



Inter-Generational Fun

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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INTER-GENERATIONAL FUN!

I had such a wonderful long weekend!

My grandson, Justin, who is nineteen years of age, called and asked if he could come for a visit. He had recently been promoted at work to a management position and got a raise, so he was financially able and excited to make the trip from Saskatoon to Medicine Hat. I believe it was the first fairly major adventure that he planned and undertaken all by himself!

Justin had been living with his dad but recently decided to move in with a couple of friends. That was when he first realized how expensive life can be! He told me that he makes a great breakfast and I know that he has mastered grilled cheese, eggs and pizza. A friend told him how to make homemade poutine but otherwise his cooking skills were fairly limited.

Years ago, I heard the expression "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime". Because of this, I thought that I could use part of our time together this weekend to teach him a few tricks in the kitchen.

Here are some ideas that you might also use to help other people "learn how to fish":

1. Find out how they learn - Justin explained that he does not learn from someone telling him what to do as well as from someone who shows him and then lets him try. This was so helpful to know.
2. Explain the financial benefits of cooking- We talked about the costs of making hamburgers at home compared to buying them at a restaurant or drive-through. Justin is excellent with numbers and it didn't take long until he was able to figure out the costs of homemade recipes per meal. (You could see the dollar signs in his eyes as he was calculating the savings he would realize).
3. Keep it simple - Together we prepared six different recipes, each with five or fewer ingredients. Before we would begin, we placed all the items needed in the pan or pot that would be used for cooking and then took a photo. This was much more user-friendly for a teenager than to write out a recipe card!
4. Demonstrate diversification - I purchased a box of onion soup mix packets for him and showed how you could mix with sour cream for a chip dip, add to hamburger for patties or use in a sweet and sour sauce to place over chicken.
5. Talk their language - We used the internet to watch a video for Cheesy Swiss Chicken rather than looking in the cookbook where it is printed. Teens tend to use their phones and computers before they go to printed materials. However, this exercise subsequently led to the cookbook where he took a photo of the recipe for future reference.
6. Provide the basic tools - I purchased a few kitchen items for him to take home including a meat thermometer, oven mitts and tongs. Our friend Jeanie who is so kind, let him choose from the stored items she had taken out of her trailer before she sold it. He was thrilled to get a pizza tray, food storage containers and dozens of other items and she seemed thrilled to be able to gift him.
7. Explain different ways to get results - We baked some potatoes and did some in the microwave. He learned about how to use the stove's broiler. Many of our recipes were cooked and then frozen for easy lunches while others were just prepped and then frozen to be thawed and cooked at another time.

I had asked Justin to bring a cooler and when he left he had it filled as well as an insulated container that his friend had given him to use. He was not only thankful for the food, learning and fun but also surprised me by saying "I learned that cooking is easy".

One of the best things to give to another person is to teach them how to fish!

Who can you help by sharing your knowledge and skills in the next week?