

HAVING A BLENDED SPLENDID

HOLIDAY SEASON blended families and holiday schedules, they can be harmonious, cont'd

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BE AWARE: You, your spouse, and your immediate family may need this time to bond free of external obligations (work, school, travel, etc). A new family may mean a new tradition. If traveling back to parents worked as a single parent, it may or may not be the best solution this year. Perhaps an all extended family Australian-like Christmas in July is an alternative?

When life gets hectic due to the multiplied moving parts of a blended family, this may be just the season to withdraw from the business and strengthen the new familial ties. Even Jesus “withdrew” to isolation when he learned the Pharisees were plotting to bind him by the rigidity of the law (i.e., family obligations and traditions that no longer work for the new family). Matthew 12: 14-15a, “14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. 15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place...”

BE A GOOD LISTENER: Once your children are old enough to have an opinion, let them help make the decisions about their exchange times. Parenting plans are created when emotions are raw and all scenarios cannot be taken into consideration. As your children age, so will their voice need more impact. Children are typically loyal and want to maximize their time with both parents. If you include them in the discussion, they will often be the best barometer of fairness. Proverbs 2:9-10 “9 Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. 10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.”

BE INCLUSIVE: If amicable, allow all family members who want to share in your children’s holiday have access to either your home or a central location (you are responsible for the

invitation, not the response). Yes, that means biological parents and grandparents, step-parents and step-grandparents, cousins the whole shebang. Your children did not ask for their birth, the divorce, and usually not the blended family to which they now belong, so why should they be harangued by schedules that rob them of their holiday? Open the doors and let children see how everyone can put aside personal differences and rally together when they are involved. This open door policy could foster good will, diminish rebellion, and establish a support network for your children to lean on when life happens. If you are not as fortunate to share compatibility with your children’s other family members, you can utilize the wealth of information offered by <http://www.smartstepfamilies.com> or <http://www.coparentinginternational.com>. Both resources have wonderful tools to help navigate parenting from two or more homes.

At the end of the holiday season, the mixology of a blended family’s New Year rings in sweeter when holidays are remembered as slightly inconvenienced verses disillusioned and disconnected. Perhaps 007 orders aptly for all blendeds when he requests his usual, “Shaken, but not stirred.”

*All scripture references were taken from biblegateway.com



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