

“Reach Out!”

Can You Hear Me Now?

Ministry Opportunities/Maintaining Social Contact

Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes in this Covid-19 Pandemic has been coining the term, “social distancing.” Maybe a better term would have been “physical distancing.” In reality, we should maintain our social connectedness but distance physically. This quarantine has given us a great opportunity to discover ways to reach out and bless someone else. As a family, we can engage in ministry opportunities while still maintaining a safe physical distance.

Volunteering together as a family has so many benefits. It also gives parents precious opportunities to interact meaningfully with their children and impart important family values. Your family members can work together as a team to reach out and show kindness to someone else who may be all alone or who may need a smile in their day.



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Benefits to Ministering Together as a Family Unit

1. Provides Opportunities for Connection and Talk

It sometimes seems that we live in a time that conspires against family togetherness. If everyone is on a different device, even while being in the same room, they aren't enjoying and learning from each other. Whether repairing a wall, cleaning up a trail, mowing a lawn, writing a letter, or baking bread, there is something very satisfying about working together. The banter, laughter and problem-solving that go on strengthen and deepen family relationships.

2. Family is a Team

Making a meal for a neighbor, planting a garden, or making homemade cards takes teamwork off the soccer field and into life. Working as a team reinforces a family's ability to stick together to the end! And, all family members can participate in age-appropriate roles.

3. Teaches Problem-solving

Volunteer jobs often require people to figure out where to put things, how to fix things, how to recover from a mistake, or how to be more efficient.

Finding real solutions to real problems can be a source of enormous satisfaction for each family member.



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4. Provides Hope in a Hopeless Situation

The media has bombarded us with visions of virus spread, hospitalizations, worry, and even death. News stories repeat and repeat and repeat the tragedy of each day. Social media adds yet another deluge of negativity. Feeling helpless to do anything about it can foster hopelessness and depression. Families who are actively involved in contributing to a community’s health, making someone else smile, and doing good are families who have reason to feel more optimistic.

5. Fosters Empathy

It doesn’t teach children much to tell them to “think about the starving children in Africa” when they won’t eat their broccoli. But working together to make a meal or bake a loaf of bread for someone in need certainly does. It moves the needs of others from remote abstraction to something very real and immediate. Being directly involved gives both parents and kids a deeper understanding of the needs that exist for others.

6. Instills an Attitude of Gratitude

Giving your time and energy to reach out to someone else teaches children to be thankful for what they have instead of focusing on all the things they want. They realize that they are blessed and can give out of an abundance.



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7. Meet New People

Volunteering is a way to get to meet new neighbors and perhaps to make new friends. Some of those friends may become part of the inner circle who know and love our kids, just as we may learn to know and love theirs too.

8. Instills a Good Work Ethic

Teaching children to see a project through from beginning to end teaches responsibility. This translates to a good work ethic later in life.

9. Helps Develop Leadership Skills

Put each of your children in charge of various aspects of each project. Learning leadership in small things now will have a big pay-off later in life.

10. Reduces Screen Time!

Like a lot of kids, maybe your kids are glued to their phones and tablets all day. Volunteering is a great way to get them out of the house, away from the TV, and away from that video game.



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Ways to Reach Out and Minister to Others During Quarantine:

- Send a hand-written letter.
- Bake bread or cookies to share.
- Mow the lawn for a neighbor.
- Make cards to mail to someone special or share with a neighbor.
- Make a home cooked meal for a neighbor.
- Call a friend, grandparent, or neighbor who may be alone.
- Record a song as a family and post to social media.
- Read a book and record it for a younger child.
- Create a craft project to share with someone else.
- Memorize bible promises, write on cards, call someone to share it, or record it.
- Write a poem, draw an illustration to go with it, and share it with some one.
- Plan a very special family worship, choose another family to do a video call with, and share the worship time together.



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Research has shown that children who volunteer exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, motivation, interest in learning, and moral responsibility. They also gain valuable social and career skills, such as managing responsibilities and interpersonal communication. If the volunteering experience is positive, it sends the message to our children that service to others can sometimes be tough, but it can also be fun and fulfilling!

What humanity is craving right now is kind and compassionate kids, making the world a better place. Make kindness an everyday practice for children and see how the world changes for the better! After all, there is no bigger or better lesson to teach your kids than to teach them to be kind! And remember, caring kids become caring adults!



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No Bake Chocolate, Peanut Butter, Oatmeal Cookie Pops

Getting our children involved in helping others has many benefits as discussed by Drs. Claudio and Pam Consuegra. So grab your apron and chef hat! **Let's make some cookies!**

This homemade recipe requires only a few, simple ingredients. Mix a little chocolate, peanut butter, vanilla, sugar, butter, and oatmeal and you're halfway there to a delightful experience!

They are so quick and easy to make. And make a great option for a fast treat on a busy night — while still being made from scratch and totally homemade. Perfect for the hot summer months. No need to heat up the oven.

Ingredients

- 1 stick butter
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup cocoa
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups quick cook oats
- ¼ tsp salt



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Instructions

1. In a large bowl stir together oats and salt. Set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, over medium-high heat, whisk together butter, sugar, milk, and cocoa.
3. Bring the mixture to a boil for about a minute and then remove from heat.
4. Whisk in peanut butter and vanilla until well combined.
5. Pour chocolate peanut butter mixture over oats and stir until combined.
6. Line a baking sheet with wax paper. Drop cookies onto the wax paper using a small ice cream scoop or form into balls.
7. Let the cookies cool on the countertop. Insert Cookie Pop. Wrap with cut treat bags. Directions included.

Store in the refrigerator once cookies are cool and dry.

Option Cookie Pop Wrap: Instead of using treat bags as they're intended, fold the bag in half and snip a tiny opening out of the center/side of the bag. Insert the pop, stick first, into the bag and then through the opening. Then use twist ties (cut into 1 1/2-inch sections) to secure the cake pop on each side.



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Wondering About Sharing Baked Goods during Covid-19?

Is it okay to bring homemade cookies to my neighbor?

Yes! Yes, it is! The CDC says there’s currently no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Dr. Donald Schaffner, a Food Science professor at Rutgers whose research specialties include quantitative microbial risk assessment, predictive food microbiology, hand-washing, and cross-contamination, agrees. “This is actually a really nice thing to do if you know someone who maybe can’t get out, or doesn’t like to [or can’t] cook for themselves. It’s absolutely just fine, as long as you practice appropriate social distancing.”

Following his advice, you’ll want to leave your homemade dish on a porch or someplace where you can have contactless delivery. Drop the dish off and send your neighbor a text (or make an actual phone call) to let them know it’s there.

Of course, you’ll still want to take proper precautions when making food for someone else, even if you don’t feel sick. Make sure the high-touch points in your kitchen are properly disinfected, wash your hands often (especially after touching packaging), and follow the usual food safety guidelines.



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Is it safe to share my sourdough starter?

I know that many Kitchn readers are getting into the sourdough game. It’s fun and it’s something we can all do together, virtually. A lot of you have been asking our editors if it’s okay to share your starter. And it is! Again, there is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread through food — and the starter will ultimately get baked in the oven (which is believed to kill the virus, should it be living in there).

I sound like a broken record here, I know, but again: Be sure to wash your hands, place your sourdough starter in a clean container, and deliver it to the intended recipient in a socially distanced manner.

Is it okay to bring homemade food to someone who is pregnant or just had a baby?

The CDC has an entire section on its website about pregnancy and babies and the coronavirus. Unfortunately, there’s a lot we still don’t know: “We do not currently know if pregnant women have a greater chance of getting sick from COVID-19 than the general public nor whether they are more likely to have serious illness as a result.” We also do not know if a woman who tests positive for COVID-19 can transmit it to her baby via breast milk.



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Says the CDC: “Pregnant women should do the same things as the general public to avoid infection.” And, if you’re bringing food to someone who is pregnant or just had a baby, it is safe as long as you take the proper protocols mentioned above. When you deliver the food, you can remind them to wash their hands after opening the packaging, and let them know that you also took the proper precautions.

Can I bring food that doesn’t get cooked (like sandwiches or salads)?

Did you see that little line in the sourdough answer about how the heat from your oven will likely kill the virus? That might have you wondering about stuff that doesn’t get cooked — like sandwiches, salads, breads that you’ve made and then touched to wrap up and won’t be heated up again, etc. Once again, I’d like to remind you that there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. If you are preparing, say, a salad (for yourself or someone else!), take appropriate precautions and wash your hands before, during, and after preparation. The recipient should do the same both after removing the packaging and before eating. From there, all systems are go.



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Is it okay to bring food to someone if I am feeling sick?

First of all, this is very thoughtful of you! When I’m sick, I want to hide in bed and do nothing — and you’re talking about bringing food to someone in need. The experts we’ve spoken to say, ideally, you’ll take time to rest (you need it). But if you absolutely have to cook for a neighbor or loved one, it’s likely fine. “Start with clean hands, wash produce, and cook meats thoroughly as you usually would. If you have a mask, you can wear it when cooking food while you are ill,” suggests Bethany Hodge, M.D., M.P.H., an associate professor with the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Louisville.

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