



THE BUBBE PROJECT

An Activity Guide to Enriching Relationships With Your Grandchildren During and After the Pandemic

"Life is like riding a bicycle: to keep your balance you must keep moving."

Albert Einstein

Ask any grandmother who has been separated from her grandchildren during the pandemic what she's missed the most, and she'll likely say it's not being able to hug and kiss them. As the most Covid-19 sensitive of the population, grandparents have felt a profound sense of loss and isolation from the youngest members of their families. The uncertainty of the future cannot do anything but add an additional strain. Their children and grandchildren may survive the pandemic in fine shape, but particularly with the ever-growing number of variants, they may not. It's been a painful game we play to assure our grandchildren that the world will be alright, while at the same time quietly facing our own fears. Perhaps a better question is, "What can we do to enjoy our grandchildren and make a difference in their lives NOW, under these circumstances?"

This toolkit by the WRJ Pacific District Planning Committee will give you some of the tools to enjoy memorable experiences with your grandchildren, whether you're only seeing them on Zoom or are fortunate enough to be in the same room. Some directly express Jewish values of *tzedakah* and *chesed*. Some are just for fun. Hopefully, you will use them not only to create special memories, but also to help you conceptualize your own ideas.

So have fun!

LET'S COOK!

What's being Jewish without scrumptious food? Even if you're not in the same physical space as your grandchildren, you still can share the wonderful experience of cooking. (The child may require supervision depending on his/her/their age.) Here are some activities you can share.

1. Anyone can cook:

Know a simple no-bake candy or cookie recipe? Want to teach your grandchild a skill, such as making a pie crust? Arrange with your grandchildren's parents to have these ingredients on-hand and demonstrate how to make them over Zoom/Facetime.

These recipes are kid-friendly and are among those found in the WRJ PD 2021 Cookbook.

Easy 1960s Peanut Butter (or Almond Butter) Candy

1 c. peanut or almond butter

1 c. honey
1 c. powdered milk
Wax paper

Mix ingredients and drop them onto wax paper. Either fold the paper and roll it into a log or roll them into balls of desired size and drop them onto wax paper. Refrigerate or freeze them. It tastes best cold.

Dreidel Snack

1 marshmallow
Peanut or almond butter or icing
1 chocolate kiss
1 pretzel stick or licorice

Use icing or peanut butter to stick marshmallow to chocolate kiss. Stick in the pretzel for the top of the dreidel.

Woolly Mammoth

1 rice cake
Peanut or almond butter
2 pretzel sticks
1 4-inch banana sliced lengthwise
2 jelly beans
2 potato chips

Spread peanut or almond butter on rice cake. Place jelly beans on top (eyes), banana between eyes (trunk), pretzel sticks on bottom (tusks), and potato chips on the sides (ears).

2. Grandma's Recipe/My Recipe:

Make sure you and your grandchild have the same simple ingredients, such as an assortment of fruit, raw vegetables, cream cheese, peanut/almond butter, and bread. Then each of you creates his/her/their own masterpiece!

LET'S PLAY!

WRJ PD Game Nights have been a favorite since they premiered during convention. There's a terrific amount of interaction, even if you don't share the same physical space. Here are a few ideas to get you started but let your (and their) imagination run wild on adapting games to suit the distanced situation.

1. Scavenger Hunts:

Write a brief list of objects to be found, let your grandchildren know how much time they've got to retrieve them, then ready, set, go! You can ask for specific objects like their favorite toy; objects with a function, such as a brush; objects with the same characteristic, such as something shiny or round; objects by color or size; or objects by number, such as 3 of something. They also can turn the tables on you, by giving you items to fetch.

2. Trivia:

Ask them general or personal trivia about you or other family members (such as how Grandma and Grandpa met), or about subjects with which they'd have some knowledge, such as holidays. Many grandchildren want their own turn to try and fool Grandma about what's important to them, such as their favorite color, subject in school, or favorite food.

3. Art Challenges:

You or they choose what to draw with or without a time limit, then everyone creates/draws their rendition. (And yes, sometimes the grandkids outshine their grandmas!)

4. Family Sports Cards:

Cut rectangular pieces of heavy paper or cardboard into sports card-size pieces. On the front, draw or glue a picture of a member of the family. On the back, write fun facts about the family member.

5. Jeopardy:

Did you know you can design your own version of Jeopardy? If you're technically proficient, PowerPoint offers you a free template. Use this and plug in your own questions about holidays and Jewish (or family) facts for some big Jewish fun!

<https://slidelizard.com/en/blog/jeopardy-powerpoint-template>

Conversely, you may draw your own game board with categories and answers, and let your grandchildren provide the questions.

6. Crafting:

Art instructor and WRJ PD Programming Committee member Evelyn Bell will demonstrate these next two projects on a Sunday, May 2nd Craft Zoom at 10:30 a.m. PDT. Here's the link to register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArc--upjgiEtG6aipEIBnAEhrOALi16YTN>

Sun Catchers

Make simple sun catchers with Popsicle sticks, colorful tissue paper, glue, and string or yarn. Creating a Star of David is especially easy.

Book Folding

If you've got some unused paperback books around the house, you can repurpose them into beautiful works of art. You can find some helpful videos on YouTube and free patterns on the net.

7. Book-Making

Every grandchild (or Grandma) can be an author, even with a single piece of paper. Here's how to do it: <https://teachbesideme.com/easy-folded-book/>

8. Clay Creations:

Send your grandkids clay (don't forget to keep some for yourself!) and create an agreed-upon project or let your imagination run free. Remember to mark your name and date on the bottom. Keep it safe after it hardens, and trade with your grandkids what they've made. You'll all have good memories of what you've done during the pandemic, as well as something to display.

9. Twenty Questions:

A classic game that's always fun. The number of questions depends upon the age of your grandchildren. You or they pick a mystery item and ask questions to figure it out.

10. Virtual Vacation:

Want to take a photography safari in Africa? Learn about how Disneyland was built? Watch penguins in Antarctica? The net is rich in live cams, videos, pictures, and reading material that you can share and learn what it's like to be where you'd like to be. Study an area with your grandchildren, and then pretend you're there. Depending upon their ages, they can write a "diary", draw pictures, and eat food of that foreign land, delivered, of course, courtesy of Grandma.

LET'S TALK FAMILY!

Zoom and Facetime have been a blessing during the pandemic, not only for grandparents who could not share physical space with their grandchildren, but also for those who live too far away or are too ill to visit in-person. These technologies have provided many opportunities to share family memories. We hope these ideas will help enrich your relationships.

1. Our New Holiday Experience:

While not being able to share a holiday table can be distressing, it provides an opportunity to create new holiday and Shabbat experiences. Discuss how you feel about this new (but hopefully temporary) normal and decide how you'd like to make this time special. Here are a couple of ideas.

Homemade Holiday Cards

Create special remembrances of these times by designing holiday cards that can be dropped off, faxed, or scanned. Make sure to include the date and a special message pertaining to the holiday affected by Covid-19.

Shabbat/Holiday Placemats

Send construction paper and other art supplies to your grandchildren if need be and have them draw holiday table placemats. You can do the same for them. Zoom or Facetime your meal celebrations, and you'll be able to see the others' creations on your tables.

2. Family Tree:

Have your grandchild draw a huge tree with many branches and cut out large leaves. They place their name at the bottom of the branch, and you give them the names of their relatives and tell some stories as they add the leaves.

3. Family Recipes:

Have a recipe that's been handed down through the generations? This is the perfect time to show your grandchildren how to make it while sharing family stories.

LET'S MAKE THE WORLD BETTER!

No matter whether it's called *tikkun olam* or a good deed project, helping to make the world better is a part of every faith tradition, and a goal as well as for those who believe in none. Children never are too young to learn that they can make a difference in the world. It's especially important now with so many people's lives upended by the pandemic.

1. Charity Collections:

Whether it's food, toiletries, or pet food, many charities and community groups are in great need of supplies (and money) to serve needy populations now. Talk with your grandchildren about how to turn their interests into solid *tikkun olam* action. Find a vaccinated family member, neighbor, or delivery person who would feel comfortable in picking up your items or shopping for them and delivering them to their destinations. You might find agencies with contactless pick-up from your car.

2. Remember a Vet:

National holidays can be difficult for veterans who live in state veteran homes. Some groups collect cards and artwork to send to them, but you may do this on your own. Have your grandchildren write letters of thanks to the vets and pictures for the holidays. If you are unable to go into the home to drop them off, ask the front desk personnel to pick them up from outside the door. Conversely, you may mail or even scan or FAX them to the home.

3. Remember Seniors Living in Homes:

Another project that can be scanned/Faxed or dropped off at a home. Some seniors would love to have artwork or letters from young people. Contact your local senior living homes for their needs and requirements.

We hope you've found these activities have enriched the often physically distanced relationships you've had with your grandchildren. We sincerely look forward to the day when we will be able to plant sweet kisses on chubby cheeks, wipe happy tears from little eyes, and share Shabbat and Yom Tov tables.

Stay well!

The WRJ Pacific District Programming Committee
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