

Mini ethnography on amish dinner instructor



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Janie Kiester Mini Ethnography on Amish Dinner Instructor, Michelle Stone, PhD Amish/Mennonite Information: Today there are over 12 different Amish and Mennonite groups in the Shipshawana area. They do not permit electricity or telephones in their homes. By restricting access to television, radio, and telephones, the Amish feel they are better able to keep the modern world from intruding into their home life. The Amish have long preferred farming as a way of life. They feel their lifestyle and their families can best be maintained in a rural environment.

While they do not permit the use of tractors in their fields, these traditional Amish groups do use modern farm equipment pulled by teams of horses or mules. These traditional Amish groups do not own or operate automobiles, believing that cars would provide easier access to the ways of the world. You often see their horses and buggies on the streets of Shipshawana. These traditional groups wear plain clothing styles, which has earned them the name " Plain People". It is the simple, peaceful lifestyle of these plain people that attracts such a curiosity today. Many wonder how these people can survive in their supposedly backward ways.

Well, they're not only surviving - they're thriving. Since 1960, the Amish population in Shipshewana has almost tripled. Their separation from the rest of society actually helps to strengthen their community. Amish children attend Amish one-room school houses through the eighth grade. Amish worship services are held every other week in one of the member's homes. Socializing is an important part of Amish life. The Amish have a strong sense of community spirit, and often come to the aid of those in need. Their barn

raisings are a good example and neighbors freely give of their time and their skills to help one another.

The Amish are generally private people and often find all the attention and curiosity about their lifestyle disturbing. They believe that the taking of photographs where someone is recognizable is forbidden by the Biblical prohibition against making any 'graven image. With our society's current interest in restoring 'familyvalues', much can be learned from studying the Amish way of life. Their devotion to family and community and their strong work ethic are good examples of a much larger society. I was invited to attend the Amish Dinner in the home of J and B Yoder, of Shipshawana on October 16, 2010, at 6: 00pm.

Six other people were invited to attend this special dinner and I arrived early so I could observe them as they arrived. The home was completely inviting and decorated in wood furniture and homemade furnishings; anyone would be of comfort. Small Amish children could be found running around, lots of women with aprons carrying food dishes to the eating area, even a dog was barking and running about while all this commotion was happening. I talked to Mrs. Yoder, the wife of Mr. Yoder, who is the head of the household. I asked her many questions about being Amish, living with extend family, and what her culture is like on a day to day basis.

She excitingly talked about her family and her ideal culture of being Amish. She went on to talk about the huge amounts of work that has to be done each day and each person residing in the home has their own responsibilities. She named a few of hers, including laundry by hand, bathing

the 7 young children, making 12 loafs of bread everyday and the cleaning. She laughed at having 4 ovens and it still isn't enough for her family. The powerful leaders in her group are definitely the men. Then use the law of consecration and when someone needs help it is done together as a community in the order of need.

If a family needs food, housing, transportation, then they give from within. She comments about being born and raised Amish and that she does not know a life outside it. She does enjoy the family unity the culture provides, the sense of well-being and the quiet lifestyle. The first to arrive was the Adam's Family. There were two adults and two small children. They entered the house with much gratitude and was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Yoder. The children were brought into the playroom to play with the Amish children. I stood in the doorway to observe the children and noticed the conversation was all about the Amish child's clothing.

A Adams, was asking the sweet Amish boy why he had to wear the same out fit as the other Amish boys and men. He even asked if it was his Halloween costume. It was amazing to me that at the age of 5, Alex knew that the clothing was out of his social norm. He also was well aware that this Amish boy was not of his same social group. The Amish boy was very quiet and did not answer the questions he was asked. He sat quietly and played with a hand made wooden truck. C Adams, the older boy pulled out his Nintendo DS System and started playing with it. The Amish boy asked him if it was a calculator.

C Adams, showed the Amish boy the video game system and he watched but never took the offer to play it. Mrs. Adams was in the kitchen trying to help but her attempts were turned down by the sweet Amish women. The next to arrive was a black couple. They were not as outgoing and gracious as the Adam's family. They sat at the table and did not get up and look around or offer any assistance to the Amish women. I walked up to this couple and introduced myself to them. They had just moved to the area and was invited to the dinner by friends. They currently had no knowledge or experience with the Amish and were amazed by their lifestyle.

They were anxious to try the delicious food they kept hearing all about. They also commented on never knowing anyone who could live life without cars, electricity etc. The black man did ask if there were black Amish families in the area and Mr. Yoder commented that he did not know of any and that he was sure there were African Americans who partake in his same culture. Once the guests were all arrived, they were all invited to gather into the garage area where there were long tables set up for the dinner. Young girls wore cute aprons and were introduced as our servers for the evening. The group was overall very quiet and full of observation.

There were a few babies fussing but other than that you heard very little chatter. Mr. and Mrs. Yoder came out and welcomed everyone formally and asked to say a blessing on the food. This was definitely part of their beliefs and everyone took the gesture kindly. We then sat as the young Amish girls brought platters and platters of food to our tables. Huge amounts of fried chicken, chicken and noodles, mashed potatoes, lots of different vegetables, white turkey and ham were available to enjoy. Everyone ate and kept to <https://assignbuster.com/mini-ethnography-on-amish-dinner-instructor-research-paper-samples/>

themselves. The Amish girls were busy running back and forth with new platters of food and pitchers full of fresh lemonade.

There was no entertainment of any kind and we very seldom saw the hostesses. It would have been nice if they were around to answer questions or to offer information about their culture to the invited guests. After the main course was cleared and everyone was full with a joyous amount of food, they brought out the pie. There was lots of cheering and excitement. We were allowed 2 pieces and there was about 10 different choices. My husband and I chose 4 different choices and nibbled at each of them. The Amish are definitely known for their delicious pies and bakery items. As the guests slowly left as they finished their deserts.

I watched and only a few took their dirty dishes into the kitchen. Those that did, took the time to thank the Yoder family for this special occasion. A couple of the young Amish boys then took a few of the men on a tour of the property. The Amish are definitely a rare social institution of its own. They go against the world and live life like they did a million years ago and survive. No cell phones, no internet, no cars, no electricity, no gasoline, etc. These strict values make the outsider curious of such institution. I heard people say many times, " I could never live like this, how do they do it? " How do they do it?

Many of them don't know anything different and therefore make it much easier to go without something that you never had to begin with. The Amish are a religious group, they are sweet and full of God's spirit. They are a kind people, a family orientated people. They are selfless, always doing service

for someone else. I can't help but think what our society would be like with instilled and encouraged amazing values and beliefs. One can still have electricity and be kind, love their families and do selfless acts of service right? I feel that our society would be so much better if somehow we could follow some of the Amish's examples.

We all have our own norms, our own religions and beliefs. Watching teenagers text nonstop is something that I fear is a glimpse of our future. Can we survive without materialistic things like a cell phone? How could a teenager's time be spent if he/she weren't loathing in high school gossip 24/7? As an entire society we will never be able to instil such values but within our families and primary groups we can. As parents I feel that we have a huge responsibility and teaching our children high standards and values is of the utmost importance.

What would our society be like if teenagers spent the same amount of time studying as they did texting? Amazing! We would have rocket scientists everywhere! Writing this paper gave me some great experience going out of my social comfort zone. I found, however, that it makes a group more likely to socialize if someone opens up first and introduces themselves. It breaks the ice and was much easier than I had thought it would be. I feel my next social event will go better now that I have experienced going out of my comfort zone and introducing myself to strangers first.