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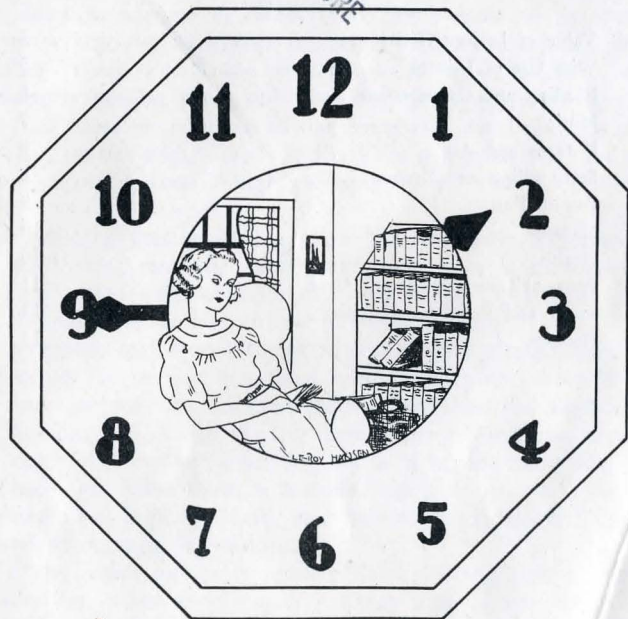
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PLANNING The LEISURE HOURS



The University of Nebraska Agricultural College Extension Service
and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

CONTENTS

Value of Leisure Hours.....	3
Wise Use of Leisure.....	5
Reading and Conversation.....	6
Music	7
Pictures and Art.....	8
Story-telling and Drama	8
Family Fun	9
Nature	10
Health	10
Personal Development and Care.....	11
Social and Religious Activities	12
Hobbies	13

Planning The Leisure Hours

MARY E. RUNNALLS

"As a river in the sea, work finds its fulfillment in the depth of leisure."

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Value of Leisure Hours

IT WAS Benjamin Franklin who said, "Employ thy time well if thou meanest to gain leisure! And since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour! Leisure is the time for doing something useful. This leisure the diligent man will obtain; but the lazy man never. . . . Industry gives comfort, and plenty, and respect."

Of all the problems with which the busy homemaker has to deal, the most difficult one is how to find time and opportunity to do the things she really wants to do, and how to help the rest of her family do the same. From our day-time income of twenty-four hours most of us spend the largest part for just the necessities of life, which are working, sleeping, and the other "musts", and save little time for "time to live". Most of us are constantly getting ready to "live" but never quite get there. We sometimes find ourselves bending all our energies toward making a living and as a result do not really "live" at all. This is a great pity, for we fall so far short of our Creator's high purpose for us, that *we should live abundantly*.

We are realizing that making a good life is more important than making a good living, and that every individual needs to have the opportunity to develop his own abilities and interests to the fullest. It is as important to know how to live as how to make a living.

If you had time and money to spend just as you pleased, how would you use it to get the deepest and most lasting satisfaction from it? Each individual must answer this question for himself. And the answer would constantly be changing, for as we live, new fields are opening to us. We would all agree that we are searching for a rich, abundant life, a well developed body, an active mind, a friendly spirit, the joy of achievement or of excelling in at least one field, and that we want happy family relationships and stimulating friendships.

Little, if any, extra money is needed for this living side of life; such living is based on values more real and lasting than money values. As to time, we may deliberately take some of the hours we have been devoting to keeping alive and so have more time for making life worth living.

Good management in the home means that a part of the twenty-four hours of an average day is used for leisure time, and not all for work and sleep. Time for work and time for living are essential in the lives of all individuals. Good management and wise planning of time are not being employed if the entire day is taken up with work. Getting leisure time is largely a matter of taking it, for some days may seem too busy for leisure.

It is important that the homemaker manage her work, her time, and energy so well that she has time for some of the more worth-while things of life. She plans to have time for herself, her family, and her community. We are realizing that "the home does not meet its full purpose unless it allows us physical, intellectual, and emotional development and refreshment." Every one needs some leisure time, some time to find out exactly what he or she wants out of life, a chance to develop better standards of living.

If you want to make your spare time count for the most in terms of enjoyment, refreshment, and ultimate satisfaction, the use of your leisure hours needs careful planning. Planning involves three steps:

1. Figuring out how much spare time you will have,
2. Dividing this time,
 - a. The part you will spend in miscellaneous activity,
 - b. The part you devote to some planned recreation, hobby, or play activity,
3. Choosing your recreation, hobby, or play activity.

Don't be a spendthrift with your free time. Use a budget system. Budgeting spare time means planning how to use it. Today planning is a part of any big endeavor that is successfully carried out. Your life's happiness is your biggest endeavor. Planning can make life mean more to you. Leisure time, like money, must be saved before it is spent and its use must be planned if its spending is to bring permanent pleasure.

Time is not the only important factor in the possibility of leisure for the family. There must be health and energy to enjoy and make good use of leisure. Social and religious views, customs, and conventions may influence the type of recreation. Education and social background determine the degree of satisfaction secured. Fashion or prevailing fads often dictate to individuals. Worry and the best benefits derived from leisure do not mix well. Money may be needed to secure certain desired forms of leisure.

The creative use of leisure has resulted in some of the greatest discoveries of the ages. For example, James Watt as a child is said to have spent hours playing with a spoon in the steam of a teakettle. His aunt, meanwhile, scolded him for not doing something worth while. From his having time to experiment and think came later the discovery of the principle of the steam engine.

Thomas Edison, the wizard of science, as a small boy constantly "tinkered" and tried to discover things for himself through experimentation in his free time. This early play furnished the background of knowledge and skill for his later renowned discoveries. This evolution from childhood play to great achievement was so gradual in Edison's case that he said after many years of what seemed to others arduous effort, "I've never worked a day in my life."

Working in the spirit of play is possibly the crowning achievement of leisure time well spent. Charles Lindbergh is a good example of another

whose boyish adventures have been turned to account in adult achievement. Henry L. K. Shaw, one-time president of the Child Hygiene Association of America, has said, "A nation may waste its water power, destroy its forest, and kill its game, and it will be doing itself only an economic injustice; but it can not hold its own for supremacy unless the health, the pleasure, and the leisure of its children are conserved."

Leisure after all is very largely a state of mind—a sense of values—taking time to do the thing you would like to do instead of the thing you think you have to do.

*"If your nose is close to the grindstone rough,
And you hold it down there long enough,
In time you'll say there's no such thing
As brooks that babble and birds that sing.
These three will all your world compose—
Just you, the stone, and your worn old nose."*

Wise Use of Leisure

"Life is what we are alive to. It is not length but breadth. To be alive only to appetite, pleasure, pride, money making, and not to goodness and kindness, purity and love, history, poetry and music, flowers, the arts, God, and the eternal hopes is to be all but dead."—MALTHIE D. BABCOCK.

The right use of leisure time is an important question to people of our day. With modern methods of production, greater efficiency in all kinds of labor, and shorter working days people are going to have more leisure time than they have ever had before. The homemaker is constantly acquiring more labor-saving equipment and is learning to shorten her work hours so that more leisure is available to her, too. If this leisure time is put to good use it will have a helpful effect upon individual communities and the country as a whole.

Dr. Henry C. Taylor, authority on economics and a recent president of the American Country Life Association, says: "The time has come when farmers should devote more time to acquiring that culture which our ancestors of necessity discarded in the old pioneer days. It may be that instead of better farming and better business as a basis of better living we must resort to less farming as a means of more living. Instead of throwing our entire energy into making dollars we may well devote more of our time to the development of an individual culture, a family culture and a community culture."

Leisure in the home is not as much a matter of wealth or time as it is a matter of attitudes. All work and no play not only makes a person dull but robs one of physical poise and beauty and impoverishes the soul. Time spent in play or doing something interesting outside of essential work recreates both body and soul. It gives a feeling of personal growth which is essential to contentment and builds a storehouse of memories which lightens routine and makes home life more colorful and happy.

It is the homemaker's responsibility not only to plan for her own leisure but to assist her family members in planning for their leisure. Families are as different as individuals; what one likes, another may discard. Home is the place where each member of the family should be able to develop his individuality and have an opportunity to follow his own special interests.

Leisure time may be used in many ways, as follows:

Mastery of an art or craft	Outdoor skills
A satisfying hobby	Expert knowledge of some field
A rich mental life	Advancement in one's work
Sound health and a strong body	An education

Reading and Conversation

*"Books are keys to wisdom's treasure;
Books are gates to lands of pleasure;
Books are paths that upward lead;
Books are friends; come, let us read."*

Reading stimulates thought. No homemaker can expect to be an ideal homemaker unless she reads and thinks. Henry Ford says, "An educated man is one who can accomplish things. A man who can not think is not an educated man. Thinking is the hardest work anyone can do." Books and magazines can help to make the homemaker a thinking individual.

Every home should have a growing library. A Bible, dictionary, atlas, encyclopedia, and bird and flower books are books that make a start in the home library. One splendid way to build up a home library is to give books for birthday, Christmas, and other holiday gifts. In addition to this, the public library and the State Library Commission offer their services to you.



Books feed the mind and perhaps the soul; they beautify and enrich our mental life.

In many households reading is postponed for lack of time. Every member of the family should be encouraged to fit reading time into his own daily plan. The important thing is not to neglect or postpone it. Many a housewife has set aside and stored up unread magazines in the hope that some day she can get them out and read them to her heart's content. But will that time ever come if you do not take it now?

A good many people who read a great deal do not keep their reading balanced. In choosing the family reading material, care should be taken to provide the five types of reading: that is, inspirational, current events, vocational, educational, and recreational.

To encourage a love of and desire for reading, the home needs to offer more than a convenient place and conducive atmosphere. Parents can show a genuine interest in reading. Books should be discussed as live factors in every-day life. Reading material should be easily available and inviting.

It has been said that conversation is a lost art. Can we make the time spent in talking as worth while as that which we give to reading? Our conversation should be a means of obtaining new information, new points of view, better understanding, a means of stimulating our thinking and our sense of humor. Unwritten words act as mirrors that reveal something of our souls to others. Let us make our conversation the best possible reflection!

Music

*"Just whistle a bit if the day be dark
And the sky be overcast;
If mute be the voice of the piping lark,
Why, pipe your own small blast."*

—PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR.

No home is complete without music. We have passed the point where music is thought of as a luxury and a source of pleasure and now we realize its importance in the home as a character builder, a refining influence for nations and individuals and an educational necessity. Music is one of the most important elements in modern culture.

If we do not like good music, it is because we are not trained to appreciate it; it is not the

fault of the music. The more good music we hear and the more we learn about it, the better able we are to appreciate it.

One of the first ways to learn to enjoy a piece of music is to hear the story of it, or perhaps why it was written and something about the composer and his life. If someone in the family is musician enough to interpret the world's great music, that is fortunate but in the age of radio almost every home may enjoy a close acquaintance with the great masters.



Good music as a daily experience in early life is as important to present and future enjoyment as good food is to health.

"Show me the home wherein music dwells and I shall show you a happy, peaceful, and contented home," said Longfellow.

Pictures and Art

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."—JOHN KEATS.

One of the goals of every homemaker is to learn to appreciate good pictures and then to give her children the ability to enjoy them. We can learn much from pictures. A greater part of what we see through pictures is retained in our memories than of what we hear or even read. A picture to be worthy of a place on our walls should have beauty in line, color, and subject. As we look at a picture, consciously or unconsciously we should see beauty in it. Any beauty which is in our lives we reflect back again to others.

The companionship of good pictures is a constant source of pleasure as well as an influence in forming the tastes and ideals of the members of the family. Picture study can be a pleasure for anyone who indulges in it. It is fascinating and inexhaustible, for one could study a lifetime learning to appreciate good pictures and becoming acquainted with famous artists.

Everyone has the opportunity to create and cultivate the appreciation of beauty in the every-day things about us: a room attractively arranged; a table nicely set; flower arrangements; a glass of sparkling jelly; a lovely garden, and other simple homely things about us but rich with satisfaction.

When beauty is expressed in our surroundings, it becomes a part of our life and personality. Beauty or art is not a thing to be set apart for occasional enjoyment but should be sought in everything we do.

Story-telling and Drama

*"Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour."*

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

Story-telling is a form of recreation which appeals to all ages and to all classes but is not used by people nearly as much as its value deserves. A well-told story gives pleasure, is an escape from the commonplace, arouses the emotions, develops a sense of humor, helps us to see the other fellow's point of view, cultivates a taste for literature, art, and music, and increases love of nature and animal life. Story-telling also relaxes mental

tension, improves the thought and expression of language, gives a better knowledge of life, helps to create the desire to serve, and makes for finer companionship.

"Tell me a story" is often heard from the younger members of the family. What a chance this affords for choice hours of family fun! Children love to do some of the story-telling. Any hour is story hour, but meal time and fireplace time are especially suited to this pleasure. These stories may be brought to life with mother and father joining in this "acting out" stunt.

Family Fun

*"A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men."*

Even in the busiest families the whole group can be brought together for some happy occasion each day. It may be at meal time, around the fireside, at night, or on some regular weekly occasion, with a different member of the family planning the activities each time. Red-letter days, such as holidays, birthdays, and any other special event will offer priceless opportunities for family fun.

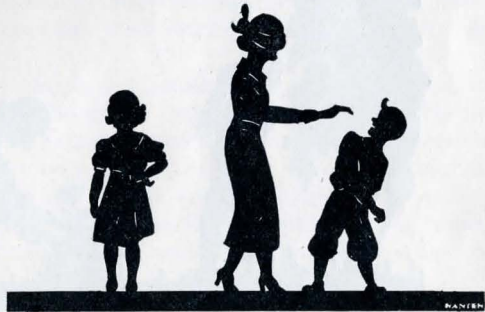
Playing together as a family gives parents and children a better chance to understand each other and welds them together as a happy family group. Outdoor games which might be suggested are: archery, croquet, volleyball, horse-shoes, and shuffleboard. Indoor games such as checkers, dominoes, chess,

ping-pong, and home-made game equipment suggest evenings of family fun, rich with the joy of real living.

To the child, play is the winning of life; to grown people, play is the renewing of life. Through play and games men and women and children find relaxation and the opportunity for creative expression.

Some families have a family fun night each week for the parents and children to enjoy themselves together. Plans for the family fun night might be made at the family council. Various members of the group may take turns sharing the major responsibility for each night.

Parties, picnics, and outings together always are good times never to be forgotten.



Nature

*"Away from the crowded city
Alone with his flock and his herds
Refreshed by the winds of heaven
And the music of the singing birds
He finds growth for the soul within him,
Sees life in the o'eturned sod,
And while tilling the crops he has planted
He humbly walks with his God."*

The woods, fields, and streams hold a boundless source of interest and new adventure. To know and love the outdoor world is a worth-while expenditure of leisure time for the whole family. What could be more fun than hikes, picnics, fishing trips, bird and flower expeditions, and star study for the family? Trips and excursions, whether long or short, frequent or seldom, are precious family memories and the companionship



for the time being and the reminiscence of the happy experiences shared together are priceless gifts for our "living" time. If we live in or near the country, nature surrounds us with beauty which defies the skill of the greatest artists. We must train ourselves to take time to see and appreciate it. Not only in the landscape, but in the sunrise, sunset, clouds, stars, snows, and in plants and flowers. "Nature is the art of God."

Health

"All good and evil, whether of the body or in human nature, originate in the soul. And, therefore, if the head and body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul."—PLATO.

Health may be considered an item which may take a part of the homemaker's time. The woman who really finds that it is fun to keep well reflects health in her personal appearance. She has good posture, a clear

complexion, well-kept hair, is neat and well-groomed, and has a bright and alert expression. She has a wholesome personality and creates this kind of atmosphere in her home. She establishes a feeling of security and confidence, develops positive attitudes, emphasizing achievement and success rather than dwelling on symptoms and danger which may cause fears to develop.

How easy it is for rural people in Nebraska to have the essentials of good health, fresh air, sunshine, exercise, rest, pure water, and adequate food. The homemaker not only needs to assure good health for her family but sets the example by observing good health habits herself. She considers that rest and exercise are important to good health.



The homemaker is convinced that the short time spent each day in resting and relaxing gives her the extra energy that enables her to accomplish more than do those who think they cannot take time to rest.

The right conception of health is not health for health's sake, but for life's sake. Health is that condition of the body which makes possible the highest enjoyment of life, the greatest constructive work, and the greatest service to the world. It involves keeping the body and mind at the highest levels and living one's best. Health is that quality of life which renders the individual fit to live most and to serve best. Health for the homemaker means living more abundantly. "Good health and good sense are two of life's greatest blessings."

Personal Development and Care

"Shed no tears over your lack of early advantages. No really great man ever had any advantages that he himself did not create."

Personal development is of first importance to oneself and is the sign of growth. We either go forward or slip backward but we do not stand still.

The desire to keep growing is a duty to ourselves and to our family. The old saying, "One is never too old to learn," is a truth that is being proved every day. Regardless of age, one may continue to learn if the desire to learn is present.

A dear old Quaker lady distinguished for her youthful appearance was asked what she used to preserve her charms. She replied sweetly, "I use

for the lips, truth; for the voice, prayer; for the eyes, pity; for the hands, charity; for the figure, uprightness; and for the heart, love."

Personal charm, like other precious things in life, does not happen without effort. The busy homemaker will find that a short time each day devoted to her personal care will repay her well.

Every homemaker owes it to herself and to her family to look her best at all times. Personal loveliness is not a matter of a pretty face but is expressed by all that is lovely about one.

Personal charm involves clear skin, well-cared-for hair, sparkling eyes, and neatness of dress. Poise is an important characteristic in a charming woman and is affected by one's personal appearance.

It is a matter of family pride and satisfaction for the homemaker to look well. She will be well repaid in personal satisfaction and family appreciation if she will but take time to make the most of herself.

Social and Religious Activities

"Life isn't taking in only, it's giving out, too. And it's not giving out only work or deeds or things we've made. It's giving ourselves out too—freely, freely, to other people. Giving ourselves in comradeship, in understanding, in joy, in love."—ANTHONY HOPE.

The first interest of the homemaker is that of her home and family but closely allied to that are her community interests, including the church, social, and club activities.

Home and community life are so closely related that it is difficult to distinguish when home influence ends and community influence begins. The community organization may either widen or narrow the outlook of the families dwelling therein.



The ideal homemaker refuses to consider only the personal interests of her family but works for the promotion of community welfare that will benefit the many. Real community life is possible only when people living within a community will cooperate and work together for a common good.

A famous lecturer once said that the walls of a home extend just as far as the members from that home happen to go. The homemaker of today must be familiar with and have an interest in what is happening in this enlarged home—this enlarged community where her children all the while are being influenced.

A problem facing most communities today is how to keep the young people happy and contented. First, the parents must have a keen interest and put forth effort in making the home community a good one. It is the homemaker's privilege to be interested in helping to provide for her community more wholesome recreation, more good reading material for young and old, and better schools and churches to meet the needs and interests of the families in the community.

The churches in your community need your interest and help. Religion is service to man. No man can really live without being religious, giving wholeheartedly and joyously of himself and his goods in the service and welfare of his fellow men. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "What you do for yourself dies when you die but what you do for your community lives after you."

Hobbies

<i>Last week my neighbor said to me:</i>	<i>Says I: "Dear me, your logic's wrong,</i>
<i>"Life's just an empty bubble,</i>	<i>Fun never comes through sighing,</i>
<i>Why, for each pint of joy I get</i>	<i>Why, happiness just can't be found</i>
<i>I have a peck of trouble."</i>	<i>By folks who keep on crying.</i>

*"There is a sayin', old but true,
That life's jest as we take it;
If you don't get your share of joy
Perhaps you don't help make it."*

Years ago the English used the word "hobby" for two different kinds of horses. One was a nag of hardy Irish breed which could be ridden over any kind of country in any kind of wind or weather. It was a favorite, because it was both enjoyable and serviceable. The other "hobby horse" was a small dummy figure of a horse, with a hole through its body so that it could be slipped over the body of a man and fastened around his waist. This was worn by early Morris dancers to create the appearance of riding a horse. Thus originated the expression "riding a hobby". It was said that these English horses were ambling nags, which suggests to us a leisurely recreational journey, as we can ride away on our hobby horses from daily cares and monotonous routine. In other words, we escape.



That is what a hobby can and should do for us. It is an escape into chosen fields of pleasure and diverse interest.

Anyone may have a hobby or several, and the only way to have them is to cultivate them. We can borrow them from our friends but we can not buy them. They become ours only by actual use. Individuals who have never learned the delights of ambling away from monotony on a

hobby have missed much. Perhaps they may never have realized that they will come back to their duties refreshed in body and in spirit, better companions to husband and children, more interesting to friends and in general more eager, alert, and less self-centered than the perpetual stay-at-home who has never escaped by way of a hobby.

A good hobby for you depends entirely upon your own tastes and interests. There is all the world to choose from. Whatever you do with your spare time is yours; however, it should be something that delights you. If it doesn't, then you are not on the right track and it is not a hobby, at least for you.

Everyone needs to own a hobby and to ride it hard, perhaps not at a galloping speed, but if you ride upon the ambling steed of old England in an easy, steady way, you will become more mellowed and relaxed by the unhurried, thoughtful journey.

In order to share in the good things of life everyone needs a hobby, not because it is good for him, not to improve or uplift him, but because it will help him to live more fully. Its interest absorbs his whole being so that for the time he is truly himself, and it gives him real pleasure. Own a hobby and ride your hobby just because it is such good fun.

Children should be encouraged in their hobbies. A child's hobby usually is not very long-lived but interests him while it lasts. Let children experiment with many. Older people need hobbies to sustain interests and to keep a good grip on life. Busy people need hobbies to broaden their horizons, to deepen their interests, or to keep from taking themselves too seriously.

If one hasn't the hobby habit, how can it be acquired? What interests you? What is the subject about which you have always had a wistfulness to know more? When choosing a hobby, not even the sky limits the possibilities. The individual may have very definite limits of time and of money and of ability which he will want to consider along with his interests in making a choice. Many times a person merely finds himself completely absorbed in a hobby without knowing just when or how the interest developed. The important thing in selecting a hobby is to be yourself and to be honest with yourself as to what you want to do.

There are many types and kinds of hobbies. They may be classified as follows: doing things, acquiring things, creating things, and learning things. Doing things includes games and sports and other things you do, such as bicycling, traveling, singing, acting, etc. Many people enjoy the type of hobby which is suggested second and which is known as collecting. Almost every article of human use has been collected, from old-time vehicles to postage stamps. Creating things opens up the whole field of arts, as drawing, painting, and all hand arts, music, and drama. Crafts such as wood and metal crafts, building, weaving, pottery, block printing, etc., are included under this classification. The great difference between doing things and making things is that the former is more social. You do things

generally with other people. Learning things is a by-product of any real hobby but it also offers wide fields in itself—as study in the arts, history, languages, and in the whole realm of the sciences—chemistry, physics, astronomy, mathematics, etc.

It is an old, old rule that to be interesting one must be interested. The skill or knowledge which comes from pursuing a hobby makes you more entertaining to others, and more interesting to yourself. No man is uninteresting who is interested in something. When choosing a hobby a personal inventory or self-examination is necessary to arrive at some sort of understanding of your natural bent or inclination for a congenial spare-time recreation. Is there something that you have always wanted to do? Do I like best doing things, making things, acquiring things, or learning things? Questions such as these will help make up your mind if you have not already done so.

Hobbies are neither drugs nor time-killers. They are play that is worth while, that develops, creates, educates, gives life a new dimension. A hobby should exercise the imagination, exercise the fancy, stimulate invention. Whatever you do with that spare time of yours, it should be something that gives you keen delight. If it doesn't, then it is not a hobby, at least for you. You have guessed wrong and should begin all over.

The following list may suggest a hobby to you that will inspire and help you in finding your own special kind of hobby:

Doing things.—There are many activities which are classified under this heading. It might be said that all leisure-time activities that do not consist of making or collecting things or pursuing a definite course of study come under this head, such as:

Acting and dramatics	Conversation	Flowers	Puzzles
Animals and pets	Dancing	Fruit-raising	Reading
Bee culture	Debating	Games and sports	Rock gardens
Clubs, societies, and organizations	Entertaining	Gardening	Story-telling

Making things.—A large number of hobbies come under this heading:

Cookery	Block printing	Chair caning	Puppet shows
Flower arrangement	Lacquering	Home decoration	Scrapbooks
Gardening	Leather	Needlework	Weaving
Basketry	Metal work	Painting	Woodwork
Batik	Modelling in clay	Photography	Writing

Acquiring things.—We all have the instinct to collect. No list could be complete of articles that could be collected. Use your wits and these subjects will suggest others. Invent a hobby of your own.

Albums	Books	Coins	Patterns	Silver
Antiques	Bottles	Colored glass	Pottery	Spoons
Autographs	Butterflies	Clocks	Postcards	Stamps
Banks	Canes	Dolls	Recipes	Watches
Bells	Clippings	Paintings and prints	Shells	Wild flowers

Learning things.—This may mean pursuing a course of study in what interests you most. To certain people study is a fascinating pursuit. An education is not necessary. By this means you can educate yourself.

Art and music	Bird study	Engineering	Natural science
Aeronautics	Botany	Geography	Psychology
Architecture	Chemistry	History	Travel
Astronomy	Civics	Mathematics	Zoology

Conclusion

“Leisure is an essential element in any well-rounded and complete living.” If we set our goals high and conscientiously manage our time, energy, and money we can have a home in which the family may live abundantly. In our ideal home, there will be some leisure for each member of the family. If the leisure time is carefully thought out and well planned, it will do what you want it to in developing a well-rounded plan of home-making.

The dwelling place of more abundant living is in the home and family life, when right human relationships exist. Homemakers may well devote a substantial part of their time to building up fine family life. Family fun, including conversation in the family around the table and fireside, family games, singing together, reading aloud, going to church together, planning, working, and playing together make for a happy, comfortable home.

Good communities are built from good families and the good community is the stepping stone to the good nation.

The family that has learned to live and work, sing, read, play, plan, and pray together is reaching toward the abundant life.