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into them and make them a big deal. Simply setting the table can make dinner inviting and can draw in your family.

I want to offer a few suggestions on making your table space matter. First, have a basket for all electronic devices, and place it on the opposite side of the house. Shut the TV off. May those who come know that they are the most important part of dinnertime. There will be no outside distractions. Set out your plate chargers and dishes and arrange your utensils, cups and napkins. Let all who gather know this time has been thought through. Casual nights with paper plates and plastic ware are equally as meaningful. Don't let the details throw you off. Just use what you have and enjoy it.

One of my favorite things to do is come up

unexpected.

I often look around my house for items I already have to switch things up. You can have fun with this and give your table a new personality or look. It's definitely something you don't need to stress about or add to your long list of to-do's. Just try and enjoy creating meaning in a space that is important for your family. Even something as simple as slice-and-bake cookies on a cake stand will do. Trust me, this will draw in your crew!

I have a table for my young kids that is often their place during meals, where they connect and eat. I place the same emphasis on their table as I do on the "big person" table. It's about starting them early with the idea that gathering at the table is a big deal in our family. It's intentional

## If you have natural light, your table could be a great place for live plants in creative planters.

with centerpieces for our dining table. I'm not talking about elaborate florals and candelabras. I'm talking about random, inexpensive themes that change one or two times a month. I never want my table to become a place for stale design and dusty decor. I want it to be a place of celebration and inspiration.

A centerpiece is not meant to distract the conversation (or eating space), so keep it simple. Vases with greenery from outside are the easiest way to get something for nothing. Also try centerpieces that spark conversation. A quick idea is to get a small branch from outside and place it in a cute container. Use floral foam so it stays in the container and hide the foam with dried moss. Clip blank cutouts onto the branches. You could go around the table and write out what everyone is thankful for and leave out this reminder for a week.

If you have natural light, your table could be a great place for live plants in creative planters. Fresh is always a better option as long as it is low maintenance. Make sure the plants you are buying are good for indoors and that you don't over-water. Make your planter seasonal by placing decorative eggs in it during the spring, small pumpkins for the fall and holiday ornaments in the winter. This will add interest and something a little

and purposeful but can still be lighthearted and fun. They love their times at the table, and this continues to inspire me to be creative so their little hearts are blessed.

Focusing on the table will help set togetherness as a priority in your heart and mind. Challenge yourself to pretty up your table for yourself and your loved ones. They will appreciate it and notice the effort. Do what you gotta do to get your family to the table! These times matter most for all of us.

I'm not saying that sharing meals together is the cure-all, but that it is one of the ways in which the foundation of family provides stability, strength and support to its members. Underneath it all, supper is not really the point. The centerpiece isn't the point. The focus is actually family and home — establishing, enjoying and maintaining connections. The goal is creating and emphasizing a secure place for your loved ones in a society that can seem awfully uninterested in human needs.

May we all be more inspired to value family time and embrace all that is truly Home. Let's start by setting the table.

We want to know what YOU think. Leave your comments at wacoan.com

