

# DAY 1: Five Days of Freebies

Dear Parents,

'Tis the season of giving, so we wanted to share some stories and articles with you from our *Tuttle Times* magazine along with a couple activities and parent articles from our magazine's Plus Pack.

This year, we talked about compromise, political parties, competition, being a changemaker, boredom, collectivism, happiness, strong communities, and more!

Today's freebie is a story about remembering to be present during the holidays (and actually all year long). We hope you enjoy today's content, and remember, there are four more days of freebies! Check our social media or [blog](#) to find them each day.

Strong families are what will change the world. We hope that the dinner table conversation starters empower you and expand your children's knowledge and understanding of how the world works.

—The Tuttle Twins team



If you want your child to enjoy the *Tuttle Times* magazine every single month, be sure to sign up before December 20, so you receive our January issue—all about tariffs.

We have big plans in 2025 for our magazine, so [subscribe today!](#)

# Story Overview + Dinner Table Conversation Starters

## Story Overview

The twins are struggling to choose a gift for their parents, so they ask their Nana for ideas. After realizing they haven't spent much time with their parents recently, Nana helps them come up with the perfect gift—their presence. They plan a game night to spend quality time together.

The Tuttle family rediscovers the importance of being present with one another, realizing that amidst life's hustle, these moments are the true treasures.

## Dinner Table Conversation Starters

- What is the hardest part between balancing a busy schedule and consistently spending quality time with your family?
- What are some of your favorite memories of spending time together as a family?

# PRESENTS OF PRESENCE



Exhausted from hanging lights over the front door and windows, the Tuttle twins removed their winter clothes. Ethan glanced at the calendar, which was plastered with holiday events and reminders. “Emily, do you realize there is only one week until Christmas, and we still haven’t thought of a gift for Mom and Dad?”

“We’re running out of time. Oh, wait, I have an idea!” Emily said with a twinkle in her eye. “We need to call Nana. She always has the best gift ideas.”

Ethan smiled, “It’s not a gift idea, but it is a good idea.”

They opened a video chat with Nana on their laptop to explain their conundrum. Nana listened and knew just how to help them.

“So you two really don’t have any gift ideas for your parents? Think about conversations you’ve had recently—did they give any hints?” Nana asked.

The twins thought for a long time. Ethan broke the silence. “Actually... I haven’t had a good conversation with Mom or Dad for weeks. We’ve been so busy.”

Emily responded, “Me neither, Ethan. We’ve been together, but between going to the parties and rushing from thing to thing, we just haven’t had any quality time really *being* with each other.”

“Sorry, Nana, we don’t have any ideas,” Ethan said sheepishly.

Nana smiled, knowing the twins had the perfect gift idea right in front of them and just couldn't see it yet. "Well, after hearing that, I do have an excellent idea. You should give them your presence."

"You think Mom & Dad want *our* Christmas presents? I don't think giving our gifts back to them would be very polite," Emily said, scratching her head.

"No, not your *presents*. Your *presence*," Nana explained,

chuckling. "The gift of being with them. You say you haven't spent much time with them recently. Make the time."

Emily whispered an idea, "Let's plan a game night with them."

Ethan's face lit up with excitement. "That's a fantastic idea, Emily! We used to play games together all the time. We should make it a monthly game night all year long."

"Thanks, Nana!" the twins said in unison, ending the chat.



Ethan and Emily couldn't wait until Christmas to give their present of their presence. They wanted to surprise their parents that night.

They spent the the day finding favorite games and puzzles that had been stashed away in their closets and forgotten. They even went into town to get everyone's favorite snacks for the evening!

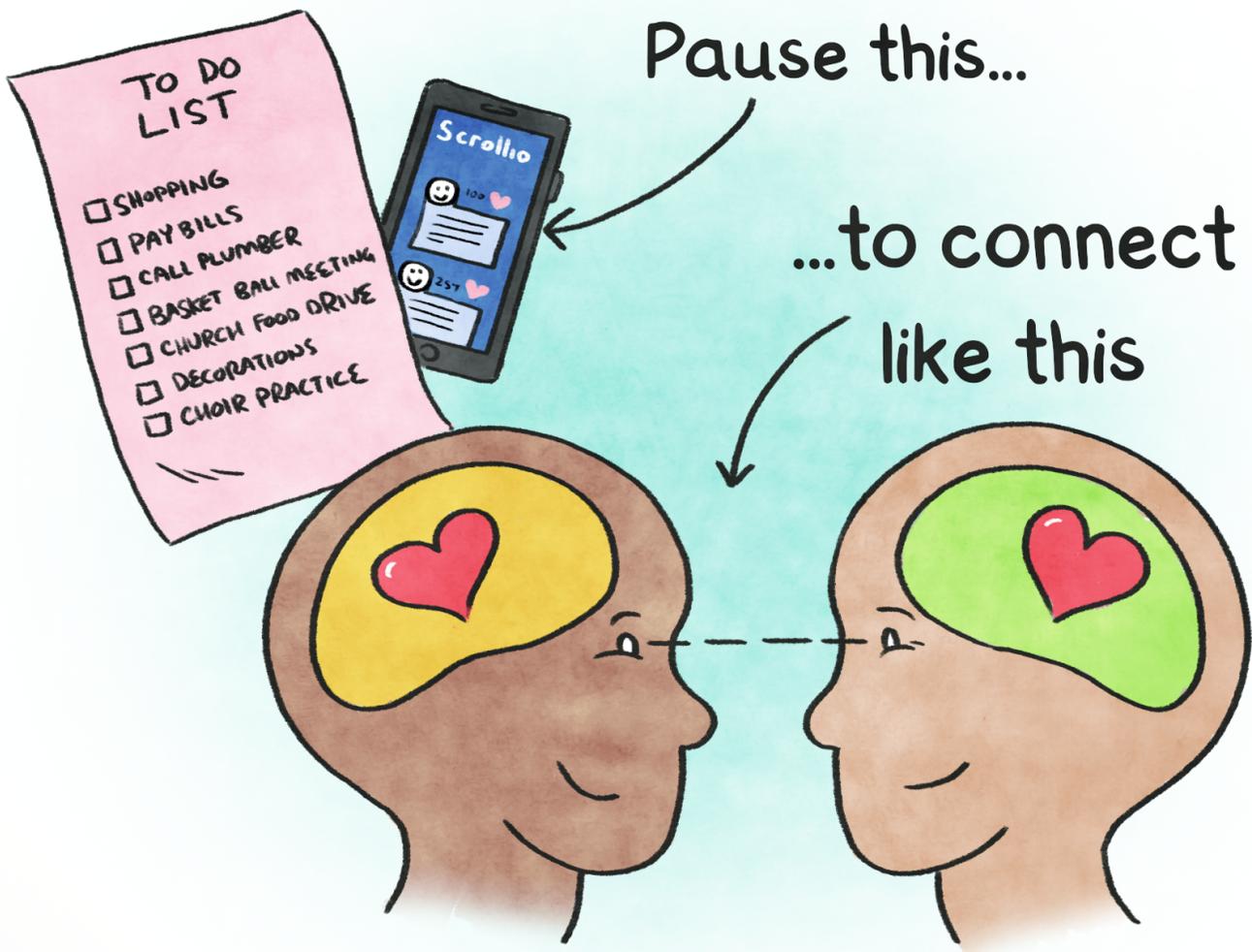
After helping to clean up dinner, the twins surprised their parents. The Tuttle family gathered around the table enjoying the friendly competition and time being spent together.

Mr. Tuttle was good at playing strategy games, but Emily had gotten better since they had last played together, giving him some good competition.

Then they played Pictionary, and Ethan and Mrs. Tuttle were quite the team! Mrs. Tuttle did a little celebration dance after drawing the perfect Panama Canal and turned to the twins. "You two have given us the best present anyone could ask for—the gift of your time and love."

They finished out the evening completing a snowy night puzzle, which included lots of time for the conversation they'd been missing out on.





In that moment, amidst the laughter and love, the Tuttle family realized that in the hustle of life, these moments were what truly mattered.

Ethan and Emily were already looking forward to the next game night. It was nice putting everything else on pause and connecting with their parents.

Mrs. Tuttle said, "This made me realize that we need to do a better job of not just being together, but being present with each other every day."

"Agreed," Mr. Tuttle chimed in. "Being present means we'll put away all our distractions—even

the busy thoughts bouncing around in our heads—and focus our attention on each other. So it's not just the amount of time, but making it quality time."

Ethan and Emily nodded with their new understanding of the importance of being present in each other's lives.

Ethan and Emily went upstairs to get ready for bed. Ethan said, "Nana deserves something special for giving us this great idea."

Emily shared her idea with Ethan, and he agreed it was absolutely perfect.



The twins realized that the true essence of the holiday season wasn't just about the festivities or the presents under the tree. It was about the gift of being present, spending time with the people they cared about, and creating moments that would be cherished for a lifetime.

# Word Search

Find and circle the words about being present and spending quality time with your family listed below—across, down, and diagonal. Have fun!

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

## WORD BANK

**connect**

**giving**

**pause**

**quality**

**distractions**

**listening**

**presence**

**stories**

**focusing**

**memories**

**presents**

**time**

# Acrostic Poem: Family Time

Write an acrostic poem about family time.

**What is an acrostic poem?** It's a poem where the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase.

It helps to brainstorm words about your theme word first. Then write short phrases or sentences for each letter in the word. Be creative. Happy writing!

## Example Acrostic:

**T**wo curious minds,  
**W**ondering and learning.  
**I**ncredible adventurers.  
**N**ever-ending ideas.  
**S**hining hearts helping others.

**F** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**M** \_\_\_\_\_

**I** \_\_\_\_\_

**L** \_\_\_\_\_

**Y** \_\_\_\_\_

**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**I** \_\_\_\_\_

**M** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_





# For Parents: Prioritizing Family in a Busy World

Juggling work, household responsibilities, and parenting can feel like an endless marathon. Our plates are undoubtedly full.

Are we filling our time with activities that align with our priorities though? The answer requires careful examination of the choices we make on how we spend the 1,440 minutes of each day.

It's a common saying that actions speak louder than words. While responsibilities are unavoidable, what we do with our extra time reveals our true priorities, no matter what we say they are. While many say that family time is a priority, schedules don't always show that to be the case. The holidays are a great time to reflect on that and make changes, if needed.

Individual pursuits and personal enjoyment are important for a healthy and balanced life. However, when we let activities steal time from us daily that aren't necessary and bring us no joy or fulfillment, it's time to reassess our habits and schedules. Tracking our daily activities can be an eye-opening experience, revealing the hidden thieves of our time.

Consider your time spent on social media scrolling through feeds, playing online games, or binge-watching a TV series. While these activities may provide momentary entertainment or relaxation, they can also be insidious time thieves, robbing us of the moments that matter most. Setting screen time limits and scheduling family time can help reclaim those stolen minutes and redirect them to bring everyone more joy.

Another common time thief is the constant pursuit of perfection. Whether it's keeping an immaculate home or striving for career success, the quest for perfection can consume us, leaving little room for the spontaneous joys of family life. Embracing imperfections and letting go of unrealistic expectations can free up valuable time and create a more relaxed and enjoyable family environment.

Work-related demands are an undeniable part of life, but it's crucial to strike a balance. Endless overtime and all-consuming career ambitions can eat away at the time we have for our families. And our children are only young for so long. By setting clear boundaries between work and home life, we can ensure that our professional responsibilities don't encroach upon the moments we want to spend with our loved ones.

Tracking our daily activities may reveal patterns that need adjustment, but it's also an opportunity for self-discovery. By becoming more aware of how we spend our time, we empower ourselves to make intentional choices that align with our true priorities. It's not about sacrificing personal enjoyment or professional success; it's about finding the right balance.

We should identify and eliminate unnecessary distractions, so we have time to spend on activities that truly matter, to strengthen relationships that bring us the most joy, and to create memories that will last a lifetime.

# For Parents: Being Truly Present

Do you ever feel like you are spent the whole afternoon with your family, but somehow you didn't? Technology is everywhere, and it sure is good at getting your attention—and stealing it from others.

It can be hard to put aside distractions and truly focus when spending time with family and friends. There are a lot of things competing for our attention—whether it's the ping of a new text message, notifications of emails that need answering, or even our own thoughts about everything we have to do. But being fully present with others when we are together is important to respect other people's time and for building strong relationships.

What does it mean to be present? It means focusing completely on the person or people you are with, without letting yourself get pulled into distractions. Give people your full attention by putting away your phone, turning off the TV, and ignoring other things going on around you. Don't think about your to-do list. Save those thoughts for later.

Instead, listen carefully and thoughtfully. Laugh together, play games, enjoy the outdoors, or get creative with an art project—find activities you can immerse yourselves in together.

Spending this focused time together helps you understand each other better. You'll learn new things and feel more connected, deepening your relationship. It also shows that you value your time with them. When you make the choice to be present, you send the message to your loved ones that they are important to you.

Making this effort can lift everyone's moods too. While that's always beneficial, it can be extremely important during the dreary winter months. While some areas lack enough sunshine during this season, we have the opportunity to be the sunshine in our family's day.

So be mindful of when distractions are getting in the way of your time with loved ones. Make being present a priority by silencing phones, setting aside tasks, and giving your full attention.

**Show people they matter by truly engaging—it can make all the difference.**