

What about Socialization?

Tags: [encouragement](#) [Socialization](#)

“Don’t you feel that you missed out on activities and friends?”

Do I feel that I missed out? Absolutely not!! True, I haven’t experienced all of the same social circumstances that many my age have, but I haven’t missed out on them! In fact, I believe that I have had a richer life than most teenagers today. Consider it this way – traditionally schooled students have missed out on many of the social circumstances that I have experienced!

The fact is that by being educated at home, I have been raised under the influence of my parents and been taught their values rather than those of my peers. Thus, I do not find myself always wanting and trying to conform to whatever my peers currently think is “in” or “cool”.

I have spent my life with my family, and what better friends could I make? Whether I like it or not, (and I do like it!) my family will always be there. For years to come I will see them at family gatherings, holiday celebrations, and other get-togethers. Since we are sharing our lives now, during these years as children and young adults, what fun it will be to get together as aunts, uncles and cousins! Oh, what stories will we have to tell the next generation about what their aunts, uncles and I used to do when we were their age!

Please don’t think, however, that I have no friends outside of my family. I do. In fact, I have quite a number of them! But there are two distinctives about these friends – they are not my very closest friends (my parents and siblings hold that place), and they are not comprised solely of my peers. I have friends who are newborn infants, and some who are elderly people . . . and can we ever have a lot of fun when we get together! Rarely do I get together with other girls my own age when we are not surrounded by the rest of our families . . .and we all LOVE it that way!

The truth is, that since we are together as a family and do so much together we view ourselves as a family unit. We even have our own “family culture” – family jokes, family phrases, family nicknames, family clichés, family games, a family “dialect” of sorts, family memories, family mottoes – and, yes, family friends.

“Activities” to us often mean having another family over for dinner and an evening of talk and games, or spending an afternoon at the park with another family (or two or three) and playing baseball together – yes, from the dads down to the 5, 6 and 7 year olds! And I’m so grateful to be able to truly consider them all my friends! If I was always surrounded by my peers I might not have had the opportunity to experience the “great” sense of humor of ten year old boys, or enjoyed the amusing chatter of a five year old girl, or had the little two year old crawl into my lap with a book – and fall asleep while I read to him. I may also not have sat with the moms and dads and heard the wisdom, experiences, laughter, stories, and honest, mature conversation that they have to share. It is a way of living not taught by our culture – and it’s very different from what most of America can imagine – but I think it’s wonderful!

In fact, I believe that this more separated (from peers) upbringing better equips children for adult life! Learning to live, play, and work with people considerably younger than ourselves builds the character necessary to work with people throughout our lives that are weaker, or less competent than we are or think they ought to be. It also helps us learn how to communicate with others in an understanding way. On the other hand, living, playing and working with those older than ourselves teaches us to value and respect the wisdom and experience of our elders, and to seek their counsel in our own lives.

There are many activities that we can participate in outside of the home, even good activities with other Christian homeschoolers! But don’t lose sight of the fact that the relationship of a parent with their children, and of the children with their siblings, is far more important than any other activity or relationship! It is the one that God has designed to be the most “convenient” (right in your own home!) and it is certainly the most critical and influential. God puts us closest with those He wants us closest to.

Remember that your children have a defining role in the next generation’s culture and will themselves raise up the following

generation. You, our parents, who have boldly taken this step out from today's society have provided the fertile ground in which this next generation can grow straight, strong, and healthy.

Please don't sacrifice this fruit for fear of isolating us!

Jessica Erber was 20 years old at the writing of this article and has been home educated all her life. She currently enjoys a very busy life helping to keep the Erber's bustling household running. She also finds her days filled with reading, writing, teaching piano lessons, answering most of the ICHE emails, and doing other general secretarial work for ICHE.

Author: Jessica Erber

Source URL (retrieved on 06/20/2013 - 2:03am): <http://www.iche.org/resources/article/01-22-2010/what-about-socialization>