



Photographed by Eric Tyler Fletcher

Ashley Richardson -Weddings and Events, Mom to Roman, 22 months, and expecting a boy in summer 2014

What has been your greatest joy in being a mom?

The happiness that the simplest of things bring. His smile, how much he loves trucks, how he wants to stop everything just to point out a plane flying by and when he says 'amen' after we pray with him at bedtime.

What about your biggest challenge?

The juggle. The consistency of trying to balance work and life. Setting and achieving goals professionally is great but only after being a mom first. That's my top priority.

If you could choose only one thing, what do you hope to instill in your children?

Moral. The world seems to be spinning faster and faster, and if I can give them a definition of what it means to be a solid person of integrity and faith, I feel like that is going to get them past what the world tells them is important.

What has been the greatest thing your own mother has taught you?

How to love people for who they are and where they are at. Everyone has their own story so while they don't look, act, talk like you, it makes no difference. Just love people the way God made them.

What do you miss about your childhood that you'd like your kids to experience?

Simplicity. My sisters and I would play Barbies and use cardboard boxes as their houses. We didn't know the difference. We were just so happy to be playing.

What do you like about raising your family in Arizona?

Our families are here. My husband grew up here, and we have such a wonderful sphere of close friends. We want our kids to know their family is more than Mom and Dad but truly a village. We are so blessed to say we have that.

Mamas Almighty

Written by Melissa Larsen

Friday, 09 May 2014 15:26 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 May 2014 09:58

How are you preparing your kiddo for his new sibling?

We talk about how we love babies. I ask him 'We love babies, don't we?' Sometimes he says 'yes' and other times it's 'no.' We just laugh and know he is so little that he may not understand quite yet.

How are you celebrating Mother's Day?

A brunch, of course! That's the reason it is admittedly my husband's favorite holiday.

Top pregnancy craving:

Bacon.

Favorite bedtime story:

Are You My Mother? by Dr. Seuss and The Little Blue Truck.

Pregnancy must-have:

Body pillow and Mama Mio lotion.

Favorite kid's movie:

Roman's: Cars.

Ashley's: Enchanted. Really, princess everything.



Photographed by Dan Raustadt

Kristin Anderson -Fox 10 Arizona Morning Anchor/Reporter, Expecting her first child in spring 2014

What are you most looking forward to in being a mom?

I'm looking forward to the adventure! I used to fear change, but now I embrace it. Everyone says being a mom will change everything. And I'm O.K. with that. I can't wait to experience all the newness our son is going to bring.

What challenge are you most fearing?

Well, this is kind of embarrassing, but I haven't learned how to change a diaper yet. I have a weird anxiety about putting his diaper on wrong!

If you could choose only one thing, what do you hope to instill in your children?

A sincere love for God.

What has been the greatest thing your own mother has taught you?

My mom taught me that you don't have to spend a ton of money to create the best memories. She always came up with fun ways to entertain us. Whether it was playing games outside, creating our own Broadway productions in our living room or making monster ice cream sundaes in a huge mixing bowl, she made sure we created our own fun in creative, self-expressive ways. I am determined to do the same. Thanks, Mom!

In what ways are you preparing for the new baby?

Every way! Oh my gosh...new body, new house, new budget, new everything!

How are you celebrating your first Mother's Day?

Not to be cheesy, but I've always savored the simplest things on special occasions. I plan on being thankful for the leading men in my life: my incredible husband and perfect son. Everything else is a bonus.

Favorite splurge during pregnancy:

Pedicures.

Top craving:

Pizza (or anything with marinara for that matter).

Pregnancy must-have:

A simple maxi dress. All preggos look amazing in a maxi.

It's the most comfortable outfit I wear, and I always feel fashionable and girly.



Photographed by Thomas Ingersoll

Dana Vela - President of Sunrise Preschools, Mom to Joshua, 25; Zackary, 21; and Zoe, 17

What has been your greatest joy in being a mom?

Surprises! Motherhood is chock-full of them. No two days are ever exactly the same, and it's impossible to get bored. Once you find your groove as a mom, you just kind of expect and delight in the little things that you weren't expecting.

If you could choose only one thing, what do you hope to instill in your children?

Confident compassion. Is that two things? As my children grew, I truly focused both on their own self-confidence as well as nurturing a compassion for others. It's possible, even preferable, to hold yourself to the standard of giving your very best every day while still reminding yourself to look for the good in each person you come across. It's too easy to allow yourself to get tripped up in measuring your performance against that of others and then passing judgment. There's so much more joy in living

confidently with compassion.

What do you miss about your childhood that you'd like your kids to experience?

I was raised in a small town in Pennsylvania where everyone knew their neighbors, and I could ride my bike anywhere at any time. Sometimes, I wish my kids had that small-town upbringing with homemade Halloween treats and a whole neighborhood barbecue for the Fourth of July. But I am also extremely grateful for all that the metro Phoenix area has to offer. There is so much variety in the choices for everything from my children's education to cultural experiences as well as enjoying the outdoors. A day in the snow is a short drive away... and you never have to shovel sunshine!

What do you miss about your kiddos being little?

I miss having the whole family together for dinner every night. We managed to have a sit-down dinner at home most nights when the kids were growing up, and it gave us the opportunity to reconnect and laugh and talk about the day. Now that the boys are grown and living on their own, we face pretty daunting scheduling issues to get together for a family dinner.

Favorite family travel destination:

I met my husband in Oahu, where I lived for five years as a district manager for Sunrise Preschools. We have managed to take two trips back for vacations since we moved back to Arizona in 1995. I do love Hawaii.

Favorite family restaurant:

My family absolutely loves Serrano's Mexican restaurants, particularly their original location in Chandler.



Photographed by Victor Amarillas

Debbie Gaby - President and Co-Founder of Sleep America, Mom to Tobie Michelle and James Joseph (JJ)

What has been your greatest joy in being a mom?

My greatest joy in being a mom was becoming a grandma and being able to share the news that my grandson, Cameron, won a scholarship in the seventh grade for giving back.

What about your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge is saying 'no' and disappointing people.

If you could choose only one thing, what do you hope to instill in your children?

To always be grateful and live by the golden rules.

What has been the greatest thing your own mother has taught you?

To do unto others as you want them to do unto you.

What do you miss about your childhood that you'd like your kids to experience?

Having lots of family around. It was a great support system.

What do you miss about your kiddos being little?

Kids say the cutest things!

How do you keep in touch with your out-of-state children?

Lots of phone calls, texting, e-mails and Skype. We always have a scheduled visit.

How are you celebrating Mother's Day?

Meeting my kids in California.

Favorite family vacation:

Hawaii.

Favorite family restaurant:

Fleming's [Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar].

Favorite family tradition:

Celebrating Thanksgiving together.



Photographed by Eric Tyler Fletcher

Elizabeth Bryant - Blogger with elizabethbryant.blogspot.com, Mom to William, 41/2; Frederick, 2; and expecting a girl in summer 2014

If you could choose only one thing, what do you hope to instill in your children?

That life is about people and relationships. More than anything, I want my children to have healthy, happy relationships in their lives full of love and mutual respect for other people.

What has been the greatest thing your own mother has taught you?

My mother taught me how to love. She is a wonderful example of a patient, kind, teachable person, and I have always wanted to be like her. My mom never missed an opportunity to teach a valuable lesson. She is always encouraging me to look for ways to serve others by her example and think the best of others, even when I am inclined to believe the worst.

What do you miss about your childhood that you'd like your kids to experience?

I grew up with nine older siblings so my childhood was always full of people and music. I loved growing up with a large family, and I love having so many siblings to go to for advice and help as an adult. I don't think I could handle as many children as my parents did with any sort of dignity, but I definitely cherish the opportunities we have to sit around and talk. My husband and I are just getting started with this phase of our lives, but I want to give my children a family who they feel are their friends.

What do you like about raising your family in Arizona?

Some of my fondest memories as a child in Arizona were surprisingly in the summer. I spent every day in the pool and, by the end of the

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summer, my hair had turned green and my mom had to cut it short before school started. I also have many memories of watching the monsoon thunderstorms on our back porch with popsicles on the porch swing. It has reminded me that even though the weather is hot, the most important things our kids will remember is that we were happy spending time together.

What activity do you try to do regularly with your family?

We read a lot in our family. I try to take my children to the library every week and let them choose as many books as our library bag can hold. They love to read with my husband and me. We enjoy being able to snuggle up with our wiggly little boys and hear them giggle and sometimes nod off as we read.

How are you preparing your boys for their new sibling?

Any time we see a baby, I make sure to point him/her out to my kids and talk about the baby in my tummy. They love to rub my stomach and tell me how big it is! My 2-year-old doesn't really understand what is happening, but my 4-year-old is very excited to have a baby sister. He loves to think of baby names. Right now, his favorite is Elsa (after Frozen).

Favorite app for kids:

Endless Alphabet/Endless Reader. It's great for my 4-year-old! Cute graphics and sounds that also help him practice what he's learning at preschool.

Favorite lullaby:

"All The Pretty Little Horses" and "Baby Mine."

Favorite bedtime story:

Sleepy Bears by Mem Fox and Wynken, Blynken and Nod by Eugene Field.

Favorite kid's movie:

Ratatouille and The Sound of Music.