

*You rarely have time for everything you want in this life, so you need to make choices.
And hopefully your choices can come from a deep sense of who you are.*

- Fred Rogers



Families Challenging Materialism: Breaking the “Work/Spend” Cycle

1. Use Public Facilities

Use public libraries, parks and playgrounds where children learn to care for resources not because they own them, but because others need them, too.

2. Critique Advertising

Watch TV with children, look through magazines together, and comment on billboards as opportunities to help young people become critical thinkers less susceptible to advertising.

3. Enjoy the Outdoors

Young people who grow up learning the delights of natural beauty are less interested in having lots of stuff in order to be happy. Walk in the park, hike in the mountains, sleep-out in the backyard, camp, canoe, visit local botanical gardens or state and national parks.

4. Personalize Celebrations

Personal “presence” can be more satisfying than purchased presents when we celebrate birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions. Surprise parties, albums with special photos and personal statements, “homemade” gifts, going special places, etc., are all wonderful alternatives to consumer-oriented rituals.

5. Open Homes and Hearts to Others

Hospitality at home can include welcoming new neighbors, reaching out to those living alone, helping at food pantries and including those separated from family during holidays.

6. Spare and Share

Set up a regular process for cutting back on desserts, costly entertainment, or new clothes. Calculate the savings and decide as a family how to distribute it.

7. Institute an “Exchange System”

For each new item brought into the home, give away a similar item to someone in need.

8. Shop with a Conscience

Buy from local farm markets, eat at neighborhood restaurants, shop at local stores, and participate in boycotts of companies that exploit workers to demonstrate and teach a sense of social responsibility.

9. Provide Clothing Allowances and Shop at Thrift Stores

Occasionally using thrift stores when children are young opens up a new world for them beyond the mall. Putting older children on a clothing allowance helps them learn how to budget, shop for bargains, and prioritize as they realize how overpriced things can be.