

# Saving Dinner with



# Manner Minders

The Instructions, Manner Minders cards,  
and Placemat  
for

**helping kids learn dinner manners**

as you  
gather round the Dinner Table

**Includes:**

Manner Minders Instructions  
18 Manner Minders cards  
Placemat Instructions  
Placemat

*Note: Instructions and cards all are designed for standard size paper. Placemat is designed for legal size paper. If you prefer to print on 8.5"x11" paper, use the "Shrink to fit" feature on Adobe's printing console for the placemat.*

## SavingDinner.com Manner-Minders

Have you about lost your grip with what you are seeing at the dinner table night after night? Do you see spaghetti clinging to your child's tonsils and elbows firmly embedded in the table? Wanna do something about it?

Introducing Manner-Minders—a simple system to encourage good table manners without being negative about the bad ones. Nagging children at the table night after night is one way to give yourself an ulcer, create animosity with the kids and turn your family experience of eating together into a war zone.

Manner-Minders will tame the shrew in you and bring you back to your sweet parental-self. By using Manner-Minders, you allow the cards to do the talking—no more saying, "Elbows off the table, Tommy! How many times do I have to tell you?" Instead, you just enjoy your children and praise them when you catch them practicing their good manners! Your encouragement will help them learn this important life skill. After all, you don't want to see your grown children eating like Neanderthals at their high school graduation, do you?

It's effortless to use Manner-Minders! Simply put the Manner-Minder cards in a bowl the middle of the table and after everyone's seated and you're ready to eat dinner, have an adult read the card of the night and tell the children that is the focus for the meal—that one manner for the night. The parental guide in parenthesis below the Manner-Minder, will cue you on how to discuss and implement these manners.

Your encouragement and pleasant demeanor at the table is reward enough for your children. However, no one says you can't take the kids out for ice cream if they've done a spectacular job that week! Just keep using your cards and watch your children's manners change!

Enjoy!



Here is one that  
all are able  
Keep your elbows  
off the table!



(Demonstrate by putting your elbows on the table and eating with the opposite hand. The comedic turn of watching a parent look silly will make an impact. Now demonstrate where your arms should go when eating.)

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When chewing food,  
lips should close  
Seeing food when you  
chew is really gross!



(Tell your children you will be sneaking a peek all through dinner to see how they're doing. Don't forget to PRAISE the effort and don't expect perfection!)

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Don't forget,  
don't take a nap,  
Put your napkin  
on your lap!

(Tell your children that the hostess or host leads with putting the napkin on their laps first. That is their clue to do the same.)

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Now remember,  
no, don't slip  
When drinking anything,  
quietly sip.



(Speak in a very quiet voice and explain that this is how quietly they should be sipping. End by making a shhhhhing with your finger to your lips and say, "remember, quiet sipping!")

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Remember the one who  
cooked your dinner,  
Say, "Thanks Mom,  
this meal's a winner!"



(One parent could introduce the cooking parent and start with a demonstration of praise for the evening meal, then take turns around the table.)

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What? You don't like it?  
Is that true?  
Don't whine and make  
everyone feel sorry for you!



(Explain this to your children. Even if the food is not their favorite thing, it's impolite to whine at the table and tell everyone how much you don't like it. Remember to think about others and their comfort at the dinner table.)

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Be wise, be nice  
and take the clues  
The Golden Rules are  
Please and Thank you's.



(Demonstrate this by asking someone to pass you something, saying with emphasis, PLEASE. Then say, THANK YOU, smiling at your children.)

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Sit up straight in your chair  
and look tall  
Then everything you eat  
will not fall!



(Show your child that when they sit up, the food will magically not fall on their laps as when they are hunched over.)

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Sit on your bottom  
when on a chair  
Knees are for kneeling  
but not there!



(Explain to your children that bottoms are for sitting, chairs are for bottoms and that kneeling is done at church and outside when you're playing.)

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Your shirt has a sleeve,  
which is upon your arm  
Use the napkin on your lap,  
to save the  
sleeve from harm



(Ask your children what this one means!)

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How big is that bite? Is it  
larger than a quarter?  
Let's practice small bites  
because that is smarter.



(Explain too, that eating smaller bites is a safety issue. Tell them that the Dinner Diva had to Heimlich her own son when he was about 4 because he ate a bite from a burrito that was as big as a gerbil!)

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What did you say?  
I can't hear!  
When your mouth is full,  
your words are unclear.



(Tell the children you have something REALLY important to tell them. Then put a big forkful of food in your mouth and have difficulty speaking. Say something important—like you're going out for ice cream. Now swallow and tell them what you were trying to say.)

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Remember to ask  
To have something passed



(Ask your children why this would be important. Discuss.)

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Good dinner conversation  
is never impolite  
Tell a little about your day,  
then give others the right



(Discuss why one person should not dominate the conversation and why everyone is important at the family dinner table.)

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Is everyone seated,  
are you waiting?  
The hostess should do the  
very first biting.



(Another discussion question—explain while everyone needs to wait for Mom to sit down. It shows her respect and courtesy.)

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What was that?  
Did I hear a belch?  
Do that in the bathroom,  
but at the table; squelch.



(Adult demonstrates by pretending to squelch a burp by holding up the napkin to their mouth and saying, "Excuse me.")

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Now that dinner  
is over and done,  
Wait patiently to be  
dismissed, every one.



(Explain to your children that waiting is a part of the dinner table: waiting for the hostess to sit, waiting for her to place her napkin on her lap and waiting to leave the dinner table is a part of the polite package that we call table manners.)

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Dinner is over and you  
would like to go,  
"May I be excused?"  
is how to ask just so!



(Explain the difference in using the word "may" instead of "can". "May" is the most courteous way to ask a question and differentiates between ability and polite social graces.)

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## Saving Dinner Kid's Placemat

Today's children are growing up in a fast food generation. But that doesn't mean that proper dinner etiquette has left the American table.

After downloading the placemat, let your little Picasso decorate the placemat to his or her heart's content. Your child could personalize the placemat with their name, or even design their own china pattern on the plate. The personalization options are only limited to your child's imagination.

Make up enough placemats for the entire family so that each family member has his or her own placemat. Your child will not only learn how to set his own place at the table, but also master setting an entire table properly.

Once your child has finished decorating the placemat, take it to your local Staples or other office supply store and have them laminate the placemat. Many educational supply stores also have laminating services so check with your local store to see if they offer this service.

These placemats provide a learning opportunity for your child to understand that the table setting on his or her placemat is the proper way to set each place setting at a table. Explain to your child that the bread plate always goes on the left hand side of your plate above your fork and your drinking glass will always be on the right side above the knife and spoon. If you forget which side your fork and knife go on just count the number of letters in the words RIGHT and LEFT. Next count the number of letters in the words KNIFE, SPOON and FORK. The word RIGHT has 5 letters. The words KNIFE and SPOON have 5 letters. Therefore your knife and spoon go on the right hand side of your plate. The word LEFT has 4 letters. The word FORK has 4 letters. Therefore your fork goes on the left hand side of your plate.

Explain too, that when a meal is served requiring both a salad and a dinner or lunch entree, the outermost fork is the salad fork. The innermost fork is your dinner fork and both are used according to their names: salad fork with salad, dinner fork with dinner.

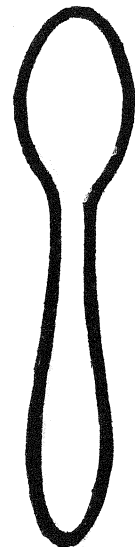
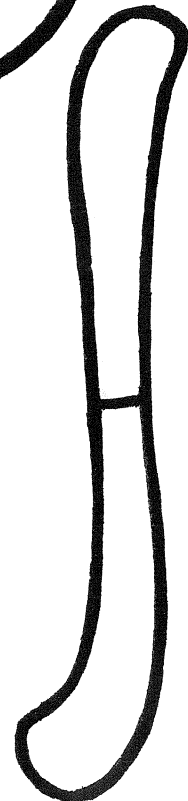
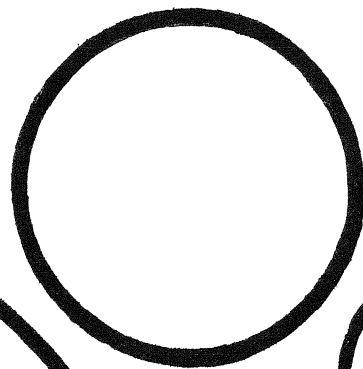
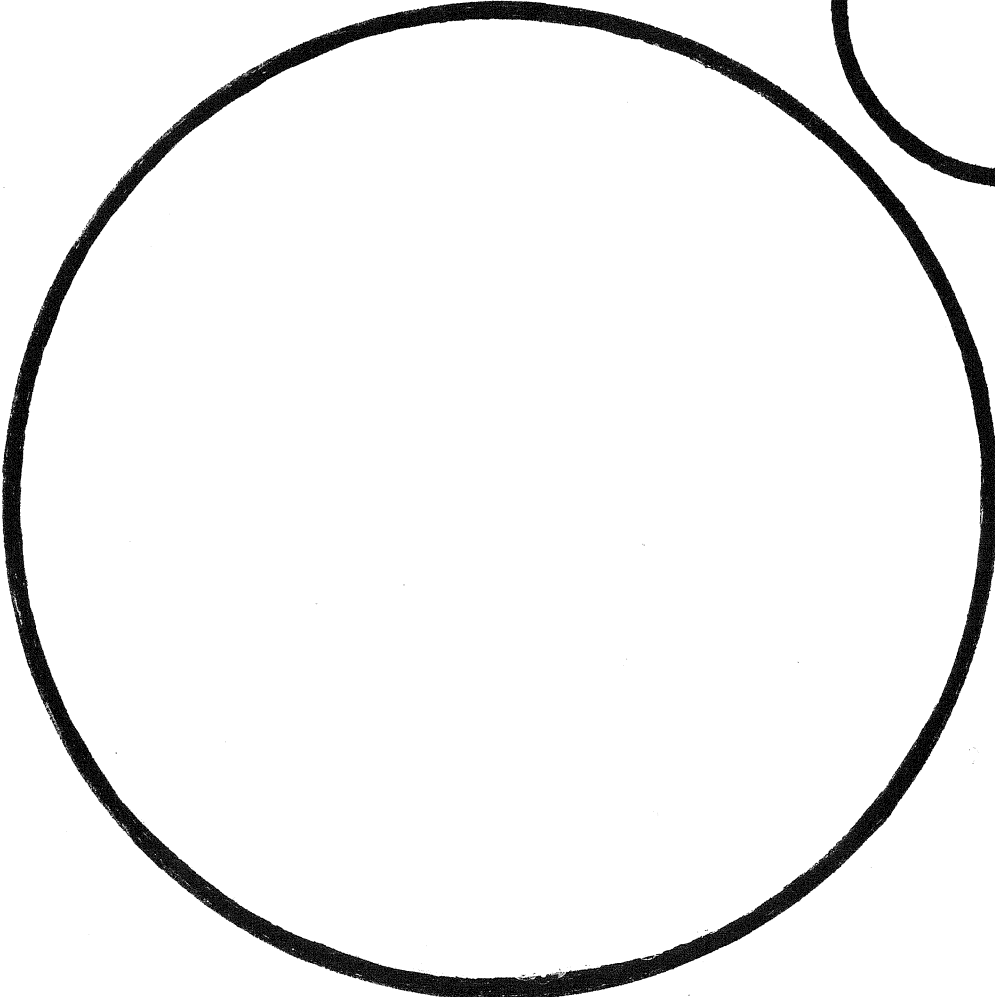
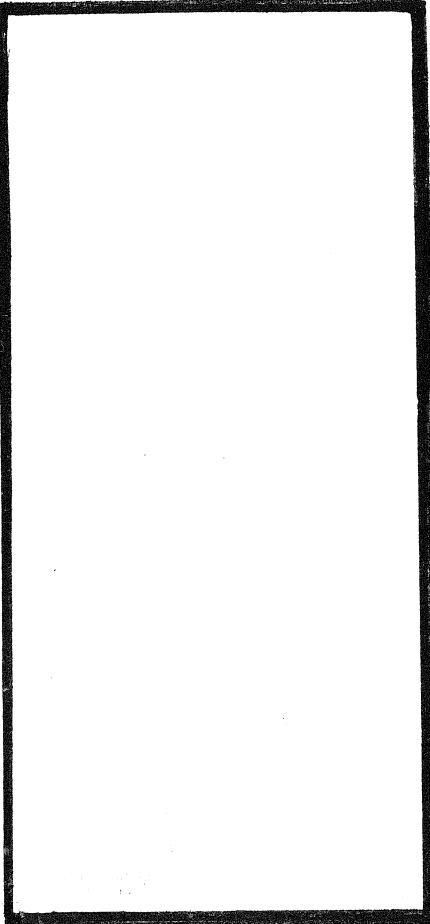
Remember that once a fork has been used for eating it never touches the table again. Should you need to put your fork down during the meal it should rest on your plate. When dinner is over, park your knife and fork in the 4 o'clock position on your plate, parallel to each other, nice and neat. That was easy, wasn't it?

One last thing...you might want to make extra copies of the placemat so that your child can change out placemats with the seasons or for special holidays. For example, celebrating a birthday or other special occasion? Have your child make a special placemat for the guest of honor. Are you having a party? Allow your child to participate in the planning of your celebration by giving them the task of making placemats for all of the party attendees. Not only are the placemats fun and a great outlet for creativity, they teach kids important table setting skills they might not learn otherwise!

Enjoy!

*Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies!*

*Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies!*



*Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies!*

*Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies! Eat your veggies!*