

STRATEGIES & IDEAS TO REDEEM TIME AT HOME

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL PARENT RESOURCES

1. MAKE CANDLES GREAT AGAIN!

Go an entire evening without electricity and use candlelight instead.

- Plan dinner around needing electricity, or just order pizza instead. Dinner by candlelight is unique, even with pizza. It's not just for the romantic!
- Over dinner talk about what life would be like without electricity. What are all the things that would change and we often take for granted?
- Move some candles into the bathroom for showers and bedtime prep.
- Maybe have a family reading hour by candlelight. Read separately, or read a book (or excerpts from a favorite book) together and discuss. Maybe have everyone in the family read an excerpt from their favorite book or an essay or short story, and explain why they like it or why it is meaningful to them.
- Play a board game or cards
- [Audible](#) has a free 30-day trial so download the app and pick out a book and listen to it as a family. It will be hard and weird at first with our need for visual stimulation, but try it for 20-30 minutes per night and ease the kids into it.
- Take it to the next level by keeping the electricity off in the morning and using candles until the sun comes up.

2. EDUCATE THROUGH CURRENT EVENTS

There is so much changing in our world and country by the minute. Help them make sense of it all by researching and learning about some current event topics and have them present it to the family at dinner. There are great free educational resources on YouTube, and my personal favorite Khan Academy. Ask your favorite homeschool parent and they probably have tons of online resources they could point you to as well.

- The stock market and how it works:
 - What makes it go up and down? What does going up and down even mean?

-
- Let your kids play a mock stock market with fake money. Make it a competition with their siblings for a week to see who performs the best and reward them. With the current climate it is sure to fluctuate a lot and keep it interesting.
 - The fundamentals of economics:
 - Why so many people are losing their jobs all the sudden.
 - The interconnected/ripple effect of supply chains due to closing restaurants and public events. This may be best explained by using your own job and current employment situation as an example.
 - What is capitalism? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this system?
 - Lots of talk about China lately.
 - How is their government different than ours?
 - What is communism and how does it work in China?
 - Do a quick overview of the last 100 years of history of China.
 - Why do the United States and China seem to have such a competitive or distrustful relationship with each other?

3. TAKE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE.

- Take out a family photo album after dinner and look through it together as a family. Pause to take turns telling the stories and background of the photos. Maybe even reenact the silly ones.
- Connect your computer to the TV and start a photo slideshow of the photos on your drives. This may be easier for all to see or if your albums are packed away.

4. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER. YES, REALLY.

- Play a game of “hot seat.” Each person takes a turn in the hot seat and everyone else has 10 minutes to ask them any question they want and they have to answer honestly.
 - Don’t settle for weak questions like, “What’s your favorite color?” Go for something more meaningful like, “What’s your proudest accomplishment?”

-
- Or “If you could take a walk in Cherokee park with any person dead or alive who would it be and why? If you’re stuck there’s a ton of questions online.
 - Maybe just do one person per night over dinner or dessert.
 - You might be surprised how much your kids enjoy this. And it is easy. It is easy and enjoyable to talk about yourself :)
 - It could be some refreshing vulnerability for your family or a great chance for siblings to throw each other under the bus in front of mom and dad.
 - Dad and Mom share your life stories with your kids. Then let them ask you questions. Most kids know very little about their parents and their lives before the kids came along. You’ll be pleasantly surprised how interested they are to learn about your life even if they act like they don’t care. They do. I promise.
 - Don’t just settle for the facts- “I worked at a golf course when I was 14.” I played baseball in high school.” Go deeper- what were your anxieties/fears/worries as a child, best friends and memories with them, mistakes you made, victories you’re proud of, what kind of relationship did you have with your parents? Talk about your teen years because these are so formative and your kids are experiencing them (or about to.)
 - Risk some vulnerability and share some hard stuff too. None of us got through our teen years unscathed...and they won’t either. Not only will your kids respect you more but they’ll also likely extend more grace and patience seeing that you’re human too and were once in their shoes.
 - Don’t leave out your faith journey. Your kids see you following Jesus now, which is great, but it is also inspiring if they knew your journey and how you got here.
 - Bust out an old yearbook, a photo album of your dating years or that wedding or honeymoon photo album. (See #3 above). Be prepared at how much they will judge your ridiculously ugly wedding dress and sideburns.
 - Since we’re experiencing a lifetime/global event, share stories of past ones you experienced such as September 11, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Black Monday of 1987, the Persian Gulf War, Iran hostage crisis etc. How old were you? What were you thinking? Where were you? What do you remember about how it unfolded?

5. EVERYTHING IS BETTER WITH FIRE.

- If you have a fire pit out back or one inside your house make use of it. Most people I know rarely put them to use yet everyone loves them.
- Plan to make dinner one night on the open fire. Make a classic “hobo dinner” of throwing ingredients into a foil ball and cooking them in the hot coals. This can be done inside or outside.
 - Here’s a [link to a recipe](#)
 - For [dessert try these](#) instead of s’mores. My personal favorite is the orange peel cupcakes.
- Another option is to make homemade personal [pizzas on the grill](#). Everyone can make their own with their favorite ingredients. If you’re not skilled enough to make your own dough just buy the premade kind at the grocery.

6. EXPLORE THE PARKS!

- Thankfully we’re not under a total confinement yet in KY. We all know Louisville has a great park system but how many have you actually been to? You probably go to the same one all the time. Check out a map of the city and visit the lesser-known ones, especially on the southern or western side of town. Yes, you have time...when else would you go?
- Make a goal to bike/run/walk the entire [Parklands](#) system. Start it now and see if you can complete it all this summer.

7. HELP YOUR KIDS CULTIVATE ADULT & HOMEOWNERSHIP SKILLS

Your kids will likely own their own home one day. Help them learn to take care of it (and your current one) by giving them basic maintenance jobs to learn. Here’s a few suggestions:

- Fix the leaky/“running” toilet, change the HVAC filter, change the oil and/or air filters (engine and cabin filter) in the car, disassemble a sink trap to clean/unclog it, how the electric panel works and what to do if a breaker trips, clean the dust off refrigerator coils, replace batteries in smoke detectors, drain sediment from the water heater, lube all the joints and springs of your garage door and automatic opener, clean and grease the grates on the grill...so many more...

-
- Youtube is an amazing resource for learning how to fix stuff and makes most jobs idiot proof. Guess what...your kids know about YouTube;))
 - There is relatively low risk with much of these tasks if it all goes wrong. What's the worst that can happen? A shirt gets shrunk on the hot cycle? Water spills on the bathroom floor?
 - Explain the family budget and ask them for insight on where you can save money or cut expenses. Kids own what they help create so inviting them into the process empowers them to do without if it was their idea.
 - This is also super helpful because few kids know how much anything actually costs. Insurance policies, mortgage interest, the family grocery bill, cell phone plans, car repairs, cable/internet, utilities, trash pick up...don't let them get to college before they learn about all these.
 - Teach your kids how to do laundry if they don't already. Simple but essential.
 - Have them purge their closets of old clothes and donate them.

8. DREAMS, GOALS, RITES OF PASSAGE

- Dream a bit as a family. Make it conversational but write it down and discuss.
 - What are some things you'd like to accomplish as a family?
 - Are there trips you'd like to take, places you'd like to see together?
 - Discuss and dream about *who* you are becoming and not just *what* you're doing. Who do you want to be? What character traits/qualities do you want to develop or be known for? Kids are always asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and never get asked, "What kind of personal character and integrity do you want to possess?"
- Think ahead to future milestones...graduations, special birthdays, weddings, awards, certifications, paying off the house?. How will you celebrate? What will you do to mark the time? What rites of passage can you create to celebrate and mark the completions or changes?