

A Happy Houseful of Children: Managing When You Have Toddlers Through Teens

by Bente Rodriguez

My Life Right Now
By Tricia Cope

Teenagers. Pre-teens. Children. A baby.
Diapers. Blankies. iPods. Laptops.
Swords. Balls. Crafts. Dolls.
Scouting. Pouting. Parenting.

Violin lessons. Piano lessons. Cello lessons.
Life lessons.

Housework. Homework. Yardwork. (A lot of work.)
Bedtimes. Dinner-times. Date-nights.
Up-all-night(s).

Carpooling. Baby drooling. Homeschooling.

Church service. Laundry service.
Needs-to-be-serviced. Lip service.

Driver's permits. Car seats. Who gets front
seat? Not enough seats.

Geometry. ACT's. ABC's. 1-2-3's.
Bike riding. Horseback riding. Tail-riding.

Laughter. Noise. Teasing by boys.
Fairy games. Soccer games. Basketball
games. Board games.

High chairs. High school. High grades.
High hopes.

Baking. Mess-making. Merry-making.

So busy. So tired. So blessed. So happy.

This is my life right now.

As much as we don't want to admit it sometimes, the tone of our home is usually determined by the mother's attitude. (No pressure or anything!!) You know the old saying, "When momma's happy, everyone's happy. When momma isn't happy nobody's happy." What are some things we can do to help us, as moms, have a good attitude?

1. Take care of ourselves

-If you don't have any quiet time for yourself, you know you are doing too much.

-Remember the Seasons of Life: go with them, don't fight against them.

-There is no way we can give 100% of ourselves to everything we do 100% of the time, but we

can give 100% of ourselves to one thing at a time.

-seek out creative outlets

-Rely on God for His divine help

-"The joyful part of mothering doesn't always knock at my door and anxiously invite itself in."-Tricia Cope

2. Systems

-Every family has systems either deliberate or by default. Determine to make yours deliberate.

-Locate the stress times in your day. What is going on that makes it stressful? What can you do to help it run more smoothly?

-Buddies (older children help younger children)

-Weekly Family Planning Meetings

-“Maybe what you are doing is right, but when you are doing it isn’t.”

3. Housekeeping

-Remember that by doing it all we are robbing our children of the experience they need to be functioning adults.

-Chores vs. Responsibilities

-Bean Jar (the motivator—i.e. bribe—that works!)

-The “Your number of things” concept

-“To keep your house constantly clean, you must have constant chore time—this is impossible! But, you can have a consistently clean house. The key is consistent chore time.

4. Homeschool

-What are my ultimate goals for my children?

-Use what individually motivates each of your children to your (and their) advantage.

-“We should measure our success by the progress of those we teach, not by the excellence of our performance.” -Teaching, No Greater Call

Don’t try to change everything at once! Determine the ONE thing that drives you the most crazy and focus on changing that. Once that is going well, move on to the next thing. Don’t try to change it all at once! Slow, steady and deliberate is the goal and the way to instill lasting change.

INTERRUPTIONS

“When you are exasperated by interruptions, try to remember that their very frequency may indicate the value of your life. Only people who are full of help and strength are burdened by other persons’ needs. The interruptions which we chafe at are the credentials of our indispensability. The greatest condemnation that anybody could incur - and it is a danger to guard against - is to be so independent, so unhelpful, that nobody ever interrupts us, and we are left comfortably alone.” -Anonymous

Resources

Large Family Logistics by Kim Brenneman (also see her website)

The Joyful Mothering Series

www.mommynark.com/p/joyful-mothering-series.html