

A FAMILY JOURNAL

by Rita Munn

Ephesians 4:2-3 "I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace."

I want to confess to you, my dear sisters in Christ, that there are those times in the homeschooling journey when the temptation to somehow 'fit in' with the greater public schooling population is a bit overwhelming and seems completely reasonable (or least it is meant to *seem* completely reasonable). Perhaps you have been down this path before with regard to sports, extracurricular activities and the like. If you have not been drawn to the dark side ☺, please bear with me in patience as I seek to explain a recent turn of events that has plagued our otherwise peaceful homeschool cooperative.


It seemed like a completely *reasonable* request (the operative word is of course *reasonable*) to have a junior and senior banquet to celebrate the completion of the school year. The children were eager to dress up, eat a nice meal and in general congratulate one another on a job well done. For the less than 20 junior and senior students from our small homeschooling cooperative this would be an opportunity to spend time with one another before the final goodbyes of commencement and the inaugural into the gradual process of swimming in the bigger sea of experiences beyond the coziness of the homeschool.

Of course as with all things mom led and homeschooled centered, there was to be a meeting. A planning meeting to decide the important issues about dress codes, food, money, crepe paper etc... The meeting began with a prayer and then the floor was opened to the participating juniors and seniors. We moms should have seen it coming but in our collective desire (and perhaps weariness from a long day of teaching one another's children) to sit in the back of the room and steal a quiet few moments to knit, drink coffee, nurse babies and quietly chat, we were blind sighted as to the unfolding agenda from the podium.

Two very enthusiastic young girls, both seniors, began extolling the wonders of car dates, boutonnieres, corsages, swing dance music, and tuxedos. Before us moms were fully aware, a full fledged prom with all the secular trimmings was being planned and the entire atmosphere turned from something completely *reasonable* to something totally out of hand.

The teens were beguiled and ready to forget the previous plans of a nice meal and tasteful decorations in favor of a soirée that would be legendary and memorable, making up for all the times that they were *merely* homeschooled.

We moms gathered our defenses, put down the coffee mugs, settled babies with siblings, and turned our attentions to the meeting. In the meantime, the room of young people was excitedly thinking of ticket costs and the virtues of dance lessons for those lesser girls and boys who did not know how to swing dance. (How did the reasonable plans of a banquet



become derailed in favor of an event we moms could not endorse? To answer the question in the simplest terms I would have to say that the young people were gently beguiled by the temptations of the world.)

As with all things mom led and homeschooled, moms began to take the reins and turn the focus from the designs of a few in order to meet the needs of the whole. The young people were understanding and cooperative and ready to meet in the middle with compromise. One mom summed up the compromise that would be allowed in this way, "You girls and boys may decide the color of the crepe paper." ☺ *That compromise seemed reasonable to me.*

I have at times fallen under the spell of the world. The temptations wrought through the glitz of glossy paged workbooks, little school desks all in a row, teachers who have agendas, the big yellow school bus that comes each morning and takes all my students away to buildings where they will be educated to meet the codes, take the standardized tests, make the grade and go to the top of the class have nudged me to abandon my path of homeschooling. After prayer and careful consideration I realize that there is little peace in doing that which I believe is not of the Lord's will for my family. This is not to say that homeschooling is chosen because it is the easier of the two paths for it is not really about ease in application. Rather the choices are made considering the great comfort of knowing that I am within the Lord's will despite the difficulties that are sure to arise.

There are those times to be sure when I have doubted my own resolve but the Lord understands how easy it is for a human to be beguiled and in His mercy allows that my weary spirit finds rest and comfort within His embrace. I have to concentrate upon my need to refresh my weary spirit and go to the water and drink often of the gracious mercy and tender love of the Lord who desires to lead me to the fullness of His will for me.

Lord, please grow in my weak spirit a docility of heart and mind that allows me to rest in Your Sacred Heart far from the beguiling temptations of the world and all its false promises. Humble me, Lord, in order that I may depend more fully and completely upon Your strength within me. I love You, Lord Jesus, and long to see Your face. Amen.

SOAP,*

Rita Munn

Munn Family updates:

Megan has dilated to a fingertip. She was thrilled but Ronald was cautious as he reminded her that the news means little until the curtain goes up and the drama begins. ☺ Bart, Megan's husband, is growing more excited about being a father with each passing day. He is eager for the curtain to go up, the play to be completed and the applause to begin as the star of the show will finally be in his arms. ☺ The Junior Senior Banquet is set for April 18th and the crepe paper colors are blue and gold. The Grandgirls, Catherine and Elizabeth, are coming for a weekend and I am to play Little House on The Prairie with them complete with hats, horses and tea. I can do the hats but I can not provide horses unless Ronald would like to wear a harness and pull the red flyer wagon around the block.

Home to Homeschool Ideas

I spend an alarming amount of time folding laundry. I know what you are saying, "Rita, why don't you have the children fold the laundry?" The answer to your query has quite a bit to do with my own personal resolve. I resolve to *teach*, in the true spirit of a seasoned homeschooling mom, the correct way to fold sheets, towels, my underwear, dad's undershirts, etc. but somehow when I see the attempts of a less than enthusiastic adolescent (perfectly wadded piles of clean clothing), my resolve is weakened and I succumb to the rigors of folding the piles myself. However lately I have found a wonderfully quiet refuge in the laundry room (a similar refuge was long ago discovered in the garden). I have posted all my personal prayer intentions on the cabinets in the laundry room. The intentions are written on a sheet of typing paper and taped to the cabinets. I pray as I fold. The time folding seems peaceful and fruitful knowing that I am offering up one Hail Mary right after another for the specific intentions posted.

Posting prayers and prayer intentions for our children to see in obvious places (mirrors, the refrigerator door, bedroom doors, etc) about the house serves us well. It allows us to show that prayer is an every minute of every day joy and needn't be set apart from our daily activities.

Every time we expose our dear children to good and helpful information is a moment whereby we have in our docility allowed the sweet Jesus to lead us gently to His will for us and our families.

*To learn more about the SOAP ministry, see April 2004's "Family Journal" at www.chcweb.com.

Rita's book, *A Family Journal: A Homeschooling Mother's Companion*, is available through CHC: www.chcweb.com.

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About the Munn Family

Ronald and I were married in 1973. I had just graduated from St. Dominic School of Nursing and he from Mississippi State with a degree in Aerospace Engineering. The Lord was very generous when we prayed to have a family. He blessed us with 10 children and now 2 grandchildren.

We began homeschooling in 1996. Children are a gift from the Lord and He designed them to begin learning the moment they are created. It continues to be one of the greatest pleasures of my life to spend my days with my children. The Lord is so good!

