

Top 10 Ways to Reconnect with Your Family



You hear the complaints everyday from a multitude of different people. Coworkers, neighbors and internet forum members bemoan the fact that their lives are so busy they never have any family time together. They often do not see their spouses until they crawl into bed because each one is taking a different child to a different after-school activity.

With this much running around, it is very easy to forget about “family time”. After all, the kids have homework to complete and parents have put such a premium on excelling at sports or dance or other extracurricular activities that they do not dare miss one practice for the sake of the family.

Rather than falling into the trap of the “busy family who does not talk to each other,” simply take 30 minutes a day to reconnect with your family members. Here are some simple ideas you can use to form a family bond:

1. Turn off the television. Rather than reaching for the remote after dinner, learn to enjoy the silence and focus your full attention on your spouse or child and listen to what he or she has to say. Having someone’s undivided attention will boost your self-esteem no matter what your age.

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2. Take a walk down memory lane. Dig out your old photo albums, scrapbooks, wedding album, baby books or home movies and have fun laughing at the old-style fashions and hairdos. This is a fabulous way to relive funny moments, share stories others may have forgotten, or to honor a beloved relative who has passed away.

3. Worship together. Sharing your faith and your religious practices helps strengthen your spiritual bond. Daily prayer brings joy to the soul, helps us become more compassionate toward others and helps us to understand that life is precious.



4. Prepare meals together. Many grandparents taught us that “the kitchen is the heart of the home.” That was in the days of families with one car who were not running to multiple sporting events every week. For a change of pace, let your older children plan the dinner menu once a week and then let them assign each family member a job so everyone has a chance to help.

5. Eat dinner together. After preparing such a nice meal together, sit together with no other distractions and learn about everyone’s day. If you approach this discussion with openness, you are likely to learn about your child’s friends, what events happened at school that day, and what happened on the bus. A child who is worried that he or she will be judged or punished is not as likely to share as one who feels confident that his or her parents will remain calm and listen to both sides of a story.

6. Plan an adventure. Dust off the old map or atlas, decide which direction you should point the car, pack a picnic lunch, and head off for parts unknown (with

map in hand)! Little ones can learn the basics of map reading and the older kids can learn how to navigate. Laugh when you make a wrong turn and hand off the map to see if another sibling can find their way home. Just be sure you have a full tank of gas before your departure!

7. Go on dates. Experts agree that moms and dads need regular “date nights” without the children to talk about themselves and to reconnect. Just as important is a parent sharing one-on-one time with each child. Spending that precious private time with a parent will make that child feel special and feel like they don’t have to compete with a sibling in order to be heard. Dads have the added job of showing their daughters how a respectful male should treat a woman.

8. Enjoy the great outdoors. Taking the dog for a walk or riding your bikes around the park will give your family extra time to talk as well as keep the family healthy. To keep the activities new and fresh, have each family member write a few activity ideas on pieces of paper, place them all in a large jar and choose a new activity everyday.

9. Exercise together. Whether you are exercising outdoors (tip #8) or you have a family membership at a local gym, keeping your family healthy should be a top priority. If everyone participates you can share your experiences to find common likes and dislikes and you can share your successes along your path to good health. Working toward common goals as a team is easier than tackling a large goal all by yourself.



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10. Plan a family fun night at home.

Choose one special night each week and decide how your family can have fun together at home. Entertainment and quality family fun does not have to cost anything. Pull out some dusty board games, teach the kids a new card game or have dinner and a movie. Sharing some funny stories or details about your day will start a great conversation.

As the old saying goes, take some time to smell the roses and put your family first. No activity should be placed above spending time with the family. What a shame it would be to raise a child to adulthood and yet not truly know that person.