

Ideas For Surviving Lockdown With Children

1. Look After Your Mind & Heart

If you remain emotionally healthy it will enable you to be truly helpful to your family. Beware of mindlessly scrolling FaceBook and losing hours online. If that does happen, don't minimise or deny your problem - admit it out loud. What you do in this time could establish patterns that persist afterwards. In my life I have some 'on call' prayer partners who I can phone anytime.

- Establish a morning prayer routine
- Use the *YouVersion* Bible app and start a Bible plan with someone you know
- Establish a regular phone call with a prayer partner
- Be accountable with a friend / prayer partner about your online time

2. Have A Family Meeting

Gather together to work out how you're going to handle this. Make it fun. Explain how to run a good meeting with a chairperson, secretary writing things down and even voting! Give real roles to children so they can participate. Respect their input and truly negotiate! Our children enjoyed family meetings when very small and still do. The key to a good family meeting is to be light hearted, make the process real so that children's input is meaningful and that outcomes will be *binding*. Some ideas to discuss:

- What is our idea of a great lockdown time?
- What rules do we need to make sure we get along?
- How can we make sure we don't watch too much screen time?
- What will our limits be?
- What are the agreed roles and chores?
- How can we create something great during this time?
- What will be our routine?

3. Establish A Routine

Human beings are creatures of habit. Routine helps us process things. I'm not suggesting that you setup rigid detailed schedules (yuk!). But to have certain things that happen each day at a certain time is good!

4. Start A Creative Project

Human beings were made to create. Work is primarily about creating and sustaining goodness. You could start something creative that is just fun, but what about something that matters?

- Potted plants or a tiny veggie patch
- Learn a new skill (cooking, sewing, strip down a lawnmower, sketch, painting, carpentry, coding, blogging, Greek!)
- Write a story, create a work of art, write a book
- Start a community support initiative like ringing three elderly people in your church just to chat!
- Learn about something important together
- Read some books, do a huge jigsaw puzzle, colour in (just not more internet stuff!)
- Fix something
- Have a huge spring clean

5. Find Ways To Be Physically Active

Please don't let this time become an encouragement for your children to be passive consumers. Limits on Xbox or screen time are great. But can you agree on ways to be physically active? A daily exercise program? Will you lock tech away for a few hours a day?

6. Use This Time To Teach Values And Faith

This is a time to establish a family 'devotion' routine. In our family it is very simple but we have now done it for 18 years and it still works with teens:

- Share highs and lows
- A single Bible verse (use the *Growing Faith @ Home* sheet on our website)
- A time of prayer
- Bless them (We just do the sign of cross and say 'Jesus loves you and I love you too').

Our teens still gladly accept the blessing and it has become a marker of normal life for them. Now the 'highs and lows' may be a bit boring in a lockdown, so you might consider starting a prayer board and ensuring you pray for your neighbours and world during this time. See the LCA pack at growministries.org.au/product/church-at-home . Immanuel resources at www.ichurch.net.au

