

# 5 ways to start a meaningful conversation at dinner tonight

A practical guide for families from The Table Talk Project

You don't need a perfect dinner. You don't need the right words. You just need a moment. Research consistently shows that families who eat and talk together raise children with stronger mental health, better resilience, and deeper connection with the people they love. This guide gives you five simple ways to make that happen tonight.

## The Table Talk Menu

Every conversation has three courses. Don't skip dessert.

### Entree

A light question to get everyone talking

### Main

Go a little deeper. Follow the thread.

### Dessert

Check in. Make sure everyone feels heard.

## Tonight, try this

- 1 **Put phones face-down before you sit.** It signals that this time matters. Kids notice.
- 2 **Start with yourself.** Share something about your own day first. It gives everyone permission to be honest.
- 3 **Ask a question, then wait.** Silence is not failure. It means someone is thinking.
- 4 **Follow the thread.** When a child says something unexpected, don't redirect. Go there with them.
- 5 **End with Dessert.** Before you leave the table, ask: did everyone get a turn? Did everyone feel heard?

# Conversation starters

## for every age

Pick one. Just one. See where it goes.

### Ages 4-7

- What made you laugh today?
- If you had a superpower at dinner, what would it be?
- What was something tricky today?

### Ages 8-12

- What is something you learned that surprised you?
- Is there anything on your mind you haven't told us?
- Who did you sit with today and what did you talk about?

### Ages 13+

- What is something the world gets wrong?
- When did you feel most like yourself today?
- What do you wish adults understood better?

### Don't forget Dessert

Before you leave the table, ask each person: *"Did you get to say what you wanted to say?"* It takes 30 seconds. It tells your child their voice matters.

**Know a parent who needs this?**