

Living Faith @



Children can engage with elders with dementia

Thanksgiving is often a time when we reconnect with grandparents and other elders. You may have older relatives who are coping with various degrees of dementia. If they are in the early stages they may be attending upcoming family events. Or they may already be in care centers.

You may be tempted to “protect” your children by avoiding contact between your children and the person with dementia. This is a mistake, both for the child and the adult.

Studies have shown that people living with dementia have a higher level of positive engagement when interacting with children.

Children who interact with older adults, even those with dementia show fewer behavioral challenges and improved social development.

Be honest and simple when explaining what is going on with the person. “Grandma has an illness that makes it hard for her to remember things.”

Some things you and your children can do with a loved one coping with dementia:

- Sing songs (familiar hymns)
- Look through old photo albums
- Read favorite bible stories

This information is prepared for you by the **Northeastern Iowa Synod – Home Life Network** for use by families and local congregations.

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Don't Perpetuate Racist Stereotypes this Thanksgiving

Many of the stories we heard growing up about Thanksgiving involve untrue stereotypes about Native Americans. Make sure you are not repeating that in your family celebrations. One way to avoid that is simply to make Thanksgiving about God and what we are thankful for. If you have older children, you can begin to correct those stereotypes and read some books about Native American history and culture.

Why not add a Native American dish to the menu for thanksgiving? Here is an easy recipe from The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen by Sean Sherman with Beth Dooley:

Caramelized Seed Mix.

- 1 cup raw sunflower seeds, pepitas, and/or squash seeds
- 1/3 cup maple sugar (see note)

In a large, non-stick skillet, heat the seeds over medium-high heat until they begin to smell nutty, about 3 minutes. Stir in the maple sugar, stirring constantly until melted and the kernels are nicely coated. Transfer onto waxed paper or parchment to cool.

These will keep a long time in an airtight container and are great on a salad or as a snack.

Note: If using maple syrup instead of maple sugar, use only half the amount.

Here is another easy activity for all ages

Pumpkin Pie Playdough

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbsp. oil
- 2 tbsp. cream of tartar
- 2 tbsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- red & yellow food coloring

Mix together the flour, salt, cream of tartar and pumpkin pie spice in a saucepan. Slowly stir in the oil, water and vanilla extract. Add a few drops of food coloring to make the mixture orange. Heat on the stovetop over medium heat, stirring constantly, until dough becomes a stiff playdough consistency. Allow 15-20 minutes to cool before playing as the dough will be very hot!