

18 Kids – Are They Crazy?

They don't seem to be, they just like kids, I guess. You might have heard of the Duggar family from Arkansas. They are kind of like celebrities. Their claim to fame? Having 18 natural children. No adoptees or fosters. The 18 includes 2 sets of twins and one on the way; there are 7 girls and 11 boys – they don't know the gender of the new baby yet. Their story interests me because with 4 kids myself, I thought I had a lot of kids. It's interesting to me to see how they go about their daily lives with 20 people living in their house. Their house is custom built, they actually built it themselves as a family project. They have lots of things in their house that help organize their lives and make everything run more smoothly, for instance, they have 4 washers and 4 dryers in their laundry room and one communal family clothes closet where the clothes are sorted by size. Their kitchen has 2 convection ovens, 2 microwaves, 2 warming drawers, 2 dishwashers, 2 sinks, and a fridge/freezer. And that's the small kitchen. The industrial kitchen is outfitted with 4 ovens, 2 griddles, 4 freezers, 2 refrigerators, 2 sinks, a pizza oven, a deep fryer, and a popcorn machine. They even have their own buffet line; that's how they serve their food. Each kid goes through the line and gets their own food, well, the ones who are old enough, anyway. They also have a drink counter in their dining room with a fountain pop machine.

Even though they have all these things in their house that help to accomodate such a large family, it's amazing to me that they can still function with all those kids. The kids are home schooled and also take piano, violin, and harp lessons. I think the key here is scheduling. The family has a daily schedule that they follow which is supplemented with reward charts and checklists for each family member. Each person has a jurisdiction within the house that they are responsible for cleaning during family cleaning time. It

sounds like a well-oiled machine, but I'm sure they run into their share of snags. I just have so many questions about their situation, though, like how can a woman want to go through the birthing process 16 times (remember, 2 sets of twins)? How is her body even able to carry and give birth to 18 children? Is she addicted to pregnancy? Do they have a money tree in their yard? What is their grocery bill? When do they have time for grocery shopping and who does it? Do they have a vehicle that fits them all, or do they have to travel everywhere in a caravan? Does Jim-Bob (the dad) work outside the home? It's kind of funny, isn't it, that his name is Jim-Bob, he's from the south, and he has 18 kids. Talk about illustrating stereotypes.

But seriously, they must be rich, or at least *were* rich before they had all those kids. Not only would their grocery bill be outrageous, but they built their own large home and they need furniture to accomodate 20 people – that's 19 beds alone! Oh, and I almost forgot to mention that all the children's names start with the letter j. Well, anyway, I just thought I'd write a little about the lives of this interesting family. If you want more information about them or want to look at pictures of them or their cool house, they have a pretty nice website. They also make appearances on news shows frequently and had a reality show on the Discovery Channel that followed them as they built their house. I wonder if they plan on sending all 18 kids to college? And if all 18 share their parents' views of contraception, they are going to have *hundreds* of grandchildren!