

Episode 388: 5 Things That Actually Matter This Summer

00:00 Embracing Summer: Intentional Planning for Teachers

Linda Kardamis (00:00)

As teachers, we love the summer break, but sometimes we try to cram so much into it or have so many things we want to do. How do we know what really matters? Let's talk about five things that you definitely want to include in your summer in today's episode. Well, welcome back to the Teach 4 the Heart podcast where we tackle teaching challenges from a biblical perspective. This episode is brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation.

I'm here today with Jen Fry, who is one of our Teach 4 the Heart Plus team members, and she is in charge behind the scenes of so much of what you guys see. Jen, thank you so much for joining us on the podcast today.

Jen Frey (00:34)

No, thanks for having me, Linda.

Linda Kardamis (00:36)

And Jen's joining us today because this was her idea of something that we should talk about. And we said, yes, let's do it. And what we want to talk about is your summer plans, right? There is often so much that we want to do, but sometimes it's hard to actually think, okay, what really matters? What should I actually focus on? And if we don't put some intentionality behind that, we can find ourselves in August and realize, wow, the summer just totally flew by without me doing some of the things.

I want to. Jen, what's your, Ben, what are your thoughts and experiences in this way?

Jen Frey (01:07)

absolutely. mean, being a mom at home in the summers, I would fill the calendar with things for my kids and make sure that they got the things that we wanted to do for them or things on the house or things I wanted to prep for the next year. But there wasn't anything to really be restful for me. And so if I wasn't intentional, I'd get back, it'd be August and I'd look at the calendar and it was like Sunday fairies, but 10 times 10 because I wasn't.

I hadn't really taken that step back. And I think, you know, as teachers, were, or as believers, know Sunday is this for the Sabbath and it's rest, but we don't see how that's really a blessing for the summer. That summer is kind of like our Sabbath from teaching to get prepared back for the next year.

Linda Kardamis (01:55)

Yeah, and so it's so important to consider all these areas and kind of intentionally schedule them a little bit. And as we kind of get going to kind of go through some of the different areas we think you should definitely consider putting on your summer calendar, keep in mind though that there's not a one size fits all here, right? God, we want to encourage you to invite God into your planning. So to actually pray, be in prayer as you listen and as you think on, God, what would you have? There might be a certain focus this summer that

Jen Frey (02:00)

Thank

Linda Kardamis (02:22)

There's more of something for you this summer in one of these categories. And so really just be sensitive to how he's leading and to your own unique situation. So the first category we want to talk about though, we definitely think that this matters and you need to put it into your summer is what Jen was just talking about. It's rest and refreshment, right? This is such an important thing. And sometimes we just assume it'll, well, yeah, I'll get some rest somewhere. I'm not working, right?

But if we're not intentional, sometimes this doesn't really happen. Jen, you had some thoughts too on like, what is real rest versus not really restful things?

Jen Frey (02:59)

Yes. And I think this is a spot where it really, I mean, it takes intentionality and it takes really thinking about it. ~ I heard another person's podcast where she was talking about basically figuring out what is rest for you and how that's going to look different from other people. So we can try what somebody else says is restful, but it might not be my thing. And it might not, you know, it's just time alone or whatever. ~ but it may not actually be restful. And so.

for me, I figured out, okay, I need to do quiet things in quiet places. And there are lots of things that can fit in that bucket. But there are lots of things that, you know, I can try out and maybe it really winds up just being different, you know, kind of like a lesson plan as students, we go in and we think, okay, this is going to be, this is going to be perfect. And then you get to the end or partway through and you're like, no, this is not what I had planned.

so getting a chance in a spot where you can try on what things might be restful and just giving it a go.

Linda Kardamis (04:02)

Yeah, and I think that it is just so important to pay attention, right, to what makes you feel invigorated, what makes you feel restful, right? Because I do think sometimes, too, we think rest like, okay, taking naps, which is sure, great, great if you can sleep in, great if you can take naps. But yeah, just that sole rest and what is refreshing and what isn't. And you're right, it is different for everybody. ~

Jen Frey (04:23)

Uh-huh.

Linda Kardamis (04:24)

It really just depends. But paying attention to what activities really help me and then spending time on them, guarding some time, right? One thing I've done this year, this is not just for the summer, but I've done is I said, okay, I'm gonna go for a walk, one mile walk every day. And that's been so refreshing, but that may not for somebody else, but just paying attention.

Jen Frey (04:44)

Yes, yeah, my husband, his favorite restful thing is going on a drive. And I could not hate it more. Like that is not restful for me at all, but I'm happy to go with him to have time together, but that's not gonna bring me rest. So just kind of knowing and making space for other people too to have their restful things.

Linda Kardamis (05:04)

Yeah, so once again, so paying attention to what is restful and then not feeling bad for putting time. Like this is your Sabbath, these are your Sabbath months, right? This is your time out of the school year to take that. So we need that to be able to come back in and hit it hard again in the fall. So take time, guard that time. One other thing to keep in mind here is remember to include spiritual refreshment, right? So we need time for not just things that, I just enjoy and my mind feels free.

but also spending time with God. And sometimes those link together really well. If you spend time in prayer during whatever restful activity you're doing or whether that's separate or together, that's just so important. And the summer is a time where we can take some time to dive deeper. One last thought I have on this category before we go to the next one is I think also we have to be on guard against trying to rest on here. Like pay it, you know, sometimes I'm just gonna chill, you I'm going on.

doomscrolling, playing a game, whatever it is, just pay attention. Do I actually feel rested after that or not? You know, so just really pay attention to yourself if that should go in the rest category or not.

Jen Frey (06:13)

Absolutely. I, know, and just a little bit broader too is like things that other people say are restful, like a bubble bath or a nap. Like, just like you said, just paying attention to, okay, I can try this, but does it actually bring rest? And most of the time, especially on their phone, it is not restful.

06:30 The Importance of Rest and Refreshment

Linda Kardamis (06:30)

Yeah. All right. So number one is very, very important. And we recommend no one totally skips this, at least some type of rest and refreshment over the summer. The second category we think is something that is worthwhile in the summer is some type of PD or professional development. ~ And so we can talk a little bit about what might be the most helpful. But the thing here is this is an opportunity to just improve.

And I'll share one story. I remember when I was teaching my first few years of teaching, there was always like a new class. So there's always like something new to dive into. But I remember, I think it was around my fourth year, I was like, oh my goodness, I have nothing new, no new classes, this is amazing. And I was actually just about to just totally coast. And when they had new initiative, here's a book you need to read over the summer, that was so good for me. So I guess I want to encourage you, whether you know, oh my goodness, this is an area I totally want to dive into, I need help with classroom management, time management, know, whatever it is.

~ Or if you say, well, you know, maybe I'm fine. It's always good to do something, right? Whether it's a course, a book, just to do something to further and just get continue to get better because we've never arrived as teachers.

Jen Frey (07:40)

Right, and I think now is a great time to be just kind of reflecting on what, even if it's small, even if it's a tiny piece, but what is something that I wish would have gone better last year? And kind of thinking, okay, what could I do to improve that? And it can be a full big book, it can be a course, Teach 4 the Heart has plenty of courses to help with different things, especially classroom management. ~ But.

I mean, it could be as small as I have a certain unit or a certain lesson that I want to improve. And so what strategies, I might need new strategies. So how can I gain those over the summer? And that was a great time to ask your admin also, you know, to be looking through those things because they may have extra money at the end of the year for PD. And so you can really cash in on not having, you know, improving, but also not having to pay for it yourself.

Linda Kardamis (08:32)

Yeah, I do encourage you to check out school funds, email your admin. I think it's wonderful when a school is able to purchase that for you guys. And if you are interested though in one of our courses here at Teach 4 the Heart, we are currently having a sale on our summer PD, depending on when you listen to this, hop on over quickly because it'll be ending soon. But we wanted to give you guys a discount on all of our summer, our best.

09:21 Professional Development: Growing as Educators

PD courses for the summer. So the three that we have that we recommend the most are classroom management 101, which is perfect if you said, man, I had too many disruptions, too many classroom management issues, that'll help you just come up with a plan and fix that for next year. The second one we have is reclaim your time 101, which is perfect for those of that have been feeling stressed, overwhelmed, I can't get everything done, that'll help with that. And then the third one is Hope Renewed, which is a devotional program that will help you, it's good for those that have.

if you've been feeling kind of discouraged or frustrated by all the challenges of teaching or life, it'll really help you dive into that and learn how to trust God and have joy even when things are really

difficult. So if one of those three areas is something that was a struggle last year and you don't want it to be like that next year, those are perfect for you. So simply go to teach4theheart.com / summer. You'll get all the information and a special coupon code to get those courses at a discount.

So our first area was rest and refreshment. Our second area was professional development. Our third is a fun one, vacation and travel. Jen, why do you think this one's important?

Jen Frey (10:00)

It just creates a space where you can make memories. You can make memories at home and you can make memories in all of the, in just daily life, but it's something outside the norm and it's super special. So you can, and it doesn't have to be big. It could be as simple as I'm going to the town that's an hour away and it can just be a day trip, but something that feels different and just outside of your daily routine.

Linda Kardamis (10:28)

Yeah, I think this is a really, really great one, especially if you have any family or friends. It's just such a great relationship and memory-making thing. So I know some people like to travel more than others, but if you're wanting to travel, we encourage it. It is a great thing to do over the summer. And if you're like kind of one of more of the home bodies, encourage you. Like Jen said, just do a little day trip an hour away. Grab a friend, grab a family member. It is really so refreshing. It's very educational too. So it really is a nice worthwhile thing over the summer.

All right, that was number three. Number four, I think it's worth investing in what matters, relationships, right? So sometimes during the school year, our relationships take a hit because we're so busy, we are stressed. And so the summer is a great time to say, okay, what relationships do I want to intentionally invest in? Is it someone in your immediate family, extended family, a friend? Maybe it's just the Lord and you want to spend more time with him. So thinking about who is God maybe calling me to

reinvest in that relationship and strengthen it during this time.

Jen Frey (11:33)

yeah, and I love the, you know, kind of calling back a little bit to what we talked about earlier, that if you have a relationship that you can tell has been especially strange, maybe you have teenagers or, you know, just a friendship that you haven't been able to invest in, really praying about how can I make a difference and an impact this summer? And then God can show you different things that you may not have thought of, you know, maybe it's...

~ a breakfast every morning with your, you know, 15 year old who's busy, you know, there or, maybe it's lunch because they like to sleep in. ~ but, know, and, if you don't have money to go out, maybe it's just a special, let's do late night or rip your float once a week on the back porch or whatever, you know, just being, being intentional about this is going to lead, you know, this is, this is, these are my people and this is who God wants me to have. And so we invest in our students all year, very intentionally.

but intentionally building those relationships at home as well. I mean, you just, don't get those moments back.

Linda Kardamis (12:35)

Yeah. And I think one thing you said there is powerful. mean, one-offs is great. Like, if you're like, I have five friends I want to reconnect with and I'm going to schedule them all. But it's really powerful when there's some type of rhythm every week or every other week or once a month. When you can put rhythms in place, that is really powerful. And it also takes away the mental load of having to plan. So that's really smart.

Jen Frey (12:55)

Oh, I love that. And if you

can stack things of like, I want to get a walk in and I want to hang out with this friend. Well, can we meet and walk, you know, once a week or every other week, you know, it doesn't have to be big to really be impactful in those minutes. I'll add up at the end of the summer.

Linda Kardamis (13:11)

Yes, absolutely.

So number four, invest in relationships. And then finally, number five, prepping for next year, right? It is not wise to wait until two days before the school year to put any thought into this. So let's share a few thoughts on how do we do this? Because Jen, we also want to be realistic, right? If you're like, going to do some time. Sometimes I see teachers summer list and it's like, is just monstrous all the stuff they want to do. depending

situation sometimes that's okay but you do just need to be realistic. How much time do I have this summer? Sometimes we just think it's infinite and it's not. How much time do I want to spend? What other priorities do I have? What people am I responsible for? So just being realistic I think about what am I really wanting to do.

Jen Frey (14:52)

Yeah, I think, ~ you know, kind of even before you decide that too, is deciding how much time do I actually want to invest in this? And really, you know, we do that when our planners, with Pre and Plan, we have a specific spot where we want for our days to start and stop, but doing the same thing on how much time do I want to put in PD, or sorry, not PD, but how much time do I want to put into prepping for next year? And almost like keeping track of it, like you're tallying

you know, for a time sheet because that time can go so fast and we can really spend it on things that we don't intend to, ~ know, in, into nitty-gritty things that are maybe important. And then we waste all this time in the summer. So really deciding when do you want to do it or how much time do you want

to invest and how much time do you want to keep for other things? ~ But I would say, you know, one of the most important things to invest

to put that time into is doing a yearly calendar or your year at a glance, writing out these are the units I want to cover. This is how much time I want to block off, putting in dates that you already know. If you know there's a student teacher or parent teacher conferences on certain days, there are calendars out there. I can't remember if we still have that in the planners or not, but. ~

Linda Kardamis (16:11)

Yep, it's still in, it's in the Pre and Plan Planner or

when I did this, I did it on the computer, but yeah, you need it somewhere.

16:17 Creating Memories: The Value of Travel and Relationships

Jen Frey (16:17)

Yeah. Yeah. And so

just having that outline so that you kind of can wrap your head around, okay, this is what's coming. And then whatever is helpful for you. For me, it was picking what am I going to do on my first day and what am I going to do that first week, but not getting into like super big lesson plans. Cause I found if I did that, if, I got really granular too far ahead, then I lost those plans and I forgot I had done them. So.

Linda Kardamis (16:45)

Yeah. And so what I'm hearing, and I think this is so smart, is think how much time do I want to do? Maybe like a list of all the things you would love to do in the summer. Maybe just brain dump that. This is everything I would love to do. But then look and say, okay, how much time do I have? And which of these things matter most, right? And pick the things you really are worth. And I agree, the year at a glance, I mean, I think that is so key to just have a general idea of what I'm doing with all my courses, especially if you've got a new one. But yeah.

Jen Frey (16:56)

Yeah.

Linda Kardamis (17:12)

just looking at what are the things, all the things I want to do, but then which ones are most important? Which ones do I actually want to choose? And then when you do have time, you'll be able to dive right in instead of wasting time on piddly things or things that actually are not the most important things you wanted to do.

Jen Frey (17:29)

And it can be as simple as I want to add a gallery walk to every unit this year. Well, gallery walks take a long time to do, so I'm not going to have time during the year, so I'm going to prep one gallery walk per unit over the summer. Like, that's a manageable, doable task where you at the end, you're like, okay, I can have this for later. I don't have to worry about it. I know I'm investing in something that's going to get my students up and moving around. You know, I mean, obviously I taught high school, so I'm talking per unit, but you know.

apply it to whatever your teaching thing is, ~ but really doing something like you said, that's going to be helpful in management.

Linda Kardamis (18:06)

Yeah. So one last piece of advice we have on this is remember what matters, right? Content matters, teaching content. Also, classroom management and routines and organization matters. These things are like big difference makers, right? What doesn't matter so much is how cute your room is. If your bulletin board took 50 hours to create, ask me how I know that's possible. Okay, so like these things,

If you love them and you're like, this is restful for me, making this gorgeous room, this is fun and restful, fantastic. ~ But if it's not something you really enjoy, you don't have to spend tons of time on those things. Put it where it matters most.

Jen Frey (18:45)

Yeah, and really, mean, especially in that case, ~ I had a friend who did that very thing. She was coming into teaching after a long time away and she spent so much time decorating her room and sourcing items. And she did not prep her classroom management plan at all. And I just knew this was going to go bad. And it did. was not, could have, time could have been put spent there. ~ So really knowing what is going to impact my year.

Linda Kardamis (19:04)

Yeah.

Jen Frey (19:14)

And it's going to make it pretty if you have a pretty room. And we're not saying don't do that, but understand that that is maybe rest or it's making memories with family members helping you decorate. It's not really prepping for the goings, the daily ins and outs of school year.

Linda Kardamis (19:30)

Yes. Oh my goodness. Absolutely. Yeah. Classroom management plan. So, so important. If you don't have one, Classroom Management 101 with a PD sale or depending, if you're listening to this like episode later in June, we have your Smooth running class coming up in July, which is a four week program. That's all we do. Just make your classroom management plan. So you can find out info about that at [teach4theheart.com / smooth](http://teach4theheart.com/smooth). All right. So let's review our five things. Number one, rest and refreshment. Number two, professional development, even if it's just a book.

Number three, vacation or travel. Number four, relationships. And number five, preparing for next year. I really do recommend taking, just putting maybe like 20, 30 minutes on your calendar if you just do one thing today. Put that on your calendar. And during that time, sit down and actually make lists. Calendar things out.

say, know, put space for these different things. Because if you don't put them either on your to-do list, on your calendar, they're going to fall by the wayside. That'll be a really worthwhile 20 minutes. So right now, put that planning block on your period, on your calendar, and a time that will work, and then use that time to schedule things out. Jen, any final thoughts as we wrap up?

Jen Frey (20:40)

Just one thing, I mean, a great thing to do in that time is to plan out a bucket list. know, bucket lists kind of have a, they can be cheesy and you can put things on there that are cheesy, but they really add a thing where you're, it's almost like mini goals. I want to achieve these things this summer. So then when you find a day where nothing's planned, you can go to that list and say, ~ let's do this thing. I forgot I wanted to do that. And again, those are, those are just ideas to kind of invigorate and put, put some.

intentionality into what am I going to do today or what am going to do this?

21:14 Preparing for the Upcoming School Year

Linda Kardamis (21:14)

I love that. Well, I hope you guys enjoyed this conversation and you have some ideas for where you want to prioritize your time in the summer. Once again, if you want to check out our summer PD sale and get some of those courses on sale, you can go to [teach4theheart.com / smooth](http://teach4theheart.com/smooth). This episode has been brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. All views and opinions are our own and don't necessarily affect those of the Herzog Foundation. We look forward to speaking with you again soon, although we are going to be on hiatus here for a few weeks, but we will be back.

at the end of June with new episodes. the meantime, teach you remember, God is at work in you and through you, and he's using you to make a difference. Keep your eyes on him and teach for the heart.