



WISDOM FOR MOTHERS

Mothering Skills



The Mothering Skills period of class is the time when the women are able to talk and share ideas and gain new insights from other class members regarding the acquiring or improving of mothering skills. This is the time in class where real bonding begins to take hold and lasting friendships are made. In fact, as the class progresses each week and the women begin to form friendships, you may want to encourage them to go on lunch outings with each other. What a wonderful support these women can be to each other.



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How to Have a Quiet Time when it's never quiet at your home!

Have you done something just for yourself this past week? If so, what affect did it have on your temperament?

Although it is nice to do something for ourselves sometimes, it doesn't change difficult situations! It may give us more patience and room to breath for a bit, but then we walk back into reality. Only spending time with Jesus is going to give us what we need to survive this life! No manicure can do that...our nails will just look good while we claw at others!

Finding time to spend alone with God is always a challenge, especially for moms of young children that constantly need attention. But developing an intimate relationship with God is the key to living in abundance. When you need knowledge, it is available to you. When you need wisdom and discernment, it will be there—in that still, private place where you meet with God.

A daily time alone with God is often called a “quiet time.” This is a time that you set aside to communicate with God and allow Him to communicate with you. Bible study and prayer are the main ingredients, but you may also want to sing praise songs and meditate on one verse of Scripture as part of your quiet time.

With children in the house you must be creative about planning your quiet time. Spontaneous times are great but with the schedules of most moms, planning your quiet time will help assure that it is priority!

Use the following questions to help get you thinking in the right direction.

PLACE: What does it look like for you? Where can you be alone?

TIMING: What time of day do you have available or how can you change your schedule to better prioritize your quiet time?

TOOLS: Bible or Bibles of different versions, study book or devotional book, commentary, highlighter, journal, pen, candle, and praise music all help. What works best for you?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Have you ever thought of having an accountability partner? If not, think of someone you might ask. Your accountability partner should ask you weekly if you have read the Bible and prayed. Usually, your accountability partner should not be your best friend as you will tend to be easier on your best friend, often sympathizing with them rather than holding them accountable. List your partner here and exchange contact info:

COMPONENTS:

MUSIC: Try beginning your time listening to and singing praise music to God.

READING: When your heart has been prepared by song, read Scripture, stopping to study and reflect. If you are unsure where to begin, start by reading one chapter of Psalms and one chapter of Proverbs each day. Read the Psalms and Proverbs according to the day of the month. For example, on the first of the month, read Psalms 1 and Proverbs 1. Devotional books are also very helpful to help you reflect on God's written Word.

PRAYING: Write your prayers in a journal and listen for God to speak to your heart. Pray out loud and on your knees. Another idea is to keep a card file box. Use index cards for each person for whom you want to pray. Write their name at the top of the card. Copy a Bible verse to pray back to God for that person. Write other prayer requests. Make columns on the end of the cards to record the date each time you pray over that card.

Other ideas: _____

SUGGESTED TOOLS TO MEET THE CHALLENGE:

For the next eight weeks, you will want to use your MotherWise workbook as your Bible study guide. When you are finished with this book, you might want to try some of the following suggestions for Bible study on your own:

- *Freedom for Mothers*, Denise Glenn, MotherWise Bible study
- *Restore My Heart*, Denise Glenn, MotherWise Bible study
- *Keeping the Secrets of Jesus for Women*, Denise Glenn, MotherWise Bible study
- *My Utmost For His Highest*, Oswald Chambers, Oswald Chambers Pub., 1963, 1992.
- Beth Moore Bible studies available through LifeWay
- *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby, LifeWay
- *Live the Praying Life*, Jennifer Kennedy Dean, www.prayinglife.org
- *Great Days with the Great Lives*, Charles Swindoll, www.publishinggroup.com

Creating a Sabbath Experience for Your Family

Learning to trust God includes learning how to rest in Him. He created the Sabbath so we could literally rest one day a week and put into practice the act of trust.

Keeping the Sabbath seems to be a lost art in today's world. How can we as women, wives, and mothers create a peaceful atmosphere one day a week for our families to find rest for weary bodies, minds, and hearts? How can we keep Sunday from becoming the most stressful day of the week? How can we help our families keep the Sabbath day holy and set apart for worship, rest and fellowship with God's people?

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN YOUR GROUPS:

What are the challenges you face each week in experiencing the Sabbath with your family?

What are three ways to begin solving some of those issues?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PREPARE YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY:

- Remember that church attendance should not just be a habit. It is meant to be a corporate worship experience where fellow believers can encourage and share together their beliefs as well as receive a Word through the Pastor and/ or teachers. It is a time for like-minded Christians to draw away from the world and be filled to go back into the world.
- Have a quiet time before church on Sunday morning or on Saturdays if you attend a Saturday evening service. Even if it's just a few moments of prayer before you get your family ready, it will set your mind on the Lord and enhance your worship experience. Ask God to speak to you at church.
- Sometimes try fasting on Sundays (or Saturdays) until late afternoon. It will intensify your receptivity to hearing from God at your church services and all through the day.
- Pray for your pastor and Bible study teacher on Saturday.

PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY PHYSICALLY:

Being part of a Bible-believing church is a tremendous and necessary way to fellowship with other believers. We encourage you to find a Bible-believing church and become an active member in it. Attend services regularly and join a small Bible study group. Keeping your children active in church activities does many things for them. First, they receive training about God. Second, they meet other Christian young people. Third, they become

part of a community of believers who can love them and pray and support them in their Christian walk. And finally, it's a great way to keep them out of trouble!

Going to church can be the most blessed event of the week or it can be somewhat of a nightmare. Getting the family out the door clothed and in their right minds seems like the impossible dream and far from experiencing Sabbath. The mothering skill for this session will provide you with information on how to have a Sabbath experience to anticipate!

What's the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer? A thermostat sets the temperature while a thermometer only registers it. As the mother in your home, you can be the thermostat for Sunday mornings (and every other morning for that matter!) instead of the "thermometer." You can set the tone for the whole family on Sunday mornings by your attitude and your preparation, rather than just reflecting their mood.

Begin on Saturday night by preparing for your family. What are some ways you might prepare physically for Sunday mornings by starting the night before?

- Iron and lay out children's clothes the day before. (Also lay out your clothes, Mom, to prevent "fashion crisis.") Include shoes, hair accessories, jewelry or anything for them to wear.
- Have a specific place for Bibles or Bible study materials so they are ready to be picked up on the way out the door for a Sunday morning worship service.
- Write out your tithe in advance and have it ready.
- Plan a very simple breakfast meal and set the table in advance.
- Don't hit the snooze button! Get up in plenty of time.
- Listen to praise music all the way to church to set the mood in the car.

OTHER IDEAS:

1. _____ 2. _____

CONSIDER YOUR AFTERNOON AFTER CHURCH:

What do you want to include in your families' Sabbath celebration each week? Church attendance? An afternoon nap? Prayer time? Fellowship with believers? A long, quiet time that includes reading the Christian book you've had on the shelf? A special family meal? Strive to make Sunday afternoon a restful, family day to refill your tank to face the next week!

You and Your Body Image

We have been created in God's image to reflect His glory. God has created us beautiful. Each one of us is a lovely, unique design.

It doesn't matter whether you are +10 or -10 lbs., tall or short, brown or blonde, dress in Chanel or Target. What matters is knowing the truth: the only acceptance that really matters is already yours in Christ Jesus. If you try to get your need for love and acceptance met in any other way, you might be tempted to:

- Make food an idol, running to it for comfort rather than God.
- Overindulge, making sure your own needs are met and you feel good.
- Over-consume, trying to find the perfect clothes, right wrinkle cream, the "It" purse.
- Under eat, desiring to be perfect.
- Hide and quit, trying to avoid feelings of disappointment and failure with your appearance.

Learning to love and accept the body God gave you is a life-long process. Because your body continues to change with age, you'll be challenged to love it through all the seasons of life.

The following Body Image Assessment and Body Image Tips are provided for you to discuss in your group but also take time to reflect on these individually as well. We've also included group discussion questions that will facilitate more discussion.

BODY IMAGE ASSESSMENT

1. How many times each day do you think about your general appearance?

2. How many times each day do you think about your weight?

3. How many people do you compare yourself to each day?

4. Is there something about your appearance that you don't like? What is it?

6. How often do you complain, whether silently or out-loud, about some aspect of your appearance?

7. How thankful are you for the body God has given you?

8. Do you eat, exercise and dress to give God the glory?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What is your best tip to share with your group to have and to keep a healthy attitude about your body?

2. Who do you know that has a good, healthy attitude about her body? Why did you choose her?

BODY IMAGE TIPS

1. Be discerning about which magazines you read and which TV shows you watch. Anyone can look good once they are airbrushed. Take your body issues to the cross.

2. Don't casually complain about your weight. It invites comparison and compliments.

3. Eat right and exercise. Quit looking for the perfect diet and go back to the basics. Our goal should be lifestyle changes for good health, not to drop a dress size before the next weekend.

4. Find clothes that fit you, no matter what size you are. Don't keep putting off buying clothes to fit your post-pregnancy body.

5. Don't make foods good or bad. Think more in terms of balance and quantity. Just as God gave us sex for enjoyment and procreation, God gave us food for enjoyment and nourishment.

6. Never go to the grocery store hungry.

7. Get going! Whether you walk or do aerobics, the key is to move each day, preferably for about 30-45 minutes. Go outside when possible. Get away from media and into creation. Try to go places that are quiet and without crowds so you can avoid comparing yourself.

8. Keep lots of healthy snacks around, not just fruit so that you can have options when you are hungry.

9. Give to God your struggles with food, weight, clothes, body type, etc.

10. Meditate on Scripture such as Ps. 45:11, John 4:34, Rom. 12:1-2, Gal. 2:20, Mark 12:29-31, and Col. 3:17.

Nutritious Meals for Your Family

You may have grown up in a family where dinner was on the floor in front of the television or where the family never sat down to a meal at all. We want to challenge you to rethink dinner time for your present family. Try the following:

- Use your kitchen table for dinner. Turn off the television. Don't answer the phone during dinner. Set the table with plates, napkins and silverware. Use serving bowls instead of putting the pots on the table. Cook simple, but nutritious and satisfying meals each night. If you don't know how to cook, get a simple cookbook or find a mentor to help you learn.

- Use dinner time to talk. It is difficult to carry on a great conversation with two or three preschoolers at the table, but some conversation can happen. Persevere! As your children get older, they will enter in and dinner time can be the time every day when the family finds out what's going on in each other's lives. I have talked to many moms of teens who complain that their kids never come home for dinner. I do understand the challenge. However, if mom has a delicious dinner cooked and on the table, teens usually find a way to get there. Mom, you will have to be very flexible about the time that dinner is served.

- Use dinner time to teach your children manners. Put your napkin on your lap. Keep your elbows off the table. Don't talk with your mouths full. Ask for food to be passed, don't reach for it. Wait until everyone at the table has been served dessert before you start eating it. One family I know makes a game of all of this. If anyone (including mom or dad) breaks a table rule, they have to leave the table and count to 10 before they return.

- Use dinner time to teach your children to pray. In our family, we hold hands and David prays before each meal. Occasionally, he calls on another family member, but usually he leads us in prayer. This simple, short prayer time is a powerful way to draw the family into a worshipful setting at least once each day.

For a time, I was a working mother with three children. We all came home very hungry, very tired and I didn't want to face a frozen chicken at 5:00. To help matters, I began cooking all the meat items during the weekend. Then, during the week we could heat up the meat, steam some vegetables or make a salad and add bread.

What is your greatest challenge in providing dinner for your family?

What tip could you share with another mom to solve dinnertime problems?

What is your most difficult food-related task?



Did your mother cook for the family? Yes No

How does that affect the way you feel about food preparation?

What is your goal for feeding your family?

Our objective is to provide for our families' bodies the nutrients they need to repair tissue and maintain optimum health and vitality.

There are some incredible books on the market today on the subject of nutrition. If you have some good ones, bring them to MotherWise for this week's discussion. Be prepared to share 1 or 2 great nutrition hints you have learned.

Write out what you will share.

1. _____

2. _____

Plan a nutritious meal. You can plan breakfast, lunch or dinner. Remember to limit refined or packaged foods, reduce fat, and include fresh fruits, vegetables, and/or whole grains.

Entree: _____ Side Dish: _____

Side Dish: _____ Bread: _____

Dessert: _____ Beverage: _____

Planning meals ahead of time always helps. Some moms even plan for a month at a time! Look over your schedule for the week. You will probably find that some nights are busier than others. On the busy nights make that your "light night" with items such as tacos, salads, casseroles, or crock-pot dinners. On your nights with no or fewer activities plan more elaborate meals. If your church serves a Wednesday night meal, try it.

Once you plan your week or your month, grocery shop for those items. You will be amazed at how much it decreases your grocery bill. Use flexibility. At some point, your schedule will change without notice and your can move around your cooking plans to fit your family's needs. Leftovers can often just be added to with a salad or fruit plate.

Cooking double and freezing always helps if you have storage room in your freezer. Always keep one meal on hand, even if it is just spaghetti and bread that you can throw together in a pinch.

If cooking intimidates you, then practice! You will be amazed at how much easier cooking gets and how much better you get with practice. For easy and tasty meal ideas check out our recipes at www.motherwise.org.

Romancing the Home

After the honeymoon is over and life settles into a routine, keeping the spark in your marriage is sometimes a challenge. Wives are often the “romantic” of the couple, and sometimes pout when the husband doesn’t think of romantic things to do on his own. You can initiate some fun dates with your mate. Don’t make him read your mind. Just as planning fun dates are important, everyday life in your home contributes to the romantic climate in your house.

- **WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE OF YOUR HOME?**

This is the critical background for romance. Is your home a haven of peace, unconditional love and acceptance? Does your husband know he can escape the stress of life to a home where he is loved and accepted? Does your husband come home to chaos or harmony? Being energetic around the house, taking care of the children and household chores is good, but chaos and grumpiness in a home is not.

How can you plan ahead to make his coming home from work a special time?

- **WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF YOUR HEART?**

Do you have a critical spirit and speak harshly to your husband? How do you communicate with him? Do you use sarcasm and insults or kindness and respect? How do you react to sex with your husband? Are you warm and inviting or indifferent and treat sex as something you have to do rather than something you would prefer to do?

Is your husband really your first priority after God? Have you truly left all others and only cleave to your husband? Does he know you are his biggest fan? That when no one else believes in him, you do? Do you allow him to be the spiritual leader of your home?

In what ways can you improve your attitude in your heart towards your husband? How can you demonstrate to him how much you respect him and desire his leadership in your home?

- **IDEAS TO CREATE ROMANCE IN YOUR HOME?**

Making Time for each other: Finding time with busy schedules can be very difficult. You may need to reevaluate your schedules. The greatest reason for disinterest in sex is fatigue. Before children, romance & sex could be more spontaneous. After children, it has to be more carefully planned. Be creative in finding time to be alone.

Romance is more than sex: Romance becomes more fun when there is intrigue and an element of pursuit. Get his attention! Leave him special notes, wear your special perfume, look your best when he comes home. See him off in the mornings and greet him in the evenings. The key word here is - Communicate! Don't expect him to read your mind on what you like or dislike. Compliment him when he does something you really enjoy so he will know that is what you like. A man wants to feel needed, wanted, and prized by his wife, just like you do from him. This is how God intended it to be! Read the Song of Solomon!

Name three free or low-cost "date" places you would like to take your husband:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name two splurge date places you could take your husband:

1. _____
2. _____

Name three times that might be possible for a special date with your husband:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What will be your greatest challenge in creating a date for your husband?

What are some practical ways to overcome those challenges?

- If babysitting is your greatest challenge... Try swapping babysitting with a couple in your church.
- If scheduling is your greatest challenge... Try getting out your calendars for the year and planning a date for once every 3 to 4 months. A few dates each year are a lot better than none! It gives you something to look forward to and time to make it a priority!
- If money is your greatest challenge... Try free or low-cost date ideas.
- If you just don't feel romantic... Try prayer and seek some good counsel from an older couple. Don't let your relationship slide into boredom!

What is the most fun on a date you've ever had with your husband?

Here are some ideas to help you start putting the sizzle back into your marriage:

- Buy one long-stemmed red rose and attach a love note. Place it in a place where your husband will discover it privately.
- Pack a picnic basket, put on some comfortable clothes, and take your husband outdoors

to your favorite spot for a long, leisurely dinner on a blanket. Take some candles and a CD player and your favorite romantic CD's.

- Learn to play or watch your husband's favorite sport. Go with him to his tournaments when at all possible and cheer him on.
- Leave a compliment for him on his cell phone voice mail.
- Learn how to give your husband a good back or foot massage.
- Listen to your husband talk about his work. Ask him questions and learn the vocabulary of his occupation.
- Since you know his preferences for bed-time and wake-up time, practice getting up and going to bed at the same time he does, if at all possible.

One of our MotherWise leaders created a special Valentine's Day date for her husband. She decorated the door of an unused bedroom with a decorated poster that said, "Love Palace." (By the way, she had pre-schoolers who couldn't read. Moms with older children and teens would need to be much more discreet!) In the room, she placed candles, a jam box with their favorite music and fresh sheets on the bed. You can imagine the rest. She says it was the best Valentine's Day they'd ever had! Try it—and not just on Valentines's!

Training Up a Child

If you ask your child to complete a task and they do not obey, what will you do? Will you yell at your children? Will you stand by frustrated when they do not obey your instructions but feel powerless to do anything about it?

Having a plan set in place ahead of time is the best strategy for training your children. You don't want to react to a situation. You want instead to be proactive in training your child. Knowing what consequences will be administered before an infraction takes place makes it much easier to follow through. Also, it is important to spend time training your child in positive ways, rather than only relying on disciplining them when they are not obedient.

1. What is one task you will train your child to do in the next three months?

2. Let's take one task several moms have mentioned and brainstorm to come up with three ways to train the children to obey.

3. What keeps you from training your child to obey?

4. What will you do this week to make it easier to train your child?

5. What encourages you the most to be diligent in training your child to obey?

Training your child instead of screaming at him comes from a different mind-set. First, you need to see yourself as a teacher. Your children are the students. They have an immature sense of responsibility and don't have the same "drive" you do to "get things done." They just want to play and be kids! But as a mother, your job is to teach them responsible behavior and to balance fun with work.

Consistency is the place many moms find difficulty in training. It is not always convenient to stop what you are doing to deal with a situation. But the end result of obedient children is well worth the effort.

Post a chart in a visible spot, such as a refrigerator, where children can plainly see the consequence of not following directions or disobedience. Then there is no question in your mind or the child's mind what has to happen if they disobey. Loss of a favorite toy or privilege, such as computer games or playing with a friend, are usually great deterrents. Go over these infractions and consequences with your children in advance, making sure they understand what you expect.

Training is not an overnight event...it's an ongoing process. Just choose one behavior to change at a time. Work on that one change until it is mastered, and then move to another task. Encourage your child with lots of praise as he learns to take on more and more responsibility. Soon you will be enjoying your children and they will be enjoying you!

Media Gone Mad

Our children today are bombarded by the media – television, internet, music, movies, and magazines. As a mom, you have the responsibility to be informed and protect your children as much as possible. Please don't withdraw from these mediums and think that they are not affecting your children: they are!

TELEVISION

- Most prime time shows today reflect values that we would not consider Biblical values. The majority of shows today portray premarital sex, extramarital affairs, promiscuity, and homosexuality as the norm. As a mom, you need to be monitoring what your children are watching. Putting a television in a private place, such as a bedroom, is a huge mistake. Also be aware that you can put locks on certain channels to prevent your kids from viewing them. Music channels are not just about music anymore and you would be very wise to view them extensively before you allow your children free access. Even finding shows where children respect mom and dad's rules are difficult to find. If you do choose to watch television as a family, use that time to discuss what characters do right and what they do wrong.

What television shows portray the family values you want reinforced into your home?

INTERNET

- Pornography is only a click away! This is reality moms! If your children are "surfing the net" you need a good internet filter. NetNanny (www.netnanny.com) is one option that will not only block a site, but will also record where users attempted to go. "Trapping" is where porn sites lock your children in. Even if they are doing the right thing and inadvertently find themselves in a porn site and try to "X" out, the porn site traps them, taking them to different levels. This is illegal, but it does happen! The best advice to give them is to hit the "home" button to escape out. Don't be fooled – pornography will have devastating effects on your family – and it's not just sons visiting sites either! You must guard your daughters as well. Not only your teenagers, but even kindergarteners are vulnerable.

- You also need to be savvy about instant messaging! Learn the lingo such as "pos" stands for "parent over shoulder" and keep your eyes open. According to Eva Marie Everson in *Sex, Lies, and the Media; What Your Kids Know and Aren't Telling You*, almost 100% of children or teens visiting chat rooms have been contacted at some point by a predator. She says, "There are people out there who are willing to invest a large amount of time, effort, and energy into getting your children to talk to them, trust them, confide in them, and then have sex with them – virtual or otherwise."

What actions will you take to help protect your children online – from porn and predators? How can you use the Internet to glorify God? What are some good websites for children?

MUSIC

- Some music is not safe for your children's ears. Go online and search the lyrics of some of your children's (especially teens') favorite songs. You might be appalled at what is filling their minds. And the old saying, "I just like the beat" still does not nullify the language, sex acts, and vulgarity that many songs are conveying today. Check out all music – pop, rock, country and hip-hop! Make them share their downloads with you and listen for songs that are not appropriate!
- Never before has Christian music been available in such great quantity and quality. For every secular artist you or your children may enjoy, there is a Christian artist whose music and voice are similar, but the lyrics glorify God and often times help us to remember Scripture! Caedmon's Call is one such group. Christian radio stations are becoming more popular and offer great programming. You can even visit artist's websites and hear their music to determine if you like it or not! If you can listen to a song and just enjoy, or you can listen to a song, enjoy, feed your soul and glorify God all at the same time, why would you choose anything else?

Discuss various Christian radio stations in your area and Christian artists that will appeal to children and teens.

MOVIES

- Obviously movies are not much different than television. The great thing about movies is that you as a mom have more control over them. The rating system is not always reliable so you must do your homework before you give consent for you child to view a movie or take your child to one. There are many different sources to check movies out. www.plug-inonline.com is a great one. It gives details regarding spiritual content – positive or negative, language, sex, nudity, and violence.
- Also, do not take for granted what your children watch at their friend's homes. It's important to know what the parents allow them to watch, and express to them they might have to come home if something doesn't meet your family's standards.

What other resources do you use to rate movies? How can you view movies as a teaching tool? What are some "oldies but goodies" movies that are available?

MAGAZINES

- Fashion magazines are not what they used to be! Monitor what your children are reading! Today's magazines give lots of advice about sex, dating, friendships, and fashion that

you might not agree with. Instead of suggesting abstinence, most teen magazines tell how to have safe sex – and yes, these are magazines geared towards girls 10 and younger!

- Just as with music, however, there are alternatives. Now there are Christian magazines that are glossy and colorful and available for pre-teens and teens with sound Biblical virtues on dating and friendships. Check out sites such as www.virtuousreality.com and Christian bookstores.

What ideas do you have for alternatives for secular magazines?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

www.netnanny.com

www.pluggedinonline.com

Sex, Lies, and the Media; What Your Kids Know and Aren't Telling You by Eva Marie Everson and Jessica Everson, Cook Communications Ministries, 2005.

Sex, Lies, and High School; What Your kids Know and Aren't Telling You by Eva Marie Everson and Jessica Everson, Cook Communications Ministries, 2006.

www.family.org

www.crosswalk.org

www.caedmonscall.com

One on One with Your Child

In today's world it is so easy to get distracted from showing the ones we love the most how much we do love them. Establishing an "it's a date" with each of your children is a wonderful way to express your love to them. (If a "date night" with your husband has become a foreign event for you, let me suggest that you go back and start there first.)

Not only is "it's a date" a wonderful way to bond with your children, it will also teach your sons how to properly treat their dates or future dates, and it will show your daughters how they ought to be treated on a date.

Sit down with your husband and make a plan of action that will realistically fit with your lifestyle keeping in mind the age and number of children that you have. "It's a date" can be started at any age!

SUGGESTED PLAN: Let's say that Mark and Sally have three kids: Matt, Susan and Sarah. Once a month each child has a date with one parent.

Example:	January	February	March
	Matt - Mom	Matt - Dad	Matt - Mom
	Susan - Dad	Susan - Mom	Susan - Dad
	Sarah - Dad	Sarah - Dad	Sarah - Mom

Dates can be as simple as going to breakfast on a Saturday morning, going for a walk after dinner, going shopping for a new pair of jeans, going out for ice cream, playing miniature golf etc. Just be sure it is a date that you can focus "one on one" time with one another.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS: On special occasions such as a father/daughter dance or a mother/son banquet be sure and go the extra mile. Brainstorm other great date ideas with your group: _____

FOR GIRLS: Have your husband call your daughter and ask her if she will accompany him to the event. On the night of the dance he should bring her flowers or a corsage and ring the doorbell to pick her up and then continue to treat her like royalty for the rest of the night. (Ladies - you will need to help your husband with these details and after a while he will probably get it down on his own)

FOR BOYS: Enlist your husband in having your son call and ask you for a date, bringing you flowers and ringing the door bell to pick you up. By the time he goes on his first real date he will be quite a prince charming!

The most important thing: Cherish your child on a daily basis and shower them with your love. Use these special times to secure the love you have for them in their hearts and to keep the lines of communication open between you and your children.

Family Night

FAMILY WORSHIP

When our girls were one, three, and five, we began something we called “Family Night.” We started with a family meal of food everyone enjoyed—no liver and onions on that night! Then we played together as a family. After we enjoyed a fun activity, we had a time of Bible study.

At first, we secured Bible story coloring books and David read the Living Bible passage corresponding with the picture the girls were coloring. He would then ask them simple questions about the passage. We still laugh that whenever he asked a question, one of the girl’s standard answer was, “Elisha!” To close our time together, we gathered the family in a circle around a lit candle and turned out the lights. We sang “Father, I Adore You” in a round, a few other worship songs they knew and we always ended with, “This Little Light of Mine.” After a short prayer from each one, on the count of three, they blew out the candles and we packed them off to bed.

When they outgrew the coloring books, David read a passage and we discussed it. Then we had prayer time. Family Night became a time when we shared our requests and prayed for one another.

Once our girls became teenagers, we changed the format completely. We went out to eat at a restaurant of their choosing, got caught up over dinner on their current thoughts, feelings, and activities, and went home to have a sharing time. While lounging on the sofa and chairs in the family room, each person shared their prayer requests. Then we spent time praying for each other.

What could you do now to begin a Family worship experience?

What will be your greatest challenge in creating Family Night?

What can you do to adapt the ideas from above to begin a Family Night with your family?

Moms, don’t forget that if you aren’t loving your children unconditionally and disciplining them, you can forget trying to be “spiritual” with them. They are watching to see if you will be obedient to God’s Word first!

FAMILY FUN

Are you looking for ways to create some fun for your family but the funds are a little low for a high-dollar entertainment park? What is something you can do with your children besides

turning on the TV or a video? This week we'll get you started thinking of ways to have fun with your children. Then we're sure you'll share some of the happy memories from your family with the women in your group.

Name some spontaneous fun times that happened with your family:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When our girls were very young, we did a lot of bike riding, running, and chasing outside as a family. We went to a pool and swam races. We went to parks for picnics and threw frisbees.

We put on 50's music and danced in the living room. We taught the girls to play domino games. We played board games. We sometimes made ice cream and ate it for dinner (this wasn't very often, but the girls still remember it as one of their happiest memories.) We played charades and videotaped not only the charades, but also made "commercials." Of course, the commercials were the best. We have some great videotape of the girls putting on "shows" for us. That was an almost every weekend affair.

THEME DINNER

If you have young children, choose one of the following themes to create a special event for your family by planning the table decorations, activities, music, and menu:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dad's Day Off: Fishing Theme | Mexican Ole Night |
| Rodeo Night | Chinese Chopstick Night |
| Hawaiian Night | Homemade Pizza Night |
| Sports Night | Beach Night |
| Italian Night | |

What "theme" dinner could you prepare for your family this week?

For the next holiday, what fun thing could you do with your children to involve them?

What "rainy day" activities do you use with your children?

GUIDELINES

1. Spontaneous:
 - Splash in the rain
 - Make cookies
 - Make play dough
 - With very young children, blow bubbles. (Make your own out of dishwashing soap)

- With teenagers, pop some popcorn, make some hot chocolate, and put on an oldie, vintage, black-and-white movie.

2. Celebrate a holiday by making a giant cookie and decorate it according to the theme of the holiday.

3. Make a “movie”: If you have a video camera, let the kids create a “show” and tape it. Don’t forget the “commercials.” These are usually the best part. If you don’t have a camera, let the kids create a “show” and pretend to tape it.

4. When plans don’t work out for a scheduled outing, be prepared to be creative!

Creating a special event for your family can make a memory for everyone. You can coordinate your special event with a holiday, or just make any night of the week something special. Sometimes we spend all our creativity on others and don’t create special events for the people we live with every day.

Which activities have you tried that work best with your family?

SOME SUGGESTIONS:

1. Make homemade ice cream as a family.
2. Go to a museum.
3. Play “kick-the-can.”
4. Play hopscotch! If your kids don’t know how, teach them!
5. Play in the rain—splash in the puddles. Your kids need to see you do something goofy!
6. Read a book aloud together.
7. Build a fort in the living room with card tables and sheets. Let your kids sleep there some night.
8. Camp out in the back yard.
9. Plant a garden or a flower pot or a tree.
10. Make and play with play dough.
11. Use the inside of a closet door to mark the name, height and date recorded for each child’s growth.

Play Dough Recipe

1 c. flour	2 tsp. cream of tartar
1 c. water	1 Tbs. cooking oil
1/2 c. salt	Food coloring

In a saucepan, mix the dry ingredients. Add oil, water and food coloring. Cook three minutes, or until mixture pulls away from sides of pan. (You may add a few drops of cloves or cinnamon to give pleasant aroma). Store in an airtight container. It will keep several weeks.

Good Discipline for Great Kids

Mothers of young children, please rate from 1 to 10 the greatest problems you have in disciplining your child:

- _____ Won't come the first time when called
- _____ Says "no" when told to do something
- _____ Throws a tantrum
- _____ "Forgets" to do what has been instructed
- _____ Won't settle down; in constant motion
- _____ Won't stay in bed
- _____ Carelessness—spills and breaks things often
- _____ Tells lies
- _____ Pouts when corrected; silent treatment
- _____ Demands to be center of family

Mothers of pre-teens and teens, rate from 1 to 10 the greatest problems you have in disciplining your child:

- _____ Does what he/she has been told not to do
- _____ Demands to go to places or with people that are inappropriate
- _____ Talks back to parents
- _____ "Forgets" to do what has been instructed
- _____ Is lazy, unmotivated
- _____ Argues with parents
- _____ Does not do or turn in homework
- _____ Tells lies
- _____ Pouts when corrected; silent treatment
- _____ Demands to be center of family

What is your most pressing question concerning the behavior of your child?

Rate from 1 to 10 your greatest problem as a disciplinarian:

- _____ I don't want to hurt my child.
- _____ I'm too tired to carry through.
- _____ I like to keep peace and avoid conflict.
- _____ I get distracted and forget to correct.
- _____ I do not have the support of my husband.
- _____ I get angry and yell.
- _____ I hate being the "heavy"; I like to play.
- _____ I get forceful and scare myself.
- _____ I want my child's approval.
- _____ My parents/in-laws don't support me.

What is your most pressing question concerning your behavior as disciplinarian?

What is your goal in the disciplining of your child?

The rule of thumb is to start with fairly strict rules and regulations for your young child. Then as he demonstrates trustworthiness, you can reward him with more independence. It's nicer to be in the position of the "good guy" giving more independence than in the place of the bad guy taking it away. The goal for our parenting is for our children to be independent of us when they leave home. Remember, they need to "leave us" so they can bond to their mates someday.

So what are appropriate boundaries at each age for our kids? Each family has to determine their own. Perhaps the following questions will help you get your thoughts on paper. Then use your answers as a springboard for discussion.

1. What are the guidelines for naptime/bedtime/curfew?

2. What are the guidelines for eating at the dinner table, snacking, or coming home to have dinner with the family?

3. What are the guidelines for spending the night with friends?

4. What are the guidelines for doing homework?

5. What are the guidelines for going to the mall or other places unsupervised?

6. What are the guidelines about dating?

7. Which movies are appropriate and acceptable and which are not?

8. What are the house rules on the use of the phone, cell phone, instant messaging and texting?

9. Which music is acceptable and which is not?

10. When will you wean your child from financial funding?

This may be overwhelming to you, but it is so much better to decide before you face an issue what your stance will be. If your children know in advance what your rules and guidelines are in these areas, it leaves less room for miscommunication!

Talk these over with your husband and come to agreements together before you share them with your children. You and your husband need to be a “united front” when you present them to your children and as you enforce them!

Learning To Serve Others

As you grow in your faith, it is easy to begin to recognize how to identify the needs others have that you may be equipped to meet. You will not have to look far to find people with needs – physical, emotional, financial, or spiritual! Ministering to others' lives will bring great purpose and contentment in your life as God uses you for His glory.

Serving a family in need will have as many varieties as you can imagine. Some friends might need a meal, others might need you to pray with them, some will need godly spiritual advice, while others might need help with childcare. Ask God to show you who needs ministering to in your sphere of influence and then follow through showing God's love to them. As we serve others, we become "Jesus with skin on." Don't wait for someone to come to you with a need – be on the look out for someone who needs you!

Name times of joy when you can minister to others and write down ways you will minister to them: _____

Name times of stress that are appropriate times to minister to others and write down ways you will minister to them: _____

What are things you can do for someone who has had a death in the family? Or someone who has been sick? _____

What are some of your favorite dishes to make for those who are sick or to receive when you are not well? _____

Times of joy to share with others are when a new baby is born, promotions at work, birthdays, and weddings. Some times of stress for families are deaths, divorce, being hospitalized, and job loss.

Some "do's" and "don'ts" of hospital visits are:

- Do: Pray a short, encouraging prayer with them
- Keep your visit short
- Be encouraging
- Smile and share only good news
- Don't: Say how badly they look
- Tell about someone else in same condition
- Tell them about your problems
- Share bad news you've heard
- Stay too long

Who are the people that provide services for you on a regular basis?

Can you name the names of your postman, people at the cleaners, gas station, grocery store checker, department store clerk?

How can you begin to share the gospel with them?

Do they know you are a Christian by your friendliness, cheerfulness, honesty, and integrity?

Great ways to serve friends who may not even have a pressing need could be to:

- Surprise them by taking them to lunch
- Send them an anonymous gift card
- Pick up their children and keep them for an evening or afternoon
- Send an encouraging card or email
- Give them a small, inexpensive gift

Serving brings purpose to our lives and allows us to connect with others in Christian love. For a fellow believer, you are meeting vital needs. For an unbeliever, you'll not only be meeting needs, but by serving them you may build a bridge or a relationship that will pave the way for you to share your faith with them.

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