



## Charlotte Regional Office Counseling

### Peace of Mind The Songs of Summer

by Lori Fox, Counseling Supervisor

Yessiree, summertime has officially arrived! Some of us know this because the weather is hot and sticky, our main streets are lined with American flags for the Fourth of July parade, and the radio is cranking those songs that make us want to head to the beach. But for all too many of us, we realize the season has begun when we hear these two classic tunes, “Mom, Joey looked at me again...Hey, he hit me too...stop it!” and who could forget the ever-popular, “I’m bored.” We ask ourselves, when did summer stop feeling like heaven on earth and begin feeling like a three-month sentence of conflict-resolution and perpetual event planning? If the start of July has you feeling less like Free Bird and more like Witchy Woman, read on for some liberating tips.

#### Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?

Try to build in a rhythm to your summer days. Maybe mornings are for chores and running errands. Afternoons are for adventures to the water park, shopping mall, the Raptor Center or Imaginon. It doesn’t really matter...find what works for your family. The important thing is having a sense of routine even though school is out.

#### Peace Train

Can’t we all just get along? If too much togetherness is causing riots in your household, try:

- Setting a timer for the sharing of toys, television, computer, etc.
- Deciding on a family tactic for resolving conflict such as “rock, paper, scissors” or rolling dice.
- Posting rules on the refrigerator for consequences to arguments and fights.
- When squabbles do break out, don’t get to the bottom of who did what to whom first. Rather, all involved in the skirmish receive the consequence, such as time out in separate corners (rule of thumb is one minute for each year of the child's age). This way, kids are motivated to work things out between themselves.

#### Shower The People

Keep in mind, these days, long as they may seem, are fleeting. Use this special time to deepen your relationships. In the summer, it’s the simple things that matter most. On Sunday after Mass, pack a picnic and the canoe and head out to the lake. At the end of the day, turn off the TV and read aloud from a summery page turner (even older kids like to be read to). Try to make a special “date” for each child during the week to do something unique with them. Go to a favorite restaurant, a movie, or sports event. Create time to play board games as a family. Children cherish this kind of attention and will remember these times well into adulthood.

Above all else, face this summer with a Peaceful, Easy Feeling and enjoy two of God's greatest gifts: time and family, with a song in your heart.