



Providing Quality Family Time Results in Workshop Offering

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In many of today's households, family meals and family members involved in its preparation has become a thing of the past. We all know the reasons—activities, busy schedules, and different food preferences. Remember when we were not offered choices at meal time but instead realized that if we did not eat what was offered, you didn't eat anything that meal. Now we seem to cater to individual preferences instead of the cook's choice. I also have fond memories of time spent at the table discussing the day's events. I keenly remember my father asking what each of his children had learned at school that day and when, on most occasions we shrugged our shoulders and replied that we had learned nothing. His standard reply was that perhaps attending was a waste of time. We agreed and then we were on to the next conversation.

In recent years, I have been promoting increased time spent together at meal time and while working together in the kitchen. Research suggests that having dinner as a family on a regular basis has positive effects on the development of adolescents. Family dinner has been linked to a lower risk of obesity, substance abuse, eating disorders and increased chance of graduating from high school. Families who have regular family dinners are most likely to understand, acknowledge, and follow boundaries than those who do not eat dinner together. Self-esteem, motivation and a decrease in high-risk behaviors are all related to the amount of time spent with family, especially during family meals.

The Liberty County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent and I invite your organization to join us for a fun and delicious class, *Rediscover Bread Baking and Jam-Making*. Over time it seems that kitchen skills have been

lost, so we designed a class that teaches or sharpen food preservation and bread baking skills. In addition, it is our desire to see families enjoying time together in the kitchen.

In the class the family will preserve berry jam and make a loaf of yeast bread to take home. One adult and at least one child will make a family. Family members do not have to be related; consider “adopting” a child or a child “adopting a grandparent” for the event. We ask that families not have more than three people. The total groups should have a minimum of 14 people with at least 7 of those being adults. Maximum group size is 28 people. The cost is \$15 per family and we will provide all supplies.

The class can be taught at the local extension office or a location of your choice that has appropriate kitchen space. You choose a date and time (day or evening) for your organization from January 20-January 31, 2015 for 2 ½ hours. Let me know your preference and we will be our best to accommodate your organization. Think about a youth and adult group working together. If you affiliate with an adult service group, how about adopting a classroom of students? I would love to see an intergenerational experience between children and grandparents. Picture a father and daughter working together and offering an opportunity for positive interaction? We are open to travel to any location in Wakulla County and are willing to host your group at the Extension office. Baking bread and making preserves is not my primary goal. The primary goal is to provide opportunities for “family members” to work together and while doing so, enjoying conversation, storytelling and creating memories. Each family will be presented with a picture in full aproning for a future holiday card, There are limited times available during the first launch of this experience so talk this up and see if an organization in which you affiliate would be interested.

As you consider my motivation for this activity, be reminded that families are the most important influence in developing the individuals within. The greatest influence is not from schools, churches, or peers. Families must work to strengthen their bonds. Meal time is one time and place to provide this opportunity. Have family dinners at least four to five times a week; turn off the television, radio, MP3 players and the like during dinner; enjoy positive conversation meal and spend at least an hour eating dinner, conversing, preparing and cleaning up together.

