

Before sharing the ideas surrounding time together, I'd like to note two important things I missed an opportunity to say:

1. Although my answer to Amy's question about joy was a "big" thing in my life, I find that little things often bring the greatest joy. Sitting around a table of food, sharing and laughing with friends and family. Gathered in the backyard, watching my kids play spike ball. Spending early morning time with coffee in the Word and in prayer. Joy comes in big packages. But, mostly it comes in little packages.
2. When Amy asked me about the social aspect, in my head, I was thinking shelter-in-place scenarios, so I offered advice that included social distancing. I am a believer in friendships. Plan a few park times with friends, or just some play times with other kids/families – to the degree that you're comfortable with it. Whatever you choose to do in this season, your children will be okay. Often with homeschooling, our children have the opportunity to grow in areas of relating to people of all ages, not just kids their own age. That's so good for our kids.

Making the most of our time with our children:

Ideas

1. Board Game Day – Take a break from books and just play games.
2. Baking Day – Take a break from books and bake together.
3. Service Projects (this will also help build compassion in your children) – Take time as a family to serve...
Yard work for neighbors, or an elderly couple you know.
Shovel snow for neighbors together.
Cook a meal together for someone who needs it.
Bake some goodies, and deliver them to neighbors.
Collect canned goods together and deliver to a food bank (they often run low).
Invite as many neighbors as you can, including older ones, to join you outside, social distancing in camping chairs, just to provide company for those who might be lonely.
4. Lunch or Dinner Theater – Enjoy food on a picnic blanket (or ratty sheet) together while you watch a movie.
5. Celebrate Birthday Week – Give something small (a pack of gum and favorite candy bar on the Bday child's breakfast plate) OR do something celebratory (get sonic slushes) on each day of the week for each child's birthday.
6. Fall Color's Drive – Get away from the city and take a drive in the high country when the leaves are changing. Stop for ice cream (this will help make it memorable and fun).
7. Hike – take some hikes together.
8. Go geocaching together – if you don't know what this is, do an internet search!
9. Pray together – take time every day to do this. Ask your children how you can pray for them. Share specific needs in your family, in your church, in your neighborhoods.

10. Campfire – get one going in your back yard (if you have a place for it). Pull out smores ingredients. Sing songs. Tell stories. Have fun!

11. Family Devotions – Parents, this is important, and will make an impact. There is no wrong way to do it. Read Scripture together. Learn and grow together.

For families with youngers, the Jesus Storybook Bible is a great place to start!

<https://www.christianbook.com/jesus-storybook-bible-every-story-whispers/sally-lloyd-jones/9780310708254/pd/708257>

For Pre-K-elementary, our family ministry, FamiliesAlive, has produced fun and meaningful materials for families. Try a sample lesson here:

<https://familiesalive.org/courses/words-of-grace/lessons/chapter-1-the-god-who-is-lord/>

Focus on the Family has some great material. They give some good tips here:

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/a-simple-way-to-start-family-devotions/>

Do an internet search to find some fun, free ideas to talk about the Lord together. Just teach your children about Jesus!