

FAMILY ROOM

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR EACH ROOM/AREA YOU DECLUTTER/CLEAN... If you haven't needed it, worn it, looked at it, or used it in a year (6 months if you really want to be ruthless) than GET RID OF IT! Quit keeping them *INCASE*... Jesus may come back before you use them, so bless someone else and give them away!

Before beginning, make sure you have a:

- "KEEP" box (to go through after you're done with the room)
- "THROW" bag
- "BLESS" bag (for garage sale or to give away)

Keep those words in mind while you're cleaning/de-cluttering/organizing each room! "Keep, Throw, Bless"... MEMORIZE THEM... TAKE THEM TO HEART... THEY ARE YOUR FRIEND! (Tee hee...)

To make sure you have as little interruption as possible, the following ideas are helpful as well:

- have your phone in your cleaning kit (so it doesn't get lost) or let the answering machine get it (which is what I would suggest so you don't get stuck talking on the phone!)
- have water to drink (you could have little water bottles for the kids too if they're helping)
- music to get ya movin'
- your organizer with the "To Do" List filled out so you can be checking things off as you go

Okay... after you've done that, it's time to get cleaning! The following is a list of ideas that might help in cleaning your family room (TV Room, Gathering Room, etc.):

- Begin by taking a picture of the room before you get going... seriously... TAKE A PICTURE! This will be evidence... um, I mean, this will be an encouragement when you're done and you see what you've accomplished!
- Start in the furthest corner of the FAMILY ROOM. Begin the "bulldozing" process, top to bottom (or whatever method you choose... the bulldozing process is simply moving through the room like a bulldozer... starting at the top and working your way to the floor in continually moving to the doorway putting things in the designated Keep, Throw, Bless boxes/bags).
- Get any cobwebs or dust bunnies off the ceiling, ceiling fan, or light fixtures. This might be the time you decide to wash the light fixtures as well. (Bugs are NOT supposed to be in there by the way... did I just reveal something?...)
- Do your curtains need washing? Take them to the washing machine if so and get that load going while you continue to clean. (*Note: MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CURTAINS/DRAPERY IS WASHABLE! The first time I did mine, they shrunk about an inch!*) If you have blinds, what do they look like? Taking them down and washing them either outside or in the tub is an easy way to get them clean. They can just sit in there and soak. A sponge should get them clean by just wiping. Don't forget to rinse them.
- While you have your window treatments down, wash those windows and window sills (trim work).
- Do your walls need any touch up paint, or can you just wash the little handprints off? Don't forget the switch plates as well.

- Dust or clean (using cleaner) any wall hangings.
- If you have a fireplace, then it's time to make it shine! Start on the mantle, taking everything off and cleaning that. Move down and clean any glass on the outside and inside door(s). Sweep the hearth.
- Do you have a TV or entertainment system in your family room? Dust it and clean it well. If you have CDs, videos, DVDs or the like, then be sure to go through them as well, making sure that they're all in their cases and in a neat order.
- Do you have plants in there? Water them and take warm water and wipe down any leaves.
- How's your furniture? Take the cushions off (I know this is scary, but you can do it!) and vacuum out whatever has been in there. This might be a "fun" discovery time for the kids! Do you have throw pillows? If they're looking a little "sad", then get some stuffing and renew them!
- Wipe off any end tables, coffee table, etc. If you have any magazines in there, go through them as well. Be sure to keep only what you "need". Magazines can be a tough thing where contentment is concerned. If you're struggling with the "want" bug (or your children for that matter) having magazines/catalogs that make you discontent with what you have (or don't have) aren't any help to you... GET RID OF THEM! *(NOTE: Keep this in mind when getting your mail as well. I know that once you order one thing, EVERY magazine/catalog company sends you something. When you get them, you don't have to keep them. Throw them away immediately. If there are some you'd like to look at, then set them aside and get to them as soon as you can. If you find you don't have time to read the magazines you're subscribed to, then maybe it's time to cancel the subscription.)*
- Time to get down and dirty... move that furniture and clean out underneath! Here's another great "treasure time" for the kids. (You can even make a game out of it by guessing ahead of time how many things are under it!)
- Do you have toys in there? Organize and re-evaluate your "supply". Kids can only play with so much, and if they have too much, there's a tendency to loose parts and pieces, or take them for granted. This might be a good time to think about what you have and why you have it. Make sure to get rid of the toys/games that have missing pieces. For everything else, ask yourself how many times you're telling your kids to "pick those toys up"... if they aren't taking care of what they have, they are taking what they have for granted... this is a heart issue. You may decide to:
 - Put some of the toys away in "storage" and bring them out later so they're like "new" toys to play with (putting the others away)
 - Take them to your church nursery and bless the children that come to play there (which would still include your children)
 - Put them on the garage sale and let your children "make the money" from the toys sold
- Wipe/wash the trim work (baseboards) off (a great job for the kids as well!).
- If you have a rug, then take care of that, do you need to take it out to shake, vacuum or shampoo it?
- Don't forget your vents. Depending on what kind you have, do you need to take the hose to them and vacuum them out?

- Finish by vacuuming (or washing/scrubbing your floor if you have hardwood).
- Once you've finished the room, take your "KEEP, THROW, BLESS" bags and boxes out. This is important! Put the garbage one in the garbage... DO NOT leave it by the door for later... DO IT NOW! If you're going to give the "Bless" bag to charity, or something similar, then put it in the vehicle RIGHT NOW! If you plan on having a garage sale, then take it to the garage, and put the "Keep" box in a place where you will go through soon (while watching TV is a great time to do this, or in the evening while the kids are in bed... put some music in and spend time with the Lord talking about the day).
- Take an "after" picture! (I like to light a smelly candle after I've cleaned a room. Just an added touch for my husband to walk into when he gets home. Another touch could be flowers too.)
- Step back and pat yourself on the back! Great job! "X" it out on the "**Clean Heart, Clean Home Challenge**" **At A Glance Calendar!**