

Walkie Talkies and Lightning Bugs

Contributed by Sue Mahar
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All summer long, I lamented over the inability to provide my young children a beach or lake house retreat to fill their childhood with fond seasonal memories. This summer, due to schedules, budget and appointments, we didn't have structured plans to carry the kids through the long months of summer. We just spent a lot of time at home. With all the other neighborhood kids at camp and away on long, wonderful vacations, my kids just got the run of the house and yard. They were given the privilege of using the garden hose, making their own pbj sandwiches, helping with chores and stopping the ice cream truck with the money they made from impromptu lemonade stands. Still, I felt there was too much down-time and not enough excitement around here. One summer night, not long ago, my heavy heart was lifted as my young, humble children discovered one of the many simple summertime joys by chasing lightning bugs and playing with walkie talkies after dark. Although they're still too young to coordinate the 'push-to-talk, release-to-hear' commands, they had a wonderful time, running, giggling and staying up late. It may have been the moon, cool night air, or the general easy feeling from the day, but that evening, I reflected upon my own childhood summer spells. When I was growing up, we did just what they did all summer long. We became deeply connected to our home. Being home all summer, I struggled to balance my writing obligations, housework, mothering and all that goes with that. But, late this summer, I realized they have created their own memories. They have helped each other grow in mind, spirit and body and became each other's best friend. They proved to me that they have good, creative, inquisitive brains on which to rely for their development and entertainment, not just me nor seasonal outlets. The guilt is lifted from my conscious. With the concerns of providing an enriching, childhood summer passing with each lingering day, I too, leave this summer season with a fond memory. The memory of my two young boys running joyfully through our yard and listening to them squeal with childhood delight. They freely demonstrated the ability to find fun for the sake of fun. It didn't take a summer retreat to create a memory we will talk about well into the cold winter months.