


SUMMER

A Time of Reflection and Respite

“Summertime...and the livin’ is easy,” or so Ella Fitzgerald would have us think. Summertime for the homeschooling parent may be different from the rest of the year, but, speaking from the middle of my 24th homeschooling summer, “easy” is not the adjective I would choose. Here are a few that I think fit a little better:

Hard. Let’s just begin with the opposite of easy. Between summer jobs, volunteering, fun with friends, family trips and household projects, keeping a routine that encourages household sanity is just plain hard. In the early years, I just threw up my hands and gave up, which had the result one would expect: chaos. If maintaining a routine is hard, living in chaos is *exhausting*. These days, we stick to a flexible routine that provides a rhythm to family life.

Long. When our children were younger, summer days stretched on for a literal eternity. Without playgroups, clubs and classes to look forward to, it was near mutiny on our good ship. When I began to initiate simple, occasional activities with our friends and family, we all enjoyed summer more. We

A decorative border on the left and right sides of the page, featuring a repeating pattern of watermelons. Some are whole, some are sliced, and some are cut in half, all set against a light pink background.

take field trips that are hard to fit into the regular school year. We do more community service in the summer. The places where we serve tell us that they experience a decrease in volunteerism in the summer months, so our help is much appreciated.

Short. I know, I just said the opposite, but stay with me.

While the days of summer can feel like forever, the season of summer seems to go by in a blink. I remember many Septembers arriving like a kick in the pants while I still had a garage to clean, an antique chair to refurbish, lessons to plan, and books to read. I've learned to prioritize the bigger projects and work time for them into our summer routine. I will always have more projects than time to do them, but being able to look back over the summer and see progress is encouraging.

Reflective. Like most of the homeschooling parents I know, I spend time during the summer months reflecting on the previous year. By nature, I tend to focus on the shortcoming, disappointments, and wrong turns. While taking into account the areas that need attention and shoring up, I have cultivated the habit of finding the good and beautiful things to celebrate, and writing those down as well. We may need to look at a different spelling curriculum and to rearrange the household chores, but we did better this year at managing library books and clearing clutter from the house.

Refreshing. I love homeschooling. I am also wrung out like a dishrag after Sunday dinner by mid-May, so I love the summer respite from the school year routine. Summer has a way of recharging my homeschool battery so that, by the second week of August, I am virtually vibrating with anticipation of another school year. I've read some great books, had long conversations, spent days at our state's homeschool convention listening to passionate speakers and visiting with thoughtful, wise exhibitors, and when it's time to start again, excitement in our home is running high.

I hope your summer is exhilarating, restful, noisy, peaceful, lazy, crazy, and wonderful! We would love to hear your plans and goals. Connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Homeschooling with you,

Dana Wilson

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