

# YOUR FAMILY DINNER GOALS FOR 2018



## Food

Healthier eating? Check. Something the kids can help with? Check. Trying new foods? Throw in some exotic fruits you've never tried before, and check! This easy snack or dessert recipe works for all the resolutions on our families' lists.



## Fun

Speaking of trying new things and getting everyone involved, why not have the family plan a color-themed dinner — maybe red, for Valentine's Day?



## Conversation

Love is a big part of family dinner, whether at Valentine's Day or any other time of year! Try these love-themed conversation starters.



As we kicked off the New Year, we asked our Facebook community to share with us their family dinner “resolutions” for 2018. What did they want to do more of -- or less? What would family dinner ideally look like this year, and how would it change for the better?

Here are some of the popular themes that came out of those Facebook responses, as well as our best tips and resources to help you make those resolutions into reality:

### Healthy eating

Without a doubt, making family meals healthier was one of the most popular goals shared by our community. “Healthy” means different things to different people -- for some, it was “no packaged, bagged or boxed food” while others specified “not too much fast food” or “more veggies” -- but it’s clear that making dinner nutritious and well-balanced is a big priority in 2018.

### Family involvement

Another popular type of response centered on getting everyone more involved in making dinner happen. Whether hoping to encourage everyone in the family to sit down together once a week or more, or planning to teach kids to take more active roles in the kitchen, families are definitely looking to share the responsibility for mealtimes.

### Broadening horizons

Perhaps the most surprising answer that came up multiple times had to do with branching out -- getting more adventurous with food and flavors. A favorite quote of ours was from a community member who said “Yes, I might gain a few extra pounds in 2018, but at least I can hold my head high and say that I tried that new ice cream flavor, or I tried that new restaurant downtown, or that I finally tried that spice I was too scared to try!” We love these adventurous attitudes and hope lots of families will take on culinary challenges of their own!

### REMINDER: Tell us about your family dinners and enter to win!

We’re not done learning from families about their dinners, and we hope you’ll share your experiences with us. We’re asking followers of The Family Dinner Project to complete a short survey about their dinnertime habits, to help us further improve our content and programs for families. All survey participants can enter to win a \$100 Amazon gift card!

### COMPLETE THE SURVEY NOW

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TFDP2018Survey>

## REAL FAMILY DINNER PROJECTS: THE JOURDAN FAMILY

Meet the Jourdens! Brynna Jourden originally reached out to The Family Dinner Project for advice on bringing information about family dinners to her son's school community. Now we're pleased to feature her family and share their dinnertime challenges and successes!

### The Goal:

Currently, Brynna shares that her biggest goal to help stay on top of dinnertime is improving her meal planning skills. She wants to work on prepping ahead of time, as well as trying one new recipe every week. "I haven't made a lot of progress towards getting this achieved yet...."

### The Challenge:

As with many families with young children, the Jourdens find it challenging to come up with recipes that everyone will happily eat, especially given their goal of trying a new recipe each week! Brynna also shares that getting everyone to the table at the same time can be difficult as they try to keep up with busy work and volunteer schedules along with the demands of raising a young family.

### The Strategies:

Getting Jack and Felix involved in dinner — from simply choosing parts of the meal to helping prep ingredients — is an essential part of making dinners go more smoothly. Although having young children in the kitchen can be messy and slow down the cooking process, giving them responsibilities related to dinnertime can also help encourage them to try new foods and to be more willing participants at the table! Even little ones

like Felix can get involved — Brynna shares that he helps to choose ingredients at the grocery store.

The Jourdens have also participated in our 4 Week Program for families, and Brynna often refers to The Family Dinner Project for dinnertime inspiration. Last week their "new recipe" was our Carrot Top Pesto, which Brynna says was "Yummy!"

### The Food:

Kindergartener Jack: "Lasagna and pizza and milk!"

2-year-old Felix: "Pizza!"

Albert: "Lasagna."

Brynna: "Salmon, rice and broccoli."

Albert: "Oh, that's my second favorite!"

Jack: "I want that too!"

Looking for recipes for Jourden family favorites? Try our versions: Turkey Lasagna, Homemade Pizza and Salmon with Pesto!

### The Takeaway:

As the family grows and continues their dinners together, Brynna looks forward to trying more conversation starters and ideas for "steering away from the potty talk that inevitably starts!" She also hopes to continue building healthy eating habits in her boys and "being together and nourishing our bodies."

### The Best Part:

Albert and Brynna enjoy getting to see everyone at the end of the day, and talking about how the day has gone. Jack likes "All of it." As for Felix....

"I LOVE EATING WITH MY FAMILY!" — FELIX JOURDEN, AGE 2



## CINNAMON YOGURT DIP WITH FRESH FRUIT



This cinnamon yogurt dip is delicious and nutritious! It can feed a hungry pack of kids as an appetizer or a dessert. And since it's so easy, kids can get involved in the preparation. Have the little chefs prepare the fruits, arrange them on a plate, and mix the cinnamon into the yogurt.

This recipe comes to us from the Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Program and the USDA.



### Instructions:

1. Core and slice the apple. Slice banana into circles. Peel the orange and break it into sections.
2. Pour the orange juice into a small bowl.
3. Dip the fruit pieces into the orange juice to prevent browning.
4. Arrange on a plate.
5. Mix the yogurt and cinnamon in a small bowl.
6. Use the yogurt as a dip for the fruit. Enjoy!

### Ingredients:

*Serves 1*

- 1 apple
- 1 orange
- 1 banana
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon



## PLAY WITH COLOR & TASTE



Ask your kids to think up a menu in all one color and then help you make it. Or, ask your kids to think up a menu that has all five tastes — bitter, sweet, sour, salty and umami — and help you make it. For example, you can make pasta with roasted vegetables (salted), adding a sprinkle of Parmesan (umami). For an appetizer, try an olive (bitter) tapenade by mixing olive, capers, lemon juice (sour), garlic and olive oil in a food processor and then spreading on crackers. Cookies for dessert would give you a 5th taste sensation!

<https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/fun/play-with-color-taste/>



## TALK ABOUT: THE POWER OF LOVE



*Use these conversation starters around the dinner table:*

How does it affect you when someone shows their love for you?

How does it make you feel to show someone else that you love them?

Is it easier to say “I love you” to some people, and harder to say it to others? Why?

Have you ever had to do something difficult in order to show your love for someone?

What’s one thing you can do today to spread love in the world? How about this week? This month?

<https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/shareables/talk-power-love>

Scan the QR Code to Sign up for our Email Newsletter

