

10 EASY WAYS

to bond with your kids

A FREE eBook

Happy Mother's Day!



*Binkies
and
Briefcases*

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Happy Mother's Day!

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Letters from Mommy: The Notebooks



I originally posted this idea [here](#). It is very simple and inexpensive to get started, but over time becomes a priceless heirloom.

All you have to do is head to the nearest Target or dollar store and buy one notebook for each child.

Over the course of the year(s), whenever the mood strikes, just sit down and write a short letter. It can be about anything. Watching a first at-bat during tee ball or a dance recital performance, a lost tooth, a memory from your own childhood, it doesn't really matter what the topics are.

Everyone loves looking back at old letters and it is even more special to have them hand-written and bound together in one place.

You can even keep it a secret and save them as a surprise gift for the eventual graduations or weddings.

I Noticed Time

My friend Anita does something with her children every night that she calls “I Noticed Time.”

I Noticed Time is very simple. It happens at bedtime and all you have to do is sit on the edge of your child’s bed and tell them one or two things that you noticed about them that day.

“I noticed that you unloaded the dishwasher without anyone asking. Thank you, that was a big help!”

“I noticed that you helped your sister with her math homework while I was on the phone.”

“I noticed that even though you were very angry when we were arguing earlier, you did not use any bad language and you did a very good job explaining how you felt, even though I didn’t agree with you.”

“I noticed that you shared your crackers with your friends.”

“I noticed that you came right away when I called you for bath time.”

Don’t try to make it about you. You don’t need to ask what they noticed about you or anyone else. Just let this time be about building them up as individuals and knowing that you *really see* them, especially the things that normally go unnoticed.

Each child should get their very own I Noticed Time, preferably with each parent, separately. It should happen at the same time every day so that they know they can look forward to that time with you. Even if the rest of the day is jam-packed, they can count on that individual attention.

Bottle Cap Locket

When I was a little girl, way back in the 80's, I had a subscription to Highlights Magazine. Every issue had a page in the back with craft projects that I liked to try. It was like the Pinterest of its time, but for five-year-olds.

I still remember one very special project: a locket necklace made out of the plastic cap from a milk bottle. I made one for my grandmother and she kept it in her jewelry box for the next 20 years, until the day she died, pulling it out occasionally and wearing it around the house. Seeing her wear it always made me feel special, even when I was a teenager, although the necklace itself certainly wasn't anything to look at. She loved it just as much as she would have loved an expensive piece from a jewelry store. (Probably even more, since she was a Depression Era woman who didn't like wasting money on frivolous things.)

I recreated that necklace recently with my four-year-old daughter.



How to Make a Bottle Cap Locket

(Although I'm sure you can figure this out on your own)

Supplies:

- A bottle cap
- Glue
- A small picture of you and your child
- String or a break-away lanyard, if you intend to let a smaller child wear it

Instructions:

1. Cut out the picture and glue it into the bottle cap. You may want to be wearing a princess dress for full effect.



2. Attach your precious new jewel to your string or lanyard. All done!



Story Time: Create a Character



When we were little, my mom would tell my sister and I stories that she made up on the spot about a very naughty girl named Besgina and her goody-two-shoes little brother, Gooberoid. Besgina always did the wrong thing and Gooberoid always did the right thing.

We would hear these stories in the car, waiting in line at the grocery store, the doctor's office, anywhere we were getting restless. We LOVED hearing all about their silly adventures and we would often beg for the stories, especially on long car rides.

Hearing, "Tell us a Besgina story!!!" was probably better than a whiny, "Are we there yet?"

As an added bonus, when we started acting naughty, mom would start calling us "Besginas" instead of our real names and we would straighten up.

I've told Besgina and Gooberoid stories to my students as they waited for the bus and to my own kids as well. They are a time-tested classic. Try making up some characters and stories of your own. It's fun, easy, and free!

Lunch Time Love Notes



JD Bailey from [Honest Mom](#) says, "I put a little love note in my daughter's lunch every day. I use either pre-printed templates I cut out and write on or cut a heart out of scrap paper. I just write something simple like *'We love you so much! You're doing great!'* or *'Can't wait to see you after school!'*"

Anna from [Random Handprints](#) has a similar tradition. "I write a note on the bottom of their brown lunch sacks so it's like a secret thing. I usually make it a riddle or like the lunch is talking, *'Ouch! Watch where you put me!'*"

You can use the printable templates on the next page to start your own lunch time love note traditions. I tried to make them boy-friendly because a lot of store bought stationary tends to cater to girls. (Obviously, these can be used for girls too!)



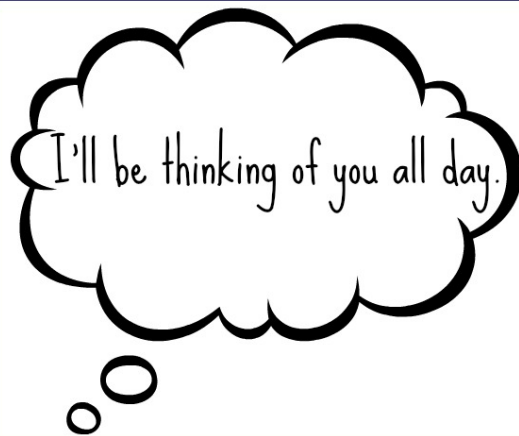
Thinking of you.

You are my rock star.



I mustache you...

How did you get so great?



I'll be thinking of you all day.

Secret Signals

Just like Carol Burnett would tug on her ear lobe during her television show to send a secret “hello” to her grandmother, some families like to develop secret signals so that they can communicate privately, even in the middle of a crowded room.

Anna from [My Life and Kids](#) says that she remembers her mom’s secret signal fondly.

“When I was little and we would go to parties my mom wanted me to know that, even if she was having fun with the adults, she would always have time for me. So we had a secret signal. If I touched my nose, it meant that I needed to talk to her. She would leave whatever conversation she was having and come talk to me. It made me feel like I was important, even when she probably would have rather been talking to her friends.”



Writing on the Windows

I like to use a dry erase marker to write notes on our bathroom mirrors. On Thanksgiving, I leave a marker in the guest bathroom and invite guests to write things they are thankful for on the mirror. It's a fun way to share because people can read each other's as they use the restroom and it is less awkward than forcing people to speak at the table.

This is an easy tradition to carry over into your everyday life. Whether it is a quick love note on the bathroom mirror, on the window next to the breakfast table, or in the car, it is a fun way to bond with your kids and practice reading at the same time.

P.S. Writing on the car window with a dry erase marker is also a fun way to practice spelling or sight words. I recommend that YOU be the one doing the writing. (I'm not responsible for any damages caused if you choose to hand your child a marker while you are busy driving.) Just write the list of words on the car window next to your child's usual seat and then it is easy to practice the words on the drive to and from school.



Daytime Dates

Kathy from [Kissing the Frog](#) says that she likes to go on individual “dates” with each of her four sons as often as possible.

Whether it is for a \$1 ice cream and trip to the play place at McDonalds or a walk to the local park, having their own time with each parent helps a child feel valued and fosters a strong bond.

It can be hard to find the time to do this when you have more than one child. An easy way to fit special one-on-one time into your schedule is to allow the kids to take turns staying up 15 minutes later than usual at bedtime or naptime. Put a puzzle together, play a game of Candyland, or read a favorite book. It doesn't have to be every day. (Unless you have 7 more kids, in which case, God bless you, and what are you listening to me for? YOU should be the one giving the advice.)

Once or twice a year it is also nice to get dressed up and go out on a real mommy/son or daddy/daughter date. It's important to model for our children the way that they deserve and should expect to be treated in their future relationships. It doesn't matter how fancy the restaurant is, or how much money you spend. You can get dressed up and go to Burger King. Focus on table manners, holding doors, and engaging in conversation. Or don't get dressed up at all. Go play mini golf or go to an indoor rock climbing place, if that's your thing.

By the time your kids are old enough to be dating, they will have had years of practicing being respectful to their date and they will know that you can have a good time without engaging in irresponsible activities. More importantly, they will know what a date should NOT look and feel like, and hopefully not want to associate with people who don't treat them well.

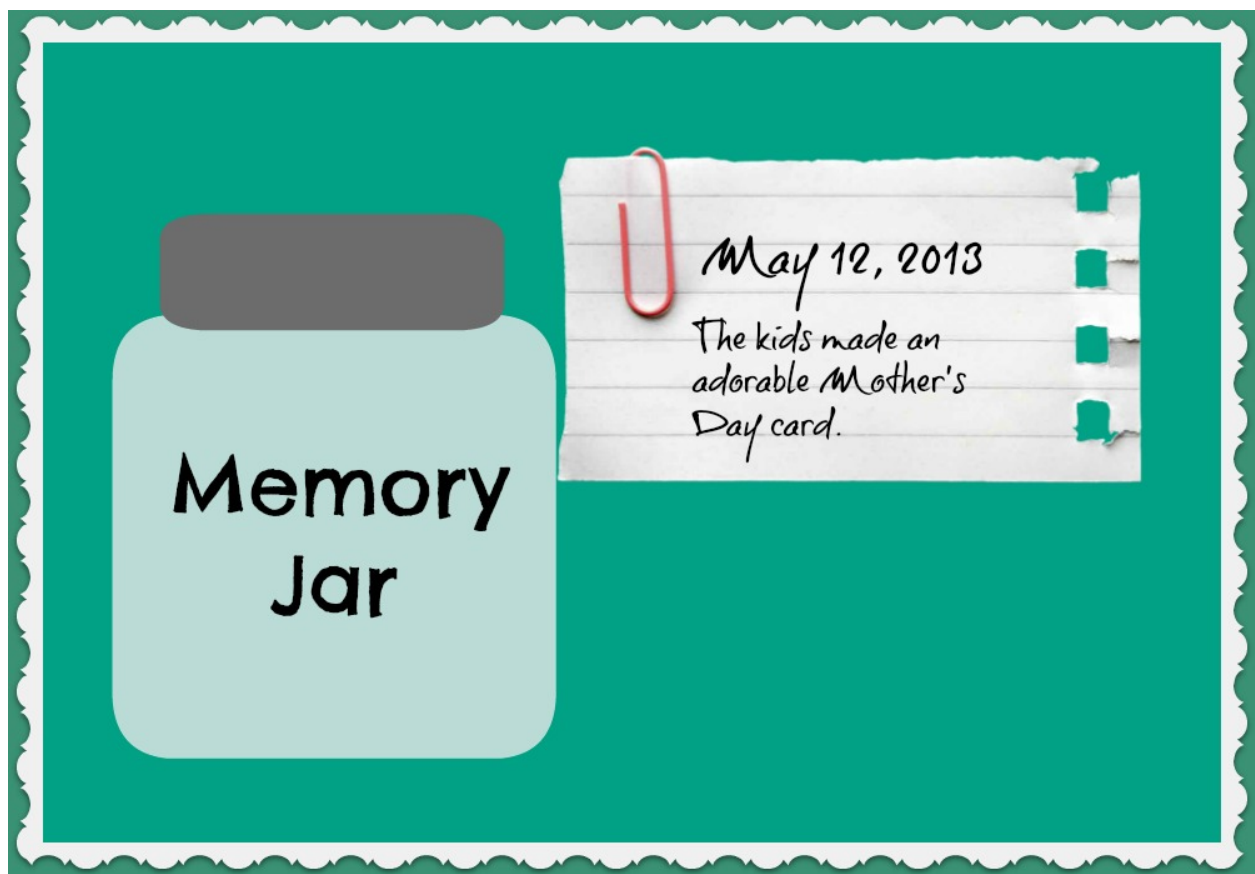
Memory Jar

Ellen from [Sisterhood of the Sensible Moms](#) says, "I have one of those jars where I write down sweet or funny or pithy things [my kids] say."

Keeping an empty mason jar and a few scraps of paper on your kitchen counter might be more your style than a notebook or journal. You could keep one jar for the whole family or keep a separate jar for each child.

If you have a family jar it could be fun to take out the papers and read through them on New Year's Eve, looking back at the funny or meaningful things that happened that year.

If you have a separate one for each child, reading through the stories in the jar might be a fun thing to do as a family on the night before that child's birthday.



Pray For Them

Meredith from [The Mom of the Year](#) knows that prayer is an important part to the start of every day at her house. She says, "Every morning when my kids wake up, I pick them up and squeeze them, probably a little too hard. I hold them for as long as they will let me and say a quick silent prayer for their day. Then it's a mad dash to the gummy vitamins."

Knowing that we are praying for them can be a huge comfort to our kids. Maybe instead of a silly note in their lunch box, you would rather send a note telling your child how you are praying for him/her that day. Or maybe instead of writing spelling words on the car window, you could surprise them by using a dry erase marker to write, "My prayer for you today is...." on the window or the bathroom mirror.

Feel free to copy and re-use the cards on the next page. Leave them on a pillow, next to a breakfast plate, or stick them in backpacks.

Thank you so much for taking the time to subscribe to Binkies and Briefcases! I am so thankful to each and every one of you for following me and taking an interest in my words and my life. I'm wishing you a very Happy Mother's Day!!!

Love,

Steph

This is my prayer for you today

*Love,
Mom*

This is my prayer for you today

*Love,
Mom*