

Pointers For Parents

Finding Greatness At Your Dinner Table

(NAPSA)—Families across the nation are discovering there's more to dinnertime than just food. The family dinner hour is the one time of the day when family members can sit down with each other, shut out the distractions in their lives and simply reconnect.

The benefits of eating together as a family are undeniable. A recent study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that children who regularly have dinner with their parents are far less likely to smoke, drink, use illegal drugs or think about suicide.

Still, many parents struggle with ways to engage their children at the dinner table. After all, how many times can you start the conversation with "What did you do today, Billy?" before your child tunes out? One way to get your children involved is by posing questions that encourage them to offer opinions on a particular subject, such as the greatest American of all time. Who was it, and why? Someone who seized opportunities, saw things in a different way, or stood out in a crowd? Someone who demonstrated determination, vision and hard work? Is it George Washington or Hillary Clinton? Elvis Presley or Chuck Berry? Martin Luther King, Jr. or Michael Jordan?

This spring, the Discovery Channel's landmark series, "Greatest American," will reveal the results of more than half a million nominations from across the country. Sundays in June,



Dinner-table conversation may improve thanks to a new TV series on the greatest American.

"Greatest American" host and NBC's "Today Show" co-anchor Matt Lauer will count down the top 100 nominees in a four-part television event. Each week, viewers will have the opportunity to vote online, by phone or text message for their choices. Additionally, there are many ways to make family dinners more fun:

- Play "conversation in a jar" by filling a bowl with strips of paper marked with questions like "The funniest thing I saw today was..." or "The best game I played recently is..."
- Gather on the floor for a utensil-free picnic with a basket full of finger foods.
- Throw a "spotlight dinner" where one person is the center of attention for the evening.

Whether it's discussing who's the greatest American or simply talking with your children, mealtime provides a tremendous opportunity for conversation—and possibly even uncovering greatness at your own dinner table.

Learn more at discovery.com.