Five ways to keep your summer faith-filled

Perhaps it is because Jesus is the Light of the World, but there is no doubt we love light, especially in the summertime. And, we love everything LIGHT about the summer! If you check out lists of summer favorites, there are bonfires, fireflies, fireworks, sunsets and days in the sun. Light encourages us and can make us feel lighthearted.

That makes summer a great time to consider what Jesus told us about living in the light of God's love. He tells us to open our hearts, love others and do what is right. What if this time of year, when we savor longer hours of sunshine and many light-filled activities, we also concentrated on enjoying more of the SONshine? What if we made our sunny days faith-filled as well as fun-filled? Try these ideas:

Enjoy the Word

As a family, memorize Ephesians 5:8-9: "For you were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth." Talk about being "children of light" and what that means as you go about summer activities. Make goodness and truth concrete daily goals. Remember that in Scripture light symbolizes God's presence and holiness. Look for God's presence in the activities of each day and talk about them each night. Search out other Bible verses about light and talk about them, too!

Enjoy the Water

Get out your child's baptismal candle and light it each week. Talk about the importance of baptism, the waters of new life and the light of Christ they received. Go swimming, do water activities or have rainy-day fun to make the connection to

Christ as the “living water” who saves us. God refreshes our souls. Give your children some water-related chores like watering the garden or helping wash the car and talk about how lucky we are to have God’s creation of water.

Enjoy the Time

Summer gives us more light and, usually, more outdoor time together. Plan a once-a-week outdoor meal without technology and spend time talking about life, faith and family. Begin with a family prayer – one you’ve written together – and remember that God is also a member of your family! Use a few hours of summer’s extra time to bring light and love to others by helping someone in your neighborhood who is lonely or ill and needs yard work, gardening or a grocery pickup.

Enjoy the Travel

As you take day trips or vacations, plan to stop at one or more faith-filled locations. Find a church of interest, a local shrine, outdoor Stations of the Cross or a museum with religious art. Or, take a “Light of God” walk and look for all the things that remind you of God’s love and creation. Take lots of pictures for your memory albums or other displays to remind your children that your faith is part of your fun.

Enjoy the Events

Summer is a time of special events like reunions, parades, fairs, ballgames and concerts. Each time you attend an event, make a list of the blessings you received. Say a short prayer for the success of the event before you go.

Make this the summer you remember Jesus told us he is the “light of the world” (Jn 8:12) and that by following him we will have the light of life!