

The Family Forum

Growing Together in Faith and Family Life

October 2010

From My House To Yours

I hope you enjoyed the Premiere Issue of The Family Forum newsletter last month! It was very exciting to finally move ahead with an idea that's been brewing in me for so long now. Thank you for all the positive feedback I received.

Feel free to share this newsletter with friends, family, coworkers, neighbours, or anyone who might gain from the ideas and resources included in these pages.

On September 21st I was asked to be a guest on a radio show for the local Christian station! It was a lot of fun, and I was able to share the vision behind this newsletter with the listeners.

Here's the link to the podcast:

http://www.cjtk.com/podcast/MorePrecious/More_Precious_2010-09-21.mp3

This month has been a busy one for our family. Our last round of home renovations is happening right now - the finishing touches on a major house-gut that we started 2&1/2 years ago. Now all we need is flooring, trim, and a few doors to finish the job.

There has been so much to learn through the renovations, and not just about how to insulate a wall or wire in an electrical outlet. We have learned there are some very evident parallels between building a solid home and building a solid family.

A house is nothing without a firm foundation. We worked so hard on the two upper levels of our house, only to discover a major leak in the basement one spring. All our hard work would have been lost if the foundation that was holding it up cracked and



Me and my boys, Halloween 2009

caved. Foundation is key for a house and for a family.

The Family Forum newsletter encourages families to focus on building a solid foundation. Experiencing positive relationships inside and outside the home, living healthy lives, and strengthening family bonds are all important parts of building a solid foundation—for my family and for yours.

Enjoy all the fun of October!
- Anna Sklar

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Family Library

Find our October 2010 Amazon.ca picks at

thefamilyforum.ca

We create sample orders of about \$39 - that means free shipping for you!

Connection Points - Ideas For Building Community

MEN - Josh Sklar

The season of life is just beginning. By that, I mean of course the 2010 NHL season. The teams have hit the ice and the rivalries are being renewed. Now is the time to dig out your jerseys and wear your team colours with pride.

Why not take some time to invite a bunch of the lads over for a hockey night in Canada? Play a bit of ball hockey before the game starts to relive your childhood and then pile into the living room in front of the big screen for the drop of the puck. What a great way to spend a night. And all I can say is,

“Go Habs Go”



WOMEN - Amy Phillips

Most women love to dress up once in a while. All we need is a reason... or do we? Invite a group of ladies to come out in their fanciest outfits, with hair and make-up done up too. You could meet at someone's house and hire a caterer for an evening of fine cuisine in a relaxing, private atmosphere. Or how about meeting up at a local restaurant you've always wanted to try?

It's about an evening of luxury with a little indulgence on the side. But more importantly it's about connecting with a great group of women in celebration of who we are and allowing ourselves to enjoy a little pampering for an evening.



FAMILIES - Anna Sklar

I know what it's like to live far from family on major holidays. It can be a little lonely celebrating on your own, and I love to be around a crowd on Thanksgiving.

This year why not invite over a couple of families you know who are celebrating the holiday alone?

My husband, Josh, and I have hosted “out-of-towners” potluck feasts at our house and at our church. Sharing the cooking, preparing and cleaning make the event very manageable. Sharing the holidays make the gathering a blessing - to you and to those who attend.



Contributions Needed!

Here's what we need for the November issue:

- *Your Family Favourite Recipe*
- *Connection Point for FAMILIES (about 100-125 words)*
- *Your idea for Reaching Out (about 100-125 words)*
- *Couples for Marriage on pg 2 (about 200 words each)*

Deadline is October 15th

Email contributions or ask for more info:

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Contact Us & Subscribe

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Archives Blog:
thefamilyforum1.wordpress.com

Health - Daily Dose of Fruit and Veggies

We all know that we are supposed to eat 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. This can sound overwhelming, but with practice you'll find new habits forming for your family before you know it!

There will be times when you don't meet the daily requirements, but don't give up, do your best, and your family will be healthier because of your efforts.

Here are a few tips that I've found helpful:

- Berries are loaded with nutrients. Throw a bunch in biscuits, muffins, waffles, fruit sauce, or smoothies at breakfast time.

- Fresh fruit and veggies are healthier and just as easy to wash and pack in a school lunch as the pre-packaged varieties.
- Raw veggies like baby carrots and cherry tomatoes are easy to wash and serve—and young kids especially love to dip them.
- Offering an apple with cookies (homemade if you can!) as an after-school snack goes a long way to getting in another serving of fruit.
- One serving = 1 cup salad or 1/2 cup fresh or frozen fruits/vegetables/100% juice.

- Try to eat one dark green vegetable and one orange fruit or vegetable per day.

Check out 5to10aday.com—a great site!

If you have any tips for getting in a daily dose of fruits and veggies, pass them along and I'll share them on the [blog](#)! Next month we'll take a look at Whole Grains. - Anna Sklar



Family Activity

	E	K	Q	W
	F	L	R	
A	G	M	S	X
B	H	N	T	Y
C	I	O	U	
D	J	P	V	Z

Click on the images to print Monica's alphabet pages, or find them on our site: thefamilyforum1.wordpress.com

Every Thanksgiving we do something my Mom started when we were growing up. My Mom would make a chart that had all the letters of the alphabet down one side and, during the Thanksgiving month, we would write things next to that letter we were thankful for that started with that letter.

- Monica, thehomespunheart.blogspot.com

Family Favourite Recipe - Broccoli Sunshine Salad

Stir this salad just before serving to redistribute all the ingredients. If the dressing is too thick, thin it with a little milk.

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 3 cups broccoli flowerets (1/2lb)
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese (1 oz)
- 4 slices bacon, crisply cooked and crumbled (1/4 cup)
- 2 tablespoons chopped red onion



1. In large glass or plastic bowl, mix mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar.
2. Add remaining ingredients, toss until evenly coated. Store covered in refrigerator.

- From the Betty Crocker Cookbook, submitted by Brenda Merrick, Sudbury, ON

A perfect salad for Thanksgiving feasts!

Finances - Creating a Budget Part 2: Fixed Expenses

Did you have a chance to list and begin to track your variable expenses last month?

I know it can be hard to find the time and motivation to focus on a family budget if you've never done it before, but believe me, it is well worth the effort!

This month we're looking at fixed expenses - things like mortgage, phone, insurance, etc. The amounts for these expenses don't fluctuate much from month to month. (See a list of our fixed expenses in the right column.)

Write down your fixed expenses and the amount you spend on them every month. If any are prepaid write down what day they are deducted from your bank account or credit card.

Now it's time to play a game. Pick one of your fixed expenses (for example - car insur-

ance) and see how much you can lower it by shopping around a little. My husband saved us \$700 per year in one afternoon last fall. He took our car insurance contract to a few local insurance companies and gathered quotes. We picked the one with the same coverage but lower payments.

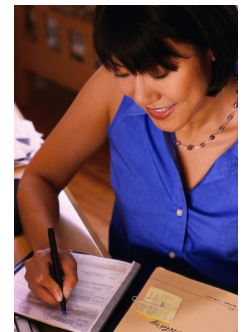
And by taking the leap to cancel cable and switch phone/internet service providers, we enjoy a savings of \$65 per month. That savings alone more than covers a week at Family Camp next summer!

Prioritize. Sort out what you really need and what you can live without. Turn the money you save into family memories.

Next month we'll look at tracking your income and making sure the money going out is less than the money coming in.

Our family's fixed expenses:

- Tithe
- Mortgage
- Water Heater
- Phone
- Insurance - Car
- Insurance - Home
- Insurance - Life
- Internet
- Allowances
- RRSP
- RESP



[Click here for a blank Budget Worksheet](#) or find it on our [site](#) or [blog](#). We will fill in other budget areas in the coming months!

Marriage: Thoughts On Grandchildren

HE SAYS...

Grandchildren truly are an important part of my life, of passing our genes on to the next generation, to watch them grow physically and mentally. We were so blessed to have had them as much as we did when they were young.

When I look back it seems now that it was such a brief moment in time. The memories will stay with me forever. Our granddaughter stayed with us the most. She was so full of life, so feminine and yet such a tomboy. She could dress like a princess but always wanted to get on that snow machine or tractor. As soon as she heard that engine start, she arrived out of nowhere shouting for me to wait for her. It made me happy to take them fishing. Those were the days.

Probably the most important time of all was at the day's end when it was my job to tuck them in, do devotions with them and kiss them goodnight. I would say "Sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite!" They would answer "Get a shoe and knock them cuckoo!" Lights out. Great stuff those memories.



- Paul Carlson

SHE SAYS...

As we age, memories seem to get more precious. We have five grandchildren. After two sons and four grandsons, we were blessed again with a "pink" one. When they were little, we spent a lot of time with them. Our "pink" one spent thirteen summers with us. Such a great opportunity to teach them about our Lord, teach them songs and teach them about nature, we live in the country so fishing and canoeing were done a lot.

Overnight they grew up and went off to school. Japan, Iqaluit and part time jobs took them away from us. Time slips by and you try to remember the last time you tucked them in, prayed with them and took them on that fishing trip.

They are still giving us memories but now they are teaching us. We have switched places. We are learning computers (we love the emails), iPods and all that new "stuff".

They are the best grandkids in the world. We are so blessed.

- Jean Carlson

Relationship Challenge:

No matter what age you are, you can help out a couple you know who is caring for young children. This is especially helpful for those parents who live far from their children's grandparents.

Offer to babysit the kids for a couple of hours, overnight or for a week! Whether you are great-grandparents, grandparents, or parents, this gesture will bless those who accept the offer.

The couple will return refreshed and renewed from their time together.

Marriage Prayer:

Lord, You are the first and the last. The first parent, and the first grandparent. Thank you for the gift of children and grandchildren. May we pass on a legacy to the coming generations that honours You.

Show us those parents in our midst who may need some help in caring for their children, or who may need a break on occasion to spend time together. May this be a blessing to us, to them and to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Faith At Home - More About The Shema

Last month I introduced the Shema to you - the verses found in Deuteronomy 6:5-9.

This month I have a tough question for you. Here goes... How's your faith doing? The hard truth is that our children learn from our example. Don't let that discourage you, instead let it encourage you to grow in your faith. This verse says we are to love God with ALL we are - that's huge! Loving someone that intensely requires that you really know them. How can you get to know God?

By reading His Word - even one verse a day is better than nothing! Just watch how God blesses your efforts and how the Bible proves itself to be the "living and active" Word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

By spending time with Him - pray, listen, open up the lines of communication. He's there just waiting to meet with you, and you can talk to Him about ANYTHING!

By getting to know His people - pray that God will direct you to the friends He has waiting just for you.

If you haven't already started to set a solid foundation for your own faith, now is a great time to start. This newsletter was created to

encourage you and your family in living out faith in your home and in your world.

Over the next couple of months we'll focus on preparing our hearts, our homes and our families for Advent and Christmas. In the New Year we'll get back to focusing on the Shema and how to live that out through family devotions, scripture memorization and prayer in the family.

- Anna Sklar

Praying the Shema for Your Family: Based on Deuteronomy 6:5-9

These commandments that I give my family today are to be upon our hearts. Impress them on our children. Talk about them when we sit at home and when we walk along the road, when we lie down and when we get up. Tie them as symbols on our hands and bind them on our foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of our houses and on our gates. Fill us with a desire to grow spiritually and impress Your word into the lives of our children. I give my vision of this family to You believing that Your plans are far beyond what I could ever hope for.

In Jesus' Name, Amen

- Idea from Amy Phillips, Sudbury, ON

Preschool Idea:

Let your little one(s) make hearts to give to each family member and also make one for God. As you pass out the hearts, tell your family you love them and you love God!



Elementary-Age Idea:

Read through the Shema with your child(ren). Ask them for ideas about being a family of faith and what it means to them. Try out a couple of their ideas!



Teen Idea:

Prepare yourself to have an open discussion with your teen! Let them know you want to be a good role model for them in faith matters. Ask them how you're doing so far and appreciate their honesty!



In The Garden - Getting Ready For Winter

When the cold winds start to blow across your garden you know it's time to start putting your garden down for a loooong winter's nap.

Most of you who have had a garden for a while will be pros at raking leaves and wrapping your tiny trees in burlap.

If you think these are thankless jobs just invite a few children over to help you. My grandchildren love to help rake the leaves and then jump all over them.

Last year I discovered something fun - burlaps for trees that look like snowmen and



gnomes! Add a few of those 'tree faces' to your sleeping trees to add some extra whimsy. Gardens in winter need to be enjoyed just the same so find something to bring a smile to your face and the faces of everyone who passes by.

Take a trip to your local library and borrow a stack of gardening books and dream of beautiful flowers and butterflies.

And don't forget - **GO PLAY OUTSIDE!** - any chance you get. See you in the spring...

- Lynne Collier
ganaraskagardens.com

Reaching Out

Since 1993, more than 77 million shoe boxes have been packed, shipped, and delivered across the globe to bless needy children at Christmastime. People of all ages can be involved in this simple, hands-on mission project. Participate through prayer, packing/sorting boxes, or promoting the project to a group. Youth between the ages of 16 - 20 can also fly overseas to deliver the boxes themselves!



Canadian Collection Week - Nov. 15 - 21

Find Canadian drop-off locations and more:

<http://www.samaritanspurse.ca/occ/>

International info:

<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/>

OCTOBER 2010 Unique Holidays

Sunday Apple Month	Monday Eat Better, Eat Together Month	Tuesday Chiropractic Month	Wednesday Popcorn Poppin' Month	Thursday Roller Skating Month	Friday Positive Attitude Month	Saturday Squirrel Awareness Month
					1 Smile Day Vegetarian Day	2 Card-Making Day
3 Intergeneration Day →Fire Prevention Week	4 Improve Your Office Day	5 Teacher's Day	6 Mad Hatter Day Balloons Around the World	7	8	9 World Post Day
10 Newspaper Carrier Day Thanksgiving →Chestnut Week	11	12 Moment of Frustration Scream Day	13 Emergency Nurses Day Top Spinning Day	14 Be Bald and Be Free Day	15 Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day	16 Dictionary Day Fall Astronomy Day
17 →Food Bank Week	18 Chocolate Cupcake Day	19 Evaluate Your Life Day	20	21 Get Smart About Credit Day	22 CAPS LOCK DAY	23 Make a Difference Day iPod Day
24 Mother-in-Law Day →Pastoral Care Week	25	26	27 Cranky Co-Workers Day	28	29 Internet Day	30 Forgiveness Day Checklist Day
31 UNICEF Day Knock-Knock Jokes Day Halloween						