

More Ways to Spend Time With Your Family

The January 2009 NEBLINE featured an article about "Creating a Strong Family."

Research has shown strong families have six common characteristics:

- Appreciation and Affection
- Commitment
- Positive Communication
- Enjoyable Time Together
- Spiritual Well-Being
- Successful Management of Stress and Crisis

A second article listed "Ways to Spend Time With Your Family in January." Here are activity ideas for the next few months. Note: many of these activities could be done any day. Feel free to add your own ideas!

February

1. Take pictures for the family album
2. Discuss ice safety
3. Study the clouds
4. Listen to classical music
5. Visit the Post Office
6. Have a family checkers tournament
7. Bake cookies or bread today
8. Make or write Valentines to family or friends
9. Share your heros
10. Read a new story
11. Eat a green vegetable tonight
12. Read about President Lincoln's childhood
13. Invite a neighbor over for an evening to visit or play
14. Valentine's Day—talk about love
15. Go for a Sunday drive with your family
16. Find out how President's Day started
17. Try a new recipe—involve everyone
18. Learn to knit or try a new craft
19. No TV tonight—READ
20. Eat at a favorite restaurant and talk about the best things of the

- week
21. Shovel a neighbor's walk
 22. Celebrate George Washington's birthday by learning something about him
 23. Go for a walk at sunset
 24. Draw a winter scene
 25. Share a funny story with your family
 26. Play a board game tonight
 27. Make fruit smoothies
 28. Visit a nursing home

March

1. Attend a religious activity
2. Make a snow angel
3. Have mom share a favorite childhood memory
4. Leave love notes for each other
5. Eat at least two fruits today
6. Stop family putdowns
7. Invite some friends over for a game night
8. Build a snowman when it snows
9. Discuss the importance of a good education
10. Take a walk and look for your shadow
11. Help your child practice giving a report or telling a story
12. Bake cookies together
13. Attend a school activity together
14. Have a family fun night
15. Deliver cookies to your neighbor today
16. Learn the kinds of seeds different birds eat
17. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by eating something green
18. Build a bird feeder
19. Describe the kinds of birds that may visit your family's bird feeder
20. Celebrate the first day of spring by going on a bicycle ride
21. Keep a diary of the birds visiting your bird feeder
22. Have dad read a story aloud
23. Have everyone share a funny story
24. Have a family night at home
25. Eat an orange vegetable
26. Share dinner preparation with family members and talk about your day
27. Play a board game after dinner

28. Visit an art museum
29. Tell each member in the family you love them
30. Exercise together
31. Play dominos

April

1. Parents or grandparents share some fun activity you did as a child
2. Discuss what you saw at the museum
3. Turn off the TV, radio, phone and computer tonight! Play a game
4. Clean up an elderly neighbor or friend's yard
5. Fill your spiritual reservoir by attending a service or reading a special book
6. Start flower or vegetable seeds indoors
7. Star gaze tonight
8. Talk about a happy family memory
9. Discuss next summer's vacation
10. Go to a play or concert
11. Fly a kite
12. Go for a drive and enjoy the view
13. Do a safety check on everyone's bicycle
14. Children read aloud tonight
15. Have a family sing-a-long
16. Do homework with your children
17. Take a family nighttime walk around your neighborhood
18. Pick up trash in your neighborhood
19. Visit someone who lives alone and share cookies
20. Eat a new fruit
21. Play Scrabble
22. Talk about important things in your lives
23. Put together a book of favorite family recipes
24. Celebrate Arbor Day by planting a tree
25. Plant flowers in a planter
26. Take a walk and smell spring flowers
27. No TV tonight, read to each other
28. Recycle plastics, cans, newspapers, magazines

29. Take a family walk and talk
30. Hunt for butterflies

May

1. Celebrate May Day with flowers for a friend or parent
2. Wash windows together
3. Pull out the family picture album and reminisce
4. Play charades
5. Learn about Cinco de Mayo
6. Eat a serving of whole grain cereal or bread
7. Children tell what you did in school today
8. Share memories of last summer's fun activities
9. Take an evening walk and look at the full moon
10. Mother's Day—do something special for mom today!
11. Draw chalk pictures on the sidewalk
12. Go bird watching
13. Take a walk in the rain
14. Phone a family member just to say "hi"
15. Attend a concert or musical in your community
16. Clean out the toy box and share unused toys
17. Visit different parks in town or surrounding area
18. Use clay or homemade play dough to create something
19. Swing on swings
20. Turn off the TV and listen to something on the radio
21. Work together to put family photos in albums
22. Plant flowers or a garden
23. Take a long walk and watch the sunset
24. Read to the elderly at the nursing home
25. Celebrate Memorial Day with a BBQ
26. Eat some fresh fruit today
27. Tell a make-believe story with each person adding a part
28. Write a poem about summer fun
29. Have a fire drill
30. Take cookies to a neighbor or friend
31. Ride bicycles together

June

1. Exercise together
2. Eat three servings of vegetables
3. Write a family history
4. Make sure everyone uses sunscreen when outside this summer
5. Invite the neighbors over to visit
6. Play a game of tennis
7. Read an inspirational story or poem
8. Finalize plans for a family vacation
9. Discuss a family favorite book
10. Lay on the grass, watch the clouds and find a shape
11. Start the summer reading program at your local library
12. Get ice cream and eat it in your community's park
13. Spend an afternoon at the local flea market
14. Flag Day—display the flag and share what it means to you
15. Go for a bicycle ride after dinner
16. Make a greeting card for a grandparent
17. Listen to another family member's concerns
18. Enjoy a breakfast pizza
19. Make S'mores
20. Clean out the garage
21. Father's Day—prepare father's favorite meal together
22. Work some crossword puzzles
23. Plan the weekly menu & grocery list
24. Have a whole grain, fruit and dairy for breakfast
25. Have a fresh vegetable for dinner (lettuce, carrot, radish, etc.)
26. Perform a random act of kindness for someone
27. Go for an evening hike in the country
28. Mom's day off! Have your children prepare tonight's meal
29. Give a shoulder rub to each other
30. Make popsicles with fruit juice

For activity ideas for the rest of 2009, go to <http://unlforfamilies.unl.edu/Calendars/CalMain.htm>

STRENGTHENING FAMILY TREASURES

Daughter/Mother Camp

A retreat designed for 5th & 6th grade girls and their mothers (or grandmothers or other adult females)

Friday, Feb. 20, 5 p.m. to Saturday, Feb. 21, 5 p.m.



Give the greatest gift to your daughter—your time! This camp is two days and one night of fun, educational and confidence-building activities. As middle school approaches, this is an opportunity to:

- Enhance effective communication including expressing emotions
 - Learn more about body image and sexuality
 - Explore techniques to handle peer pressure and stress
 - Discuss the importance of individual family values
- Cost includes meals,

snacks and lodging at Carol Joy Holling Center. Fee is \$120 per pair (4 people per room) or \$150 (2 people per room)—each room has two double beds. Carol Joy Holling is located at the end of Ranch Road off Highway 66 between Interstate 80 and Ashland.

Co-sponsored by UNL Extension, Sheridan Lutheran Church and Camp Carol Joy Holling. For more information or a registration form, go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/family/guf.shtml> or call Extension Educator Maureen Burson at 441-7180.

Master Conservationist Entries Due April 1

Nebraska adults and youth in both rural and urban areas who have implemented soil and water conservation practices are eligible to enter the 2009 Master Conservationist Recognition program. The deadline for entries is April 1. There are categories for youth groups and individuals, residences, communities and private businesses as well as production agriculture (farming and ranching). Master Conservationist program brochures are available at the UNL Extension office and online at <http://owh.com> (click on the "In the Community" link).



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