



GROWING WHAT MATTERS

LITTLE BY LITTLE

THE FRUITFUL SUMMER GUIDE
week three

#FRUITFULSUMMER
LARACASEYSHOP.COM

TEND TO WHAT MATTERS

This summer

INSIDE WEEK THREE:

HOW TO TEND TO WHAT MATTERS, LITTLE BY LITTLE

DIGGING IN: HOW TO GROW DEEPER FRIENDSHIPS

A FRESH NEW VIDEO!

MORE MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS *-printables!*

JOIN OR HOST A FRUITFUL SUMMER MEET-UP *-printables!*



MISSED WEEK TWO? GET IT HERE.

LET'S DO LIFE TOGETHER

Confession: I was once really good at killing plants. I'd see an orchid in the grocery store, buy it on a whim for my desk, and then four days later it would be bloomless. But I now have a thirty-foot vegetable bed on the side of our house and a genuine love for cultivating new life.

I was addicted to instant gratification. I didn't want to tend to anything in my life, much less a plant grown from seeds. I wanted to have stuff that was already pretty. I didn't care if a plant died—I'd just buy another one. I didn't want to do hard work or get my hands dirty—I just did whatever was easy and instant.

It took a heart change for me to relish the "little by little" instead of overnight instant gratification and my life is completely different now. When we surrender our fears, take leaps of faith, and let go of the chase for "perfect," we begin cultivating what matters -- what lasts longer than us.

So, let's get to it!



WIN an INSTAX CAMERA
in next week's Fruitful Summer
Guide. Stay tuned for details!





TENDING TO OTHERS

LITTLE BY LITTLE babies grow.

LITTLE BY LITTLE peaches ripen on trees.

LITTLE BY LITTLE tending is the key to
growing fruitful friendships.



If we strive for overnight results, we might
miss the good fruit that waits for us in the
LITTLE BY LITTLE.

LITTLE BY LITTLE, let's make what
matters happen—together!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT



Chasing perfect is comparing our worth with someone else's.

Chasing perfect makes us believe we are bad moms, wives, friends. Chasing perfect makes us believe we are average and insignificant. Chasing perfect makes us believe we don't have enough friends, fun, or adventures. **Over time the impossible standards we set for ourselves become the measuring stick for our worth.** We start to believe that if we don't measure up, we aren't enough. We begin to feel worthless.

Be still, friend. Wherever you are is exactly where you are supposed to be to ignite intentional change. **The lies of perfection and shoulds tell us we aren't enough**, but the truth paves a path for us to an abundant life of joy where we are more than enough.

Start now. Today. Choose purpose over perfection, forgiveness and grace over guilt, and this week - and always - choose to love people ridiculously. **We all need someone to come alongside us and remind us that**

IT'S OKAY TO LET GO OF THE CHASE.

Get more in Lara's book,
MAKE IT HAPPEN



this week's fruitful
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What are some **MEANINGFUL, SIMPLE THINGS** *friends have done for you?*



SOME OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL THINGS FRIENDS HAVE DONE

FOR ME ARE THE SIMPLEST: dropping by on a morning they know I'll be home with coffee in hand and some time for conversation, texting me on the way to the grocery store to see if I need anything, having my kids over to play when mama is under the weather and needs some rest, checking in with me on a day of an important appointment or meeting. **WYNNE**



I HAVE TWO SINGLE GIRLFRIENDS WHO EACH FAITHFULLY OFFER TO WATCH MY BOYS ONCE A MONTH

so that my husband and I can get out on a date. Not only has it made us more regular about date nights, it's also been a relational investment in my kids. Babysitting is not so hard to come by, but friends who want to be a part of your kids' lives? That's really meaningful. **RUTH**

A SWEET NOTE IN THE MAIL means so much. Recently, I spoke at a conference and I talked about how I had to create systems in my life to bring sanity to my work and family. I said, "Rules bring freedom!" A few weeks later, a dear friend and calligrapher who was in the audience, lettered that phrase and sent it to me as a beautiful art print. It made my day to receive that little surprise, and to know that she took the time to not only remember something that was important to me, but to make it a print

and send it my way! I felt so loved and cared for! **MICA**



SPEAK GOD'S TRUTH TO ME when I'm too deep in something to see it. Pray over me. Send random snail mail. **VAL**



Recently, a friend showed up with a tray of Diet Cokes and on the back of each one, there were **VERSES OF JOY AND ENCOURAGEMENT**. She saw on Instagram that I had a hard week and took the time to drop those off! Every day when I had my daily diet coke, I was encouraged! **KATELYN**



How do you TEND TO FRIENDS?



MY CLOSEST FRIENDSHIPS ARE THE ONES THAT I'VE GIVEN THE MOST TIME TO.

This can be hard when life is busy and it's a constant battle to make time for people over to-do lists but I have found that when I do make time for friends, it's always so rewarding! I never regret giving my time away to friend!

KATELYN

For me, it's spending time with my friends that are local, and making time for the friends who live far away, whether that means a phone date, a string of voicemail messages throughout the week, or simply a text to let someone know I'm thinking of them. **I WANT TO KNOW HOW THEY ARE DOING, HOW I CAN PRAY FOR THEM AND ENCOURAGE THEM, AND I WANT THEM TO KNOW I AM ALWAYS THERE.** **WYNNE**



I HAVE "LUNCH/PLAY DATE/DINNER WITH A FRIEND" ON THE WEEKLY TENDING SECTION OF MY POWERSHEETS. I try to plan some sort of hang out time before the week even starts. **VAL**



Nothing makes me happier than finding an opportunity to have a friend over for dinner at the last minute, minus all the stress and desire for perfect. See a need, meet a need. **SPONTANEOUS DINNERS WHERE I CAN COOK FOR FRIENDS AND THEIR FAMILIES IS REALLY ONE OF MY FAVORITE WAYS TO CARE FOR THEM.** **RUTH**

I love surcees, or little gifts for no reason. Because I'm trying to manage a company as well as my family of five, sometimes I don't get a birthday gift in the mail at the perfect time. But I do send or deliver little surcees to all my besties throughout the year! Getting and giving a gift at a time other than a significant holiday seems so much more special. Other than surcees, **I THINK JUST SHOWING UP IN TIMES OF NEED IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING YOU CAN DO AS A FRIEND.** Most of us have a hard time asking for help, and the best way to love on people is to just show up! Take their kids, deliver food, bring over their favorite coffee or wine, or have a listening ear if they are in the mood to verbally process. **MICA**



How do you take a friendship from SURFACE TO DEEPER?



Nothing brings friends closer than **LIVING LIFE ALONGSIDE OF EACH OTHER IN COMMUNITY,**

ASKING THE HARD QUESTIONS, DIGGING DEEP INTO EACH OTHER'S STORIES, AND THEN SHOWING UP FOR EACH OTHER. I

also believe that there is nothing like travel that bonds someone, whether it's halfway around the world, or just a road trip to the next city. Having that uninterrupted time to tell stories, sing, laugh, and snack is priceless. Also, serving together is a huge opportunity to deepen your roots with your friends. **WYNNE**



I JUST OPEN MY DOOR. We love to have people over, even if the house is messy, or if the

kids are running around wild. I don't worry too much about being "perfect." It matters more to me to share our life and home with people that we love. To me, friendships are built over time, in late evenings over cocktails, or in long brunches that turn into afternoon drinks. We do this with everyone. Sharing all the beautiful parts and all the messy parts of our lives and home over time is how we've built some of our deepest, most sincere friendships. **MICA**



1. CHALLENGE THEM. When we don't just say what the other person wants to hear because it's easy, friendships become real.

2. ASK FOR HELP. It tells the other person they can be vulnerable, too. Think about that person you can call at midnight with a problem. That's a sign of a great friendship. It was serving each other like that in the past that bonded y'all together in the first place. **3. GIRLS' WEEKEND!** When you share a few meals, a bed and a bathroom, you bond. **VAL**

I think if you want a deeper friendship, you have to have **BOTH QUALITY AND QUANTITY.** Quality conversations require that we ask more intentional questions and lead with more deliberate things to share about ourselves. Quantity, because there's really no substitute for time together. Some of the most meaningful relationships are forged out of serving in a ministry together, working to pack up a house together, or making meals together. My favorite friend times are rarely set in the context of playdates or events, but rather spontaneous opportunities to do mundane things alongside each other.



RUTH



HOW TO TEND TO FRIENDS

PLANT A SEED: Start a conversation. Get out there and say hello!

WATER: Send and invite, send a text, and get together in person.

WATER SOME MORE: Ask a second question, share your heart, dig deeper. Little by little, keep going.

FERTILIZE AND PULL THE WEEDS: Love ridiculously and be humble. Keep showing up, forgiving, loving, and saying yes, even if you feel imperfect. Your friend may feel that way too.
Embrace imperfection together!

ENJOY: Watch your friendship bloom and keep cultivating what matters.

The image features several large, vibrant pink peonies scattered around the text. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing green leaves. The background is a plain, light color, making the pink flowers stand out.

FRUITFUL FRIENDSHIP
IS ABOUT

Progress
NOT
Perfection

LITTLE BY LITTLE,
KEEP GOING.

#Fruitful Summer

WATCH
THIS WEEK'S
VIDEO



FREE PRINTABLE!



#FRUITFULSUMMER

WE ASKED YOU ON INSTAGRAM:

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE
CONVERSATION STARTERS?

@LMARZOLLA:

What have you been reading lately?

From there it can be as in-depth as the Bible, a book, or maybe a good blog or article. Either way, the topics are endless. If a friend happens to not have a good book on her plate, I'm never short of recommendations.

@LOVEONEANOTHERPROJECTORG:

I ask strangers, *How's your heart today?*

I ask people I know, *What's God been speaking to you lately?*

@HEATHERBUSEY:

Tell me about where you're from.

@MADIMAGEZ:

I love hearing what people's first job was!

So many funny stories!

@MAEVERAFF:

What's the best thing you've eaten this week?

Normally that leads to inviting them over for a meal. And what's better than that?

@SHEILADPALIGA:

I love asking people about their hobbies.

There is no better way to get a conversation going than asking someone to talk about something they love.

@KADIASARAF:

What fires you up?

@JUSTWALKINFAITH:

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

@AUSTINBOAT:

What's something that consistently makes you happy?

A silly and fun way to learn a friend's quirkiness. I love a specific French vanilla coffee creamer with my coffee (and Chick-Fil-A is always a crowd pleaser!).

@HEATHERLILY1161:

What's your story?

@LAILAMCCLOUD:

What was the best part of your day?

*you are
loved*

#FRUITFULSUMMER

I AM SO
grateful

FOR YOU

#FRUITFULSUMMER

*Hello,
WONDERFUL!*

YOU ARE AMAZING

#FRUITFULSUMMER

YOU ARE THE
PINEAPPLE
OF MY EYE



#FRUITFULSUMMER



HOW DO YOU TEND TO OTHERS?



@K_CRU I love sending unexpected encouragement mail. Including confetti is especially my favorite! :)

@GRACEHAHN2 Snail mail and putting important dates on the calendar (first half marathons or baby showers) so I can follow up. Sometimes just remembering is enough to make someone feel valued!

@EMILYAYERTHOMAS I love spending time with friends but scheduling can be a challenge. Doodle polls make it easy to find a time that works for everyone, if we're trying to meet up with multiple couples!

@NICOLEAYANG Tending to friends is most fun (for both parties) when it's based off their interests. One of my best friends loves to cook, so I regularly send her recipes I think she'll enjoy when I'm going through my daily blogs.

@JOIEINTHEJOURNEY I tell them I'm praying for them in good times and bad!

@BECCANNE_ I love to invite friends over for a midweek supper or get together, whether it's a beer at the pub or having a cookout.

@BIRCHANDBOKEH A simple "Love you, thinking of you!" text or note to friends who I don't see often helps to make sure they know that I'm always there if they need me. A simple "touch" now helps me to keep long lasting, strong friendships when busyness often gets in the way.

@GLOHERMOSABEACH Call them when I know they're awake. Cook for them and just say the words we all love to hear: "I've been thinking about you" or "I love you, my friend."

@ELIHAMM I keep a list of quirky things I learn about them to surprise them with. (Like knowing they love pretty straws and diet coke.)

@CAROLINAWEDDINGDIRECTOR This year I decided to "birthday bomb" my girlfriends that live within driving distance. I show up unexpectedly either on their birthdays or close to it. I bring them flowers (because everyone deserves flowers on their special day) and a card. In the card I tell them how special they are and how I am blessed to have their friendship. So far I have "bombed" five of my friends :)

@DANIDORTCH28 I love to check up on them in the middle of their work day, treat them to lunch, go for walks around the lake, or call them and pray when I know something big is coming up in their lives.



Be devoted to one
another in love.
Honor one another
above yourselves.

ROMANS 12:10





HOW DO YOU TEND TO OTHERS?



@ELIZABETHELANE When I started college, I was spending time with a larger group of five or six girls at a time. While this was fun and helped to avoid any potential awkwardness, I was only getting to know each girl on the surface. I started asking each individual friend to hang one on one, often times to take a break from work or go grab a snack. This gave us the opportunity to have deeper conversations that have lead to strong, lasting friendships.

@MEGANMCCURRY I love gifting devotionals like *Jesus Calling* or *Savor* by Shauna Niequist.

@KN_WINCHESTER Being face to face to tend to friendships is so important but can be a challenge! FaceTime (or Skype) can be a great way to connect with friends and say hello when you have a few minutes and have the chance to get face time with a dear friend! I love being able to see emotions!!

@JOURNEYWITHRITZ We have “iPhone church” (when life is crazy and can’t pause to meet) via group text. Lots of amens, shoes being thrown, scripture shared, encouragement, prayer, words of wisdom and counsel. All through text! It’s powerful to say the least.

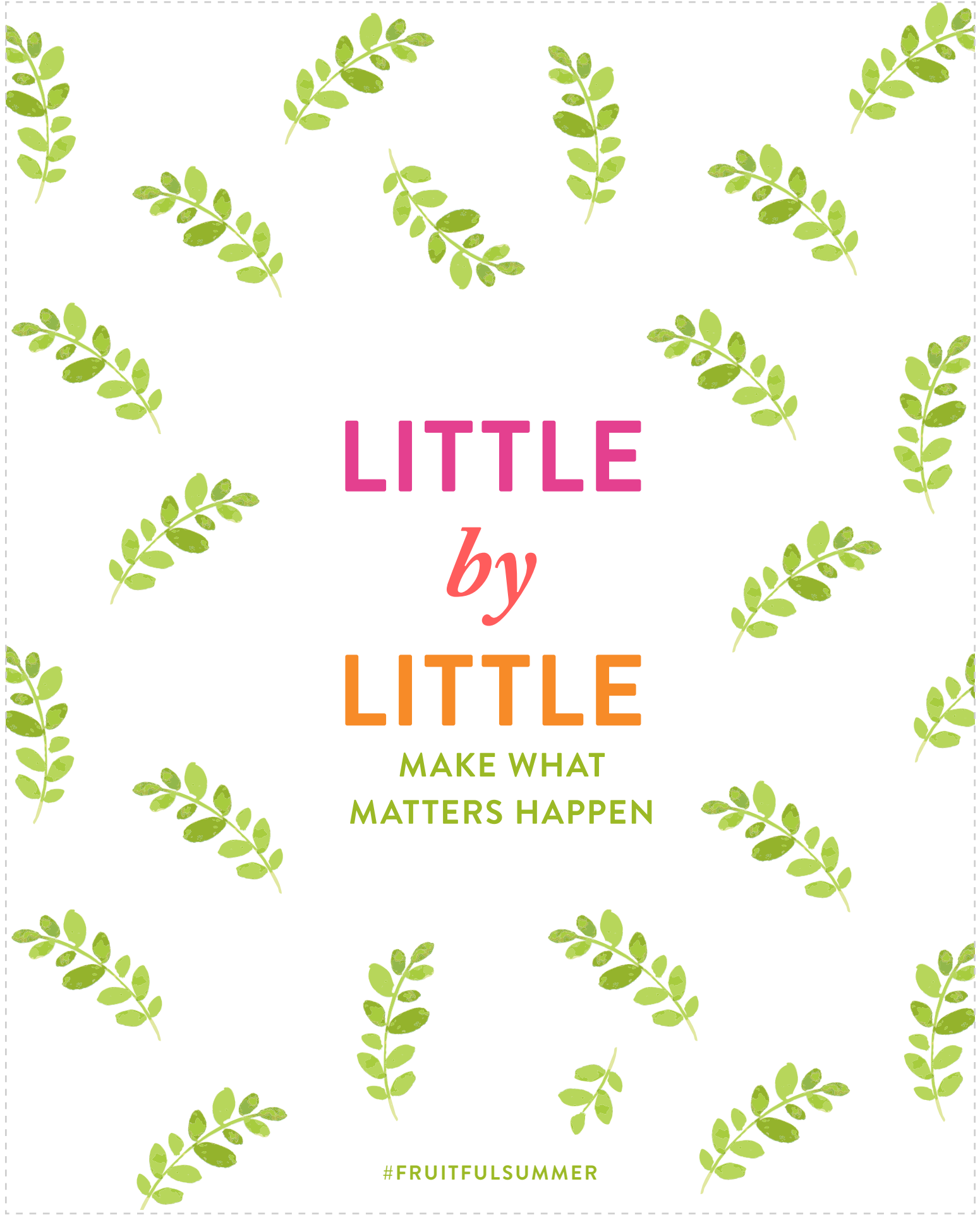
@CARRYYOURHEARTEVENTS I used to do mail box drops, where I would randomly buy cookies or wine or balloons and leave them in mailboxes. I just moved away two states away, so now I text them my favorite things about them whenever I’m thinking of them.

@MARISSAKLOESS I think casserole delivery is a lost art. Everyone loves a little home cooking! Also, emoji encouragement! I LOVE silly emoji texts. No need for words, just throw a series of icons in your friends’ inboxes, and they’ll know you’re thinking of them!

@LEELEEWITES I like to schedule meetups and phone dates so that my friends and I stay up to date on each others’ lives.

@LISAJANELKIRK I try to make touch points with others a consistent part of my schedule. After realizing one day that I hadn’t talked to my brother in a few weeks, I started “brother Wednesday.” Now, every Wednesday, he and I connect to catch up. Even if it’s just a few texts or a five-minute phone call, it has been a great (and effective!) way to make sure we stay part of each other’s lives. My immediate family is spread out across the globe, so different time zones and schedules can make it extra challenging for us all to keep in touch. Thank heavens for our family group text chain. It keeps us all connected so that no one misses a thing, and we can all take part in one conversation.

FREE PRINTABLE for you and your friends!




LITTLE

by

LITTLE

**MAKE WHAT
MATTERS HAPPEN**

#FRUITFULSUMMER



Let's do
SUMMER
together!



**FRUITFUL SUMMER
MEET-UPS
ARE ON**

Let's make meaningful connections
and embrace awkward together.
No perfection required :)

FRUITFUL MEET-UPS

NEAR YOU!

U.S. CITIES:

ALABAMA

Birmingham
Mobile

ALASKA

Anchorage

ARIZONA

Phoenix

ARKANSAS

Hot Springs

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
San Clemente
San Diego
San Mateo

COLORADO

Denver

FLORIDA

Fort Meyers
Gainesville
Hollywood
Jacksonville
Jupiter
Naples
Orlando
Palm Bay
Pensacola
St. Petersburg
Tampa
West Palm Beach

GEORGIA

Atlanta
Conyers
Cumming
Dallas
Marietta
Newnan

GEORGIA

Riverdale
Rome

ILLINOIS

Chicago

INDIANA

Fishers
Indianapolis

IOWA

Waterloo

KANSAS

Kansas City

KENTUCKY

Henderson
Louisville
Lexington

LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge
Pinehurst

MAINE

Bangor
Portland

MARYLAND

Baltimore
Bethesda
Damascus
Rockville

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

MICHIGAN

Detroit
Genesee /Oakland
County
Royal Oak

MINNESOTA

Mankato
Minneapolis
New Ulm
Rochester

MISSISSIPPI

Oxford

MISSOURI

Kansas City
Saint Charles

MONTANA

Kalispell

NEBRASKA

Lincoln

NEW JERSEY

Madison

NEW YORK

New York
Poughkeepsie
Rochester

N.CAROLINA

Apex
Asheville
Cary
Chapel Hill
Charlotte
Durham
Fuquay Varina
Greensboro
Holly Springs
Raleigh
Thomasville
Wake Forest
Winston-Salem
Youngsville

OHIO

Cincinnati
Youngstown

OKLAHOMA

Norman
Oklahoma City
Tulsa

OREGON

Portland

PENNSYLVANIA

Doylestown
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh

S. CAROLINA

Charleston
Greenville
Mount Pleasant
Rock Hill

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga
Knoxville
Memphis
Nashville

TEXAS

Austin
Cypress
Dallas
Fort Worth
Grapevine
Houston
Kilgore
Longview
Midland
San Antonio
Trophy Club

VIRGINIA

Alexandria
Charlottesville
Lynchburg
Purcellville
Reston

WASHINGTON

Seattle

WASHINGTON, DC

Washington, DC

WEST VIRGINIA

Bridgeport, WV
Hurricane, WV

WISCONSIN

Appleton, WI
Madison, WI
Milwaukee, WI

INTERNATIONAL

London, England
New Brunswick,
Canada
Nova Scotia,
Canada
Ontario, Canada
Panama
Tokyo, Japan
Vancouver, Canada

... AND MORE!



CLICK HERE TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS IN YOUR CITY & ASK ABOUT SPECIFIC LOCATIONS OR DATES



WANT TO HOST A MEET-UP IN YOUR CITY?



1. CONNECT WITH PEOPLE IN YOUR CITY (CLICK HERE). More than one person can host in each city—do it together!



2. PICK AN EASY PUBLIC LOCATION: a park, outdoor cafe, coffee shop, or a summer garden. You could meet to pick fruit, picnic, or—if you are feeling adventurous—try a watermelon-seed spitting contest.



3. PICK A DAY AND TIME that will work well for most people—maybe a weekend afternoon or after work hours.



4. INVITE PEOPLE via Instagram, email, and snail mail! Printables and graphics are on the next page.

FOR INSTAGRAM: make it easy for people to connect with you to get details! Post the invitation graphic or an image of your choice with the location and date of your meet-up. Important: add the **#FRUITFULSUMMER** hashtag plus your own city tag (**#FRUITFULSUMMERCITYNAME**) too so others can connect and join easily! Examples: **#FRUITFULSUMMERDALLAS**, **#FRUITFULSUMMERTAMPA**, **#FRUITFULSUMMERTOKYO**



5. GET READY: print the conversation cards and nametags.



6. HAVE FUN! Be sure to get everyone's contact info at your meet-up, take a group pic (tag **#FRUITFULSUMMER**), and make a plan to meet again!

hosts,

Post the graphic below with the #FruitfulSummer hashtag and your own city hashtag (#FruitfulSummerCityName) to invite others to join your local meetup!

click to download!





MEETUP INVITATIONS - FREE PRINTABLES!

Let's do
Summer
together!

YOU'RE INVITED TO A
FRUITFUL SUMMER MEETUP!

hosted by _____

when _____

where _____

#FRUITFULSUMMER

CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD A
**FILL-ON-THE-BLANK
DIGITAL INVITE.**
PERFECT FOR EMAIL OR
INSTAGRAM!

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**GENERAL DIGITAL
INVITE.**
PERFECT FOR
INSTAGRAM!

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DOWNLOAD THE
**FILL-IN-THE-BLANK
PRINTABLE INVITE.**

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

hi! my name is



MY FAVORITE FRUIT IS

FREE CONVERSATION CARD PRINTABLES for your summer meetup or anytime!

WHAT I WANT
MOST IN NEW
FRIENDSHIPS IS...

#FRUITFULSUMMER

TODAY, I AM MOST
GRATEFUL FOR:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

IF YOU WERE A
HOLIDAY, WHICH
ONE WOULD YOU
BE AND WHY?

#FRUITFULSUMMER

FAVORITE
SUMMER
FOOD AND
DESSERT?

#FRUITFULSUMMER

MY "HAPPY
DANCE" LOOKS
LIKE THIS:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

MY FAVORITE
THING ABOUT
SUMMER IS:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

FAVORITE
CHILDHOOD
TV SHOW

#FRUITFULSUMMER

FRUITFUL
FRIENDSHIP IS:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

IF I WERE A PIE,
I'D BE:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

WHAT MATTERS
MOST TO ME

#FRUITFULSUMMER

THE BEST DAY
OF MY LIFE SO
FAR WAS:

#FRUITFULSUMMER

DO MOSQUITOS
LIKE OR DISLIKE
YOU?

#FRUITFULSUMMER

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and share the love!



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ENCOURAGEMENT POSTCARDS

Send love and encouragement across town, across the country, or across the world!

20% OFF with code **FRUITFULSUMMER**



make friendships happen at
LARACASEYSHOP.COM



#Fruitful Summer

SEND THIS TO A FRIEND &
ENJOY IT TOGETHER

MORE FRUITY GOODNESS
AHEAD NEXT WEEK!