



TV - Turnoff News



Dear Parents:

As you already know, our school is participating in the TV-Turnoff Week together with thousands of other schools and communities around the world. The purpose is to take a healthy break from TV and re-focus on activities that are more academically, socially and physically rewarding. The official international week is April 19th -25th 2010. We have decided to dedicate one night every month during January through May for a Family TV Turnoff Night.

This week kicks off our 1st event, the Harmony Family Food Challenge on Wednesday, January 20th 6-8 pm. Please join us for a night of fun with cooking, tasting, exploring art with food and possibly even win a prize. This is a free event, but we do ask that each family donate 1 non perishable food item which will be donated to a local food bank.

We encourage your whole family to participate by leaving your television sets off for the night. We know that everyone has a hectic schedule. We ask that if you can't join us take some time to spend with your family. Cook a meal together, play a game, just sit and chat, or ask your family about their day for a few minutes.

As part of this year TV-Turnoff, our TV Turnoff Committee is working hard on some really special events. Mark your Calendars for the following dates. Thursday, February 25th is when we plan to have Sergeant Jeff Charous and his NJST K-9, Kaiser, followed by Jeff Serdinsky's Martial Arts group. This is a free event but we do ask families to bring a dog or cat item which will be donated to a local shelter. Wednesday, March 24th is craft night. This will be a sign up event. More information will be sent home as the event gets closer. Friday, April 23rd will be a fun night with Mad Science. This event will cost \$15 per family. Advance sign up is required and more information will be coming home. Friday, May 21st is a very special family event that is still being working on. More information to follow soon.

The success of previous TV-Turnoff Weeks demonstrates that a solid one-week recess from television allows people more time to talk, read, volunteer, exercise, play, create and participate in their community. The purpose of TV-Turnoff Week is to examine the extent to which television detracts from more productive and rewarding activities and to reconsider the role of television in our daily lives. It is also about having more fun. We want everyone to get out, away from the TV and have fun with your family and friends at least once a month. Hopefully these events will inspire you to enjoy life with out television for a few hours or the whole week.

As a reminder, here are some things to do on your time.

Indoor Activities

The following activities need only a few simple supplies. Gather items to be used for crafts, such as rubber stamps, crayons, color pencils, stickers, old postage stamps, markers, outdated magazines, uncooked fun-shaped pasta, yarn, construction paper, and buttons. With these items your family can make:

- * A creativity book. Make a book by lacing several pages of paper together with yarn. At the bottom of each page, give a topic for your children to draw. For example, "Draw your favorite vacation spot" or "Create a new animal." Use your imagination for creating a great bedtime story together.
- * A mini scrapbook. Have your child cut out theme pictures from old magazines (such as puppies and kittens or things that remind them of summer) to paste in the book.

- Attend a high school sporting event. Start a neighborhood basketball, soccer, or kickball game.
- Go play with your pet.
- Write a letter to a friend or relative.
- Learn to cook or create a new recipe together as a family.
- Read magazines or newspapers together.
- Plan a family slumber party.
- Go through your closets and clothes. Donate surplus items to Goodwill, the Salvation Army or a local rummage sale.
- Get out the family photo album. Research your family history. Add your current life to your album.
- Make crafts to give as gifts for future birthdays or holidays. The web is a great resource.
- Learn to say simple phrases in a few different languages.
- Ask an older family member to tell you a story about his or her childhood. Write about it.
- Learn some new riddles or jokes.
- Bake two batches of cookies; one for your family and one for a neighbor.
- Watch the night sky through binoculars; identify the different constellations. Observe the moon.
- Begin a family project.
- **HAVE A PARTY TO CELEBRATE A TV-FREE WEEK.**

ANSWERS TO 10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) "Why turn off the television completely? Can we do it for just one day?"

Turning off the television for seven full days helps participants realize that life without television is not torture and may actually be more fun. A multi-day TV "fast" allows sufficient time for the development of habits likely to be more productive and rewarding. A one day turnoff provides too little challenge.

2) "Is all TV bad? What about the Discovery Channel or PBS?"

All TV is passive, sedentary and non-experiential. Most viewers tend to watch show after show--not individual programs. Instead of watching a documentary about birds, go out (with binoculars if you have them) and see how many real birds you can identify in your neighborhood. The purpose of National TV-Turnoff Week is to leave behind judgments about the quality of television and focus instead on creating, discovering, building, participating and doing.

3) "What about media literacy and teaching critical viewing skills?"

By going without television for a week, people will learn a great deal about their television habits and will likely be more critical viewers if and when they decide to return to the tube. A TV "fast" is a path to media literacy.

4) "I can't give up my programs! Don't interfere in my home!"

Remember that a TV-Turnoff is voluntary and meant to be fun. It's intended to build family and community spirit.