you know when you're putting down your card and you want him to pick your card, you say, "It's a blond, beautiful police officer," or, "It's a World War II beautiful uniform veteran." You pick the things that encourages John, and he gets all animated, and everybody is just hysterical laughing. We do this in good fun. We're not making fun of him or anything, we're just including him. But my daughter-in-law, who takes things seriously was appalled that we were making this up about the cards. But it was great fun.

We also have rubber band wars. We have used Nerf guns. We used them one year for Easter. Sandi made sure we all had Nerf guns, and we played guys against the girls running around in the backyard having Nerf wars.

Edutainment – make learning fun when possible, and learn while having fun. And some of the biggest lessons you can learn is good sportsmanship, learning how to obey by the rules, learning how to say, "Good game." Competition is healthy when done in the Spirit. I struggled with competition. I could have a whole podcast on competition, but I read a biography about a guy who played hard, but he said he played with honor, and I thought, "Amen." God help us to play hard, but play with honor and play in the Spirit and keep our spirit in control and not get in the flesh. And anything that you can come up with in your family that becomes part of your own flavor as a family, one that you build memories, and one that you can gather around with the grandkids and start talking about, "Hey, you remember that time we played charades?"

Thank You Father for the ability to laugh and have fun. Thank You for ideas. I pray that You will go with each of these people that are listening to the podcast, encourage us all, and help us to learn how to have the right atmosphere in our home and conducive to healthy competition and healthy game playing and healthy sportsmanship. In Jesus' name, Amen.