

This Surprising Salve Will Soothe Your Family's Tension

We call it “one-on-one time” in our house.

My littlest coined the phrase a while back. It was her baby-talk way of asking me to spend “one-on-one time” with her. We laughed at the cute expression, but it stuck. Now we all use the term for our special Mommy-and-me times.

We started this practice of one-on-one time a few years ago during a particularly frustrating parenting season. My days were spent correcting and instructing, yet the negative behavior continued. My husband suggested that maybe our kids needed some focused alone time with me—just the two of us having fun together.

Sure enough, it made a world of difference. Contentment settled in. Each child seemed to come alive as I joined him or her in doing things they love to do.

Our kids need more than training and discipline. They need *us*. They need to be reminded that we love them, that we enjoy spending time with them, that we think they're really special—no matter how they behave.

Having fun together is a great way to help them remember.

Here are some tips for spending one-on-one time with our kids or grandkids:

- **Let Them Choose**

I don't particularly love Legos. I'm a bit clueless when it comes to creating masterpieces from tiny bricks. But all three of my kids love playing with them, so Lego building is a frequent choice for our times together. Sometimes we read books (my favorite). Other times we color or play a game. They

all love the chance to pick our one-on-one activity.

▪ **Unplug**

My phone is a frequent distraction. To eliminate the problem, it's helpful to put it somewhere away from our hangout spot. Text messages and notifications can wait. Putting our devices aside communicates to our kids that they are our priority.

▪ **Focus on the Relationship**

Whatever activity they choose, these alone times are a beautiful way to deepen our friendship with our kids. Ask open-ended questions. Talk about what's going on in their lives. Point out things you love about them.

As we invest in our kids through focused time together, we model the heart of our God who takes great delight in His kids. {eoa}

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