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This past Sunday evening, we played miniature golf as a family.

No cell phones. No iPods. No computers.

Just five of us (including our son-for-the-summer exchange student from Spain), enjoying a summer evening, laughing together, and cheering each other on.

We try to do family night every Sunday night. Sometimes we

play a game of baseball in the back yard. Sometimes we have a ping-pong play-off. On other nights, we play a card or board game like Apples to Apples, Uno, or Monopoly.

In my book, *My Heart's at Home: Becoming the Intentional Mom Your Family Needs*, I identify the need for home to be a playground. Our home needs to be a place where our family plays together, laughs together, and enjoys life to the fullest.

Our time together Sunday night was not without its challenges. Fifteen minutes before we left to head to the miniature golf course, we were dealing with a discipline issue with one kid while another was expressing his negative opinion about our plans for the evening.

Parenting is about leadership, so we pressed forward through the attitudes while staying positive and focused on the goal of pulling everyone out of their corners and having some uninterrupted time together as a family.

By the time we made it to the miniature golf course, everyone had worked through their issues, and we had a great time!

Is your home a playground? Do you slow down enough to have fun together? It's unlikely it will happen on its own. You'll have to be intentional about making it happen.

I hope you'll join me this month in making home a playground! It's an important part of relationship building and making memories as a family!

Joining you in the journey,

Jill

Wife of Mark

Mom to Anne, Evan, Erica, Kolya, and Austin

Nana to 1-year-old Rilyn

Five Strategies for a Successful Family Night

Make one day a week your Family Night.

If possible set aside one night of the week that becomes sacred to your family. No one accepts an invitation that evening, no meetings, no social engagements--it's reserved for family night. Friday night or Sunday night works well for many families.

Calendar your Family Nights.

If setting aside one night a week is not feasible with your family's schedule, sit down with the calendar and plan for some evenings together. Communicate to everyone these dates, and keep them free from activities.



Include the kids in planning the activities.

If they're old enough to weigh in on the activities, let them do so! When they feel they have been valued in the planning process, their desire to participate increases.

Stay positive.

Don't be discouraged if the process of gathering everyone is met with frustration, especially early on. We all have a self-centered nature and have to be coached into understanding the importance of team.

Be creative with your evenings.

Ideas include: game night (Scrabble, Monopoly, Pictionary), watching home movies, going through old photo albums, watching a movie together, or baking cookies. Bowling, miniature golf, ice skating, and even roller skating make for enjoyable family time, too.

Hearts at Home helps you...

...feel refreshed and ready to embrace the challenges of motherhood.

...remove the guilt of not being a perfect mom.

...create the vision to successfully usher your kids into adulthood.

EVERY mom.

EVERY stage.

EVERY day.

Looking for a girlfriend getaway?



A Hearts at Home Conference is the perfect place to do that! Grab some girlfriends (a group of 10 will get you each a \$10 discount!) and make plans to attend one of our fall conferences!

REGISTER NOW!

for the Western Conference, October 7-8, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

REGISTER NOW!

for the North Central Conference, November 4-5, in Rochester, Minnesota.

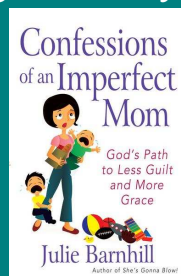
Don't have a conference close enough to attend?

REGISTER NOW!

for a Conference To-Go!

Need to know you're not alone?

Julie Barnhill's *Confessions of an Imperfect Mom* (formerly known as *Motherhood, the Guilt that Keeps on Giving*) August Facebook study will help you find the encouragement you need!



Want to join the study?

Click on the image above to "Like" the page.

Then grab the book off your bookshelf or order it online and join the discussion!

God's "Mom Revolution" Truth for You

"Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming

together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."
Philippians 4:6-7 The Message

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