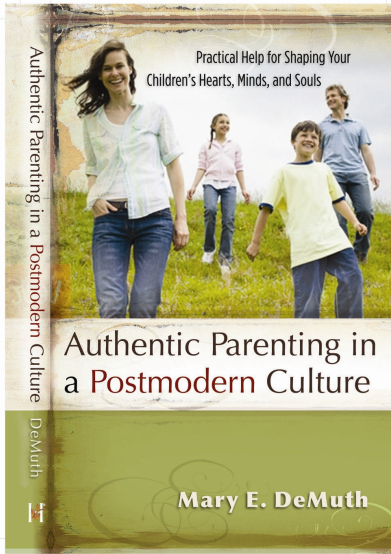


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10 Ways to Make Your Home a Haven

By Mary E. DeMuth

The following are ten ways to make your home a haven in this shifting world. This is adapted from *Authentic Parenting in a Postmodern Culture* (Harvest House, 2007):

1. **By letting kindness reign.** Determine to treat your children and spouse with the same sweetness you'd give a stranger you're trying to impress. Remember it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance. What makes us think anything different would evoke our children's repentance?
2. **By welcoming hard questions.** It's okay to question. You did it, didn't you? Give your children the same leeway. Let them vent. Let them worry. Welcome their wrestling. Don't give pat answers; instead, let them work through their questions. Love them through a period of questioning.
3. **By being there.** Give your children the rare gift of your focused attention. Look into their eyes. Ask great questions. Relax alongside them. Dr. Ross Campbell says, "In short, focused attention makes a child feel he is the most important person in the world in his parents' eyes."

4. **By limiting media.** Steer your children away from mindless interaction with the TV or video games. Set limits and stick to them. Dare to believe your children are creative, innovative kids who can create instead of idly recreate.
5. **By playing outside.** We've lost the importance of outdoor play. Even if it means walking to the park with your kids, or swimming alongside them, or taking a nature hike, dare to move beyond the four walls of your home to venture out to see God's creation.
6. **By weeping and rejoicing at the right times.** We are to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). When a child has a difficult day, scoop her into your arms and cry alongside. When she makes a great grade, jump up and down and celebrate with ice cream.
7. **By cherishing childhood.** Our kids grow up so fast in this crazy culture. Keep them kids as long as you can. Let them play, run, stretch, linger. Limit activities when they're younger so they don't become little stressed-out adults at age ten.
8. **By reading together.** The most haven-producing thing I do as a mommy is simply to read to my kids. I still read to my fourteen year old! Discover books on CD as a family, lessening the tedium of car rides without popping in a DVD. My kids have stayed in the car to listen to a story finish.
9. **By laughing hard, but not at another's expense.** Joking and laughter are blessings you can add to create a fun-loving haven, but be cautious not to laugh at your kids' expense or allow them to laugh at yours or others' expense. Watch funny, clean movies together. Tell jokes. Tell funny family stories over and over until they become ridiculous. A lighthearted family that doesn't take itself too seriously is a haven-home.
10. **By practicing God's presence in the mundane.** Require chores of your kids. It teaches them important life skills. Even so, introduce joy as you work. Turn on the radio, dance, laugh. By learning to practice the presence of God during the chores of life, you create a productive, gratitude-based home.