

let's do: ideas and conversations

Hey there! Our days definitely look different than they did just a week ago. I hope this simple activity might help us live intentionally in these days! May God grant us his vision of what he desires in this focused time together as a family.

Have fun as you gather around the table and run through these ideas. I hope great conversations arise as you brainstorm, hear one another's thoughts and uncover simple joys. We chose a two-week span for this calendar in hopes you will find this doable and enjoyable!

This list is simply a starting point. There may be a lot in here that is NOT for your family, so please, feel freedom in moving quickly past those suggestions. But maybe a few ideas in here resonate and serve to create new traditions or craft an unexpected opportunity for heart-glimpsing dialogue with your child. I pray this rises up for each of us!

We are praying alongside you, that the Lord would bless our efforts as parents in growing these "gifts" of relationships with our children. I am thankful for how he works and redeems even our failures to accomplish his work...how humbling and encouraging this can be! Blessings!

Bake for a neighbor or elderly shut in

Write a note of encouragement-prayerfully consider who the Lord might rise up for you to reach out to.

Learn how to Skype, Zoom, or other methods are out there to communicate with friends and family. (It might seem crazy and loud if you do this as a family-(it is at our house!) but no doubt it will encourage your heart and bless those you are communicating with!) What a gift this is as we find ourselves more withdrawn from "typical" community.

As the Lord brings people to mind, stop & pray; follow it up with a quick text to let them know.

Consider doubling your recipe to share with another as you cook dinner. Freezer meals can be such a blessing, especially in times of sickness or not being able to get to the store.

A surprise grocery drop-off of some non-perishables for an elderly friend or neighbor. Maybe include an anonymous card or a bouquet of flowers.

Family Worship-ask your kids for a topic they would like to discuss. (We have just begun this and the kids have chosen some interesting topics: coveting, adultery, sacrifice and a few parables.) It can be easy to feel intimidated or defeated by thought of what questions they may ask. We have had to say "we don't know" on several occasions. Take heart though, what an opportunity for us to dig and search the Scriptures, growing in our knowledge of him!

Sing! While you may not consider it to be a joyful noise, it can be soul-lifting as we experience the Lord take our “attempts” and refresh our souls with the gospel truths from his Word! You Tube can be such a great place to “sing along!”

Memorize a passage of Scripture together as a family...funny how putting it to song can speed up the learning process! Consider adding a fun incentive to enjoy as a family after completing this endeavor!

Share stories of how God is working in your life during this time. How have you seen him at work in the lives of others? What opportunities have you had to share the love of Jesus with others around you? Your story might encourage other family members to step out and try themselves!

Enjoy all the new “Facebook Live” concerts, prayer gatherings, etc...it seems like our social media outlets are brimming with opportunities for us to stay engaged remotely. Several artists are singing from their homes, and setting standing weekly concerts. (We have watched Keith and Kristyn Getty on Tuesday nights at 8:15 ET, a friend mentioned Rend Collective is also doing something similar through their Facebook site)

Make a paper chain (a friend of a friend is doing this) Daily invite everyone to write down one thing they are thankful for. What a treasured memory this could be in the years to come... serving as a “rock of remembrance” of this time.

Date Night with your Spouse - feed the kids early and pop in a movie for them to enjoy while you enjoy a meal or dessert together. Spend some time talking (and maybe confessing) about the joys and challenges this “new normal” brings. How might you encourage one another and also capitalize on the time together as a family? Ask your spouse how you might pray for him/her and then pray! What a encouragement we find in James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.”

Rotate nights of cooking each other’s “favorites”

Bake a new dessert as a family. Not really into baking? No worries, grab a mix and enjoy the time and conversation that comes from working together.

Cook Breakfast for dinner

Start a family Read-Aloud book

Make homemade or individual pizzas

Bake homemade chocolate chip cookies and eat them warm out of the oven (this is one of our favorites!)

Take a hike

Go on a drive

Plan a scavenger hunt around your house/yard

Wash the cars...and be prepared for the fall-out and fun to follow

Get outside, if you are able. Funny how we can hear the word "quarantine" and find ourselves staying closed up inside. We can comply with "social distancing" and still enjoy a walk around the house or neighborhood...it is amazing how much just getting outside can serve to refresh and renew us mentally. Consider prayer-walking around your neighborhood.

Favorite Movie Night - everyone pick a movie and plan snacks... pencil in your night on the calendar

Play a board game or work a puzzle

Family Work-out/Abs: even just 3-4 minutes nightly of various ab exercises can be fun and create many laughs!

Learn a new card game (Uno, Hearts, Spades, Dutch Blitz is a family favorite of ours...available on Amazon.com, even our 5 year old plays with us!)

One-on-One time with each child-this could get fun and interesting as you plan where to meet! Rotate a night here and there and enjoy focused time with each child. Ask them what they would like to do or talk about...a simple way we can invest in their lives and build our relationships!

Family Reading Time-as everyone brings their current read into the family room to read on their own. There seems to be something sweet about just being together! This might be a great excuse to pop some popcorn or make mugs of hot cocoa!

Learn a new hobby together (hand lettering, sewing, woodburning...the list is endless!) What have you wanted to learn, but reason it away because there is not enough time?

Enjoy afternoon tea

Plant a garden, raised beds or even grow some herbs in a small pot...something about watching the progress of plants grow that can bring so many gospel truths to life and great conversation opportunities with our kids! If you enjoy cooking, maybe google a recipe that uses your herbs.

Have a picnic