

Family Days & Nights

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Family Night is a night you set aside to specifically spend some enjoyable time together as a family on a regular basis. This can be especially valuable for families that have crazy busy schedules, and find it necessary to put family time on the calendar. For some families it even becomes a tradition.

When I was growing up we had a tradition of having a family dinner once a month with my grandparents. Sometimes it would be at their home and sometimes it would be at ours, and once in awhile we went out to eat at a fancy restaurant. During these times my brother and I socialized with my parents and grandparents, even when we were quite young. We chatted about what was going on in our lives and the world around us.

This monthly tradition was special and we never tired of it. My grandmother used to make a delicious lamb dinner and we would get dressed up nice to go to her place. When it was at our house my mom would make something out of Gourmet magazine. We would set the table with a beautiful centerpiece, linen, lace & candles and use the best china & silverware. Everyone had something to do with getting dinner ready, setting the table & serving it. Even as young children we were very much involved in the process.



Staying Connected

Having a regular Family Night (or day) is a great way to create a tradition that keeps your family connected. It doesn't really matter what your activities are, as long as you are interacting and having a good time. Discussions around the dinner table help kids learn manners and how to be sociable. As my brother and I became teenagers the discussions became more lively as we could share our opinions about current events and express our philosophical viewpoints.

Other family traditions are important too. Our family was into nature so we went camping several times a year with other families. The kids & adults worked together to set up camp, make the fire, cook meals & entertain each other. Whether we were roasting marshmallows, swatting mosquitoes, or telling ghost stories, we were doing it together and talking to each other. The days were filled with swimming, canoe trips, nature walks, hunting, and other activities and at night we relaxed by the fire, played card games, and made up other games.



Scheduling Family Time

I know many families who like to have a weekly family night. If you can do it that often it's a great thing. Sometimes it's hardboard game though as kids are growing up and schedules change. A weekly Family Night can be simple but fun; have a pizza party and watch a movie together while eating ice cream. That's what my husband and I decided to do when our kids were young and we were both working. We were too tired to do anything else after a long work week.

As kids grow up they can get bored with the pizza & movie routine or lose interest. When it became difficult to keep a regular schedule because everyone had activities & commitments as they got older, we scheduled our family times more spontaneously. Even though we are now all adults, the Occasional board game after dinner or a trip to the zoo still brings us together.

A weekly, monthly or even quarterly tradition of doing something together as a family will help create bonds that last forever.