Three Moms – Showing Them – by the Cousins

The question posed to the three moms was a little different for February. It wasn't about tips for raising the kiddos, but rather their thoughts on how they spend time with their husbands…in the middle of raising the kids. It's hard! We asked how they demonstrate a loving relationship in front of the kids, if they are purposeful in date night or showing affection, and if that too is a struggle. With Valentine's Day this month, do you celebrate with a special activity with the family or just him, or what? Here are their answers…

Mom of Two

To be honest, we haven't been big Valentine's Day people. I enjoy the flowers and the pampering but I enjoy both more when they are random and not expected. We usually do *something* in February, but with our hectic schedules it's not always on the actual *day* and that's okay. In this season of life, any date night, no matter what the day, is appreciated!

When it comes to showing our children our love for one another, we don't hesitate. We kiss, we hug, we hold hands, and we say we love each other in front of our kids. It is important. Just like they need our love, they need to see that their mommy and daddy love each other too. The way we love each other is one way we can show how Christ loves us and his church.

When we do get away for a date, my oldest daughter loves to see me get ready. She likes to help me pick out my outfit and says she can't wait to go on a date with Daddy too (which she does). Lord willing, one day (a LONG way from now) both our girls will date. I pray that we can show them what Christ's love is today so they can know what that looks like in a future spouse. We are far from perfect, and we show our girls that too, but with Christ's guidance, our love grows deeper through the years.

Mom of Three

Honestly, this was a hard question – not because we don't show affection – but we don't really "intentionally" think about date nights. We do hold hands and sit on the sofa next to each other, in front of the kids. We also do our best not to argue or fight in front of the kids, and that's an act of love. They do see us flirt with each other and be silly, but we don't overthink it – and that's a good thing. Being naturally loving in front of the kids is awesome. Their dad is such a servant and his acts of service is something they see, in how he loves me. I like to regularly remind the kids to thank their dad, and demonstrate acts of love to him…and he to me.

Date nights – we're not so good at it. We used to be in ministry so much that we felt like if we had free nights, we wanted to be together as a family. Date nights are important and there are seasons where we really needed them. But other seasons, we need free time to watch movies and hang out as a family – and we sit together – and enjoy that time. Maybe that's not the best, but this is how it works well for us.

We are together every day at home without the kids now, and the kids are all in school, so we are able to do day lunches or watch a show together. But intentional date nights we don't do a lot – maybe around Christmas or on our birthdays we will go out. We don't date based on a

holiday. I'd rather have date nights or random ones, or even surprise coffee dates – rather than big blowouts. I do love Valentine's Day but I'm more of an "in the moment" person – even playing a board game or sitting at home or even bowling or playing arcade games is fun (we are competitive!)

One day, we may have more consistent date nights when the kids are older, but right now we don't prefer babysitters and are in a season of family. I love this season. As far as Valentine's Day, we have a family thing (last year we were snowed in!) We have a fun dinner, small gifts, and make it memorable and special. Creating those family memories, to me, shows love between Mom and Dad and to the kids, as well. It's all good!

So, yes, our kids see how we love each other and serve each other, and it's just more of a natural flow doing life – being chill – and I'm so grateful for that. And when we do have date nights, it's great as well. Sometimes, we don't have a lot of money so walks, drives or coffees are our date experiences – and sometimes they're actually the best! The rest of our life is so scheduled that date night and spontaneity is often more appealing than a planned blowout on the calendar.

Mom of Four

We do our best, but honestly life is chaotic and we struggle to make time for dates and yes, even Valentine's Day. But that doesn't mean we don't make time for each other or show affection…we just naturally fit it in, in the daily rhythm of life.

We get away together for mini dates in the evenings on a walk, go feed our kids' agriculture animals (I know our kids should be doing this!), or check in over the phone throughout the day to just say hi. No matter how busy we are, we always make time to connect daily even if we send the kids to the other room to watch a show or play outside so Mom and Dad can talk.

I do believe it is healthy to show our kids our affection for each other. Hugs, kisses, and romantic glances are things our kids see. And when we are met with an, "Ewww gross," we remind them how God celebrates the love we have in our marriage, and they will celebrate that too when they are married one day.

There is no plan or date on the calendar for Valentine's Day. We might go out or we might celebrate as a family, but we will make time to invest in our marriage in the small moments of everyday life. I do promise you that our next free evening that isn't full of kids activities, we will get away together for a nice dinner and grocery run.