

LIFE SKILLS ACTIVITIES - INSTRUCTIONS

FAMILY OWNED RESTAURANT – Ages 3/4 thru teen

Any time I would start a new parenting tool or life skill activity, I would sit all my children down and build the excitement with my voice, play acting or whatever would get my children excited about what new “adventure” was to come. Depending on the number and age of your child/children you could say something like this: *“I have a big surprise for you! We are going to start our own family restaurant right here in the house and you would get all the tips (money)?”*

Hopefully that would get their attention. Then describe the plan clarifying that the only customers in the beginning would be mom and dad. All other aspects of running the restaurant and doing the cooking would be up to them. As a team, they could also come up with the name of their Family Restaurant. One child could fill all the job descriptions or with a larger family, everyone could have their own job or share a job description. Here are more specific suggestions:

Menu Design – After the parents look in the pantry, cupboards and refrigerator, parents and the children could make a list for menu options: easy-to-microwave meals, sandwiches, or fresh fruit/vegetables to name a few. The restaurant team could decide what 2-4 options could be on that night’s menu and an older child could use the computer to create the menu or it could be an art project for all. Examples: soup, pot pies, tuna fish, mac/cheese, hot dogs, sandwiches, salads, veggies/chips and dip, etc

Table set – Table cloth or place mats with pretty centerpiece; possibly candles; knife, fork, spoon and napkin all in proper placement; salt & pepper; and water glasses would all be on the table. One or more children could be in charge of this.

Hostess/Greeter – This job is probably for the youngest child. He/she would welcome the parents, guide them to the table for Date Night & give them the menu.

Server – After a warm greeting/welcome, and filling the water glasses, the server would describe each entre and the House Special. He/she would write down each parent’s food and drink order on his pad. (For a non-reader server, pictures could be drawn and the server would circle.) Server, and possibly the Chef as well, would serve the prepared food. Server would check on the parents throughout the dinner to see if they have additional needs. At the end of the dinner, he/she would prepare and present the bill for the dinner. It could be paid with pretend money but I suggest the TIP is real money that could be divided between the entire restaurant “staff”.

Chef – This should probably be the oldest child or a team of more than one. Using a microwave can be dangerous because of the hot food, but with proper instruction before the Date Night, this could be a possible option. If only younger children are participating in this activity, then simple chilled or room temperature food would be best.

Bus boys/girls – After the parents have paid and the hostess escorts them out of the “restaurant”, the table will be cleared, floor swept, and all the dishes would be brought to the kitchen.

Clean-up – Since all the “team” would receive a portion of the tip, everyone helps together to wipe off counters, wash dishes, and/or put in the dishwasher. The kitchen and dining room should look as neat and clean as before Date Night.

If the question comes up why the parents aren’t paying for the food with real money, you could explain that since the food was bought by the parents, they would be paying twice for the same food. If the children wanted to buy the food with their own money, then parents would pay for the food to cover the costs. The TIP was for the good service. It should be paid in easily dividable amounts. Tip could also be paid in tokens to purchase “wants”, privileges, or each token could be worth a specific amount of minutes with a parent doing an activity of the child’s choice.

This adventure should be fun!! If it becomes a chore, it could backfire. It is a privilege to have a Family Owned Restaurant in your own home. Possibly if it goes well, grandparents, other family members and neighbors could also frequent this infrequent restaurant.

Let me know how this life skill activity has worked in your home or how you adapted it.