

enriching ideas

for marriage & family relations

Easy Ways Busy Parents Can Tell Kids "I Love You"

Morning Affections Surprise your child first thing in the morning with a sign on the bathroom mirror that says, "You're going to have a great day today!" Or draw a picture of a smiling face. ♥ **At breakfast**, raise your orange-juice glass and make an unexpected toast to your child for being an overall great kid. ♥ **Surprise your child** with an occasional accessory for a favorite outfit. Say it's a present just because you love him or her. **Lunchtime Lovings** For a first or second grader, add a note on their napkin that says, "I love you. Have a good day—Mommy." Your child will be delighted just knowing you're thinking about him or her. ♥ **For an older child**, try including a riddle with lunch. A new joke every day can easily make your child the hit of the lunchroom. **After-School Forget-Me-Nots** Put a star-chart (a piece of construction paper with the words "You're special" will do) in your child's room. Keep various-size gummed colored stars in a bowl. When your child comes home from school, say you're so glad to see her that she can pick another star and add it to the star chart. ♥ **Choose one week-end afternoon or evening** to make a snack together that will last the whole week. Each day your child eats the after-school snack, he will also have a reminder of the fun time you spent making it. Cookies, brownies or colorful gelatin squares are just a few of the quick snacks you can make together. ♥ **Buy some cardboard picture-frame mats.** Save all your child's artwork for a month and then together choose one picture to be framed and hung. The "picture of the month" can be proudly displayed; "honorable mentions" can be taped to the fridge. **Bedtime Love Notes** Buy your child a notebook that will become a special secret bedtime message book for the two of you. Each night, the notebook will be on the pillow. Before falling asleep, your child can

A Few Favorite Romantic Movies

Tiffany: Far and Away; The Mirror Has Two Faces ♥ *Tenney:* Somewhere In Time ♥ *Stephanie:* Emma ♥ *Marilyn:* A Walk in the Clouds; An Affair to Remember; French Kiss; The Love Letter ♥ *Lisa:* Autumn in New York ♥ *Irena:* Chances Are ♥ *Heather K.:* Return to Me ♥ *Cheryl:* Beauty and the Beast; Lady and the Tramp; The Fox and the Hound ♥ *Cheryl's husband, Alain:* Groundhog Day ♥ *Allison:* While You Were Sleeping; You've Got Mail

Other Good Valentine's Day Rentals:

Good Advice from Joseph Smith...

...to the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo shortly after its founding in 1842: *"Let this society teach women how to behave towards their husbands, to treat them with mildness and affection. When a man is borne down with trouble, when he is perplexed with care and difficulty, if he can meet a smile instead of an argument or a murmur—if he can meet with mildness, it will calm down his soul and soothe his feel-*

Boredom Busters

Ideas for kids on those stir-crazy snow days:

Make edible clay In a large bowl, have the kids mush together 2 cups of smooth peanut butter, 2 cups rolled oats, 2 cups dried milk powder, and 2/3 cup honey. Then give each child a cookie sheet to sculpt and mold things (toothpicks make great arms and legs), and let them nibble away.

Suggest a lunchtime bath Why not? It's a novel idea that can easily kill an hour or two. Run a bubble bath and serve the kids lunch while they're in the tub. Then hand them plastic colanders and other safe kitchen utensils for a splashing good time.

Freeze things Round up all the

20 Ways to Make a Good Marriage Great

♥ **NIGHT AND MORNING PRAYER...**to say thanks, to ask for help in your marriage & family, to worship together. ♥ **A WEEKLY PLANNING MEETING...**to discuss the calendar, talk over needs & problems, decide priorities & next steps. ♥ **A DAILY PHONE CALL OR PERSONAL CONVERSATION...**to say "I love you," to touch base, to discuss the day, to show you care. ♥ **A WEEKLY DATE...**to a favorite park, a concert, the library, the gym; or staying at home for a candlelight dinner, a game, or a mutual hobby. ♥ **PATIENCE REGARDLESS...**of missed meals, tardiness, forgotten favors, a thoughtless remark, impatience. ♥ **DAILY SERVICE...**helping with house or yard work, taking a turn with the sick baby, fixing a favorite meal. (*Write it down. Do it!*) ♥ **A BUDGET...**to tie down income & expenses, help set financial goals, & give you control over your finances. ♥ **LISTENING...**not only to what is said, but also to what is meant. ♥ **REGULAR ATTENDANCE...**at church & —where possible—the temple. ♥ **DAILY SCRIPTURE READING...**to learn the gospel, to receive inspiration for yourself & your marriage, to become more like the Savior. ♥ **WORKING TOGETHER...**caring for a garden, painting a bedroom, washing the car, team teaching a class. ♥ **FORGIVING EACH OTHER DAILY...**always learning from each other, trying a different way, being the first to make peace. ♥ **COURTESIES...**like saying please & thank you, not interrupting or belittling, not doing all the talking, continuing the niceties of courtship. ♥ **SOFT AND KIND WORDS...**of ten-

50 Ways to Say "I Love You"

*Make every day a Valentine's Day
for your family*

1. Bring home a single rose and place it on your child's pillow.
2. Have a favorite photo of family enlarged, framed and placed on the desk or bedside of your child/spouse/parent.
3. Go for a leisurely walk or bike ride with just one child or your spouse.
4. Take off early from work one day and take your child to the park after school.
5. Suggest to your child that she invite a friend over before she has to ask and beg you.
6. Get tickets to a local sporting event, play or concert for just you and your child, or the whole family.
7. Declare a no-TV night and pull out a board game, cards, or puzzle.
8. Take lunch out—with your child at her school, the park, or a restaurant.
9. On an occasion that is special to your child, invite him out to a "good" restaurant for dinner.
10. Mat and frame her art work and display it in your house or office.
11. Pick up your child's favorite magazine or order a surprise subscription.
12. Take over a task that belongs to your child/spouse/parent, such as taking out the garbage, once in awhile.
13. Have a candlelit dinner—for the family.
14. Rent a tape that your child/spouse/parent has been wanting to see and watch it all together one evening.
15. Select certain regular television shows to watch, enjoy and discuss as a family.
16. Invite your child/spouse/parent out to a movie.
17. Pick a paperback book that you enjoyed to give to your child/spouse/parent, or go to the library together and pick out a book you both will enjoy.
18. While shopping at the mall, take 15 minutes out to play a video game with your child/spouse/parent.
19. Volunteer to do unsolicited child care for your spouse/parent.
20. Share personal thoughts, concerns, feelings and memories with your child/spouse/parent.
21. If you work/study all the time,

surprise your child/spouse/parent by taking off an afternoon or weekend to devote to the family without outside distractions.

22. Do something unexpected and fun for a change, like roasting marshmallows in the fireplace or playing indoor Nerf baseball.
23. Spend an extra ten minutes to put your child to bed at night by reading him an extra story, singing a song, or just chatting and cuddling.
24. Bring pizza home one night so nobody has to cook.
25. Pick up your clothes, books, papers, room without being asked.
26. Give each member of the family a hug every morning when you wake up and every evening when you go to bed.
27. Next time your kid heads off to the mall with friends, slip him a little extra cash "just because."
28. Bake your spouses' favorite desert and serve it to him/her as if it's your wedding day.
29. Contribute matching funds to an item your child has been saving for.
30. Plant special cards or messages saying "I love you" in lunch boxes, dresser drawers, pockets of jackets, book bags, and briefcases.
31. Give an unsolicited food/hand/head massage to your child/spouse/parent.
32. Read to your young children every day, whether it is Dr. Seuss or the Sunday comics. Hold them close to you in your lap.
33. Take your child to a favorite place once a week—the science center, card shop, library, or playground—guaranteed.
34. Read favorite stories and books out loud, even to kids who already know how to read.
35. Ask your child/spouse/parent opinions about things that matter to you.
36. Call your child/spouse/parent from work just to say "I love you!"
37. Share the newspaper everyday, particularly sections that interest you both, such as the sports page or the entertainment section.
38. Really try to learn/understand about a hobby or interest your child/spouse/parent has.
39. Lend your child/parent an item of clothing or jewelry she really admires.
40. Take your child to work with you one day, or even a few hours.
41. Offer to do your mother's/

Show Your Children You Love Them

- ♥ Listen to them, really listen.
- ♥ Take time to really understand them.
- ♥ Kids aren't perfect. Accept them as they are.
- ♥ Spend quality time with them.
- ♥ Don't compare them to their siblings.
- ♥ Find something positive to say.
- ♥ Praise them. Tell them you're proud of them.
- ♥ Be kind to their friends.
- ♥ Talk to them about a small problem you're having so they know that they're not the only ones who go through troubled times.
- ♥ Go to their school events.
- ♥ Have respect for their belongings.
- ♥ Ask their opinion about something.
- ♥ Laugh with them.
- ♥ Find something that the two of you like to do together and do it.
- ♥ Be interested in their schoolwork.
- ♥ Take time to find out what they like.
- ♥ Eat meals together; prepare them as a family.
- ♥ Tell your children you think they're wonderful.

Love Letters to Children

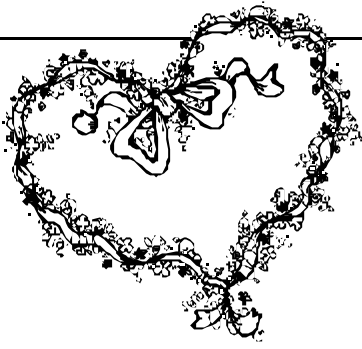
You tell your child frequently that you love him, but how often do you express your feelings on paper? Here's your chance: write him a letter for Valentine's Day. The ten minutes you spend writing a letter will thrill your child, and he'll have a memento to treasure for a lifetime. Here are a few tips to get you started.

How to Begin? This can be the toughest part. If you've got writer's block, try a simple opener, such as, "Do you know what I like about you?" or borrow prose from an inspirational poem or famous quote.

Be Yourself. You don't have to construct a sonnet that rivals Shakespeare's. The letter should be in your own voice, so write the way you speak.

Accentuate the Positive. There's a time to coach kids and a time to praise. Simply tell your child that you love him just the way he is. Give him examples of why he's so exceptional, such as "I love the way you smile at me" or "I'm so proud of the way you play basketball."

Don't Over-Edit. Never mind about length or sentence structure. And



creative ideas

for celebrating Valentine's Day

Sweetheart Salad

Dress up a green salad for Valentine's Day with a garnish of tender beet hearts. Prepare the beets by roasting or steaming them: To roast, heat oven to 400°F, wrap beets tightly in foil, and cook until a fork slides in easily, about 1 hour; to steam, place whole beets in a steamer basket in a medium saucepan, and cook until fork tender, 25-60 minutes, depending on their size. Peel the beets once they're cooled; for easy peeling, use paper towels to rub skins off. Slice peeled beets thinly, and make heart shapes with a cookie cutter. Serve arranged

Chocolate Decadence

1 lb (500 g) **semisweet chocolate**, chopped (about 3 cups)
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons (5 oz/150 g) unsalted **butter**, at room temperature
4 extra-large **eggs**, at room temperature
1 tablespoon **sugar**
1 tablespoon **flour**

♥ Position rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°F (220°C). Butter an 8 or 9-inch (20 or 23-cm) layer cake pan or springform pan. Line the bottom with a circle of parchment paper or waxed paper cut to fit precisely. Butter the paper and dust with flour, tap out any excess. ♥ Place chocolate and butter in large heatproof bowl or top pan of double boiler. Set over a pan of gently simmering water, but not touching the water. Stir occasionally until melted and combine completely. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. ♥ Place eggs and sugar in bowl. Using electric mixer, beat on high speed until light, fluffy and tripled in volume, 5-10 minutes. Reduce the speed to low and beat in the flour. Using a rubber spatula fold one-third of the egg mixture into the chocolate to lighten it, then fold in the remaining egg mixture, taking care not to deflate the batter. Pour and scrape into the prepared pan and

Double-Duty Play Clay Hearts

You'll love this highly original valentine that moonlights as a usable ball of clay.

3 cups white **flour**, 1 cup **salt**, 1 tablespoon **cream of tartar**, 3 cups **water**, 6 tablespoons **vegetable oil**, Red **food coloring**

(You'll also need a rolling pin, heart-shaped cookie cutter, small cellophane bags, scissors, white paper, hole punch and ribbon.)

Mix the flour, salt and cream of tartar in a medium saucepan. ♥ In a separate bowl, mix the liquids, adding drops of food coloring until you reach your desired shade. ♥ Pour the liquid over the dry ingredients and stir. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture holds together and gets too stiff to stir (it will stiffen even more



Lollipop Flowers

Help your children make these irresistibly simple and lovely cards with a candy treat inside.

Red & green construction paper or cardstock, Scissors, Lollipops, Glue stick

From red construction paper, cut out a heart that's just larger than the lollipop candy and glue it to the wrapper. ♥ For the leaves, fold the green paper in half and cut out a leaf shape, leaving the two sides

Fingerprint Hearts

This is the perfect little-kid card, although older kids might like making them, too.

Non-toxic **stamp pad** (red) **Notecards** or paper, and **marker** or crayon

Press an index finger into the ink pad. Then stamp a V-shaped 1-inch heart on a notecard by joining two

Heartfelt Homemade Gifts

These adorable Valentine crafts are sweet (and easy) ways to say, "I love you."

Bloom Bounty
Whimsically painted planters make a gift of roses or African violets even sweeter. All you need is a terracotta pot, some acrylic paint, and a little imagination.

Wrap Artist
You (or even your child) can transform plain tissue paper into a work of art straight from the heart. Set out cups of paint and sheets of tissue paper in a solid color and decorate with two fingerprints or thumbprints joined together to form a heart.

Sealed with a Kiss
This year, skip the store-bought cards. Instead, purchase plain cardstock, patterned paper, pretty buttons, and ribbon to create the most personal of Valentine's wishes.

Sweets for the Sweet
Dress up mini chocolate bars with a creative wrapper for the cutest

CDs to Quicken the Heartbeat

- ♥ **Cole Porter Songbook**, Ella Fitzgerald
- ♥ **Starring Fred Astaire**, Fred Astaire
- ♥ **When I Look In Your Eyes**, Diana Krall
- ♥ **In the Wee Small Hours**, Frank Sinatra
- ♥ **Tu, Tu, Amore**, The Three Tenors
- ♥ **The Postman** (Il Postino), movie soundtrack

Valentine's Day Menu

Check out these sites for a little inspiration:

www.my-meals.com
www.epicurious.com
www.onlinechef.com

Gal Pal Gala

Fun-filled Girlfriend Party

Invitation Ideas Draw, copy or download a graphic of a perfume bottle and write Love Potion #9 on the bottle for an enticing invitation.

♥ Add a sprinkle of red heart shaped glitter in each envelope and let the love rain down on your invitees.

Decorating Tips Set your table in the color of love, with rousing red tablecloths, napkins and plates. ♥ For a centerpiece, assemble an assortment of interesting shaped bottles filled with different colored liquids and tied with contrasting ribbons. Label one Love Potion #9. Look for unique bottles in antique shops and secondhand stores. ♥ Arrange your edibles on cake stands, for a heightened appreciation of your cuisine. Stands with lips are great for finger food and those without are perfect for platters. ♥ Red mums, carnations and poppies look splendid in glass vases. ♥ Chatting can make a girl thirsty. Fill a punchbowl with red punch to keep the conversation flowing.

Food Anything goes! ♥ Here's a sample: Toasted Cheese Pita Chips, Tomato-Lentil Soup (the right color, too), Chicken Salad Croissants, Chocolate Cheesecake, Hot Scarlet Cider Punch

Mood Makers Lieber and Stoller's "Love Potion #9" by the Searchers is a must. ♥ Wherever you can fit one, place a red candle. White candles in red glass votives would be lovely, too, as long as you fill the room with romantic, flickering lights.



Love Potion #9

Recipes for romance have been around nearly as long as romance itself. One old tradition suggests that swallowing a four-leaf clover while thinking of your beloved will make him reciprocate your love, while another says that swallowing the heart of a white dove as you rest your hand on your intended's shoulder will ensure his eternal fidelity. The following easy-to-concoct brew is light on the magic and strange ingredients, heavy on the red color and tart taste.

Place 1/2 cup frozen **strawberries** (slightly thawed), 1/2 cup frozen **raspberries** (slightly thawed), and 1 cup **white grape juice** (or apple juice) in a blender and mix on high

Heart to Heart

Valentine Party for Friends

Invitation Ideas Cut out a paper chain of hearts and let your invitations unfold to entice your guests. ♥ Children's valentines are sweet and cheerful and make adorable invitations.

Decorating Tips Welcome your guests with a heart-shaped wreath.

♥ Savory or sweet, bake it and serve it in heart-shaped dishes. ♥ Cookies and cakes look even sweeter on heart-shaped doilies. ♥ Kindle many tiny flames with assorted heart-shaped candles filling every nook and cranny. ♥ Set out platters of "X" and "O" cookies and watch them gobble up those hugs and kisses. You can also play tic-tac-toe with these cookies; winner eats all! Make your own cookie stencils or look in baking supply stores for alphabet cookie cutters.

Food As a starter, plan to have assorted fruits and cheeses on hand as your guests arrive. Serve with sparkling apple cider. ♥ Here's a sample menu: Creamy Chicken and Tomato Pasta, Caesar Salad with freshly grated parmesan, Cracked Pepper Breadsticks, German Chocolate Cheesecake with chocolate or caramel sauce. Still hungry? Have popcorn and hot chocolate when you get the late night munchies.

Mood Makers Pull out a board or card game and have a good-hearted battle of the sexes: men against women. ♥ They're sweet and crunchy and a whole lot tastier than e-mail: Conversation Hearts, that Valentine's classic. Scatter small bowls full of these colorful candy hearts adorned with pithy sayings around your room for snacking and sweet-talking. ♥ Dress for affection, in red, from head to toe — and encourage your guests to do likewise. ♥ Have each guest bring a child's



Say it with Flowers

Did you know that flowers have different romantic meanings? This year, present your special someone with the flower that best expresses your sentiments. **Gardenia:** *I secretly love you.* **Lily-of-the-Valley:** *Let's make up.* **Rose:** *I love you passionately.*

Romantic Gifts

Valentine's Day is a time for treating sweethearts and other special loved ones with tokens of your affection. And if you don't have a Valentine this year, there's no better pick-me-up than buying a fabulous gift for yourself. Here's what the people at *Better Homes & Gardens* suggest:

Harryanddavid.com

If your sweetheart has a sweet tooth, try the Tower of Hearts, including chocolate-raspberry layer cake, raspberry filled shortbread cookies and Bing cherry chocolates.

Balducci.com

Balducci's Panna Cotta Hearts are beautifully decorated hearts made of the traditional Italian eggless custard, panna cotta.

Tavolo.com

Treat your honey to breakfast in bed with adorable heart-shaped waffles made with Tavolo's Valentine's Hearts Waffler.

Deandeluca.com

Surf through their Gifts for Sweethearts and Romantic Dinner for Two.

Vermontcountrystore.com

A real country store, from their old-fashioned penny candy and cologne to flannel nighties.

Figis.com

If you know a chocolate-lover, the Fudge Heart Trio makes the perfect gift: three flavors of fudge, each in a different heart-shaped container.

Leonidas-chocolate.com

If chocolate is an aphrodisiac, then Belgian chocolate should be a controlled substance. Treat your honey to the one-pound pralines general assortment.

Greatflowers.com

Roses sav. "I love you" in a big way.



For Chocolate Lovers

Chocolate is a vegetable! ♥ Chocolate is derived from cocoa beans. A bean is a vegetable. Sugar is derived from either sugar *cane* or sugar *beets*. Both are plants, placing them in the vegetable category. Thus, chocolate is a vegetable. ♥ To go one step further, chocolate candy bars also contain milk, which is dairy. So candy bars are a health food. ♥ And chocolate-covered raisins, cherries, orange slices and