

HOW TO BE *Friends*



WITH YOUR *Family*



Sometimes your closest friends may be closer than you think.



By Bonnie Brown

“**S**he’s already my sister. And now I have to be friends with her too?” Sound familiar?

Let’s be honest, being friends with your family can seem hard—especially when your sister always takes the last Pop-Tart or your brother leaves the milk in the fridge with only two sips left. But the truth is, your family can be the best friends you have.

You’re probably already doing a great job. Think about the games you invented as kids—you know, the one where your brother pretends to be a dinosaur, and if he finds you, you have to run or be eaten? Or maybe it’s your own spin on Twister—the version that involves your elbows or head. These games are some of the many ways you’ve already started to turn family relationships into friendships. And there are other ways too. Here are ideas from youth that you might try for building friendships with your family members. Some may sound familiar, but have you actually *tried* them all out yet? Start today!

TALK WITH EACH OTHER ONE ON ONE

Find fun ways to spend one-on-one time with each sibling and parent for 10 minutes a week. You can go to the park with your brother and see who can do more pull-ups on the monkey bars. Or you might teach your sister the proper way to apply makeup (remember: less is more!). You could join a parent on an errand or surprise your mom by helping her make dinner. As you get to know each other, you might be surprised at how well you can relate!

PRAY TOGETHER

The Lord has commanded us to pray together as a family (see 3 Nephi 18:21). President Thomas S. Monson said, “There is no more beautiful sight in all this world than to see a family praying together. There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted ‘The family that prays together stays together’” (“Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 5). Pick a time of day when you can all kneel together in prayer, and pray for your family members by name.



FORGIVE EACH OTHER

If you get into an argument with a family member, hug and make up! Ezra A. from Australia, says, “When you get into a fight, rather than keeping a grudge, just be a bigger person and say sorry—straight afterward. One time I was fighting with my sister. We had a big argument, and instead of holding a grudge I just said sorry and ended it there. It felt good to get rid of the anger and not feel a grudge anymore.”



SERVE EACH OTHER

Who doesn't love nice surprises? Do the dishes when it's your sister's turn, make your brother's bed (especially if he never makes it himself), set up your sister's stuffed animal collection like a zoo, or finger paint a love note. They will *love* it!



READ THE SCRIPTURES TOGETHER

Studying the scriptures with your family can help you apply the scriptures to situations you might face. For example, what if your family were asked to pack up everything and leave? Or what do you do when you're teased for your beliefs? Nephi gives help for both of those questions (see 1 Nephi 3:7; 17:17).

Levi C. from Wyoming, USA, says, "Often my mom asks us to read scriptures on our own, but the best days are when we read scriptures all together as a family. When everybody does this together, we all have things we can relate to and have something to talk about."

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER'S TALENTS

Little brother on the soccer team? Big sister learning cello? When you support your siblings by going to their games, recitals, or other activities, you show them you care about them. Linley B. from Canada has a family that's really into soccer. "We've always attended each other's games as much as we can. I once had a soccer tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, and my sister drove from Utah to come and watch me play. My mom always says that when we support each other—show that we're proud of each other, pray for each other, etc.—that's when she knows she did something right as a parent."

HAVE FAMILY HOME EVENING

Family home evening is a time you can learn as a family and have fun! Jayden C. from Texas, USA, says, "One time we shot Nerf bows and arrows at each other for a family home evening activity. Dodging the arrows taught us about avoiding the fiery darts of the adversary. Now that I've been hit by Nerf arrows, I understand that the fiery darts of the adversary are not something you want to run into. These activities helped my siblings and me grow closer to our Heavenly Father and our family."



SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Sometimes as a family you'll need to endure hard things together. Holland S. from Washington, USA, says, "What brought me close to my five brothers were some of the trials we experienced together. They were horrible, but that brought us even closer. I know that if we stay close to our family in a time of need, we will gain closer and more meaningful relationships that will last through the eternities." When someone (or your whole family) is going through a hard time, look for ways to help.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

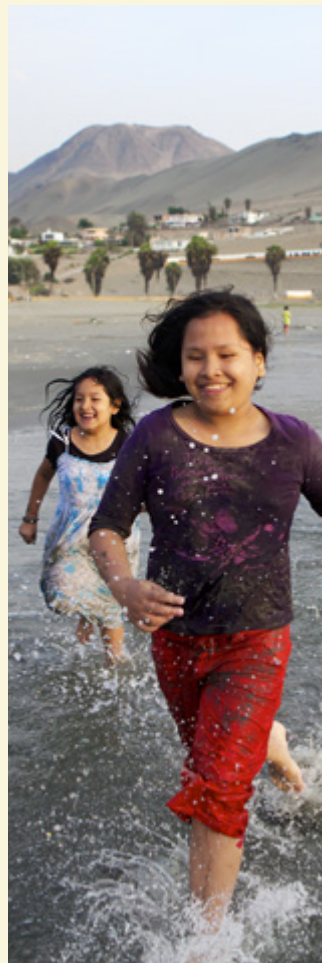
The best times with family often happen when you carve out room in your schedules to spend time all together—no distractions—whether it's a planned activity or just hanging out. Sierra C. from Wyoming, USA, said, "I have five younger siblings. I find it best to put my music player and phone away and take the time to play with them. They love it when we go outside to jump on the trampoline or go and pet my cows. The whole day seems way better when we're all laughing and getting along."



BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

If you build your family friendships now, they can bring you joy for the rest of your life and into eternity. Kaleigh K. from Utah, USA, says, "Family members are the best friends you'll ever have! Making fun memories with my siblings always overshadows any I've ever made with my friends."

So even if your brother *still* leaves hardly any milk in the container, remember that the time you spend together will strengthen your relationship, bring a happy spirit into your home, and prepare you for eternal joy with those you love. **NE**
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REMEMBER WHAT MATTERS

"Never let a problem to be solved

become more important than a person to be loved."

President Thomas S. Monson,
"Finding Joy in the Journey,"
Ensign, Nov. 2008, 86.

MORE IDEAS FOR FAMILY FUN

- Play board games—grab all your family favorites and let the tournament begin!
- Explore the great outdoors. You can make outings extra fun by creating nature scavenger hunts or other activities!
- Learn more about others' interests. Rather than just watching your siblings use their skills, join in! If your brother loves building things out of boxes or blocks, let him teach you how to build the tallest block tower in the universe! If your sister is a dancer, have her teach you a few steps.
- Play games that test how well you know each other. If you don't get all the answers right, then you'll have learned more about your family by playing!
- Plan a trip to a museum, theater, or library, and get to know what there is to do in your neighborhood.