



## *Windows of Opportunity: The Rewards of Enlightened TV & Video Game Choices*

*"...Use that most remarkable of all tools of communication, television, to enrich [your family members'] lives. There is so much that is good, but it requires selectivity."*

- Gordon B. Hinckley



### *The Thirty-Minute Solution*

In **thirty minutes** or less you can significantly impact the amount of **great television** in your home



*Elder M. Russell Ballard recommends the following strategies for improved use of the television in our homes:*

- 🕒 Hold a **family council** and decide what the family's media standards will be.
- 🕒 **Limit television** viewing to a *maximum* of two hours a day of carefully selected programs.
- 🕒 **Move your TV** to a common, well-traveled area in the home, not in a bedroom or private place.
- 🕒 **Make use of TV programming locks** to prevent your children from "chancing upon" things they should not see.
- 🕒 **Make time to select and watch appropriate television shows** with your children and discuss with them how to make choices that will uplift and build...  
(See "Understanding the Media's Influence," *Ensign*, Jan. 1987, 56).

#### **Additional ideas:**

- 🕒 Spend 30 minutes studying your TV, VCR and DVD owner's manuals to discover programming locks and filtering technology you already have, but are not using.
- 🕒 Create your own "Terrific TV" library. Use a media guide (such as the TV guide printed in your newspaper), to pre-select several television shows your family is interested in watching. Find someone who is VCR literate (your 9-year-old is your best bet) who can program your VCR to tape these programs for later use. Keep several of these tapes on hand to view instead of allowing family members to simply access

“whatever is on.” (Hint: break the recording tabs on all video tapes of priceless family footage to prevent them from being erased accidentally.)

## FIVE TO TRY:

### Five websites that promote great television and videos

- Here’s a site you can view with your children as a “starting point” for a discussion about television, what is good about it, and what is not so good about it. Be sure to click on “Exhibit Map and Guide” so you will understand how to navigate through this site (it isn’t intuitive). Different video vignettes will help you discuss topics like “how minorities are presented by the media,” “whether or not the media portrays family values accurately,” and “how advertising influences us.”  
<http://www.sito.org/exhibits/realtelevision/>
- <http://www.common sense media.org/reviews/index.php?showthis=Television>  
Common Sense Media Review’s family-friendly entertainment guide reviews popular shows, and can even recommend the best viewing based on age. You can add your own reviews of programs.
- <http://www.pbs.org/> Enter your zip code and view information about the PBS programming available in your area. Includes links to [www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org) (the PBS site for children), and <http://pbskids.org/go/> (the PBS site for older children).  
<http://www.pbs.org/parents/> is a parent resource for PBS programming. The site includes information and advice for helping your children get the most out of their television viewing, games you can play with children that connect with what they’ve seen on TV this week, and access to your local TV schedule. Sign up for a weekly parent newsletter that will tip you off to events in your own community, and give you ideas about programs you might be interested in watching yourself.
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/17067/welcome2.html> A site about television created by teenagers. The aim of the site is to educate teenagers about their use of television and make them aware of how television influences them.
- [http://pressroom.hallmark.com/HHOF\\_movie\\_list.html](http://pressroom.hallmark.com/HHOF_movie_list.html) A listing of the Hallmark Hall of Fame made-for-television movies that are recognized for their quality and wholesome approach to real-life issues. Many can be purchased or checked out at your local library.

## Television and Video Game Resources

*The following organizations are some of many that are dedicated to helping parents choose appropriate television and video game media for their families:*

- <http://www.parentstv.org/> Sponsored by the Parent’s Television Council, this site includes reviews of prime time television and gives brief background and thematic summaries of all of the television shows offered by the major networks, plus some cable stations. The PTC rates each show on a traffic-light rating system. Green indicates “family appropriate.”
- <http://parentalguide.org/> Clarifies the parental advisory systems for the movie, electronic game, music, cable, and broadcast television industries.
- [www.fcc.gov/parents](http://www.fcc.gov/parents) A web page for parents that includes information on TV ratings, channel blocking, and resources for finding quality family programming.
- [www.tvguidelines.org](http://www.tvguidelines.org) offers information about the TV ratings system and use of the television v-chip.
- [www.mediafamily.org/kidscore](http://www.mediafamily.org/kidscore) provides ratings for popular television shows that will help you make informed choices about your viewing. This site also includes an annual “video game report card” that will help you review the content of video games before you purchase.
- Get a simple-to use guide for Video Games. This site rates games based on content, and gives guidelines for how to select age-appropriate games.  
<http://www.common sense media.org/reviews/index.php?showthis=VideoGame>
- [www.familysafemedia.com](http://www.familysafemedia.com) is a resource for parents who have tried everything else to limit television and computer use. You can purchase all kinds of TV and computer locking gizmos—everything from a lock that makes it impossible to plug the TV in, to a special remote for young children that can be programmed so that only appropriate channels can be accessed. If you want to put your children on a “token” system that allows them to exchange chores for TV time, this site offers you an option.
- [www.tvguardian.com](http://www.tvguardian.com) provides a device that connects to your television and filters out offensive language from television, videos and DVDs.
- [www.ControlYourTV.org](http://www.ControlYourTV.org) is a web site that provides guides and instructions for parents who use cable television. These include digital parental controls, set-top options that block unwanted channels, and information about V-chip use.
- <http://www.tvturnoff.org> Is a national organization that promotes an annual “TV Turnoff” week. The site includes lots of fun activities to fill the time with while the TV is off.