

## HOW IS YOUR FAMILY BALANCING SCREEN TIME?

Taking time to pause and reflect about balancing screen time in your family is important to the well-being of each family member. Take time to pause, literally unplug, and have an open family conversation to reflect about what screen time is looking like in your household.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS TO ASK:**

- What are the expectations for screen time in our family? What are we allowed to do in front of screens and for how long?
- Do these expectations promote a balanced approach with healthy boundaries?  
*Helpful Tip:* Kids do need parents to set the boundaries for them. However, children can share how they are feeling about the boundaries and voice their boundary suggestions.
- Can our family improve the set parameters for the amount of screen time each family member is allowed per day (appropriate to age/activity)?  
*Helpful Tip:* Use a timer if necessary, to help build awareness of time spent on a device
- How can we encourage each other to abide by these expectations and boundaries?
- What are some screen-free activities our family can engage in on a regular basis, so we are balancing our screen time and device usage?  
*Helpful Tips:* Ask your children to come up with this list to give ownership of putting that device down and stepping away from a screen. Kids are so creative!
- As our family uses the internet, are we being safe in our online activity? How are the restrictions on our devices keeping us safe?  
*Helpful Tip:* As kids participate in social media, video gaming, etc. to stay connected to friends and starve off isolation, remind them that digital safety and online vigilance is important. Reassess your device restrictions to make sure they are still appropriate and working.
- Parents, how are you modeling screen-free times in your day for your kids? 😊

### **SCREEN – FREE IDEAS**

Below are some ideas of screen-free things you could do with your kids, during this time. Staying indoors to keep safe and healthy is imperative but it doesn't have to be boring or detrimental. *An excerpt taken from: 20 Screen-Free Things to Do with Your Kids When School is Closed by Saved You a Spot*

1. Homemade gifts. Encourage your child to make a gift for someone or a greeting card. There are many ideas and instructions online, start searching!
2. Get baking. Bake some cakes or biscuits. Have them help you in the kitchen! Who doesn't need a great helper?
3. Reminisce. Sort through old photographs, make a scrapbook of memories. It might sound a bit old fashioned but it's so therapeutic and you get to spend quality time with your kids.
4. Organize. Get your child to sort through their belongings and throw out what they don't need. Ask them to organize their room.
5. Draw or create a family tree. Why don't you even make an art gallery at home and show of your child's artwork?
6. Chat about life, family, friends, and feelings. Let your child share what their thoughts, emotions, what they would like to be doing, etc. Focus on describing the positive elements of their friendships and relationships with others. Listen.
7. Treasure hunt. If you are lucky enough to have a garden create an exciting treasure hunt with clues and home-made treasures for your kids to find.

8. Get gardening. Show your child how to take care of plants and let them garden, too. If you live in apartment, go to your balcony plant some flowers in pots.
9. Show time. If your children like performing, go through dress-up outfits and help them to put on a show for the family. They can even work on some literacy skills in a fun way by writing a play script and act it out.
10. Puppets. Make finger puppets and help them create their own puppet show. Make a theatre out of a box and get creative.
11. Read. Start a family book club. Discuss what your favorite characters and what part you liked best and why.
12. Picnic time. Have a family picnic indoors, on the balcony or in the garden.
13. Create. Make potato stamps, stamp paper or even a shirt. Create something for someone else.
14. Adventure time. Go camping in the garden or the living room.
15. Sports. Make your own mini-golf course in the living room. There are many online ideas you can easily recreate.
16. Homemade games. In the evenings get the kids to design a game that you can make the next day – give them ideas to keep it simple such as a paper boat race in the bath or homemade skittles using a tennis ball and empty toilet rolls.
17. Origami. All you need is paper and instructions which can be found online, will keeps kids amused and they will learn a new skill.
18. Theatre. Encourage the kids to put on a play or a magic show. They could even use the dress up with clothes and props from around the house. If you have a camera, you can even film it to watch later or for some great memories.
19. Games. Play board games and card games, I'm sure there are some lurking somewhere in the house.
20. Learn something new! What have you always wanted to learn to do? How about learning to play chess? Try taking up a new instrument to play. Knitting anyone?

**Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23**