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CENTERPOINT

THE JOHN BURNSIDE SMITH CENTER FOR FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • INDIANAPOLIS, IN

CONNECTIONS A Season of Change



Aahha, summer! Summer is a time that we look forward to each year. With the onset of summer, we begin to plan for picnics in the park, art fairs, outdoor concerts, time on the boat and fun in the sun. We hope for a slower pace, when we can spend time relaxing and catching our breath from a hectic year.

And yet, summer is also a time when children and adults experience profound changes in their lives. Children are promoted to the next grade; others will graduate from high school and prepare for life away from home; some will graduate from college and begin their lives as adults. Some adults will celebrate their wedding; others will move to a new home; others may give birth to a new loved one; and some chose summer as the time to retire from a busy work life. Summer is both a time for fun and a season of change.

The rest and relaxation also provide an important moment when we can reflect on the life we are living and the changes

that each year brings. To live life well, we need to celebrate the spirit of the Sabbath and its call to reflect on our lives and look for how God is leading us. To move through a season of change well, we need to bring closure to that which we are leaving behind, wait for the wisdom of God's leading, and embrace with resolve and passion the life that God sets before us.

In this season of change, push the pause button on all the busyness, and take time to reflect on the ways God is moving in your life.

In this season of change, push the pause button on all the busyness, and take time to reflect on the ways God is moving in your life. Enjoy the fun of summer and make time to reflect on and celebrate your life.

Centerpoint is a publication of the Center for Family Life Ministries at Second Presbyterian Church. Through this newsletter, the counseling staff of the Center hopes to encourage you in your life, faith and relationships. Each issue will provide insights and suggestions on how you can enhance your life and deepen your connections with others. In addition to this newsletter, through our web-site, www.thecenterindy.org, you will find a range of articles to enhance and encourage your personal and relational life. We hope you find this publication helpful and we welcome your thoughts and feedback.

GRIEF RELIEF

Coping during the Summer



With each new season comes a new set of challenges. Every season holds special moments that can become difficult days for those who are grieving. Maybe it will be the Race Day celebration or Fourth of July fireworks. Maybe it will be the trip to the family cabin or the first time you fire-up the grill for the family cook-out. These moments, and others like them, can bring strong

feelings that can catch us by surprise. The summer season is a great time to practice good self-care. What can we do to help us through these difficult times?

- Be honest with your family and friends about your feelings and limits.
- Make sure you get plenty of rest.
- Be flexible. Be willing to change your family plans or traditions if you feel they will be too difficult this year.
- Get some exercise. Try walking or swimming.
- If you're up to it, reach out to neighbors and friends.
- Look for ways to help others.
- Remember the children who also may be struggling.
- If you can, remember to pray.

COUPLES

CORNER

Planning a wedding



Summer is often described as a season for weddings. Although weddings occur all throughout the year, the summer months seem to be the season when most people join their lives together. Therefore, it makes sense that many couples will marry this summer, and many more will be celebrating their anniversary.

How can couples planning to marry this summer prepare themselves for this big transition, and what can couples who will celebrate their anniversary do to strengthen their relationship this year?

While planning for their wedding, engaged couples would do well to clarify their expectations about marriage. Unfortunately, clarifying expectations is easier said than done. We all have expectations about how a marriage and family

should function, but we don't always realize our expectations until their not being met. These unmet expectations are the cause of most early marriage conflict and disappointment. Differences in how we approach money and budgeting, physical intimacies, time and work priorities, parenting and discipline approaches, and time together vs. individual interests are key expectations when it comes to building a good marriage. Other expectations include differences in life-style goals, chores around the house, and in-law involvements.

Before the wedding or around your anniversary, take time to discuss your expectations or review where things stand in your relationship and celebrate your achievements and tweak your disappointed expectations.

CENTER WEBSITE

Want more information
on The Center for
Family Life Ministries,
other articles and
resources and more?

Check out the
Center's website at
www.thecenterindy.org!

NEW DAY NOTES

Summer can be a challenging time for children of divorce. The regular structure of school and friends gives way to a new schedule and more disruptions. For many families, summer vacation becomes a time when child visitation patterns shift. A child may go for an extended stay (weeks and months) to the other parent's home that

takes them away from their friends. These times away can be great fun with a parent they don't see as often as they want, but both parents would be wise to recognize the challenges their child must face with the disruption of their regular routines.

If you are a family of divorce, take time to talk about the challenges everyone must face and look for ways to begin new summer traditions.



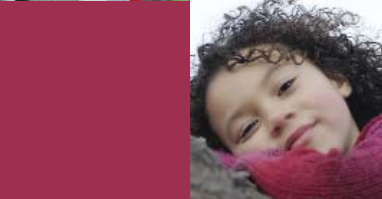
PARENTING PARADIGM

Make the Most of Summer: Ideas for Parents and Children

While many adults treasure fond memories of their childhood summer vacations, today's children may need considerable adult support to thrive during a long break from school. Adults can help by initiating conversations about each family member's hopes and expectations for the summer months. Including children in planning schedules and activities can support their developing autonomy, responsibility, problem-solving and relationship skills.

Safety planning is essential when children will be spending time without direct adult supervision. Review family rules, and practice problem-solving by playing "what would you do if ..." games. Planning regular family trips to the library and setting summer reading goals may help to limit children's use of television, computer, and video games.

Extended daylight hours make it more challenging to observe regular bedtimes. Some families solve this problem by establishing regular family reading time together in the evening. Take turns selecting longer books to read aloud, or try securing several copies of a play so children can each read a different part. Preschoolers enjoy keeping a 'drawing journal' to make their own illustrations while listening to longer 'chapter



THERAPY THOUGHTS

Managing Transitions

What are transitions? According to Webster's, transitions are a change from one position to another. When I think of transitions, I think of small children. I frequently hear parents say that their child doesn't transition well. They say that their child has difficulty changing from one activity to another and to facilitate the change they often give their child extra time. Like children, adults have numerous daily transitions. Sometimes the transitions adults experience (marriage, job loss) are much more life changing than those experienced by the child leaving a play date. Adults, however, give themselves little extra time to make the transition. I wonder if adults were to take more time with transitions, if they would then be better able to mourn the loss of the old position and embrace the new one. The next time that you are faced with a transition, big or small, I challenge you to be like the small child who has difficulty with transitions and take the time to grieve and then seize the opportunity that lies ahead.

SUMMER SAFETY

Safety Planning for Families

School's out—you know what that means .. swim parties, bike rides, camps, sleepovers, parks and ice cream. Summer could also mean DANGER if your family is not prepared. Before you start this summer with your kids, please take some time to review this important safety information.

1. Develop a Family Code Word. Children need a word that can alert you when they find themselves in a dangerous or uncomfortable situation. Create your code word as a family, but don't use a common word. You could use a name of a non-existent person, like Rev. Jones. You could name a food that everyone dislikes. Something that would signal there is a problem and come help me.
2. Remember the basics for Physical Safety: Wear a helmet when you ride a bike or skate board. Carry a cell phone or change and an emergency number with you.
3. Review Stranger Safety. Teach your child that you can NEVER tell the difference between a good stranger and a bad stranger. Coach them on how to respond when a stranger at the park asks them to help find a lost puppy.
4. Review Internet Safety. With more time for play, your child, especially your teen, may want to use the internet to talk with friends. Be aware of what they are viewing and with whom they are instant messaging.

For more information on safety resources, please contact the Indianapolis Police Department at www.kidsbmv.org or The Center for Family Life Ministries at 252-5518.



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MEET THE THERAPIST

Dr. Bunny Alexander

Dr. Bunny Alexander is a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and has been a Pastoral Counselor for 18 years. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and served as a parish minister before completing a residency in pastoral counseling. Bunny is a Licensed Professional Counselor in South Carolina, where she lived until recently. She founded and was the Director of Columbia Pastoral Counseling Center for thirteen years. She moved with her family to Indianapolis in August, 2004.

Bunny has worked with individuals, couples and families in therapy. She also enjoys working with adolescents and children. She has worked with clients experiencing problems such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, grief, adjustment disorders, parenting issues, marital tensions, family of origin issues, among others. It is Bunny's goal to help her clients increase their emotional resilience, their problem-solving and coping abilities, and to lead lives more in congruence with their deepest values.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

New Day for Children of Divorce: New Day meets the second and fourth Tuesday of Each month from late August through June.

New Day Facilitator Training: The Center will offer training for volunteers who want to help facilitate New Day Groups for children of divorce. The training will be August 19, 22 and 23.

Turning Point Divorce Recovery: Turning Point is a six week divorce recovery program for adults and will meet Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8 p.m. beginning July 11.

After You Say "I Do:" The Center is offering a Marriage Enrichment workshop on September 23 and 24 to help strengthen your marriage while having fun with your spouse.

Please call the Center at 252-5518 to register or more information.

THE CENTER FOR FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES COUNSELING STAFF:

David Chaddock (Director), Sandy Berry, Bunny Alexander,
Caroline Steward, Carol Hornbeck, Stephanie Lowe-Sagebiel

For information or to make an appointment, please call
Jennifer Emerick, Administrative Assistant, at 317-252-5518.

Enjoy our website at www.thecenterindy.org