

TV ACTIVITIES

It's so easy to let the television be the babysitter. When I became pregnant with my second child, I didn't have the energy to keep up with my toddler. But I worried that excessive viewing time might affect his overall development. So I developed a plan that can work for children of all ages.

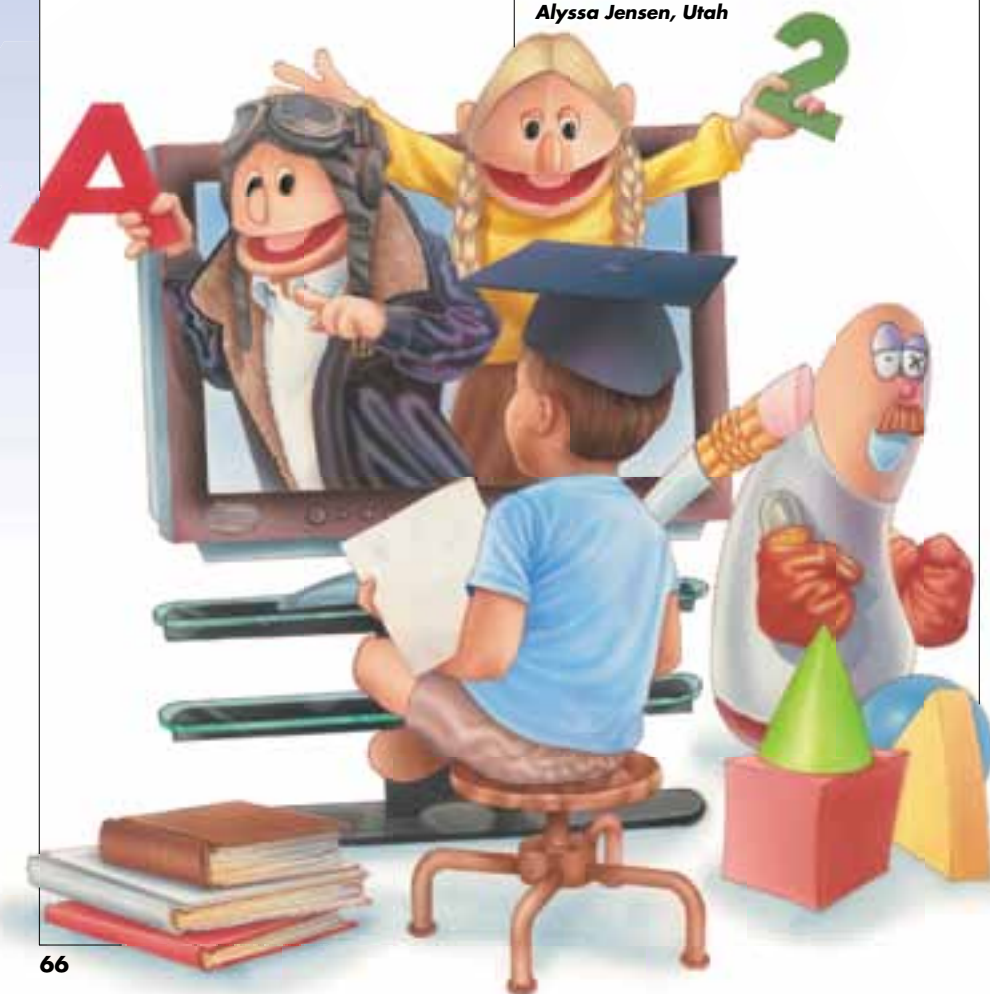
First I started to *actively* watch television programs with my son. I noted which things genuinely interested him and which things simply kept his attention. I then made a list of activities we could do that centered on his interests. He loved shapes, letters,

numbers, and colors, so we started going on "shape searches," "letter hunts," and so forth. To enhance our interest activities, I made a few sensible purchases and checked out items from the public library.

I also made a list of shows that benefited my son; that way I could limit his overall TV time to worthwhile programs.

As for parents, it's ever important to be a good example. I try to spend what little free time I have productively, enjoying physical activities, reading, or learning a new skill. If my children watch anything, I'd rather have them watch Mom.

Alyssa Jensen, Utah



DEALING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

Living with a chronic illness can take a toll on the one suffering and on those who help to care for that person, including the spouse or other family member. As someone who has suffered from a chronic illness for many years, I would like to share some insights that have helped me to manage.

Listen to your body. Be aware of changes in how you are feeling. Keep records of how you respond to a change in activity or medication. Be sure to take your medicine as directed by the doctor, and consult with him or her if adjustments are needed. Pay attention to your diet (including vitamin intake), and get enough rest and exercise (when possible).

Find support. Don't be afraid to ask for help from family or friends. Seek priesthood blessings when needed. You might also benefit from attending a support group. See if there's one in your community or through a hospital. If none is available locally, you may find support through an online chat group. Carefully select groups with monitored discussions or enforced rules that govern constructive content. Of course, you'll want to avoid sharing any information that might identify you and where you live.

FAMILY HOME EVENING HELPS



As Easy as 1-2-3

When my children were younger, I made a list of their favorite Primary songs, as well as new ones I wanted to teach them. I cut the list into strips and placed the strips in a container. I filled another container with titles of stories from the scriptures such as “Nephi Breaks His Bow”

or “Joseph Smith Prays in the Sacred Grove.” I also included family stories like “Daddy’s First Day on His Mission.” Finally I filled a third container with a variety of children’s game ideas: “Duck, Duck, Goose” and “Mother, May I?” Then on Monday nights after opening prayer, our children

took turns drawing paper slips from the containers. We would sing the songs, read or tell the stories, and play the games that were listed on the slip.

We had a well-established pattern for holding consistent family home evenings. Having our three containers on hand made preparation hassle free.

Lorraine Windsor, Texas



Build your spiritual strength.

Read the scriptures, pray regularly, serve others, and attend the temple when you are able. If you prayerfully consider your situation, you’ll find that everyone has opportunities to serve—even from a bed. Focus on what you still have and what you can do.

Research the most current information about your illness.

Knowledge is power. Becoming your own expert will help you to better communicate with your physician. Accredited publications and reliable Internet sources, such as material posted from a university, can help you to stay educated about your particular situation.

Overcome guilt. Some individuals might believe they did something wrong to cause the illness. These thoughts come from the adversary. Consider the source, and try to focus instead on what the Savior would have you think and do.

Name Withheld

OUR FAMILY PICTURE BOOK

Scrapbooks shouldn’t just sit on a shelf collecting dust. You can use them to stay connected with extended family or learn about your ancestors.

Since the albums are going to be handled a lot, I recommend using a convenient size, such as 6 inches by 8 inches. They should have clear, archival page protectors that are easy to

insert and remove as needed. I begin with a table of contents, followed by a pedigree chart that starts with my parents and goes back two generations. Next is a page that explains the meanings and origins of our family names. Then I designate a page for each paternal and maternal great-grandparent, ending with current family members, and I update the pages when new photos are available. I also tuck in a few blank pages for future spouses and children, knowing that I can always insert more as needed.

Each person’s page contains a photo, vital statistics, favorite scripture, and favorite dessert. Before each married child’s picture, I place a pedigree chart of the child’s immediate family. I also share the meanings of maiden names or husbands’ last names.

I enjoy scrapbooking and

preserving our family’s heritage. It’s a great way for my children to remember family members who live far away. Though this project may seem daunting at first, you can do it a page or two at a time. Then use it and share it, but don’t shelve it.

Kelly Toth, New Hampshire

Do you have ideas for Random Sampler? We invite you to send short (less than 500-word) articles on any of these topics related to practical gospel living:

- Teaching ideas for home or church, especially for family home evening
- Personal or family financial management tips
- General health and physical fitness tips
- Home production and storage ideas
- Gospel-related holiday traditions that build testimony.

Please see the “Do You Have a Story to Tell?” box on p. 2 for submission instructions.