



an
Intentional

R E T R E A T

for moms

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A swlw resource by
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Sometimes, we can spend so much time serving our family, community, and business that we are left running on an empty, depleted tank for weeks, months, or years at a time. And while the idea of a weekend away can sound amazing, **we can also be overwhelmed at the idea of it.**

What do you DO?

Do you actually DO anything?

If you're supposed to "relax" or have "fun"... What does that even mean for YOU anymore?

And by the way, won't you be overwhelmed with guilt?

Isn't leaving your family for a whole weekend SELFISH?

I personally walked through a season of serving my family, home educating my children, having babies back to back, launching a business, and grieving the loss of a parent that left me so empty, I had no IDEA what even made me feel relaxed or joyful. ***What did I actually enjoy to do, without any regard for anyone else? How do I get past the guilt of abandoning my home and children for 2-3 days? Does my husband really understand or is he low-key resenting me? Am I lazy, weak, or crazy for feeling like I want to run away from my life.... a life filled with people and work and purpose that I do truly love and appreciate?***

Over time, God revealed many truths about this time away from my family that I want to share with you right now. These might not "feel" true for you yet, but they are grounded in THE Truth, so take some time to pray through each of them.

There are three key things I want you to remember about an intentional retreat:

- » You are not "running away" from your family. You are running **TO God.**
- » You are a part of your family, which means *your* happiness, physical health, mental wellbeing, and spiritual state are just as valuable as your children's and husband's. **Not only that, but your family loves and values YOU above all else, and they WANT you to be happy and feel rested and restored.** Investing in YOU is investing in THEM. (Chant that a few times until it reaches the recesses of your heart.)
- » We have been released from slavery to serve God. We cannot serve from empty. We can do nothing apart from Christ. (Exodus 8:1, Mark 1:35, John 15:5)

You may now have an idea of something you'd like to do or a setting you'd like to curate on your retreat. *If not, that's OK.* It's perfectly normal to be really unsure of how you best relax. Or you might be confident that all you need is time alone to be relaxed and restored. Definitely don't make this more complicated than it needs to be for YOU (because again, this is all about you, friend.) If you still aren't sure what you might "do" to help yourself relax, walk into the weekend trusting that God will meet you there. He will help you get back in touch with your own needs, desires, and joy. He will restore and revive your heart, so if you ONLY come prepared to meet with Him, you'll be in good shape.

Let's talk about what to pack! Here's another brainstorming session:

What is your favorite thing to eat?

What's your favorite thing to wear?

What's your favorite thing to watch?

What do you enjoy to read?

List your 5 favorite songs.

What makes you laugh till you cry?

What author, singer, or podcaster leaves you feeling revived and restored?

Pack THOSE THINGS.

You don't have to eat it all, listen to it all, or read it all. But pack it anyway. ***Lavish yourself with every favorite thing you own, eat, or love.*** Make it all available to YOU for YOUR ENJOYMENT, if/when the mood strikes. *Remember, this isn't about spending big bucks but spoiling yourself with every cup-filling thing in your life and with the freedom to partake in each of those things as YOU FEEL LIKE IT.*

(You'll be shocked at how life-giving it is to just be able to do exactly what YOU feel like doing and to have the opportunity to make small choices in your day without having to necessarily consider the needs, emotions, and desires of everyone else in your family first.)

I know that when I'm doing a brand new thing, I really like to see how someone else has already done it. If alone time is completely foreign to you (like it was for me for a very long season), you might need an example of how things go for someone else. I've included my own Friday-Sunday sample schedule below, not as a map of what YOU "should" do, but as a way to inspire and clarify for you if you're still feeling overwhelmed or uncertain.

Before Friday (or whenever you leave), here are a few notes and "rules" that I follow for my retreat:

- » It's not your job to pack 3 days worth of "mothering" or care-taking into the days before you leave. Your husband can survive this time with your children.
- » ***He can not only survive but THRIVE, and this time can be something your family begins to look forward to. Trust me. This is an opportunity for growth and exploration for you BOTH.***
- » Make sure you communicate with him that you won't be available to help him find shoes or baseballs or the jar of pickles via text.
- » Let anyone who needs to know in your life that you are completely unavailable and "off the clock" during this retreat, except for legit emergencies.
- » Go as far as to turn off your phone and have your husband call the hotel in the event of an emergency.
- » Remove all social media and email accounts from your phone.
- » Don't bring your computer. Go old school and head out with a notebook and pen instead.
- » I usually stock our home with groceries or have an order delivered right as I'm leaving. I add in some convenience foods and ask my husband if he has any special requests before shopping.
- » I do my normal cleaning before I leave, knowing that when I get home, my home will NOT look exactly like I want it to. But I do communicate to my family that coming home from a retreat to a disaster undoes a bit of the relaxation, so I would appreciate a decent clean-up when I'm on my way home. *They always do a quick load of dishes and clear the floor right as I'm arriving.*

Friday Afternoon

- » I tend to leave on Friday afternoon as soon as my husband gets home from work. I spend Friday morning packing my bag, trying to focus on not what I *should* take but I **want** to take.
- » I don't stay far from home so my drive is short. For my first few trips, I would stay further away (about 2hrs) and would have a nice podcast or worship queue set up, depending upon what I felt like. I also find driving in complete silence to just pray (and cry if needed) is really cathartic.

- » Before arriving at my hotel, I run by Target and get some easy hotel snacks. Microwave popcorn, sodas, some total junk food, etc. Not what I would normally eat or *should* eat but things that are fun treats that I enjoy.
- » Friday evening is usually spent in total veg mode. I listen to some worship music, take a hot shower, enjoy peeing by myself, sit on the balcony, visit the hotel restaurant or order room service. I queue up my favorite shows that make me belly laugh and have a complete, lazy, veg time because that's how *I* feel really refreshed.

Saturday

- » I sleep in! Or at least I try. (Don't forget to pack a sound machine, favorite pillow or blanket, or anything else you might normally leave behind because it feels "high maintenance." You have full permission to be "high maintenance" this weekend, as long as you don't exhaust yourself.)
- » I order breakfast in or grab something I brought with me.
- » Saturday mid-morning, I have a really in-depth time of prayer, worship, and deep Bible study. I journal heavily during this time as I process best through writing, so figure out what works best for you and do that. If you need to call a best friend to verbally process, do that.
- » After 2 or so hours of study, worship, and prayer, I'm worn out and refreshed simultaneously. I head out of the room and eat lunch. I visit a favorite restaurant and just enjoy silence or favorite music in my car. I eat what I'd like, stay as long as I like, and I enjoy having the opportunity to acknowledge and recognize all my own needs and feelings, processing through my time in the Word earlier.
- » Early through late afternoon, I follow my heart. I may nap. I may watch more TV. I may spend more time in worship or prayer. I may lounge by a pool, visit the beach, or drink coffee and gaze at a beautiful view, depending on where I am. Mostly, I enjoy being "selfish" and just taking this opportunity to remember that I am a singular, unique person, made in the image of God, who has her own set of emotions, needs, and desires. It's a rare treat in a mother's life to observe and follow her own whims, and it's amazingly refreshing. Dig deep into this opportunity to notice your own self, and enjoy this time.
- » I prefer to order dinner in from a favorite restaurant on Saturday night. If I've spent the afternoon in more Bible study, I spend the evening watching a favorite show or reading a light-hearted book. If I took the afternoon to veg out, then I'll usually get back into the Word and continue to work through and pray through anything God has brought to my attention.

Sunday

- » It's not often that we get to sleep in and enjoy a lazy Sunday morning, especially those of you who have family in ministry, so enjoy this time. Remember that your husband is an adult and a parent (obviously), so don't spend this time worrying how his time is going or how he's managing

with getting everyone to church. He's going to be OK, I promise!

» After a leisurely morning in bed with a wonderful breakfast, I dive back into the Word. Check-out is usually around noon, so I enjoy every minute of that. I spend a couple of hours continuing to journal, pray, worship, and press big RESET buttons on many areas of my life during this time of study. I ask for God to reveal, lead, revive, convict, and anoint my thoughts and heart as He sees fit.

» I make sure to take a shower and feel my very best before I re-enter my home. I also give my husband an arrival time and ask him to please make sure the house is not a war zone when I arrive. Since I've spent the weekend away, coming home to a mess can quickly give me a rough start to my week. It is NOT an unreasonable request to ask that your husband and children load the dishwasher, pick up toys, fold a load of laundry, and clear the main surfaces in the house.

Results

You may be wondering- *What should I expect to come from this?* I've found that expectations aren't super helpful because some times we can expect too much. I've had around a dozen intentional weekend retreats and they each vary greatly (in what I do, in what God does in me, and in how I feel after it's all over).

Sometimes I just needed some SLEEP and have felt revived from rest alone. Other times, I needed a full heart reset as I'd grown too dependent upon self and had slowly pulled away from a consistent relationship with God and His Word.

Many times, I end the weekend remembering that I'm still a whole person every single day, and the level of overwhelm that I get to is often the result of NOT stopping often enough to remember that my individual needs and preferences still matter, even in motherhood.

*My needs and preferences don't matter MORE than my family's, **but they do still matter.*** We are called to love our neighbor AS we love ourselves... **which means we still love ourselves.** God doesn't call us to love our family **instead of** loving ourselves, but to love them to the same extent or more. **And HOW we love ourselves is the same as how we love our family members.** When we love our family, we are responsive to their needs. We sense their emotional state, so we encourage them in disappointment and calm them in anxious moments. We sense their physical state, so we have them nap or rest when needed and send them to a quiet spot when they're overwhelmed. We sense their intellectual needs and offer them high-quality books, life-giving adventures, and challenge them to make good decisions for themselves. This weekend is about taking the time to do a hard reset, love ourselves just as we love our families, and then to continue to walk that out in little ways during our daily lives.



Wrapping It Up

When it comes down to it, no matter what music you listen to, shows you veg out watching, Bible stories you read, or treats you shove down your throat, this weekend is all about your heart and its responsiveness to God's. *Life is not about martyring ourselves to busy, overly packed schedules that allow no margin for simply being a human person.* It's about remembering that no matter your season of life, you are reliant on a God who took rest for Himself after a long week of work. We are made to sacrifice, love, serve, and enjoy our busy, hectic lives. But we are also made for limitedness- in the image of an unlimited Creator who was willing to humble Himself and *stop* just to show us how good and right it is to do so.

*So make that pledge today, sweet friend. Make that date with yourself.. with your Father in Heaven. He longs to see you stop and *rest.* He commands you to do so. (And even if you regularly observe the Sabbath, we all know that Sabbath with children is often not exactly a rest.) Jesus took breaks to be alone and pray and lament to His Father. He took breaks from a needy, confused, still-learning, rebellious, sometimes over-zealous group of students to connect deeply with His Father, likely to enjoy some silence and center His own heart upon His calling and all the challenges that it entailed. Be like Jesus friend, and glorify Him as you do it.*

Are you a homeschooling mama?
Do you enjoy to curate educational resources for your children who attend traditional school or are virtual-schooling?

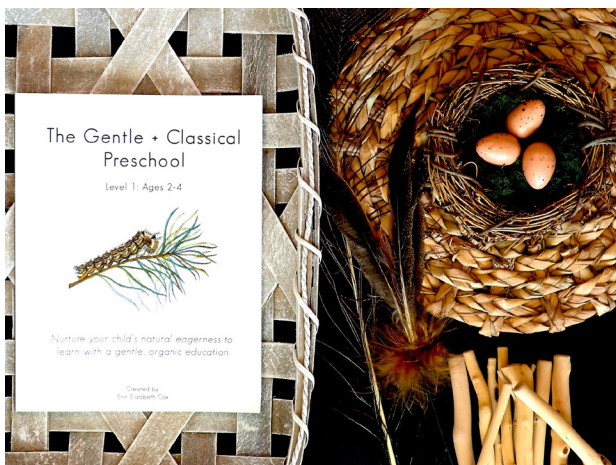
Check out the many free or reasonably-priced resources from The Gentle + Classical Press at ShopGentleClassical.com



Gentle + Classical Primer is a gentle yet robust program for your kindergarten or first grade student. Explore music, art, scripture, and wonder tales that inspire the imagination and cultivate virtue in your little one's heart.



Gentle + Classical Nature is a literature and exploration-based nature study program, rooted in Charlotte Mason and Classical philosophies for your k4-4th grade children.



The Gentle + Classical Preschool is a first introduction to classical education blended with the Charlotte Mason philosophy for mom and her 2-4 year old children. Explore classics in a new way with hands-on activities and play-based learning.



On Mission is a unique magazine-style curriculum that functions as a unit study while practicing Charlotte Mason philosophies surrounding geography, missionaries, culture, and more.