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MOTHER'S DAY

Kathryn Kilpatrick

Mother's Day began as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia. She is credited with bringing about the official observance when she persuaded her mother's church in Grafton, West Virginia to celebrate Mother's Day on the second anniversary of her mother's death, the 2nd Sunday of May in 1907. Two years later Jarvis held a ceremony in Grafton, W. Va., to honor her. She was so moved by the proceedings that she began a massive campaign to have a formal holiday created that honored mothers and in 1910, West Virginia became the first state to recognize Mother's Day. 1911 Mother's Day was celebrated in almost every state. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson officially proclaimed Mother's Day as a national holiday to be held on the second Sunday of May. Many celebrations of Mother's Days are now held throughout the world.

What about your mother and some of your memories of her or perhaps your grandmother or someone who you felt was a mother figure in your life? If you are one of the lucky ones who are able to still share the company of your mother, maybe you will be able to spend the day with her, or gift her with something special. If she is not living, you might enjoy gathering some old pictures or sharing some stories about her with others in your family. If she is in a nursing home, perhaps you would like to make a collage of her story with some of your favorite pictures or share some of your stories with the staff so that they can get to know her better.

My mom's name is Florence Mitchell and she is 82 years old, lives in an apartment in Massachusetts, loves to read and do puzzles. She volunteers for the Red Cross once a week and enjoys a good game of Scrabble! Sometimes I am able to win – but usually she does!

Here is something fun to do for Mother's Day. Since next month is Father's Day you may want to create something similar for him. Go through the alphabet and think of word that begins with each letter of the alphabet that would honor and celebrate some of your memories with your mom or dad. Get a little creative and have some fun with it - maybe get your siblings or the grandchildren involved in the process! Take some time to share stories! Here are some of the words I came up with to describe my mom.

Articulate

Compassionate

Becoming

Determined

Economical	Proud
Fussy	Quiet
Gracious	Respectful
Helpful	Sensitive
Intelligent	Thoughtful
Jewel	Understanding
Kind	Very good speller
Loyal	Well dressed
Mild mannered	Xtra special
Nice	Young at heart
Old fashioned	Z best!!!

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FATHER'S DAY Kathryn Kilpatrick

The idea for creating a day for fathers to be recognized began in Spokane, Washington. Sonora Smart Dodd wanted to honor her dad who had raised his six children by himself after his wife died in childbirth. She had originally chosen the date of his birthday, June 5, but it was actually celebrated on June 19, 1910. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national Father's Day and President Lyndon Johnson signed a proclamation making Father's Day the third Sunday in June.

When you think about Father's Day, do you have some memories of times you spent with him? Or perhaps there was an uncle, grandfather, stepfather or someone else who was a father figure in your life. As you look through these words, recall some thoughts about your dad... what do you remember about personality, sports, work, gardening, fishing, discipline, friends, religion, travel, advice, military service, music, entertainment, education, parenting, politics, relatives. Maybe you would like to ask him to tell you more about some of these topics or others that come to mind. If your dad is no longer living, maybe Father's Day would be a time when you would like to reflect back on some of the memories, look through old pictures or share stories with others who knew him well.

The topics listed below can be conversation starters to try with your dad. You might want to write down some of his stories to share with others in the family. If he does not live in the area, these might be something to talk about when you are on the telephone or maybe when you email each other. Ask him to tell you something about:

A person he has known a long time

Ball player he admires

Chore he did not like doing

Dessert that is his favorite

Earliest childhood memory

Funny incident he recalls

Good deed he has done

Holiday memory

Interesting celebrity
Job he liked
Kind thing someone did for him
Longest place he lived
Most interesting person he knew
Newest member of his family
One of his hobbies
Pet peeve
Quiet place he enjoys
Restaurant that is a favorite
Sunday activities as a child
Teacher from grade school
Understanding friend
Vacation he enjoyed
Weather he prefers
Xtra special person in his life
Year that was most memorable
Zoo animal he enjoys watching

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GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN

Kathryn Kilpatrick

Grandparents and great grandparents make a real difference! You have such an important role in the lives of the younger generations. Just watch their eyes light up when they come to visit you. Sometimes you are lucky enough to have your grandchildren living nearby while others need to do grand parenting from a distance.

No matter what your circumstances, grandchildren not only need your maturity but your traditional sets of values, your wisdom and to hear some of your fascinating stories about life as it was many years ago. Talking about things they may not have known can provide for some interesting conversation. What about the lamplighter, party lines, iceboxes, soda jerks, air raids, scrub board washtubs or the silent movies? Sharing your stories about the historical events and changes you have seen through the decades of the 20th century help them to get to know you in some different ways.

Grandparents need the smiles, playfulness and the caring of their grandchildren. It is such a delight to see the world through the eyes of those young children. Remembering those days with grandparents can be some of the most important days in their growing up years! Learning new things through their eyes are another important gift they are to you.

- What are some creative things to do when they live near you and come to visit?
- When the grandchildren are younger and live out of the area, send them a special book but also tape-record yourself reading it to them. That way they can keep enjoying it over and over.
- Have a special box of toys that you may have collected in garage sales for the younger ones. These may become the old and familiar things they like to pull out when they come to visit.
- Invite your grandchild to sleep over and then together prepare a breakfast for their parents the next day.
- Create a story telling time. You begin a story and they add on a part. Keep going and see where the story leads and how creative you can become. If they live away, you might want to do this by mail or as part of your phone conversations with them. If you have a computer, have them show you how you can email each other. Take some computer classes for the older adult in your area so you can learn other creative ways to keep in touch

across the miles using some of the features available on the Internet.

- Plant a special bush or tree with your grandchild. If you are in an apartment, buy a special plant and together watch it grow. Take a picture with your bush, plant or tree and put it in an album you have created for pictures of the special times you spend together.
- Get out some of your old pictures and tell them the stories related to those pictures. Recall friends, family and special happenings in your life and perhaps other family members they never met.
- Give them a disposable camera to take pictures of something special they are doing or just times spent with their friends. Have them bring some of their pictures when they visit, listen to their stories and, if they are too young to write, do that for them and put them in an album. Make sure you include some of their anecdotes. If they live in another state, have them mail you a set of the pictures and tell you what was happening. If you both have access to email, explore some of the options for exchanging pictures that way.
- Find a favorite card or board game you can enjoy playing together. Create a tradition of playing these when you get together.
- Keep a journal of some of the interesting things they have said and done and read it together years later, perhaps as a gift on a special birthday.

It can sometimes take effort to stay in touch with the grandchildren, especially if they live far away. Your wisdom and love for them is essential to their development and a sense of well being. Their spirit can energize you in many ways as you create special moments together – regardless of the distance and the busy schedules. What a great opportunity to get to know their generation and share how things have changed. Be open to the possibilities of what they can teach you. Don't forget to share the creative ways you connect with your grandchildren with other grandparents.

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ACROSS THE MILES

Kathryn Kilpatrick

Staying in touch with your grandchildren does take effort especially if they are not living near you. There are ways for you to be involved with them regardless of the miles, the distractions, and the busy schedules. Not only can you take part in shaping your grandchildren's lives but this is an opportunity for you to let some of their energy and spirit come into your lives as well. Here are some thoughts on ways to help you stay in touch and continue to develop those meaningful relationships that you need as much as they do. Perhaps there are some new things that you can do to stay connected and maybe you will even start a new holiday tradition in the process. Your efforts will not be in vain. They will remember those days with their grandparents as perhaps some of the most important days in their growing-up years.

- You may want to keep the camera handy as you share these experiences together. Think about taking pictures to capture the time together and making a little photo album along with some words to share what was happening. Don't forget to make double prints so you can create a memory album for yourself as well. This makes a nice remembrance of some of the time you have shared together.
- For the younger child, help them write a letter to Santa Claus. If they are too young, have them tell you what they would like to say and you write the letter for them. Get some colorful holiday stickers or stamps and let them decorate the letter and the envelope. This can be done over the phone if they live out of town. Send them their letter and the stickers to decorate if they are out of town.
- Cut snowflakes out of paper and decorate the windows. Find some holiday decals and create something interesting together. For grandchildren who live away, send some of these to them along with a disposable camera so they can decorate their windows and send you the pictures.
- Make a date to watch one of the holiday specials together and if the time does not work out, record it and share it another day. Perhaps there is a favorite holiday movie you like to watch together. My son (now 33 years old) has a few Christmas favorites and we are sure to watch at least one of those movies sometime over the holidays. It has become one of our traditions. If they live in another city, make a date to watch it at the same time or record it and send the video to them. If you can make a copy for yourself as well then you can watch it at a set time in your separate locations. Share a conversation after the performance is over.

- Put on the holiday music favorites and have a sing-a-long or even better go Christmas caroling together.
- Pick a favorite annual holiday program or church service and create a tradition of spending that time together.
- Perhaps you would like to get together and make a garland out of popcorn and cranberries using a large needle and some strong thread. Put it on your tree, place it outside for the birds, or give it as a gift to a friend or neighbor. Play some holiday music and share some hot chocolate and cookies.
- Make some table favors, special placemats or name cards that can be used for one of the holiday meals.
- Make some cookies or candy together, wrap them and give them as gifts.
- Contact a local organization and pick out a project you can do together to help a family in need. Go for a ride together and look at the holiday lights. If they are younger, take them to see Santa Claus and go out for a special treat after the visit.
- Go window-shopping and look at the various Christmas displays. Talk about which one is a favorite and why.
- Help them make something special for their parents. You know many fun things about their Mom or Dad. Get out some old pictures and make an album along with some written stories that they can give to a parent as a holiday treasure.
- Create homemade holiday cards for some of the family members.

Whatever holidays you celebrate, find something that appeals to you and your grandchildren and enjoy the many blessings that they bring to your lives.

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