

33. Calendar Corral

OBJECTIVE: Give families a tool for tracking spending together.

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

An envelope and Calendar Corral Handout for each participant

NOTE TO TRAINER:

This activity uses cowboy imagery as a fun way to help encourage families to track their spending. We encourage families to “lasso” in their spending by keeping a list of their expenses on a “calendar corral” for all the spending they do “out on the range.”

ACTIVITY:

Start a discussion about the need and advantages of tracking money and spending as a family.

- What would be possible for the family if everyone did this?
- How would each family member benefit?

Explain that with a wall calendar, envelope, and notebook families can set up a simple system for keeping track of where their money gets spent “out on the range.”

DAILY HERDING OF EXPENSES:

Give each family a Calendar Corral Handout. This is a good example of a wall calendar on which families can track their expenses. Explain that a good way of keeping track of expenses is to write down on the calendar the amount you spend and “what for.” It is good to do this each day when you spend money. For example, if dad goes to the supermarket on Tuesday and purchases \$12 in groceries for dinner, he would arrive home—and before starting to cook—write on Tuesday’s date the amount: \$12 Groceries for Dinner

Ask families to think of a place in their home to hang the calendar where everyone in the family can easily write on it. Each family will want to attach a pen or pencil to the calendar with a string to make marking on the calendar easy. It is also helpful to attach an envelope to the calendar so that family members can slip the receipt in when they write down the amount on the calendar.

Remind family members in a friendly way throughout each month to “corral” those receipts into the envelope and write those amounts and “what for?”s on the calendar. Show children by explanation and example, and encourage them to fully participate “like a grown up.”

MONTHLY ROUND-UP:

- a. The first step is for families to brainstorm a list of the “what for” spending categories that they want to use to track their spending. For example:

Groceries	Eating Out
Transportation	School
Household	Personal
Clothes	Entertainment
Other	

- b. Next they will want to purchase a spiral notebook and write one of the spending categories the family has agreed on at the top of each page. Make sets of columns on each page so they can record the date, item, and the total amount. When they fill up a page, just make a new page for the category, and so on until the notebook is full. If the family would like, they can draw or tape pictures at the top of the pages to brighten up the notebook.
- c. At the end of each month, the family has a “Home on the Range” meeting and “lassoes” its receipts and records the family’s spending on pages of the notebook into the “what for?” categories of spending. Using the Calendar Corral as a guide, take the receipts out of the envelope, one by one, check them against the entry on the Calendar and organize them by spending category. Once they are organized, sort them by date and write them into the Ranch Notebook with the receipt dated the earliest in the month first to the most recent. If one receipt has spending that fits into several categories, the spender divides the total into appropriate categories on the calendar.

The family can store receipts needed for returns or personal records in a shoe box or folder and throw away the others.

Combine the monthly “ranch” meetings with a small reward for the family every two weeks for putting this system into action, such as making ice cream sundaes together. Keep the reward simple and family-fun oriented, and be sure to do it right away. Remember, that the best reward is everyone’s good feelings of cooperating and building family financial strength.



Calendar Corral

HOW OUR FAMILY SPENT OUR MONEY IN THE MONTH OF _____, 200_

When you spend money, please write the amount and the "what for?" on the date. Then put your receipt, if you got one, in the envelope below. Every two weeks, we'll round up the receipts, record, and total them.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday