

A YEAR OF family home Evenings

6 TIPS TO BETTER FAMILY HOME EVENINGS

1. Be Consistent

I started the Year of FHE blog because we never had Family Home Evenings. I realized if I sat down on Fast Sunday and wrote out the Family Home Evening plans for the entire month, I could print them all at once and be completely ready when I was feeling tired and overwhelmed on Monday nights. And it worked for us. Don't be afraid to find what works for you. But do everything you can to choose a night and time and stick with it!

2. Be Flexible

Sometimes even when we plan ahead and feel prepared...life hits! I have made really fun activities and plans that had to be amended because life threw our family a curve ball. Notice I said "amended". Try not to cancel or give up on FHE one week, no matter how tempting it is. Feel free to ditch all your well-laid plans and instead sing Popcorn Popping 4 times in a row, share a short spiritual thought, and put on a movie for the activity.

Our family holds FHE on Sunday evenings. I don't have some great excuse like we have sports practice or other commitments on Monday nights, it just never happened when we tried on Monday nights. Sunday works for us. The day of the week doesn't really matter as long as you have Family Home Evenings as consistently as you can. Likewise, if everyone is sick on your scheduled night, have it the next night or the night after.

3. Be Inclusive

Yes, I know I have written out, in strict detail, every word of a potential lesson plan. Singing a song that goes with the theme of Temples is probably less important than letting your toddler choose the primary song they love the most. When I was very little, my older sister choose cold, uncooked, hot dogs as her "treat" for after FHE. And my Mom totally went with it. As your children get older, hand more responsibility over to them. Family Home Evening is a great venue to teach children and teens how to conduct a meeting, prepare a lesson, or choose a scripture that is meaningful and share it. Trust me, I am as Type-A as it gets and this part is very hard for me. We can do it! Let go of control!

4. Be Patient

We have two very small children at the moment (both under 3 years old). They will wiggle. They will pull down their pants. They will run from the room. They will hit their sister while you're trying to bear your testimony. It's okay. We have always tried to gently bring them back onto the couch and into the FHE, but sometimes I just let it go. Eventually they will see the behavior that is expected during certain parts of FHE and be ready to sit ("sit quietly" is one I can't guarantee). But resist the temptation to turn Family Home Evening into Family Home Screaming by demanding a 2 year old stay seated for 30 minutes during the lesson. It's not possible for them. It's against science and the laws of nature and their wild-animal ways.

5. Be Aware

Again, I've laid all these lessons out for you and I hope you use them and love them. But take some time to pray and really consider what your family needs. Sometimes this will hit you in the face: your kids won't stop calling each other names, time for a lesson on Kind Words. But other times the Spirit will whisper to you a lesson that needs to be taught. You can always search my lessons by topic in the right hand tool bar when those quiet promptings come. I believe that when Heavenly Father sees you trying your best to hold regular Family Home Evenings that He will steer your thoughts and heart towards lessons your family needs at the time when they need it.

6. Be Fun!

LDS members of all ages get a lot of doctrine these days! 3 hours of church, weekly activities, special firesides, service projects, Home Teaching visits, personal study, General Conference, etc. While I firmly believe that all of those sources should only be a SUPPLEMENT to what is taught within your home, Family Home Evenings is a chance to have FUN! Building families that want to stay together forever means enjoying each-other's company, laughing until we snort, and making memories of happy time spent together.