

#ETHANproject



10-Week Summer Challenge

Summer is a time for relaxation, laughter and play. But it can also bring with it a unique set of challenges for moms. Whether you home school or send your kids to public school, work at home or work outside of the home, volunteer or engage in community events, one thing we all have in common as moms is the fact that our children need more of us during the summer months.

They need our time, our energy and our creativity. I don't know about you, but sometimes I am running on fumes and don't have much energy to invest in inspiring my children to spread their wings and fly. Although I make so many sacrifices as a mom, I still need time during the summer to work on my own flying skills!

We have partnered with several of our favorite bloggers to participate in a 10-week challenge to help us re-focus our lives and learn to "ENJOY the HERE and NOW." We believe in the value of setting clear goals and the importance of having a supportive community to help us accomplish those goals.

What if you entered the summer months knowing that you had a community of women cheering you on, celebrating the small victories with you, and challenging you to STOP and ENJOY the special moments with your children? What if you had one day a week set aside to do something creative and fun, outside the box, and you didn't have to come up with the ideas all on your own?

The purpose of the #ETHANproject (ENJOY the HERE and NOW Project) is to inspire your creativity, motivate you to be a better mom and support you through the summer months.

Be sure to share your own challenge stories publically on social media using the #ETHANproject. Check in at [Grounded & Surrounded](#) every Friday for a re-cap of our favorite photos & stories from the #ETHANproject bloggers and their readers. Who knows, maybe you will be featured one week!

Sammi & Sarah

#ETHANproject Co-Founders

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Enjoy the Here and Now

Summer Challenge Schedule

June 5-10: Enjoy Friendship

June 12-17: Enjoy the View

June 19-24: Enjoy the Flavor

June 26-Jul 1: Enjoy the Water

July 3-8: Enjoy the Sky

July 10-15: Enjoy the Dirt

July 17-22: Enjoy the Sound

July 24-29: Enjoy something New

July 31-Aug 5: Enjoy the Drive

August 7-12: Enjoy the Mess

We would Love to Feature You!!

Share your photos and stories on Twitter, Instagram, & Facebook using the #ETHANproject! Be sure to check GroundedAndSurrounded.com every Friday for our blogger link-up and to see a re-cap of our favorite photos & stories from the week!

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Weekly Challenge Details

Thank you for choosing to participate in our summer long #ETHANproject Challenge. Are you ready to re-focus your life and learn how to "ENJOY the HERE and NOW"? Here is an overview of the weekly challenges we will be participating in together.

Week 1: Enjoy Friendship

June 5-10

True friends are hard to come by. As moms, we are often too busy to invest much time and energy into building healthy relationships with other women. That STOPS NOW! Friendship is an essential element of a fulfilling life. We are constantly striving to educate our children on the value of friendship and train them to be kind and considerate friends. It is time to take some of our own advice! **Your challenge for this week is to make a new friend or re-connect with an old friend.**

Maybe the mom of one of your child's classmates, maybe that kind face from church, or the girl that always beats you to your favorite exercise machine at your local gym. Call an old high school classmate or a friend you haven't seen in a while. It doesn't matter who it is, so long as it is a MOM. Be BRAVE! Pick up the PHONE! **She needs a friend too!**

Plan a play-date with your mom friend (and her kids) and be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all celebrate friendship together.

Week 2: Enjoy the View

June 12-17

Do you ever get so caught up in your "To Do List" that you forget to stop and enjoy the view? Moms are constantly juggling their long list of responsibilities and sometimes we simply forget to stop and take in the beauty that surrounds us. How long has it been since you have taken a hike with your kids, visited an art gallery, or re-connected with the beauty that



surrounds you each and every day? **Your challenge for this week is to STOP and enjoy the view.**

Beauty is a very personal thing. Take a moment to think about the most beautiful place within walking or driving distance to your home - a place that inspires you and makes you feel beautiful. GO THERE! TAKE YOUR KIDS! Teach them about what it means to stop and appreciate the world that surrounds them. **Share a little of your beauty with them.**

Plan an outing to this beautiful place with a view and be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all celebrate the view together.

Week 3: Enjoy the Flavor

June 19-24

Ever find yourself in a cooking rut? Is your desire to return to your pre-mom shape and size stronger than your desire to enjoy the flavors of life? Although there is nothing wrong with eating for health rather than taste, it is important to remember that life is all about balance (and it is ok to splurge every once in a while). **Your challenge this week is to introduce your children to a flavor they have never experienced before.**

Maybe you have an old family recipe you have never made for your kids because it is too complicated, or a Pinterest board full of creative cooking ideas that you never have time for. **Whatever it is, make sure it is NEW to your children and FUN and a little CHALLENGING to prepare.**

Head to the grocery store and make a plan to prepare and enjoy this new flavor with your kids. **Be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all celebrate the flavors of life.**

Week 4: Enjoy the Water

June 26-July 1

Kid's favorite summertime memories are often made at the pool or the lake. There is just something about a large body of water that makes kids happy! Although the little ones may love it, swimming sure is a lot of work for mom! **Your challenge this week is to find a creative new way to enjoy water with your children.**

Put your thinking cap on and come up with an idea that involves water, but also sounds like a lot of fun for mom too. Maybe you could take your kids fishing, or have a

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water fight in the back yard with hoses or squirt bottles. Grab a bunch of water balloons and declare war on your children. If you have very small children, let them paint the bathtub with finger-paints at bath time. It doesn't matter what you do so long as it involves your KIDS, WATER and lots of LAUGHTER.

Be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all be inspired to find new ways to enjoy the water.

Week 5: Enjoy the Sky

July 3-8

For those of you who live in the United States, the Independence Day celebrations are in full swing by now. This is a fabulous time of year to STOP and enjoy the sky. The vast beauty overhead is constantly changing; always keeping us guessing what it has in store for us tomorrow. **It does not matter if it is nighttime or daytime, cloudy or sunny, blue or grey, this week your challenge is to find a new way to enjoy the sky.**

Plan a night to go watch a fireworks display with your children (who cares about one missed bedtime!), or lie on your back in the middle of a field and find shapes in the clouds. Throw some yummy snacks in the car and go to a place where you can see ALL the stars. Teach your kids about the different kinds of clouds or go outside and dance with them under the grey sky of a rainy day.

Once you have taken the time to enjoy the sky with your family be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can celebrate the beauty of the sky together.

Week 6: Enjoy the Dirt

July 10-15

Chances are you either LOVE to play in the dirt or absolutely DETEST the stuff. One thing we can all agree upon is the fact that children know how to get dirty. They are also skilled in tracking that dirt all over our freshly mopped floors, but that is beside the point. **It doesn't matter how you typically feel about dirt, this week your challenge is to find a new way to enjoy it.**

If you are a gardener, you may think this challenge is going to be simple. Heed this warning; no personal growth will come if you don't step outside your comfort zone. Find something dirty to do with your child that makes you a bit uncomfortable. **This is a**

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great week to let your children decide how to complete the challenge. Follow their lead and let their creativity inspire you. Then pop everyone in the shower before they mess up your floors!

Be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all be inspired to find new ways to enjoy the dirt.

Week 7: Enjoy the Sound

July 17-22

The sounds of summer: birds chirping, crickets creaking, children fighting. Have you hit the mid-summer slump yet? Is the here and now starting to feel less enjoyable? Now is the time to commit to finishing strong, you can do this! So far in our #ETHANproject challenges, we have engaged our children's senses of sight, smell, taste and touch.

This week your challenge is to find a way to enjoy sound with your kids.

You could take them bird-watching or find a waterfall nearby to listen to. You could introduce them to a new kind of music or help them create their own musical instruments and record their made-up songs. Take them out to the back yard and just listen to the sounds that surround you, keeping track of how many you can recognize. If you have a baby, find items in your house that make different sounds and see how the baby reacts to each one. The possibilities are endless.

Once you have taken the time to enjoy the sound with your family be sure to snap a photo and share your experience on social media with the #ETHANproject so we can all enjoy the sounds of summer!

Week 8: Enjoy something New

July 24-29

As moms, we often have the best of intentions at the beginning of the summer. Many of us make a list full of creative and fun activities to keep our kids occupied and engaged all summer long. But as the weeks drag on, we find ourselves disappointed by how few of those items actually get checked off our list. The truth is that summer is far too short and we rarely get to do all that we set out to accomplish. **This week, your challenge is to do that one NEW thing you've been putting off all summer long.**

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If you don't already have a list full of ideas, you might look through the tourist pamphlets for your area and check out a new attraction. You could grab a local newspaper and see what's going on in your town, or call your friends who have kids of similar ages and see what they have been doing for fun.

It is an incredible gift to be able to introduce your children to something new, capture their reactions and post your story and photos on social media with the #ETHANproject.

Week 9: Enjoy the Drive

July 31-Aug 5

Family Road Trip! Most of us have memories of childhood trips with our family, whether they be cross-country or the short drive to grandpa's house. There is something about being stuck in a car with your whole family that shows you what you are made of! **This week your challenge is to hop in the car and enjoy the drive.**

You may not have time to plan a cross-country trek for this week, but you can make an afternoon of it. You don't even have to know where you are headed, just plan to bring lots of snacks and a list of fun road trip games to play along the way. Then drive somewhere....anywhere....and enjoy the drive!

Take pictures along the way and post them on social media with the #ETHANproject and let us know what part of the drive was your kid's favorite (their answers may surprise you). Sometimes just getting where you are going is the best part!

Week 10: Enjoy the Mess

August 7-12

There is a reason we saved this challenge for the end! There is something about making a mess that is just plain hard for us moms to enjoy. We are always thinking about the work it is going to take to clean up the mess, and often miss out on the "fun" that was supposed to be had in the making of it. **We hope you have grown throughout the #ETHANproject Summer Challenge Series; grown enough to find a way to enjoy the mess with your kids this week.**

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Kids are gifted at making messes. Ever mother knows this to be true. They enjoy life with abandon, rarely thinking of the trail of toys and half-finished projects they leave in their wake. Taking the time to enjoy the mess with your children this week will give you a glimpse into the simplicity of childhood. It will help you to remember the value of fully engaging in the moment without thought of what is to follow. Maybe, just maybe, daddy will come home and clean the mess at the end of the day (a woman can hope, can't she?).

Take a picture of the mess you are able to create with your children this week and proudly display it on social media with the #ETHANproject. You have completed the Summer Challenge Series, and sharing your mess with the world is a great way to say, "I learned how to ENJOY the HERE and NOW with my kids this summer!"



Thank you for joining us for the #ETHANproject Summer Challenge. If you enjoyed participating in and would like to see us develop more challenges in the future, please let us know by e-mail at sarah.koontz@groundedandsurrounded.com. We love to support other moms, and hope that the #ETHANproject has inspired you to "ENJOY the HERE and NOW."

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