USE HOLIDAYS TO TEACH CHILDREN LIFE SKILLS



PARENTING

DICKSON TUMURAMYE

When schools close for holidays, many parents breathe a sigh of relief. Children are finally home after months of early mornings, homework, examinations and busy school schedules. Yet, while schools may temporarily close, learning never stops. In fact, the most important lessons children carry for life are not learned in classrooms, but within the walls of their homes. A home is the best place for informal education. Talk about discipline, self-awareness and life skills, among others.

A child may forget formulas, dates and classroom notes, but they rarely forget the environment they grew up in. They remember how people spoke to one another at home. They recall the most interesting stories daddy or mummy told them. They remember whether they were listened to or ignored. They remember whether discipline was practiced with wisdom or anger. They remember whether their parents lived the values they preached. Holidays, therefore, are not simply breaks from school, they are seasons of formation. Learning becomes a continuous process during holidays.

EDUCATION IS MORE THAN ACADEMICS

Many parents unknowingly reduce education to academics alone. We celebrate report cards, but ignore a child's holistic transformation. We invest heavily in school fees, but little in emotional connection. We monitor grades closely, but fail to notice attitudes, habits and values quietly developing in our children. Yet the world today is full of highly educated people who still struggle with responsibility, discipline, empathy, honesty and resilience. This reminds us that education without values and proper upbringing is incomplete.

THE HOME SHAPES IDENTITY

The home remains the first and most influential school a child will ever attend. Before teachers shape the mind, parents shape identity. During holidays, children spend more time observing their families than listening to teachers. They study how adults handle conflict, stress, money, relationships and communication. What parents repeatedly do becomes the curriculum children silently absorb. What is seen is more practiced in their lifetime than what is told. They also need to know who they are, which the school can teach them. The school holiday gives you ample time to have deeper conversations about your identity, where you see your family in years to come.

RESPONSIBILITY BUILDS COMPETENCE

One of the greatest gifts parents can give children during holidays is responsibility. A child who participates in simple household chores learns that life is not centred around comfort and entertainment alone. Responsibility teaches discipline, teamwork, accountability, commitment and problem-solving. Unfortunately, many parents mistake love for overprotection. Some children grow up knowing how to operate smart phones better than how to organise a room, wash utensils or care for younger siblings.

When parents do everything for children, they may unknowingly raise dependence instead of competence. Show them what to do and demand accountability. When they fail, they will learn to seek your guidance, not assistance, where you are the one to dot it for them.

CONVERSATIONS BUILD EMOTIONAL SECURITY

Holidays should also become seasons of conversation. Many children are growing up physically present in homes, but emotionally distant from their parents. Busy schedules, digital distractions and constant phone usage have weakened meaningful family interaction and bonding.

Yet some of the deepest emotional healing and confidence-building in children happens through ordinary conversations. There is a lot of pressure and rush through many activities during school days. A child who feels heard at home develops security and self-worth. Listening to children does not spoil them; it strengthens connection and trust.

MANAGING SCREEN TIME

This holiday season also presents an opportunity for parents to shape digital habits. Screens have increasingly become silent babysitters in many homes. They compete favourably with your parenting schedule. Some children now spend entire days moving from television to TikTok, from gaming to endless scrolling on phones. While technology has benefits, unregulated screen exposure can slowly damage attention spans, social skills, discipline, and creativity. Parents must intentionally create healthier alternatives, such as reading, family activities, skill development, outdoor play and faith-based conversations.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FORMATION

Most importantly, holidays are an opportunity for spiritual and moral formation. Children need more than academic success to navigate life successfully. They need values, purpose, wisdom and inner stability, and also know God deeply. Homes that nurture prayer, respect, gratitude, honesty and compassion build children who can withstand pressures beyond school walls. Character is not developed in one lecture, but through consistent daily modelling and spiritual formation helps us navigate life with hope and faith in the Lord.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT PARENTS MODEL

Parents must remember that children are always watching. They learn from what adults celebrate, tolerate and practice repeatedly. If parents model kindness, children notice. If parents constantly fight, children notice. If parents demonstrate integrity, humility and responsibility, children absorb those values over time. Parenting, therefore, is not merely instruction; it is example. Therefore, even if you have marital conflicts as a couple, it would be good to shield children from your challenges and keep your "battles" together behind their eyes and ears.

TURN HOLIDAYS INTO SEASONS OF FORMATION

As families continue navigating this holiday season, parents should see these weeks as more than just free time to survive. Holidays are opportunities to intentionally shape identity, values and habits that schools alone cannot teach. Long after report cards are forgotten, the lessons children learn at home will continue influencing how they think, relate, lead and live. A holiday can either become wasted time or a season of intentional formation. The choice begins at home.

The writer is a parenting coach and marriage counsellor

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