

## How To Make Lockdown Fun And Fruitful – Rachel McConchie

Many of us are finding that lockdown means we have a lot more time together with our families or housemates. This can present us with new challenges, but also new opportunities. I'd like to share some of the things we've been doing as a family to try to make the most of this time and to keep things positive. These ideas could be used in share-houses as well as families.

### Warm Fuzzies

We knew that spending more time together in lockdown could mean more fights, more disagreements, more irritations. So Jonathan suggested a way to add more positive words into the mix. We created a 'warm fuzzy' wall. Each member of the family created a pocket out of an envelope, wrote their name on it and decorated it. These were then attached to the wall in our dining room. Whenever someone does something we appreciate we write a note to thank or encourage them and put it into their pocket. Or if we just notice something we like about someone we write that in a note too. Or sometimes we put little treats into a pocket. We've found it's made us more mindful of the things we love and appreciate about each other and has certainly added a positive vibe to our home.



### One good thing, one bad thing

We copied this idea from my brother's family. At dinner time we take it in turns to ask another family member: "could you tell us one good and one bad thing about your day?" This gives each person at the table an opportunity to share something about their day, to receive sympathy, if needed, and to share their joys. It also teaches the kids how to be more thoughtful and to ask questions of others at the table. And it helps us to be more aware of what is going on in each other's lives. Sometimes sharing leads to prayers of thanks and request.

### Bible reading challenge

It's been my desire that each of my children has a habit of reading the bible every day. I needed to find a way to motivate them, so I came up with the '20 day bible reading challenge'. This could be useful for adults too! They say it takes 6 weeks to form a habit. I decided to try 4 weeks. So I said to my kids "if you can read a chapter a day for 20 weekdays in a row, I'll give you a reward". The reward, in my children's case, is 90 minutes of screen-time (our kids have to earn their screen time, ask me about that another time!) which is VERY motivating for them. You could choose whatever reward your children (or yourself) find most appealing. I printed off a list of all the chapters of all the books of the bible<sup>1</sup> and asked them to tick off each chapter as they read them. Once they'd ticked off 20 they would receive their reward. This has worked beautifully for Ben (16) who has now been in a daily (including weekends!) habit of reading a chapter over breakfast for over 12 months now. He's up to 1 Kings now! Poppy (14) was in a good habit of listening to a chapter in an audiobook while riding the bus to school.

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<sup>1</sup> If you'd like a copy of this, get in touch with me at [rachel.mcconchie@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.mcconchie@gmail.com).

## Changing the scene

It can get monotonous and boring having to stay home all the time. It's good to give our minds a break from the home routine. Transport yourself into another place (figuratively) by creating another world in your home. Here are some ideas:

- **Camp in the backyard.** Set up tents, have a campfire, cook outside, toast marshmallows, don't go inside except to go to the toilet. It's surprising how different it feels!



- **Have a themed dinner<sup>2</sup>**

### **Dinner on the trampoline.**

Make a tossed salad and put it in a plastic, lidded container. Bounce to toss the salad! Do the same with the spaghetti bolognese! Use plastic plates and drink from bottles.

**Posh party.** Set the table with your best tablecloth, cutlery and crockery. Cook a fancy dinner and wear your best clothes. Play some classical music and light some candles. Ask your kids to use their best manners (or use this as an opportunity to teach them good manners!). For fun you could even talk in a posh English accent!



**Red dinner.** Decorate the table with a red tablecloth or flowers or whatever you have in the house. Dress up in red clothes. Make red food, eg. spaghetti bolognese (you can even dye the pasta red with food colouring), eat a tomato salad, drink red cordial, eat strawberries and red jelly for dessert. (You could choose another colour on another night).

**Back to front dinner.** Come dressed in your clothes back to front. Eat dessert first, then mains and then finish with entrée. For added fun, try talking backwards!

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<sup>2</sup> Most of these ideas came from the book "Celebrate....just because" by Mimi B. If you want more ideas get in touch.