



Children watching a play by Ten Ten Theatre

# First Monday newsletter

May 2016

## Activities & Celebrations

Fr Stephen Wang writes:

It's good that children have lots to do. It's also good that they have time just to do their own thing, or to do nothing.

Sometimes they just need the freedom to play and decide what to do with their time. Some of their best ideas come when children are bored!

Others say:

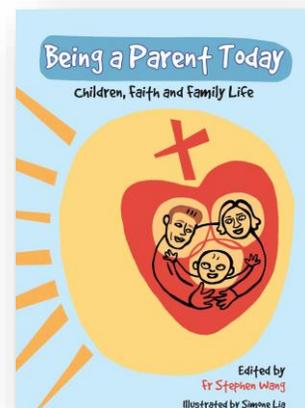
- 'We try to involve the children in one or two activities outside school and home. It helps them make friends, and gives them a different focus and interest. But we need to weigh up the costs wisely, in terms of money, time, and the effort of travelling and giving lifts.'
- 'It's easy to become a slave to the idea that your children must be doing something all the time. There can be a subconscious peer pressure that you are a failure if your child is not doing this or that. But no child can do everything! And too many regular activities away from home can damage family life. It can mean you never spend

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Ten Ten produce a newsletter for parents on the First Monday of every month.

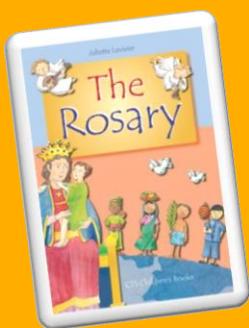
The text on the left is taken from the booklet which was given as a free gift to all parents who attended one of our sessions in schools. In the booklet, Fr. Stephen Wang gathers the thoughts of parents and others on "Being a Parent Today: Children, Faith and Family Life."



## Parenting & Family Life

any ordinary time together. It can spoil children - because they think they have to be entertained all the time. There is a danger for some that every hour after school and at the weekend is filled with a prearranged activity.'

- 'It's important to respect the dignity and individuality of your children. You can encourage them to do something (for example, to join a club, to play an instrument, etc.), and perhaps insist that they try something out. But don't force them to do something they hate over a long period – especially if you are forcing them to do something simply because you missed out on it in your own childhood!'
- 'Share the responsibility of making decisions about free time with the children – letting them make some choices themselves, after helping them to think things through. At each age children need to have some sense of control and power over their lives, at an appropriate level. By making choices and decisions they learn about free will, responsibility and consequences.'
- 'They also need to take risks – calculated ones. And be given reassurance and courage when things go wrong. Parents can be overprotective. Children learn a great deal through failure, as long as they have support and security to fall back on.'
- 'We make a special effort to celebrate special occasions as a family. Not just Christmas and birthdays, but wedding anniversaries, baptism anniversaries, passing exams, feast days in the Church's year, saints' days, etc. It's not just the activities themselves, it's the chance to share them as a family, and to plan them and look forward to them together. And it's not about spending lots of money. Children appreciate the simplest things.'
- 'You see how elaborate birthday parties can be a problem for many families, and the pressure of keeping up with what others have done. They can become costly and make a child materialistic. But you can make it a special day without overwhelming the child with gifts or over-the-top party preparations. What really makes a child happy is being with others and enjoying their company, which can be done very simply.'



## CTS Book of the Month

### THE ROSARY

As May is the month of Mary, our CTS Book of the Month is a simple but beautiful book which helps children to pray to Mary following Jesus' life step-by-step.

Beautifully illustrated and in simple language, this book is a wonderful way on introducing children to the prayer of the church.

**PRICE: £5.95**

- 'I try to plan some activities for the next few weeks, and for the year ahead, and put them on a chart in the kitchen that everyone can see. This creates a sense of excitement, and relieves the monotony of term time. It's great to go out together as a family – to a park, a library, a museum, a city farm, etc . Anything where you can explore, talk and spend time together.'
- 'It really makes a difference to support them in their sports events, school plays, recitals, etc. It means a great deal to them.'
- 'I make a plan to have some special time out with one child at a time, so they can feel special and valued, and have a chance to share their own concerns with me. But to have an equal time with each of the children, so it doesn't seem as if I have favourites.'
- 'It's great to make things with the children. Cooking is one obvious example. You can make models, costumes, games or dens.'

Children remember making things more than they do opening expensive toys.'

- 'I try to welcome others into our home, especially friends of our children. I encourage them to stay for a meal, so they can feel welcome, and so I can be more involved in the friendships of the children.'
- 'Shopping can be a special treat, but it should not be the default form of 'going out' for a family. It makes children possessive and envious, and it can make it harder to spend real time together.'
- 'It's good to let children be outdoors as much as possible. Of course you must make careful decisions about how much freedom to give them. But we shouldn't let the small dangers of them getting into trouble outweigh the huge benefits of them being able to explore and take risks.'

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Life to the full

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Ten Ten Theatre is a professional theatre company working in schools, churches, prisons, care homes, within communities and in theatres throughout the UK. It is part of Ten Ten, a national Catholic educational charity.

We are a family-run independent organisation based in North London.

Mass is celebrated for the intentions of the children and parents we meet in schools on the First Monday of every month.



To make a donation to The Ten Ten Charitable Trust, please [click here](#).