

Daily, Weekly, & Monthly Rituals
to Ground Your Family

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

Screen-Free Family Rituals



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SCREEN-FREE FAMILY RITUALS

A ritual is a repeated event performed daily, weekly, or even monthly. It's something that we can't imagine not doing. Perhaps due to craziness in your life, your family's rituals disappear at times, but they are the things you return to time and time again. In our screen-crazed world, we need to create and honor these rituals in our homes more than ever.

As screens begin to seep into the white space in our lives, families are reluctant to set their devices aside to embrace the rituals that used to be so commonplace in society.

You can change this. You can set down your device in favor of family dinner, an evening walk, bedtime stories, and Saturday chores. These simple moments have the power to ground your family and elevate your life in ways a device never will. We hope this community-curated list inspires you to set your device aside and let the screen-free rituals win!

DAILY RITUALS

- A morning walk to get your bodies and minds moving.
- Read aloud while the kids eat breakfast.
- Morning devotional or scripture study.
- Breakfast together every day with healthy hot cocoa.
- Family prayer before kids go to school.
- Repeat daily affirmations with the kids. Things such as, "I am brave. I am protected. I am loved. I have super powers. I am kind. I am going to have a great day." (One mom does this on the same street on their daily route to school. She calls it their affirmation street!)
- Before your kids leave the car, squeeze their hand three times to signify "I love you", or when in a public place and the kids are nervous or scared and you can't talk, do three squeezes on their hands.
- Have a special goodbye handshake for each child followed by a hug.

"Family rituals...are associated with marital satisfaction, adolescents' sense of personal identity, children's health, academic achievement and stronger family relationships."—American Psychological Association

- Clean out backpacks together after school and talk about the day.
- One hour of quiet time in your room (no screens).
- Daily teatimes with the "fine china" (my 3 & 5 yr old LOVE this) where you read poetry, classic stories, and listen to classical music.
- "Snoopje"—Dutch for "treat." Each afternoon have a small treat with your kids around the table. Homemade, if possible. Read scriptures, play a fun little game, or tell jokes.
- Daily tidy time before dinner.
- Prepare dinner together.
- Read a short inspirational story during dinner.
- Family dinner together everyday! (No phones at the table.)
- Nightly family walk after dinner.
- Sharing the best/worst parts of the day over dinner. Some families call it High, Low, and Buffalo and others Rose & Thorn.

"Rituals...involve symbolic communication and convey 'this is who we are' as a group and provide continuity in meaning across generations. Also, there is often an emotional imprint where once the act is completed, the individual may replay it in memory to recapture some of the positive experience. Any routine has the potential to become a ritual once it moves from an instrumental to a symbolic act."—Psychologist Barbara H. Fiese, Ph.D

"In most industrialized countries, families don't farm together, play musical instruments or stitch quilts on the porch. So dinner is the most reliable way for families to connect and find out what's going on with each other. In a survey, American teens were asked when they were most likely to talk with their parents: dinner was their top answer. Kids who eat dinner with their parents experience less stress and have a better relationship with them. This daily mealtime connection is like a seat belt for traveling the potholed road of childhood and adolescence and all its possible risky behaviors."—Anne Fishel, co-founder of The Family Dinner Project and professor at Harvard Medical School

- Share three things we're grateful for at dinnertime.
- Singing the same simple "goodnight song" to my kids that includes their names—a verse for each of them.
- Family prayer before bedtime.
- Music! Turn up the music and have a family dance party.
- Draw names during dinner and give that person a compliment.
- At bedtime share three things you're thankful for.
- Individual chats with kids at bedtime. Let them talk about anything they want to!
- Read *The Story of The World* together after dinner.
- Journal time for 20-30 minutes before bedtime.
- Bedtime back tickles for the teens.
- At night, we read the kids a Bible story, say

our prayers, then play a short card game (like Uno, Old Maid, etc.)

"Walking is meditative. It helps us foster a slower frame of mind, so that we become more aware of the people around us and able to meaningfully reconnect."—Carl Honoré, author of *In Praise of Slowness*

- Quick Uno game before bed. Winner picks who says the bedtime prayer.
- Family prayer each night then we tell each other one thing we love about each person.
- Bedtime stories.
- Recite a family chant where we stack our hands on top of one another's hands and say "team work" and then throw our hands into the air.
- Saying "I love you" when we say goodbye and before we all go to bed.

WEEKLY RITUALS

- Sunday roast dinner at 4 PM.
- Friday night is pizza night (everyone helps!)
- Hide-and-go-seek once a week.
- Game night.
- Weekly family bike rides.
- Sitting around the fire pit and talking.
- Going to get ice cream.
- Playing double-shot (indoor basketball).
- Sunday morning fancy breakfast.
- Grandpa Beck's card games.
- Chores together on Saturdays.
- Worship time together each Sunday.
- Jam sessions with musical instruments.
- Nerf Gun wars.
- Fill out a *Mad Libs* together.
- Singing together around the piano.
- Sunday night popcorn and smoothies.
- Screen-free day on Sundays. We play games, cook, go on walks and bike rides and reconnect.
- One-on-one time with each child.
- Weekly adventure day outdoors.
- Dinner with extended family.
- Poetry tea time (gather favorite beverage and read poetry together.)

"In addition to nature's ability to restore attention, which in turn helps family members get along better, researchers see how important it is for families to have nature-based routines or rituals that they participate in regularly. A common example for families might be walking the dog together almost every evening. This might be a simple activity, but one that brings a sense of belonging and identity to family members."—Family studies researchers at the University of Illinois

“As you consider your own family and your own most important things, what family rituals might you create? Start with something small, memorable, repeatable, and clear. It could be something that you say, a place you go, something you do, listen to, or read together. There is no right or wrong here, because parenting rituals are unique to you.”—Erin Walsh of Spark and Stitch Institute

- A family meeting which always begins with our family song (1 Timothy 1:5 set to a tune), includes discussion of any new business, and ends with playing a board game.
- Nap time coffee—when my husband is home, we sit in the garden and enjoy our afternoon coffee together.
- Saturday evening Sabbath meal. We have bread and grape juice, and always dessert!
- Saturday morning donut dates (one kiddo with one parent).
- Sunday morning snuggles in our bed followed by a yummy breakfast.
- Weekly hike.
- Weekend brunch with grandparents.
- Crepes every Saturday morning.
- When you get frustrated, dance to the song "[Freak Out](#)" by [Le Chic](#).
- Start the weekend every Friday evening with the same meal and same music playlist.
- One night a week have the kids put you to bed! They can read you a story and tuck you in!
- Go to the library every Wednesday.
- Bake challah on Fridays.
- Look at family photo albums together and share stories from the photos.
- Weekly family night with a song, prayer, inspirational lesson, treat, and someone is always “Spotlight”. Turn the lights off and have one person stand in/under a few lights. Family members raise hands and as the person calls on them, tell them something we love about them.

“In a way, doing tasks together puts parent and child on more even ground. So often we parents are rushing to schlep our kids to practice or lessons or other kid-oriented events, making them the pivot around which a family's activities revolve. Taking part in regular tasks together, even if we're pulling weeds on opposite sides of the garden, affirms the sort of mutuality that advertisers tell us is only found in pricey vacations. Of course time afterwards for a nice game of hoops and some cold lemonade builds bonds too.”—Laura Grace Weldon, Wired article

MONTHLY RITUALS

- One-on-One interviews with each child to plan a simple date together (monthly).
- Interviews with each child to do a five-facet review from the Eyre's. Discuss each child's social, physical, mental (including academics), spiritual, and emotional well-being.
- Monthly one on one parent/child dates. Rotate each month between the kids.
- Fancy dinner night with candles and food served on nice platters.
- Attend one another's events and cheer each other on.
- Family discussion and set goals together.
- A monthly theme night where the food, games, and activities are centered on that theme.
- Monthly service activity where we serve someone else together as a family.
- Cooking a meal from a different culture every month.
- Write thank you notes to friends and family all together.

YOUR FAMILY'S NEXT STEPS FOR HEALTHY TECH HABITS:

- [Creating a Tech-Healthy Family](#)—The only family-tested approach to fewer screen time battles and more peace of mind.
- [Untangling Teens and Tech](#)—A step-by-step program for parents who want to connect with their teens while navigating turbulent tech waters.