

Historic Hygiene for Your Offspring

Attending events with children adds another dimension to your hygienic efforts. It does not, however, mean you must carry a great deal of “farb” to events! Taking a progressive mindset, and asking “How did they do it?” will serve your family well.

As mentioned in other articles, owning a family *chamber pot* will go far in lightening the burden of children’s toilet needs at an event. There is nothing so well planned to traumatize a toilet-training toddler, than a trip to Our Lady of the Blue Waters at three in the morning, or so suited to giving Mother grey hairs than the incessant need of a four year old to “visit the Confessional” sixteen times in one hour.

Sturdy reproduction chamber pots are available for under \$40; in many rural areas, you can pick up a good used pot at estate and farm sales for quite a bit less. (A hint: the two-handled “tureens” and “extremely large latte cups” are chamber pots.) Bring along a small bottle of diluted vinegar water to rinse the pot after dumping it in the flush or portable toilets, plus a roll or two of toilet tissue from home. Practice using the pot at home so your child is familiar with it, and knows it is okay to use, as many will be uneasy about not going in an official flushing potty.

If you have children in diapers, be sure you have plenty for the weekend, as well as a non-offensive way to handle them.

If you normally use *cloth diapers*, you may want to consider disposable diapers for the weekend. If you choose to use cloth consistently, consider ripping muslin to make quick diaper liners; these liners will catch the worst of solid wastes, and can be thrown away in chemical toilets. The diaper (napkin) itself can then be

rinsed and soaked in a bucket of baking soda and cool water—preferably one that can be covered closely.

There is an added element of reality if you must wash, boil, and hang baby napkins out to dry!

Use woolen soaker pants rather than plastic covers or Velcro diaper covers, for a more accurate situation.

If you choose to use *disposable diapers*, be sure to bring plenty of small trash bags for easy disposal. Maintain a decent sanitation level by dumping any solid waste into a flush or chemical toilet before tossing or soaking the diaper. Human waste fermenting the public trashcans is not considerate.

You will want to keep your children fresh and decently clean by providing daily *bathing* opportunities.

At one point, I recommended the use of baby wipes for quick “bathing.” I have since come to see the error of that suggestion. It has no real advantage over actually washing with water, and does increase the farb-load for a family. Several huck towels and cloths pack very small, wrapped around a bar of soap, and leave none of the chemical residue on your child’s skin.

If you do have room in your gear allowance, you might purchase a large *washtub* that fits a child. You can use it for sponge baths after you’ve sat the offensive little one in for a good long soak. Most children find bathing outside (or in a tent) quite a novelty, and consider it much more fun than a regular bath. (This tub, set in the shade and filled with about 2 inches of cool water, is a boon on hot, muggy days.)

Whether you use a washtub or a spit-bath, plan to wash your child (or provide time for older children to wash alone) before bedtime. The change into fresh undergarments or nightclothes, and the elimination of the day’s sweat and grime, lead to a peaceful slumber.

One of the best ways to keep your children looking and smelling within the bounds of decency is to have an adequate and *functional wardrobe* for each.

Plan to have at least one fresh change of clothing, skin out, for each day (more if you have a grime-inclined child). If you can’t manage three sets of outer clothes, buy or make *four* sets of underclothes to go with one outer set. The worst dirt can be shaken out of trousers or dresses, but clean undies make all the difference to comfort and hygiene.

No one will notice that your child “recycles” an outfit on the last day of the event. Pinafores and smocks are very helpful in keeping play and work grime off clothes, can be made in quantity, and are cheap to replace.

Do keep in mind that children are drawn to grime as iron filings to a magnet... it’s no poor reflection on you when your freshly bathed child wanders ten feet off and sits in a dust pile.