



The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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"From Your Valentine"

No one knows for sure just exactly how we got started with the Valentine's Day tradition. We do know that it is named after a man known in history as St. Valentine. Trouble is, the Roman Catholic church recognizes three different men known as "St. Valentine," all of whom suffered martyrdom. According to one legend, one of the Valentines fell in love with a young girl (some say the jailer's daughter). It is alleged that he wrote her a letter prior to his death and signed it "From Your Valentine." That simple signature eventually became a business opportunity for people who are in the greeting card business.

Norman recalls the first Valentine's Day, he and Ann spent together. To be more accurate, he doesn't recall it. He didn't even know it was February 14th, even though he and Ann had been married less than two months. The honeymoon is supposed to last longer than that. He really can't account for his actions on that day except that he knows he brought neither flowers, nor a card, nor delicious chocolates when he came home from work. Certainly there was not a note that ended, "From your Valentine." Most likely his most romantic words were "What's for sup-

per?" It would have meant the world to Ann if he had at least noticed. At the very least he could have suggested bedtime reading from the Song of Solomon.

Within a few months of the wedding nearly all of us will discover that we didn't marry "Mr. Wonderful." or "Mrs. Perfect-In-Every Way." Marriage is not based on romance. It's based on a kind of love that has a more substantial foundation than that. On the other hand, who would want to live in a house that has no walls, windows and doors? Maybe romance doesn't even qualify as windows and doors, but surely romance can be compared to window curtains and some tasteful art pieces. Yes, you can live in a house with bare walls, hard board floors and an unpainted ceiling, but doesn't it seem a lot more like home when there are some decorations? We are not trying to dictate taste. If you want to tack up a velvet picture of Elvis, that's all right, if you both agree that's what you want. Others may think it's tacky, but if it looks good to you, we're not going to protest.

Romance works the same way. Your commitment to each other may be rock solid, but your relationship has a better chance of being enjoyable if you grace it with some aesthetic additions - music (we're not dictating which kind), art, gifts, words of appreciation. A little attention given to

these things will pay enormous dividends.

From a spiritual perspective, as marriage partners we are "heirs of the gift of life." We need to explore the thoughts of each other and learn how we can enhance our gift with thoughtful expressions of love. "From Your Valentine" may be just a little bit too corny for you, but surely you can find a way to let your spouse know how much you care.

—Norman and Ann Bales

Time That Counts

There's no age limit on a good old-fashioned playdate. Everyone enjoys spending time with friends, family, and loved ones, so why should that stop once you're a senior? Even though we may slow down as we get older, maintaining a commitment to social activities and sharing new experiences is important.

Read the list of activities for seniors below and get inspired.

- *Visit a museum. Have lunch afterwards and talk about your favorite paintings.
- *Find a local birder to take your group bird watching.
- *Have everyone get together those old family photos and share stories about the photos.
- *Take a class in cooking, quilt-

ing or flower arranging. Then show your skills at the next gathering!

*Take a group internet class so that you can send emails or videos to family members.

*Visit a local park and practice your nature photography skills.

*Host a traditional English tea party, complete with crumpets and scones.

*Have a game night. Give prizes to the winners.

The above thoughts are from, Griswold (Home Care)'s **Caring Times**, (a blog) but did you notice there are no spiritual activities included. I like the idea of getting together and having a fun time but let me also suggest as seniors we have a lot to offer in help and service to others, both among the lost and the saved.

Consider a few of the ideas below where you could be serving as:

* Bibles Correspondence teacher.

* Provide transportation for others as needed. Of course, helping with a ride to church, but to the store, the doctor or other places as needed.

* Always praying. Have a set time for yourself, but also to pray for others.

* Be a missionary helper, visit one of the missionaries we support and spend some time as your schedule allows helping as you are able.

* Serve a congregation that is between preachers. Again, spend time as your schedule allows. There are hundreds of congregations you could serve.

I am sure you have other suggestions, but I think you get the point. Yes, have some fun along the way and do things that make

you smile. Still day by day do the things that will count for an eternity.

You will never know the full impact of your actions until you are in God's presence. —**Dick Brant**

Helping Your Children Manage Distress

(Provided by the Christian Counseling Center, Paducah, KY)

As a parent, you may be struggling with how to talk with your children about a shooting rampage. It is important to remember that children look to their parents to make them feel safe. This is true no matter what age your children are. Consider the following tips for helping your children manage their distress.

Talk with your child. Talking to your children about their worries and concerns is the first step to help them feel safe and begin to cope with the events occurring around them. What you talk about and how you say it does depend on their age, but all children need to be able to know you are there listening to them.

- Find times when they are most likely to talk: such as when riding in the car, before dinner, or at bedtime.
- Start the conversation; let them know you are interested in them and how they are coping with the information they are getting. Encourage them to put their feelings into words, journaling, or art.
- Listen to their thoughts and point of view; don't interrupt – allow them to express their ideas

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and understanding before you respond.

- Express your own opinions and ideas without putting down theirs; acknowledge that it is okay to disagree.
- Remind them you are there for them to provide safety, comfort and support. Give them a hug.

Keep home a safe place.

Children often find home to be a safe haven when the world around them becomes overwhelming. During times of crisis, it is important to remember that your children may come home seeking the safe feeling they have being there. Help make it a place where your children find the solitude or comfort they need. Plan a night where everyone participates in a favorite family activity.

Watch for signs of stress, fear or anxiety. After a traumatic event, it is typical for children (and adults) to experience a wide range of emotions, including fearfulness, shock, anger, grief and anxiety. Your children's behaviors may change because of their response to the event. They may have trouble sleeping or concentrating on school work. This is normal for everyone and should begin to disappear in a few months.

Take news breaks. You may want to keep informed but it is important to limit the amount of time spent watching the news because constant exposure may actually heighten their anxiety and fears. Also, scheduling some breaks for yourself is important to allow yourself time to engage in activities you enjoy.