

There's more love. This is mentioned with all respect to small families but it's just a case of plain arithmetic. When I return from work or a trip, I'm affectionately greeted by eighteen loving arms. I'm richly endowed with little hearts that want to impart confidences to me. I'm something of a big shot, too, since I'm sought after by young ladies who, because they're so young, have unfailing confidence in my judgment.

Probably our biggest source of annoyance comes from those who are of the opinion that parental affection works in reverse ratio. They feel that each married couple has only so much love to give their children and that this big chunk of love potential grows smaller each time a new child arrives. Mild Margaret rarely boils, but one thing that always lights the fire is to have someone say, "Well, you don't mind that bump (or bruise, cut, fever, etc.) as much because you're used to it," or "I suppose you've been through it often enough and your child's disappointment doesn't affect you too much."

I certainly don't hold that the reverse is true—that big-family parents love their children more—but they certainly resent any inference that they love and care less. On many occasions I find myself saying, "But Honey, her blouse is clean enough and her hair doesn't need combing and her

shoes are shiny, so why make more work for yourself?" As soon as I've said it, I know the answer, "Because I don't want anyone to think that because we have more, we care less."

Another thing that there is more of are demands on your time, and this leads us to one big disadvantage of a large family as Margaret and I see it. It is the inability to give concentrated individual attention to each child. I can remember that with Mary, our first daughter, I read the exploits of Uncle Wiggly so often that I could recite them by heart. Why, without turning the page I knew exactly what Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy was going to say when the long-eared uncle lost his red, white and blue

rheumatism crutch. Things are longer that way with the additional teeth and hands to be washed more school clothes to be laid and more shoes to be polished.

We try to compensate for lack in several ways. First, we courage the bedtime reading signment, for younger children be done by older sisters. The chore is happily accepted—particularly by those who have recently learned how to read can rejoice in a little pedantry in front of listeners whose interest in plot rather than mispronunciation.

Secondly, we have developed an institution called "Family Night." On Friday nights we play corn, play games, and encourage

each child to contribute a poem, song, skit or an original type of entertainment. The awe in which this activity is held can be judged from the fact that on one occasion we decided that for punishment, one of the girls should be barred from Family Night proceedings. Great consternation ensued, and we were finally met with a delegation of daughters who felt that such punishment was inhumane. Spank her, shave her head, stand her in a corner for a week, cut out ice cream cones for twenty years—but, deprive her of Family Night? Never!

Our third endeavor to compensate for the lack of individualized attention has brought about "days". On or near the birthday of each child we celebrate what is known as a "Catherine Day", "Joey Day", etc. It simply means that on her particular day that child is queen and in company with one or both parents, she alone partakes in the day's agenda of enjoyment. It varies with age and season but generally embraces such activities as a visit to the zoo, dinner out, or a pony ride.

Another thing, high on the list of "more of," is noise. Our children are well behaved but that really doesn't enter into the picture. Take any group of soft-spoken adults and the decibel output increases as additional members join the group. The "tiny

tinkle of childhood laughter" gets a little gong-like when many tinkles are combined.

In concluding, let me say a few words about our one-year-old Eddie. His arrival was spectacular since it occurred on the day when Syracuse had one of its heaviest snowstorms on record. The world was really white (and so was I) when Margaret broke the news that we had to get to the hospital.

My first job was to find the car which had been left in the driveway. This accomplished, we traveled exactly three blocks before we bogged down. I was all for calling a police car but Margaret, with a "pride-knoweth-no-pain attitude," was adamant, "I can just see the headlines—48 YEAR OLD LABORING MOTHER OF SEVEN DAUGHTERS RESCUED BY POLICE."

We finally made our destination through the help of a really true Samaritan who drove a snowplow. Eddie arrived eleven hours later but, for all we knew at the time, our leeway might have been eleven minutes.

Now that he is with us, I'm sure he'd agree that there's more fun, too, in a big family. His every want is catered to by loving sisters; his every action is applauded. I think his aunt has the right idea when she shakes her head pityingly and says, "Isn't it a shame that pretty soon he'll have to learn that there are boys in the world."