



Summer is my favorite time of the year here in Ohio. I love everything about it, especially the warm weather and the long nights. Having my kids home from school can be incredibly exhausting, but it's absolutely the highlight of the summer months. So many memories are made during these weeks full of campfires, baseball games, and time to "just be" together. Over the years, I've learned that to have an enjoyable summer, I need to invest some time into planning and preparing for the days ahead. Today, I'm sharing a few of the essential tips that have helped our family make the most of our summer days.

7 Summer Tips For Catholic Parents

1.) Pray – If you've read any of my other lists here at Catholic-Link, you've probably noticed that I always include prayer. It's so basic, yet in the chaos of family life can easily be neglected. Schedule prayer time not only for yourself, but also for your children.

TIP: A great time for parents to pray? Swim lessons and baseball games! Get a rosary app and a pair of headphones so you can make the best use of your time.

2.) Make a Summer Bucket List. – This has been key to our summers for the past five years. During the first week of summer vacation, we sit down as a family and make a list of the things that we all hope to do. Our list has included everything from having a lemonade stand to a fun vacation destination. We always include simple service projects like making cookies for the neighbors or writing letters to our sponsored child. We include something for everyone to enjoy and keep it realistic, but fun.

TIP: Choose one day of the week as your field trip day. This will keep the kids from

constantly asking when they get to do the really special activities.

3.) Read a lot. – Don't let your children forget all that they've learned during the school year over the summer. Make time for reading every day and pick a good book to read together as a family. Library programs help to keep kids focused and motivated. There are countless benefits to reading aloud to your children, even children who can read on their own.

TIP: If you've not yet read *The Read-Aloud Family: Making Meaningful and Lasting Connections with Your Kids*, pick it up today. The wonderful tips and insight will show you how to build this important ritual into your family routine. Don't miss my recommended book list below!

4.) Play outside. – Everyone feels better with fresh air and exercise. The old-fashioned parenting technique of sending kids outside and not allowing them to come back in until dusk has some merit. It's good for kids to get "bored"...this is typically when they end up having the most fun.

Tip: These amazing self-filling water balloons are a life saver.