



guide to
self-care
for families together
at home



introduction

Hey there, I'm Jonas Ellison. I'm so happy that I could write this "Guide to Self-Care for Families Together at Home" in collaboration with my good friends at the SALT Project. In this time of pandemic and "sheltering" at home, taking care of ourselves and each other is more important than ever.



This little guide was designed to give you some tools to pick and choose from to foster self-care in your family during this challenging time. Peruse through it, use what speaks to you, and discard the rest. There's no certain order to this guide – so settle in and feel free to jump around. I've selected from my own mental Rolodex of family self-care ideas as well as ones I've borrowed from the cultures of my Scandinavian ancestral siblings (because it's true – they are the masters of self-care).

I hope you enjoy this little guide. In these uncertain times, as we stay home in the name of love and care for our neighbors, may these new challenges bring us closer together – with God and each other.

As Ever,
Jonas Ellison



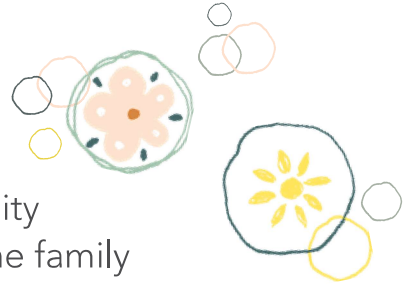


simple ideas

relatively quick and easy;
little or no prep time necessary

schedule 'curiosity days'

Curiosity is one of the highest virtues (at least, according to me). But just like any muscle, curiosity can atrophy if not exercised. Have everyone in the family write down one thing they're curious about and book a day to explore it together, in print or online. Then, reflect on it over pizza (or whatever fare your family best converses over) afterward.



be intentional about your music choice



"Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise..."

+ Martin Luther

The music we listen to has a profound effect on our overall well being. Any kindergarten teacher knows that if kids are getting rowdy and frantic, playing classical music is like turning the chaos knob down at least a few notches.

At home, it's so easy to just throw on Top 40 or Kidz Bop (not to knock Kidz Bop – it has its place!). But when the energy gets too raucous, consider switching the playlist up to something more soothing in nature.

(See our 'Recommended Playlists' at the end of this guide for suggestions.)

go on a social media check-in spree

Grab the kid(s) and your computer and head over to the social media accounts of friends and family (especially those of whom you haven't seen/heard from in a long time). Surprise them with quick, fun, and sincere hellos and updates from the family. Make them short and fun hellos rather than long diatribes – and feel free to get a little goofy!

Note: The best place for this might be via direct message unless you're okay with your check-ins being public.

plan some one-on-one time

Time at home can often end up being spent either all together, all separate, or in an ever-shifting jumble. Intentionally create space for some quality one-on-one time. Maybe just mom and son go for a walk together. Or dad and daughter play some cards. And don't forget parent dates too:) It helps for family time to be balanced between group time and individual time.

the timeless power of gratitude



"Give thanks in all circumstances..."
+ 1 Thessalonians 5:18



We have gratitude apps, journals, t-shirts, beads, etc. – that's because it works! Gratitude really is a powerful thing. As often as possible, talk about what you're grateful for. Write it down in a journal. Mention it at meals. Counting your blessings doesn't ever get old.

chore-crushing wind sprints

Are things getting a little messy around the house? All that lounging you've been doing (right?!) has that effect. When things get untidy, it frays our nerves. As author and Netflix phenom Marie Kondo so eloquently states, tidying up is a spiritual practice. Huddle up and have everyone do a single tiny household chore that stands out – empty one drawer, give away one bag of clothes, or clean one shelf of your fridge.

schedule in catnaps



"And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and rested on the seventh day..."
+ Genesis 2:2

Napping does not mean giving up, productivity is not tied to your true worth, and family naps are THE BEST!

don't just do it, savor it



"This is the day that God has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it."

+ Psalm 118:24

Choose something that you're going to savor today – taking a shower or a walk, chopping vegetables for your lunch or dinner, starting a new novel, etc. Take time to "savor" it instead of just "doing" it.

what's in your backyard?

Depending on your circumstances, go somewhere local that you've never been before – a new nature preserve, a new park, a new corner of your community garden, etc. Extraordinary things love to lurk in ordinary places close-by!



write a letter

It's a lost art – and a downright lovely way to spend part of an afternoon. Try writing a longhand, thoughtful, heartfelt letter, and reconnect with how our ancestors routinely used to stay in touch with each other. Who knows, if you write enough of them, you just might get some in return – and how great would that be!



the rule of three

It's easy to get stuck in a rut. No need to stress about it, but it's nice to be excited about things on the horizon. Try following the "rule of three": always be consciously aware of 3 things that you're looking forward to. When one gets checked off the list, add another one. Again, these don't have to be epic. Simple is always enough!