

2020 | May | June

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource



Love Thy Neighbor

HOMEFRONT.ORG

SERVING

*"Ask the question,
"What needs to be done?"*

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

*"God transforms me when I
step out in faith."*

Discipleship Steps at New Life Church

Parents are the spiritual nurturers of their children's faith and are the main disciplers in their lives. We are committed to engaging, empowering, and resourcing our parents and families to succeed in their God-given role. Time and resources make this role challenging in our busy world. At New Life Church, we have created a clear path of discipleship for our parents with convenient times and locations. We hope to see you there!

PARENT ORIENTATION A first step toward engaging in our ministry. Hear philosophy, meet staff, and learn how to get involved.

SPIRITUAL PARENTING A six-week class that dives deep into what God's Word says about parenting.

PARENTING CONVERSATIONS An every-other-month evening for parents to discuss tough topics with other parents and hear from leading experts.

HOMEFRONT MAGAZINE A magazine designed to help you have a successful family night in your home.

FAMILY NIGHT An intergenerational family night as the body of Christ.

PARENT CURRICULUM A weekly or series handout that shares biblical information, discussion questions, and activities.



How to Use

HomeFront

1 Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening around a meal, breakfast on a Saturday, or a break between sporting events. Just commit to "family time" once a week.

Utilize this magazine as a workbook to plan your family time. The calendar pages are designed to help you plan ahead. Pick a God's Word devotional, recipe, and one of the other activities titled Create, Game Time, Worship Response, or Serve. At the end of your time together, speak a blessing over your family members.

2 There are four weeks of devotionals and activities. When you have a fifth week in the month, let the kids plan the family night. **3** Remember to HAVE FUN! Family night does not have to be perfect. If you spent time with God and with one another, it was a great family night.

Our Mission

INSPIRE parents with ideas to create fun, spiritually forming times in the normal rhythm of everyday life.

EQUIP parents to become the spiritual leaders of God's truth in their own households.

SUPPORT families to engage their communities and change the culture around them.



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A NOTE FROM MICHELLE



Dr. Michelle Anthony

Michelle is the Executive Pastor of Family Ministries at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. Michelle has graduate degrees in Christian education, theology, and leadership and more than 30 years of church ministry experience as a children's and family pastor. She is also the author of *Spiritual Parenting*, *The Big God Story*, *Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family*, and *7 Family Ministry Essentials*. Michelle loves a good book and a cup of coffee.

 @Trulnspiration

HomeFront magazine is designed to help parents and grandparents disciple their children and grandchildren by creating environments in their homes that put God on display. Each issue gives practical ways to develop family nights or experiences in your home based on the 10 environments in my book *Spiritual Parenting*. It is vital for our children's and grandchildren's spiritual growth to set aside time on a regular basis to engage in spiritual conversations and activities that are both fun and developmental.

In this issue you will be focusing on the environments of **SERVING** and **OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE**. The environment of **SERVING** asks the question, "What needs to be done?" It is a posture of the heart more than something we "do." However, as we and our children lean into this question, we find ourselves about the Father's business in ways we never could have expected. The environment of **OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE** allows our children to begin to understand dependence upon the Holy Spirit. If we only stay where we are comfortable, we will never fully understand our need for God and the work of His Spirit to make us more like Jesus.

My prayer is that you will grow together as a family as you faithfully engage in the contents of this resource over the next two months.

EDITOR'S NOTE



Holly Newman

Holly is the Editor in Chief of *HomeFront* magazine and Pastor of Parents and Families at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. She has pastored in family ministry for nearly 20 years and written curriculum for other authors as well as developed her own tween and teen curriculum on identity called *Girltime*. Her passion is for families to create influential, faith-building moments with their children. She has been married to her high school sweetheart, Jared, for 18 years. They have four children: two girls and two boys. In her spare time she loves to get outdoors with her family.

The last couple of months have turned our lives upside down. Yet in the midst of it all, God is moving in powerful ways through His people. For decades, we have heavily relied on ministry happening within the walls of a church. But today, the church continues to thrive and grow in a new location: the home. I love the picture on this issue's cover of a front door to a home as it represents a shift in our thinking about where ministry takes place. Thousands of people have continued to serve and love their neighbors by dropping off a meal on the front porch, sliding a card through the mail slot, sharing a birthday message on the front lawn, and so much more. Love and kindness continue to permeate our communities and neighborhoods.

As we move into a summer that looks different than others, it felt fitting to choose the environments of **SERVING** and **OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE**. The new rhythms and daily schedules for most families have forced us all out of our comfort zones while serving has taken on a new meaning. For May, **God's Word** (pages 10-11) unpacks the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13. As you discuss it with your family, make one of the yummy recipes—but save the special Mother's Day recipe for dads and kids only.

In June, **God's Word** (pages 22-23) will help you explain the role of the Holy Spirit to your children through the dynamic stories found in the book of Acts. Step out of your comfort zone together as a family with the ideas in the **Serve, Create, and Worship Response** articles.

I pray your family grows closer together and deeper in relationship with our heavenly Father during this season. God is faithful to protect and provide for His children. May you know that He will give you peace at all times and in every way (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

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A Note on Prayer:

TO BE USED WITH GOD'S WORD FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

Most Christians would agree that prayer is important. But often, we neglect prayer because we don't know how to pray or we don't understand prayer's purpose and power. Prayer is simply communication with God. Through prayer, we can express our needs to Him. As we read God's Word and listen to His voice, we understand what is important to God and His thoughts and desires become ours. God uses our prayers to restore us to Himself and bring His kingdom to earth. We can use the acronym: PRAY as a pattern based on the Lord's Prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13.

P=Praise: Hallowed be Your name: honoring God; worshipping His name.

R=Repent: Forgive us our debts: confessing our sins so we can have fellowship with our Father.

A=Ask: Give us this day/Your kingdom come: bringing our requests to God based on His goodness and purposes.

Y=Yield: Your will be done: accepting that God's ways are higher/better than ours.



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ASK OUR PASTORS

COMMENTS TO OUR FAMILIES

*did
you
know*

It is our prayer that homes and churches would create these environments for children to live in so their faith will grow in a community of consistency, common language, and practice. To learn more about how these environments can ignite a transforming faith in your family, we suggest you read:



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:

An Awakening for Today's Families

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY

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10 ENVIRONMENTS

The order of the 10 Environments listed coincides with the monthly distribution of this resource.

2

“God transforms me when I step out in faith.”

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

As children and students are challenged to step out of their comfort zone from an early age, they learn to experience a dependence on the Holy Spirit to equip and strengthen them beyond their natural abilities and desires. We believe this environment will cultivate a generation that, instead of seeking comfort, seeks a radical life of faith in Christ.

1

RESPONSIBILITY

This environment captures the ability to take ownership for one’s life, gifts, and resources before God. A child must be challenged to take responsibility for his or her brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as for those who are spiritually lost. Our hope is that the Holy Spirit will use this environment to allow each child to understand that God has entrusted His world to us.

“God has entrusted me with the things and people He created around me.”

3

“Asks the question, ‘What needs to be done?’”

SERVING

This posture of the heart asks the question, “What needs to be done?” It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and focuses on a cause bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that as Christ-followers we are to view our lives as living sacrifices that we generously give away!

4

“God fills me with His love so I can give it away.”

LOVE & RESPECT

Without love, our faith becomes futile. This environment recognizes that children need an environment of love and respect in order to be free to both receive and give God’s grace. Innate to this environment is the value that children are respected because they embody the image of God. We must speak to them, not at them, and we must commit to an environment where love and acceptance are never withheld due to one’s behavior.

5

“God has a big story, and I can be a part of it!”

STORYTELLING

The power of The Big God Story impacts our lives by giving us an accurate and awe-inspiring perspective into how God has been moving throughout history. It is the story of redemption, salvation, and hope and tells how I have been grafted into it by grace. It further compels us to see how God is using every person’s life and is creating a unique story that deserves to be told for God’s glory.

6

“God knows me, and I can know Him.”

KNOWING

Nothing could be more important than knowing and being known by God. We live in a world that denies absolute truth, and yet God’s Word offers just that. As we create an environment that upholds and displays God’s truth, we give children a foundation based on knowing God, knowing His Word, and a relationship with Him through Christ. God is holy, mighty, and awesome, and yet He has chosen to make Himself known to us!

7

“I belong to God, and He loves me!”

IDENTITY

This environment highlights who we are in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, and given an inheritance in Christ ... all of which we did nothing to earn. This conviction allows children to stand firm against the destructive counter-identities the world will offer.

8

“When I get off track, God offers me a path of healing.”

COURSE CORRECTION

This environment flows out of Hebrews 12:11-13 and is the direct opposite of punishment. Instead, biblical discipline for a child encompasses a season of pain, the building up in love, and a vision of a corrected path for the individual with the purpose of healing at its core.

9

“God’s family cares for each other and worships God together.”

FAITH COMMUNITY

God designed us to live in community and to experience Him in ways that can only happen in proximity to one another. The faith community serves to create an environment to equip and disciple parents, to celebrate God’s faithfulness, and to bring a richness of worship through tradition and rituals, which offer children an identity. Our love for each other reflects the love we have received from God.

IT IS OUR PRAYER THAT HOMES AND CHURCHES WOULD CREATE THESE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN SO THEIR FAITH WILL GROW IN A COMMUNITY OF CONSISTENCY, COMMON LANGUAGE, AND PRACTICE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THESE ENVIRONMENTS CAN IGNITE A TRANSFORMING FAITH IN YOUR FAMILY, WE SUGGEST YOU READ:

10

“I see Christ in others, and they can see Him in me.”

MODELING

Biblical content needs a practical living expression in order for it to be spiritually impacting. This environment serves as a hands-on example of what it means for children to put their faith into action. Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others are watching to see if we live what we believe.



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
An Awakening for Today’s Families
BY MICHELLE ANTHONY
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MAY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

notes

Shopping List

ideas

supplies

This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.
And lead us not
into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”

Matthew 6:9–13

GOD'S WORD

WEEK ONE

The “P” in PRAY: Praise. When was the last time you really looked at the beauty in creation? Have you paused recently to think of where all your blessings come from? Sometimes I get overwhelmed by a big, powerful God who loves me unconditionally. When we truly stop to think about these things and the supremacy of our God, our hearts should desire to praise Him. The Bible says that all of creation praises Him (Psalm 66:4).

Psalm 100:1-5 says, “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and His love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Verse 4 instructs us to “enter his gates with

thanksgiving and his courts with praise.” As you and your family take time to enter God’s courts—through prayer—enter with words of praise and thanksgiving. As a starting point, praise God for His majestic creation, His powerful hand, and His divine care for you personally. Then, give thanks to God for all that He has done in your life or in the lives of those around you and offer Him praise for what is yet to come.

Think of something from your past that you saw God overcome and give Him thanks for bringing you through. If there is an area of your life in which you are beginning to see God’s victory, give Him praise in the process. If there is a promise you are waiting to see fulfilled, choose to praise God as you wait.

DISCUSSION: What is your favorite characteristic of God? Where have you seen this aspect of God displayed in your own life? How can you give praise to Him for that specific thing?

by McKenzie Lebeau, Second-Grade Teacher

GOD'S WORD

WEEK TWO

The “R” in PRAY: Repent. This word can seem like the brussel sprouts of spiritual disciplines sometimes—yuck. So, before we jump in, take a moment to pray as a family and ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what He wants you to know about repentance and prayer today. Read Matthew 6:9-13. Why do we pray this way? His kingdom will come and His will will be done regardless of what we think, right? Jesus paid for our sins, so why do we need to ask Him to forgive us AGAIN? Let’s find out.

Revelation 3:19 says, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.” Read verses 14 through 20. Do you see how the writer loves this church in Laodicea? He points out that they are choosing to live in a way that shrivels up their hearts. They think they are fulfilled, but they’re only satisfied as deeply as their sleepy way of following Jesus allows.

Sometimes, we get sleepy in how we follow Jesus too. We don’t love Him less, but we start to settle for our own kingdom instead of His. Repentance is the act of turning our focus and desires back on His kingdom so we can be fulfilled in our relationship with Him! Repentance can be hard sometimes, but it’s all about love in the end.

How do we repent? First, we notice our actions, thoughts, and words. We take responsibility for them and admit to Jesus if any are for our own kingdom instead of His. Then, we ask Him for forgiveness and thank Him for it! We ask because it’s how we receive the gift He will ALWAYS offer us when we get off track in pursuit of our kingdom.

DISCUSSION: What is sin? How are you settling for your kingdom instead of Jesus’ kingdom? What happens when we repent of these things?

by Kaitlyn Morgan, Family Care Administrator

GOD'S WORD

WEEK THREE

The "A" in PRAY: Ask. Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

This is both the easiest and most challenging part of prayer. We all have needs, wants, and desires that we would like God to give us and others. So why is asking so hard? It's often a reflection of our view of the character of God.

Sometimes we think, since God knows all things, why do we need to tell Him? Perhaps we feel that God's grace is limited so we shouldn't bother Him with our little problems. Or maybe, God has given us problems to teach us a lesson.

Jesus' disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, and He showed them the Father. While it's true that God is sovereign and He knows all things, He has chosen to partner with us to bring His kingdom to earth! Jesus said: "Ask and it will be given to you"

(Luke 11:9). Second, God delights in our reliance on Him for our "daily bread" and whatever concerns us. Jesus wants us to "cast all [our] anxiety on him because he cares for [us]" (1 Peter 5:7). Finally, although God does use trials for our benefit, God is a good Father who wants us to have an abundant life (John 10:10; James 1:17).

Knowing who God is helps us to pray in faith according to God's Word. Father, let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven! (Romans 12:2; Matthew 6:10).

DISCUSSION: How does knowing that God is a good Father affect the way you ask in prayer? Why do you think God invites us to partner with Him in bringing His kingdom to earth?

by Jill Nardini, Third-Grade Teacher

GOD'S WORD

WEEK FOUR

The "Y" in PRAY: Yield. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" (Psalm 46:10 ESV). To yield is an act of surrender to the fullness of God and a demonstration of trust in His mighty power. This is the final step in the journey of prayer. We have learned how to praise God, take responsibility for our actions through repentance, and ask God for help. Now we get to pause for a moment and let Him lean into us. Think of this time as comforting, where you feel the safest and most loved. It is like leaning into your parents' arms during a thunderstorm and being comforted. Yielding places our heart in a posture of recognizing that God is enough.

In this time, God fills us up and renews our hearts, minds, and souls so we can love others well and look

more like Jesus every day. Let's practice a time where we don't speak but we close our eyes and pretend Jesus is sitting right next to us. What is He saying? Who is He saying you are? Where is He leading your heart, mind, and soul? Is it to peace, to remembrance, to thankfulness, to grief, to joy? Let God lead you during this time. All we have to do is "be still."

DISCUSSION: What is God saying to you? How did you feel during this time of pausing and listening?

TIP: PLAY INSTRUMENTAL WORSHIP MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND TO HELP CREATE A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE.

by Catherine Gerstenberg, Student Ministries Administrator



MOTHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

Dads and kids, surprise Mom with this delicious, easy-to-make breakfast on Mother's Day. Don't forget her favorite tea or coffee!

EGGS IN A NEST

- 15 ounces frozen shredded hash browns, thawed
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 medium eggs
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 slices cooked bacon, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 tablespoon parsley, chopped

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mix hash browns with salt, pepper, olive oil and 1 cup of cheese in a mixing bowl.
2. Grease bottoms of the muffin pan and divide the hash brown mixture into each muffin cup.
3. Pat the hash browns down tightly to form little nests in each cup.
4. Bake at 425° F until the edges have browned and the cheese has melted (roughly 15 minutes).
5. Crack a medium egg into each nest and season with salt and pepper.
6. Top with cooked crumbled bacon, cheddar cheese, and parsley.
7. Bake at 350° F until the egg whites set, 13 to 16 minutes. Let cool, then gently slide knife along the edges to lift out of the pan.

BERRY YOGURT PARFAIT

- vanilla yogurt
- blueberries
- strawberries
- granola
- almonds



WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Grab a pretty glass to layer the ingredients. Fill the glass with about 1/2 cup of the vanilla yogurt and then layer the granola, almonds, and fruit on top.

PEPPERONI PIZZA TWISTS

Family nights wouldn't be complete without some form of ooey, gooey goodness. Your kids are sure to enjoy this "twist" on a pepperoni pizza.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 pound pizza dough, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 6 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces pepperoni
- 4 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- marinara sauce or ranch dressing

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
2. Roll the dough out into a rectangle on a large, lightly floured cutting board.
3. Combine the garlic powder, parsley, Parmesan cheese, and red pepper flakes in a small bowl.

4. Sprinkle about half of the seasoning blend onto the dough.
5. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese on half of dough and top it with the pepperoni.
6. If you are using mini pepperoni, leave them whole. If you're using full-size pepperoni, cut them into quarters.
7. Fold the side of dough without the pepperoni over the other side, covering the filling.
8. Use a sharp knife or a pizza cutter to cut the dough into thin strips. You'll get about 12 strips out of the pound of dough.
9. Twist strips a few times and press down on ends to keep them closed.
10. Brush the tops of the twists with olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning blend.
11. Place the twists on a parchment-lined baking sheet, seasoned side down.
12. Brush the other side of the twists with olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning blend again. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until twists are golden brown.



BUTTER TARTS

The slow process for making this delicious buttery tart allows for great conversations while baking and sharing a cup of coffee or hot chocolate. Use this time to have some intentional discussion and see into the heart of your child.

PASTRY

- 1 pound vegetable shortening
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{7}{8}$ cup ice cold water
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons white vinegar
- pinch of baking soda
- 5 cups flour

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mix the shortening and baking powder until it forms little pea-sized balls.
2. Blend the water, egg, vinegar, and baking soda together.
3. Add liquid to the flour mixture and combine.
4. Roll out dough on a floured surface, adding flour as necessary. The pastry may be wet.
5. Cut into 4-inch rounds and fit into muffin tin.
6. Refrigerate while preparing tart filling.



BUTTER TART FILLING

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup corn syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mix ingredients together.
2. Fill tart shells $\frac{2}{3}$ full.
3. Bake on bottom rack at 400° F for 12 to 14 minutes.
4. Consider adding toppings like raisins, pecans, or chocolate chips for the last 1 minute of baking.



EASY, CHEESY TORTELLINI CASSEROLE

One of the easiest ways for our families to bless others is to take a meal to someone in need. This casserole is an easy dinner that kids can help you make. Double the recipe for two dinners, one for you and one for a blessing.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

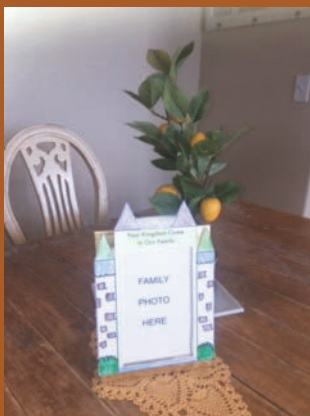
- 1 20-ounce container cheese tortellini
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 24-ounce jar tomato sauce
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
- 1-2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1-2 cups grated or shredded Parmesan cheese
- Italian seasoning, garlic salt, and pepper to taste

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. Drain and set aside. Preheat oven to 350° F and grease a 9" x 13" baking dish.
3. In a large skillet, brown ground beef and season to taste.
4. Drain excess grease from beef and then stir in tomato sauce and cream cheese.
5. Simmer for a few minutes until smooth.
6. Gently toss the cooked tortellini in with the sauce mixture and pour into the casserole dish.
7. Top with mozzarella and Parmesan cheese.
8. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.
9. Turn oven to broil and cook for an additional 2 to 3 minutes.

CASTLE FRAME

**YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE
DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
(MATTHEW 6:9-10)**



God's Kingdom Reigns in Our Family

When you hear the word “kingdom,” what image comes to mind? One of the first things you picture may be a castle. A castle’s occupants include not only the king but also all the servants that serve under his rule. John 12:26a says, “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.” For followers of Jesus, every moment is an opportunity for God’s kingdom to reign in the places where we live, work, and play!

You can show others God’s rule in your home, neighborhood, and community by having eyes to see the things that need to be done and then taking action! Take time to make a Castle Frame as a visual reminder that your family is a place where God’s rule is active—here and now. God’s rule is put on display as your family lives sacrificially and generously serves.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- 5" x 7" picture of your family, drawn or printed
- 5" x 7" picture frame
- Castle template
- cardstock
- scissors
- markers, crayons, paint, glitter, etc.
- glue

WHAT YOU’LL DO

Print the Castle template on cardstock. Have a family member cut out the castle. Be sure to cut out the center along the dotted lines. Encourage everyone in your family to decorate the castle—color it, paint it, glitter it. Invite each person to write his or her name on the castle. Glue the castle to the front of the frame and let it dry. Place your photo in the frame and display in a prominent place as a reminder that your family is part of God’s kingdom and submits to His rule. Throughout the day, as you see the frame, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see things that need to be done and ways you can take action to serve others.

by Laurie Bennett, Early Childhood Director

The Add-On Game

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

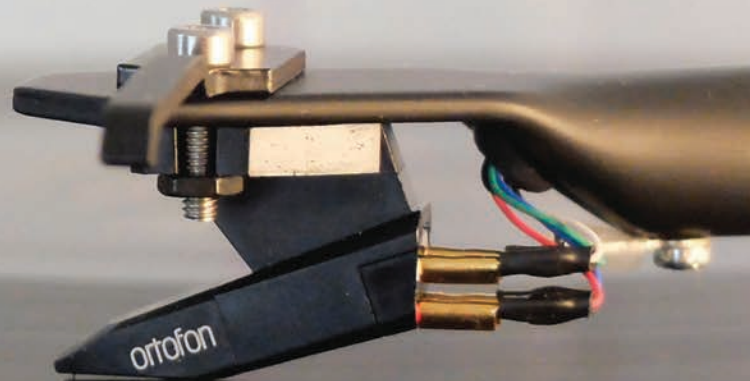
- music
- open space to move around

TIME TO PLAY!

Have family members form a circle facing each other. One family member will begin the game by performing a single dance move. Moving in a clockwise direction, the next person will perform the first person's dance move and then "add on" her own special dance move. Person number three will perform the dance move from the first person, then the move from the second person, and then perform his own dance move. Person number four must continue repeating the dance moves and add his own, etc. As the game continues, the dance will become longer and longer with dance moves being "added on." If anyone forgets a dance move, that person is eliminated.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminds Christians that we are all unified in the body of Christ. Using our God-given gifts and talents, we each have a different but vital role in spreading the gospel. In fact, there is power in numbers. The gospel can be spread more effectively when we all play our part. In this game, every family member must do his part for the game to be fun. If only one person plays the game correctly, it will be lackluster at best. When everyone plays the game, each unique personality, gifting, and temperament will be sure to bring laughter and joy as you play.

by Aidan Hollis, Fourth-Grade Teacher



When You Pray

Have you ever wondered, “Is there a right or wrong way to pray?” Or perhaps your children have asked you this question. Fortunately, Jesus doesn’t leave us in the dark grasping at assumptions about prayer. Rather, He gives us clear direction in Matthew 6:5-15. In this part of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks to those who may be wrestling with how to pray:

This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:9-13)

This prayer acts like a guide for us. It leads to the heart of the Father, providing a way for us to see what He values. Praying this prayer is an exercise in letting go of our own desires and aligning our hearts with His.

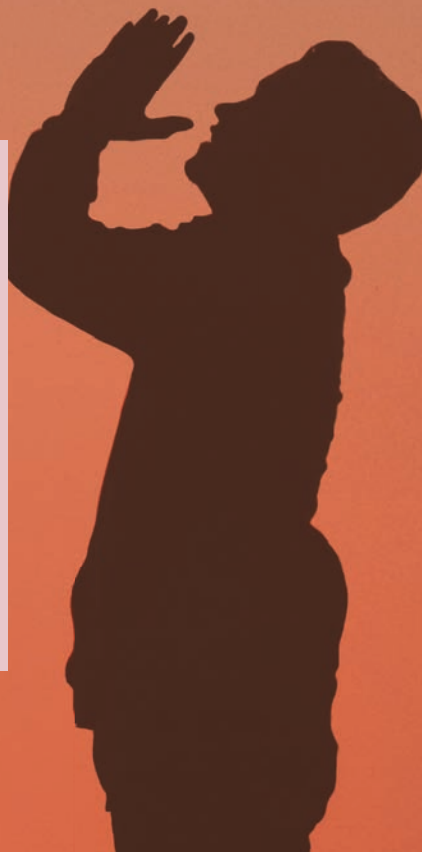
For example, when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are asking for the Lord’s way of things—His culture, His rule and reign, His perspective, His way of thinking and living—to fill our lives. Praying this means we aren’t led by our own desires but that we are choosing to be led by the Lord and His kingdom mindset. This prayer is so important because it gives us the opportunity to say yes to the ways of the kingdom of heaven instead of to our own little false kingdoms we’ve built up in our heads. This heavenly kingdom perspective is countercultural but valuable beyond compare.

In response to Jesus’ instructions on how to pray, take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit to help you see what areas of your life need to be viewed through the lens of the Lord’s kingdom. In what ways are you being led by your own desires? In what areas can you choose to serve others instead of yourself? Talk about these things with your family.

by Shayleen Smith, East Campus Children’s Director

ACTIVITY

When each family member has had a chance to share and respond, have everyone write or draw aspects of the Lord’s Prayer on his own sheet of paper. When everyone is finished, encourage each person to hang her sheet somewhere she can be reminded to pray this prayer often. (You can also do this together on a large canvas, chalkboard, or dry erase board.)



A Unique Work



What are you good at? Baking? Painting? Building? Maybe you are great at listening to the lonely or changing the oil or brakes on a car, or you might be an engaging babysitter. Perhaps you just like to take care of others.

God has given each person in your family gifts and talents. He wants to use those gifts to bring glory to Him and to build His kingdom. First Peter 4:10 tells us, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

God created each of us to be unique, and He works through each person in wildly different ways according to our dominant gifts and the ways we like to serve. **He wants us to be faithful stewards of our talents by looking for ways to use our gifts to bless others.** We are blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:2). God doesn't give us something for our own benefit. He calls us to use our gifts, talents, and skills for the benefit of others.

How can you put your gifts into practice? Is there a ministry at church that could utilize what you have to offer? Is there a person in your life who needs some extra care? Is there someone who needs a meal or needs help repairing a car? How can your family be a blessing to others by using your unique gifts and talents?

SERVE CHALLENGE

Give each family member two sheets of paper. Use one sheet of paper to identify the gifts and talents of each family member. Use the second sheet to list possible ways to use those gifts and talents to serve in May. The entire family can focus on one member at a time by calling out gifts and talents you see in one another. After you have identified each person's gifts and talents, pray and ask God to highlight opportunities for you to serve either as a family or individually.

by Andrew Cantrell, Family Ministries Worship Pastor

"GOD CREATED EACH OF US TO BE UNIQUE, AND HE WORKS THROUGH EACH PERSON IN WILDLY DIFFERENT WAYS."

BLESS WITH YOUR WORDS



A BLESSING CAN BE A PRAYER OF COMMISSION, A BIBLE PASSAGE, OR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. BLESSINGS CAN BE SPOKEN OVER A CHILD FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECLARING GOD'S PROTECTION, JOY, AND WISDOM OVER HIM.

WEEK 1

(Child's name), may you know that your heavenly Father loves you. He is honored when you bring Him offerings of thanksgiving and praise for all that He has done. Be blessed as you choose to look to Him because He promises to help you. God is worthy of praise!

(Psalm 100:4-5; Psalm 22:3; Psalm 50:23)

WEEK 2

(Child's name), your heavenly Father delights in you. In His kindness, He corrects and guides you so you can live at your best. As you change your ways, God is faithful to forgive you and give you a fresh start.

(Revelation 3:19; Romans 2:4; Psalm 51:7, 10)

WEEK 3

(Child's name), may you know that you can come boldly to God with your prayers and concerns because He cares for you. When you call out, He hears you. He is your good Father and desires to give you the kingdom as you seek Him first.

(Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 5:15; Luke 12:31-32)

WEEK 4

(Child's name), be still and know that He is God! As you surrender to God's rule in your life, you will experience a life empowered by His Spirit—filled with righteousness, peace, and joy. May you know that God wants to speak to you and tell you great things. Rest in His presence and be still!

(Psalm 46:10; Romans 14:17; Jeremiah 33:3)

by Evie Swart, Director of Midweek Programming

JOURNAL

remember and celebrate

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prayer

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thankfulness and praise

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JUNE

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

notes

Shopping List

ideas

supplies

**How good and
pleasant it is
when God's
people live
together in unity!**

Psalm 133:1

GOD'S WORD

WEEK ONE

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-19, 20b).

When the disciples gathered on the mountainside with Jesus that day, the Bible tells us they worshipped Him but “some doubted.” **Jesus’ words most likely rekindled their faith, but they also gave the disciples an important responsibility.** God was inviting them to be the ones to spread the good news of God’s love to the entire world!

This task, to tell the entire world about Jesus, must have seemed impossible. All nations? Even Rome, the nation responsible for Jesus’ murder and the persecution of His followers? Changing such hard hearts as theirs would take a miracle, not words from a ragtag bunch of young disciples.

Jesus’ command to “make disciples of all nations” may sound impossible, make us question how we’ll go about it, and even cause us to feel inadequate. But Jesus said some words that brought comfort and courage:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,” and “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus’ authority and the presence of His Holy Spirit give us the ability to fulfill the responsibility of telling others about Him. **Without God, we can do nothing.** But through His power, here we are thousands of years later and the church is a vibrant, global phenomenon!

As we study the book of Acts this month, it might be tempting to focus on the disciples’ courage, **but let’s focus instead on the ever-present work of the Holy Spirit.** He is still working in the world as He did in Acts because the good news of Jesus has yet to reach all nations. He’s inviting us to join the work. Will YOU join?

DISCUSSION: What do you think was important to the people who made up the first church in Jerusalem? You can read about it in Acts chapters 2 and 4. What are some qualities that are important for the church today? What is one thing in particular that you love about your church?

GOD'S WORD

WEEK TWO

“The word of the Lord spread through the whole region” (Acts 13:49).

Those who heard Jesus’ command right before He ascended into heaven knew the task was impossible on their own, so they waited for the promised Holy Spirit (John 14:15-17). They were wise to wait before setting out to do what Jesus had asked because He said that we’re able to do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5).

Today, sadly, we quickly forget our need for Him. With all our resources, we may become overconfident and think we’re the ones producing faith in people. Still, faithful Christians throughout history show us that they were successful BECAUSE of God’s power ... not their own. **We don’t create faith; the Holy Spirit does!**

Throughout Acts, Jesus’ followers continually rejoiced when the Word of God spread into another region, fully knowing it was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Although those who received the powerful message of salvation sometimes misunderstood where their power was coming from, the early church was quick to confess helplessness apart from the Holy Spirit (Acts 16).

So, this week as we explore Acts together, continually ask God to show you if you’ve been overconfident in your own abilities, and repent if you have been. Likewise, if you’ve been feeling unqualified to share the gospel, ask the Holy Spirit to help you see that you are qualified, not by your own merit, but by His power in you. **There’s a harvest waiting, so ask the Holy Spirit to send you!**

DISCUSSION: What is something God has done this week that you maybe just haven’t noticed to be His work until now? Perhaps giving you patience, strength, a kind and forgiving heart, or even boldness? Thank Him for His constant presence and provision.

GOD'S WORD

WEEK THREE

As you go through the four weeks of God's Word devotionals, consider watching the Bible Project video about the book of Acts on YouTube or read a couple of chapters each week.

"The Lord's will be done" (Acts 21:14).

Even when we know Jesus' authority and rely on the Holy Spirit as our source of strength, **we can easily run off course by our own wills and ideas of what we want.** The believers in Acts combatted this dangerous pattern of the human heart through constant prayer and waiting on the Lord in all they did (Acts 1–2).

When we begin to serve Jesus and want His kingdom to come, we can serve without surrendered wills. The idea of "waiting on the Lord" may seem like a waste of time. However, a pastor once noted that **to wait on the Lord in prayer (even prayer during our daily assignments) leads to more profound service with Him than any act of charity for Him void of prayer.**

To wait on the Lord means that you are going to understand His love for you in greater ways. And because of that love, He will give you the love you need for others. **When we love and are loved by Him, we will find it easier to obey the will of the Lord in all things.** As you continue reading through Acts, notice the fruit that came from the disciples seeking God's will, and may this week be marked by a simple, repetitive prayer: "Holy Spirit, let Your will be done."

DISCUSSION: Why is it hard to seek the Lord in prayer first before acting? Why do you think understanding and experiencing God's love changes our hearts toward obedience? Thank God for His great love for you and ask Him to help you seek Him in everything you do and say this week.

GOD'S WORD

WEEK FOUR

"[Paul] witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus" (Acts 28:23).

Near the end of his life, the Apostle Paul was not shy in proclaiming the gospel; he took advantage of every opportunity to witness to those around him. This should be true for us at any stage in life. Whether eight or eighty, the Holy Spirit has us where we are to be a unique testimony of His goodness and grace. Paul witnessed in synagogues, at the markets, on ships and during shipwrecks, and even in prison. He was able to minister at all times and in all places because he knew Jesus personally and relied on the Holy Spirit constantly.

Perhaps you find it easy to pray for fellow believers

but can't find the courage to witness for Christ in settings where He isn't known. Or maybe you just aren't sure whom to talk to about Jesus and His great love.

The reality is: God is always with you. In every chapter of Acts, we see that God is more concerned about bringing His kingdom to earth than we ever could be. In every story the book records, we see a God who gives Himself to all who ask Him. May we ask Him every day for wisdom and strength to take the responsibility that He gave us seriously and passionately.

DISCUSSION: Have you ever had the Holy Spirit ask you to share about Jesus to someone outside of church? Who was it? How did you feel? How did God help you? Thank God for His faithfulness to help us spread the good news of Jesus.

May God's Word devotionals by Chase Windebank, Pastor of Student Ministry Discipleship

GRILLED PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY BRIE SANDWICHES



For most of us, PB&J was a childhood favorite. These PB&J Brie sandwiches take a classic sandwich to the next level; get ready for gourmet!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 4 slices of your favorite bread
- 2-4 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1-2 tablespoons jam or jelly
- Brie cheese
- cooking spray

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Spread a 1-tablespoon layer of peanut butter on 2 slices of bread (use more peanut butter to taste).
2. Spread a 1/2-tablespoon layer of jam or jelly on top.
3. Cut several slices of Brie about 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick.
4. Trim off the rind. Using your fingers, spread out the Brie, and lay it on top of the jam.
5. Add enough Brie to cover the slice of bread.
6. Top with the other slice of bread and spray the outside of the sandwich with cooking spray.
7. Using a grill pan or a skillet, toast each side of the sandwich for about 2 minutes or until the bread is browned and the cheese melts.

LEMON BERRY CHEESECAKE TRIFLE



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 5-6 cups white cake or angel food cake cubes
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup icing sugar
- 2 cups whipped topping or whipped cream
- 1/2 cup lemon curd
- 3-4 cups fresh strawberries
- 1-2 cups fresh blueberries
- additional whipped topping or whipped cream on top

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. For the cheesecake, beat cream cheese until smooth in a stand mixer.
2. Add vanilla and sugar and beat until smooth.
3. On low, fold in the whipped topping or whipped cream and the lemon curd.
4. Layer half of the cake cubes in a parfait glass, jar, or 3-quart glass bowl.
5. Cover with half of the cheesecake mixture and then top with berries.
6. Repeat layers one more time, then add the final layer of whipped topping and berries.



BACON-WRAPPED GRILLED CORN ON THE COB

Do you need a great side dish to take to a neighborhood BBQ or summer gathering? This is it! Corn on the cob always tastes delicious from the grill, but with bacon, butter, and seasonings this corn on the cob is irresistible.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 6 ears of corn, husks and silks removed
- 1 pound of bacon, regular or hickory
- butter
- salt and pepper

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Prepare grill for direct high heat.
2. Rinse the corn and pat dry.
3. Rub the corn with butter and then season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Wrap 2 to 3 pieces of bacon around each corn cob.
5. Make sure $\frac{3}{4}$ of the corn is covered with bacon.
6. Wrap the corn in foil, ensuring the ends are completely covered.
7. Grill for 40 to 45 minutes, turning every 10 minutes.
8. When done, corn kernels should be tender, and bacon should be starting to turn crispy.



CAMPFIRE S'MORES NACHOS

For a summertime treat, there's nothing better than a campfire s'more. Whether you are camping or using a grill in your backyard, everyone will enjoy these campfire s'mores nachos.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- graham crackers, cinnamon graham crackers, or pretzel crisps
- mini marshmallows
- regular marshmallows
- chocolate chips

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Break up graham crackers or pretzels and spread them in a single layer in the bottom of a foil pan.
2. Sprinkle the mini marshmallows on top of the graham crackers and then add a layer of chocolate chips.
3. Repeat with another layer of the 3 ingredients.
4. For the last layer, place the regular marshmallows and chocolate chips.
5. Cover the pan tightly with a piece of heavy-duty foil.
6. Place the pan on a grate over a campfire or directly on a backyard grill for 7 to 10 minutes.
7. Cook until the marshmallows and chocolate are melted. Don't burn or overcook.
8. Let cool for about 2 to 3 minutes.

Jar of Courage



Living inside our personal comfort zones is easy. We happily go along, doing the things we enjoy—things that don't scare us or make us feel uncomfortable or incapable. However, our big God calls us to more. He calls us out of our comfort zones so He can be made known.

He hasn't asked us to do this on our own. He has given us His Holy Spirit who equips and strengthens us to do what is beyond our own abilities and desires. When we step out of our comfort zone we allow God to transform our hearts, and His kingdom comes into our own lives and the lives of others.

Sometimes getting out of our own comfort zones takes intentionality, courage, and a little bit of creativity.

“HE HASN'T ASKED US TO DO THIS ON OUR OWN. HE HAS GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT WHO EQUIPS AND STRENGTHENS US TO DO WHAT IS BEYOND OUR OWN ABILITIES AND DESIRES.”

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- small jar
- paint
- popsicle sticks or slips of paper
- permanent marker

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Decorate your jar as a family. You can write words or Scripture or just draw pictures and designs.
2. On the popsicle sticks or strips of paper, write creative and intentional ways you, together or individually, can get out of your comfort zone.

Examples:

- Invite another family over for family night or dinner
 - Sit with someone new at lunch
 - Learn something new (something you've wanted to learn for a long time but have been afraid to)
 - Bake cookies for a neighbor and ask her to tell you her story
3. Once a week (or more) pick a popsicle stick/paper strip out of the jar and follow through with the written idea. You can keep each other accountable throughout the week, asking each other how you have seen the Holy Spirit empower you to do what you have been called to do.

by Kendra Baker, Preschool Coordinator

A Walk of Trust

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- blindfold
- an open space
- pillows, stuffed animals, Frisbees, water bottles, etc.

BEFORE YOU START

This game will force players out of their comfort zone and require them to trust each other to succeed. Gather your supplies and invite your family to join you in a large open room or a grassy space outside.

TIME TO PLAY!

Have players pair up. Blindfold one player while the rest of the players scatter the gathered objects over the floor of the open space. The objective of the game is for the partner who can see to direct the blindfolded partner across the open floor while avoiding the objects. The trick is the directing partner can only use his voice. If the blindfolded person touches any of the objects, the partners must start over. To make it more challenging, family members can time each group to see how quickly they can accomplish the challenge. After everyone has gone through the game you can rotate partners so family members can engage with different people.

by Tim Shepard, Student Ministries Pastor

REMEMBER!

Our world is filled with many voices screaming a lot of different things. To follow Jesus means we must be sheep who know the Good Shepherd's voice and listen to it above everyone else's (John 10:27). His voice will often lead us out of our comfort zone, but it will always be for our good and His glory. The trick is trusting His voice in the midst of uncertainty. Use this as an opportunity to teach your family the power and importance of trusting God and His plan in the midst of uncertainty.

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

Just a few months ago, our church was faced with the news of the fast spreading COVID-19.

The urgency to do our part in order to “flatten the curve” was shocking and left a lot of us feeling uncomfortable. As the church doors closed, everyone was forced to reimagine ministry by stepping out of their comfort zone to help and support others during this time.

Story after story flashed across social media of people caring for one another in unique ways. A young lady sang a song to a lonely elderly woman through a window. Several families united to purchase groceries for a family who had lost their income. A junior high volleyball team sent snack bags to kids who were missing paid-for school lunches. Teachers drove by kids’ houses, and birthday parades lined the streets. The pictures and videos represented the body of Christ spreading joy and bringing peace and love during a time of crisis. **The Holy Spirit is leading His people to experience connection outside of their comfort zones.** There is more work to be done as we continue to move through the effects of this crisis.

Luke 12:12, " For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." In what ways can you step out of your comfort zone and trust the Holy Spirit to guide you? Maybe it’s sharing the gospel with your neighbors. Maybe it’s asking someone to forgive you for something you’ve done. Maybe it’s forgiving someone else for something she’s done to you.

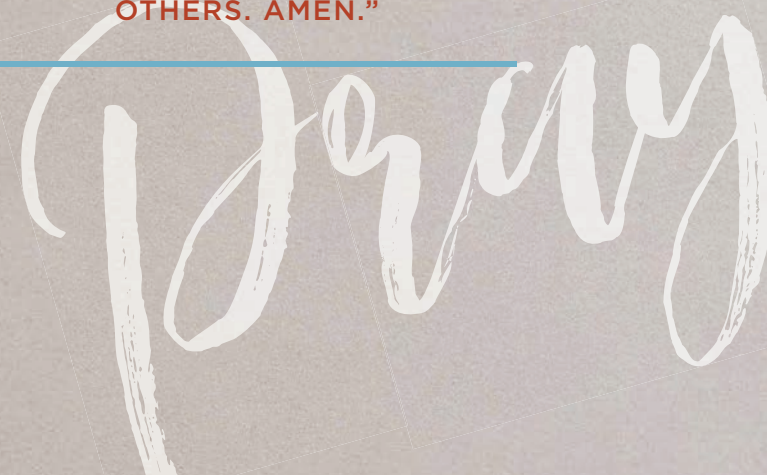
ACTIVITY

Take some time to respond to the Lord in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into greater understanding about the ways you have tried to stay in your comfort zone. You or your children may want to write these things down. Once all of you have had the opportunity to spend time with the Holy Spirit individually, pray together as a family. You can use this prayer as a guide:

“Holy Spirit, thank You that You are near. Thank You that You desire unity among Your people. Please guide us as a family to know how to step out of our comfort zones in order to share Your love with others. Amen.”



“HOLY SPIRIT, THANK YOU THAT YOU ARE NEAR. THANK YOU THAT YOU DESIRE UNITY AMONG YOUR PEOPLE. PLEASE GUIDE US AS A FAMILY TO KNOW HOW TO STEP OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES IN ORDER TO SHARE YOUR LOVE WITH OTHERS. AMEN.”



by Shayleen Smith, East Campus Children's Director



LOVING OTHERS

We quickly learn our performance, appearance, and acquaintances can boost our confidence. Praise and recognition can make us feel valued and significant. In the same manner, a negative word, an unkind action, or being overlooked can make us feel insignificant and unloved. Thankfully, God's love is the foundation of our identity. His love is unconditional; it isn't based on our achievements or failures. He generously pours out His unconditional love on His children. Failure and the feeling of falling short are inevitable, and sometimes we need to be reminded of His words. You are enough. You are loved. You are made with a purpose. You are beautiful. You belong to Him.

Jesus said in **John 13:34-35**, **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

As we begin to believe our identity in Christ, we can encourage others to do the same. Out of the love Christ shows us, we can show others His love. We can be a light to someone in pain by reminding him of his identity in Christ.

Grab a stack of blank notecards (or make some out of construction paper). Pray about people you know—friends, coworkers, family members, or teammates—who might need to be reminded of God's unconditional love. Write each person a note filled with truth from Scripture. Don't compliment the people on their performance or achievements. Instead, highlight God's unchanging love. Last, send or deliver the cards anonymously. This way, the "praise" and "thank you" is directed to God.

Enjoy encouraging and loving others the way Christ loves us.

by Lori Welch, Family Care

BLESS WITH YOUR WORDS

A BLESSING CAN BE A PRAYER OF COMMISSION, A BIBLE PASSAGE, OR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. BLESSINGS CAN BE SPOKEN OVER A CHILD FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECLARING GOD'S PROTECTION, JOY, AND WISDOM OVER HIM.

WEEK 1

(Child's name), may you know that all things are possible with God! He has equipped you with His mighty power to share the good news of Jesus and to make disciples of all nations. Don't be afraid, beloved child of God; He is with you always. You can depend on Him.

(Matthew 19:26; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 28:19-20)

WEEK 2

(Child's name), may you know that Jesus loves you and has asked the Father to give you the Holy Spirit to help you. The Holy Spirit will teach you all things and lead you because you are God's child. May you know that His Spirit and power working in you will help you tell others about Jesus.

(John 14:15-16, 26; Zechariah 4:6; Romans 8:14; Acts 1:8)

WEEK 3

(Child's name), as you invite the Holy Spirit to have His way, may you know that waiting on God allows you to experience His abundant blessings. May you seek His will above yours and trust that His timing is perfect.

(Psalm 145:15-16; Lamentations 3:24-26)

WEEK 4

(Child's name), may you know that you are deeply loved by God. You are created by Him and for Him to do good works. Be confident and know that He is with you every step of the way. May you use the gifts He has given you to be His instrument for kingdom purposes.

(Ephesians 2:10; Joshua 1:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

by Evie Swart, Director of Midweek Programming

JOURNAL

remember and celebrate

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Resources

RESOURCES

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SUPPORT

Support

get your family talking

WHEN YOU'RE IN THE CARPOOL LINE ...

Most of us spend a significant amount of time picking up and dropping off children at school, sports, or social events. The carpool routine can be a valuable time to connect with your children without interruption. They are stuck with you! Turn down the radio and set this time apart to learn more about your child and deepen your relationship.

1. If you could trade places with one of your parents, who would it be, and why?
2. If you had unlimited resources, what would you do to help or bless your friends and family, and what would you do to help the community or world?
3. What is the most challenging thing you have had to do up to this point in your life?
4. How does it feel when you have accomplished something hard?
5. If you could have one dream come true, what would it be?



KEEPING UP WITH YOUR KIDS

How do you know if your child is ready for social media? Ultimately, this is a decision that should be taken to the Lord in prayer. The Holy Spirit desires to help us by generously giving us wisdom to parent our children. When making your decision, below are a few questions to help you assess if your son or daughter is emotionally mature enough for social media.

1. Is your child mature enough to use social media responsibly and safely?
2. Do you and your child have an open relationship to talk about the issues that will come up with social media?
3. Does your child understand online safety, the purpose of a private account, and the importance of only communicating with people he or she knows?
4. Are you committed to regularly checking your child's social media outlets, asking questions, and intentionally giving guidance?
5. Does your child display good judgment in knowing what is appropriate and what's not in posts, comments, and searches?
6. Have you thought of clear boundaries for your child's social media use? Does your child clearly understand and agree to these boundaries?

Empower your children to use social media responsibly, and help them navigate the ups and downs that come with this technology. Navigating social media with our children takes great intentionality and discipleship just like any other area of character development. Your involvement will give them practical tools to use as social media platforms continue to grow and morph; you can help your children's values stay the same.



A Scooter AND God's Kingdom

Goldie woke up to a sunny morning. She was excited as she made her bed, got dressed, and ate a granola bar. The day before, Goldie had celebrated her birthday. She was eager to try her new scooter—a special gift from her dad who was serving in the Army and deployed overseas.

After she quickly brushed her teeth and put on her sneakers, she hurried out to the garage. Goldie put on her helmet and grabbed her special birthday gift. Goldie paused for a moment as she remembered her mom's words from the night before: "Wait for me to get up in the morning so I can help you learn to ride your scooter." Bummer! Mom was still in bed. **But Goldie couldn't wait! After all, how hard could it be to ride a scooter?** Goldie opened the side door that led out to the driveway. As she stepped onto the scooter, she felt wobbly and struggled to gain her balance.

Goldie gripped the handlebars and started to roll unsteadily down the driveway. Uh-oh! She was headed straight for the street! Goldie made a sharp turn. Ouch! Tumbling over, she fell hard onto the sidewalk. Tears began to roll down her cheeks. As she tried to pick herself up, she glanced down at her hurting legs. Her jeans had ripped, exposing a throbbing skinned knee. Suddenly, Goldie felt a reassuring touch on her shoulder and heard her mom's calm voice: "Goldie, Honey, you'll be okay." Goldie looked up to see her mom's loving smile. Mom gently picked her up and carried her inside to clean the painful scrape.

Goldie felt better as she snuggled into bed that night. Mom put an arm around Goldie and let her hold the open Bible. She and Goldie had been talking about the Lord's Prayer and memorizing Matthew 6:10 each night before bed. They repeated together, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Goldie asked, "How can I help God's kingdom come on earth?"

Mom laid the Bible on the nightstand and tucked Goldie into bed. She explained, "When you follow Jesus and say yes to Him throughout each day, you are showing that God's kingdom, His rule and reign, is in your life. God is a good and wise King. He made us and knows exactly what we need and the best way to live our lives. Sometimes we think we know what's best, so we choose our own way and decide we don't need God's help, which can cause pain and messes."

Goldie put her hand on her bandaged knee. She told her mom that she was sorry for not obeying and waiting for her help with the scooter. **Before Mom kissed Goldie goodnight, they prayed. They thanked God for sending Jesus, who made the way for them to be a part of God's kingdom.** And that the Holy Spirit would help them say yes to Jesus so God's kingdom would be displayed on the earth.

by Laurie Bennett, Early Childhood Director

DUST OFF YOUR CLEATS



At 21 months, my speechless nephew constantly gestures with his tiny hands for his parents to come over and play. He will grab an arm, pant leg, finger, or whatever is within reach in an effort to get their attention. The little guy will bring over his massive tub of soccer balls, basketballs, and footballs and start throwing them while voicelessly urging his mom or dad to join in the fun. His adorable grin makes it difficult not to comply. As kids get older and life gets busier, it becomes increasingly easy to miss the subtle nonverbal cues children use to try to communicate to their parents.

Although elementary-age children can communicate, they often beg for their parents to play through nonverbal cues, just like a younger child. Children desperately want to spend time with their parents. It does not take much effort to toss a

ball back and forth with a toddler. However, to involve yourself in the world of an elementary kid may take some stretching out of your comfort zone.

What are some of the activities your child loves? Is it Pokemon? Playing basketball? Fortnite video games? Drawing cartoon characters? Building with Legos? Soccer? Journaling? I doubt that trading Pokemon cards is listed under “skills” on your resume. **In fact, most of the activities children love seem ridiculous, mundane, and immature to their parents.** Or perhaps you were an athlete as a child but your son or daughter is more of an artist. Whatever the case may be, grab a gaming remote, dust off the cleats, research the Pokemon characters, learn a Fortnite dance. Dive into your child’s world no matter how uncomfortable it might seem.

A common quote states, “To a child, love is spelled T-I-M-E.” Contrary to common thought, children actually want to spend time with their parents. They love to see you try to play a video game, bust a dance move, shoot an airball, or whiff a soccer ball. They don’t need a perfect parent or an expert. They just need a willing and cheerful heart.

I am reminded of a cold, harsh winter in Indiana that kept our entire family inside. In an effort to turn off the technology, my parents created the “Fox Family Olympics” (my maiden name). They included games everyone would enjoy and some games that would push us all out of our comfort zone. My father was and still is terrible at dancing. However, he knew that all of his children loved to dance. He would compete as if he was good at dancing and laugh along with the rest of us at his inability to ever win the dance portion of the games. Now, as a young adult, I have fond memories of moments like these because I know my parents loved me by the time and effort they put into spending time as a family.

Just like my nephew, your son or daughter may not have the words to articulate his or her desire to play with you. Don’t let your children’s silence or apathetic attitude mislead you. Diving into their world of activities will bring rich conversations and moments of discipleship and serve as an example to try new things. **Embrace the awkward and uncomfortable and step out of your comfort zone as a parent.**

by Mary Windebank, Director of Elementary

CHALLENGE

Identify one activity that your child or children put effort into or gave attention to this week. How can you be a part of their activity? How can you make this activity even more special to your child? For example, if your child loves basketball, is there a college game you can watch together? Maybe consider going to a restaurant to watch a big game. Get creative and be okay with doing things that might be uncomfortable. Your child will love it!

Look Up & Breathe



A DEVOTIONAL FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

READ LUKE 10:38-42.

Have you ever felt like you are furiously swimming through life and then something happens that forces you to come to the surface, take a few deep breaths, and look around you? During my senior year of high school, I remember running on a treadmill after a long week preparing for midterms. I was stressed out. I had been investing all my time and energy into studying, passing tests, presenting speeches, planning Thanksgiving break, making sure Parker asked me to homecoming, not to mention the unrelenting question of “What am I supposed to do with the next season of my life?” My head was spinning.

So, I was running on a treadmill, and I looked up at the TV screens to see “Breaking News: Day 7 of California Wildfires.” Apparently, California had been on fire for a week and I had no idea. Up until that point, I had been furiously swimming with my face stuck in books. My thoughts were so consumed with my needs I hadn’t even looked up to see what the needs of others were—let alone the devastation happening a few states over.

In the story Luke recounts in chapter 10, two sisters are “swimming” similar lives but seem to be fixing their attention in two different places. The first sister, Martha, appears to be doing the right thing by letting Jesus into her life and serving Him readily. However, she is focused

on less important tasks. The second sister, Mary, pauses to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him.

Jesus knew how important it was for Mary and Martha to sit at his feet and be filled by His words. He even called it a “need.” You see, in the end, the “swimming” gets done. My schoolwork got done, I passed my tests, I went to homecoming with Parker, and Thanksgiving break was a blast! But it took wildfires and stress to make me pause, come to the surface, and see what was right in front of me.

Jesus calls us to, first, get filled with what we need from Him. Then everything else falls into alignment with His will.

I want you to pause, take a moment, and sit with Jesus. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. He is present and wants to give you the oxygen you desperately need. Are you ready to receive?

Once you pause, ask the Lord if there is a different direction He wants you to swim. Once we are filled, we get to use our energy for the sake of others, sharing the fullness of Jesus with the people around us. Sometimes this looks like serving our families, our churches, our friends. Don't be afraid to breathe deeply at the feet of Jesus, and then swim out and share His goodness with others.

by Catherine Gerstenberg, Student Ministries Administrator

LET'S DO THIS *Together*



Do you feel alone when you or your family walk into church? When you walk through the doors into the lobby do you feel like a small fish in a very large pond? Do you think no one knows your name and that if you were to stop coming ... no one would miss you?

If that is the case, I have the cure for what ails you: VOLUNTEER and participate in other church functions such as family ministry, sections community, men's meetings, women's meetings, and many other opportunities to connect. There is no better way to meet people in your church than by serving them. Not only do you get to meet the people you serve, but you also are in a position to get to know many of the church leaders and volunteers.

Currently, my wife and I are section hosts, living-room greeters, prayer ministers, and we participate in other regular church functions and ministries. That may sound like a lot ... but it's not really. We alternate certain functions every other Sunday and we are careful not to serve in areas that are outside of God's calling on our lives. As a result, we are not drained by service—we are energized by it. **Our entire family sees our church service as an opportunity to utilize the gifts God has given us and to be a blessing to others.**

Our youngest child serves in the children's ministry and in the special needs ministry. My wife and I want to emphasize that he chose to serve on his own and we did not force or pressure him to do so. However, we do believe that he was influenced by our example and by his own inward desire to help others like his older brother who has special needs. Our middle child, who has autism, often stands with me when I serve as a

living-room greeter, and he is usually near me when I speak to members of our section community in my capacity as a section host. In his own way, he is contributing as much as anyone with his infectious laugh and room-brightening smile.

As a result of volunteering, our family has developed a deep love and affection for church. We are not just "participants"; we feel CONNECTED. Church isn't just a Sunday morning event; it is our extended family. This family connection is possible because we stepped out in faith and began to serve. We experience true joy when we walk through those doors to participate in worship because we know that we are home!

So, where should you start? I know it's easy to be fearful and think that you have to have a special skill or ability in order to minister to your fellow believers. However, we have learned that you only need to have a willing heart. Also, do not be afraid that you might make a mistake and volunteer in an area that is not right for you. Remember, just like a large ship, you can't do anything with it when it is standing still. However, once you get it moving you can change direction if you see that you are going the wrong way. Just get going! Once you say yes to God He will equip you, and then you'll see the overflow that comes from stepping out in faith.

by Sheldon and Selena Duffy

Sheldon is a California native, retired from the army 28 years ago, and currently teaches middle school social studies. Salena is a New Jersey native, Army veteran, and ministry leader. They have been married for 18 years and are the proud parents of three sons: Christopher, Samuel, and Daniel.



HOW TO SERVE YOUR FAMILY WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

The day had just begun and I was already exhausted. I had been up much of the night with an infant who had cried on and off for sustenance and comfort. I knew God designed her dependence on me, but I felt worn out from meeting all her needs day after day, night after night. All too quickly the sun was rising and another day was on the horizon. After breakfast, I began rallying my four kids, seven and under, to begin our day. My oldest headed to our office area. “Mom, can you read *Owls in the Family* to me?” I followed her into the room with as much enthusiasm as I could muster. “Sure Honey, let’s start reading.” I sat down beside her while continuously rocking her fussing three-month-old sister in my left arm. We had just finished reading one page when I heard a faint voice from the living room. It was my son’s voice: “Mom, can you play soccer with me?” Before I had a chance to respond, my second daughter chimed in, “Mom, I can’t find my favorite green T-shirt and I really want to wear it today. Can you help me find it?”

I felt the anxiety swirling in my stomach; there were too many needs and not enough of me to go around. I wanted to serve and love and extend kindness, but how could I do this well? How could I pour myself out like a drink offering but not become drained in the process?

Jesus was a servant, and He calls us to follow His example: “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26 ESV). But Jesus was also self-differentiated, meaning He was neither enmeshed with nor detached from the people He served. He had a clear understanding of His vision and values. Therefore, He was able to healthily separate Himself from people while also welcoming them and meeting their needs. **When we serve, we should not lose our sense of who we are by becoming enmeshed with or codependent upon the people we serve.**

Serving our families can be hard for another reason. Our society tends to elevate achievement and efficiency. People don’t often turn to us moms at dinner parties to ask what we’ve accomplished with our kids that day—despite the fact that we likely have a long list! The ways we serve our kids day in and day out is largely hidden from most people. Just as Jesus heard the Father say, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we must continue to go to the Father to remind ourselves of His delight in us (Matthew 17:5 ESV).

It’s essential for our identity to be rooted in Him rather than listening to what the world may say about the value of servanthood. All the small, everyday acts you do, from washing dishes to buying groceries to changing diapers to making a meal to picking your kids up from an activity, are exceedingly valuable in the kingdom. The world may not respect your choice to spend time serving your family, but God sees each and every act as a seed planted in His garden that will bear much fruit.

Take 10 minutes by yourself to reflect on this question:

In what ways do I serve my family?

List the general areas where you serve your family and the specific ways you serve your family. You may notice you lovingly serve them more than you realize, or you may recognize there are additional ways you’d like to serve them.

Finally, pray. Ask the Lord to remind you that you are His beloved child, that you don’t need to prove anything, and that He sees all the ways you lovingly serve your family. **Take heart, friend. Fix your eyes on Jesus; be rooted in the Father’s love; go in the power of the Holy Spirit to serve your family.**

by Holly Packiam

Holly is the Parenting Ministry Pastor at New Life Downtown. She also writes and speaks on parenting and spiritual formation. Holly earned an MA in Counseling and a BA in Communications. She enjoys coffee, homeschooling her four kids, long walks, and meaningful conversations with her family and friends.

Embrace the Uncomfortable

I noticed something recently about my three-year-old son, Declan. He loves it when my wife calls him a “gentleman,” and her encouragements propel him to act in many tiny gentlemanly ways. For example, he loves to share with his sister. I can see as he scrunches his little face and slowly releases his grip on the coveted toy of the moment that it is a stretch for him, and I am sure he does not love that particular moment of release. But he sure loves making his sister happy. And he loves to be who his mom says he is.

As I’ve watched him grow over these last three and a half years, I have wondered if my son is more of a gentleman than I am. Being a father often reminds me that I am selfish, distracted, entitled, impatient, disinterested, and proud. The ironic thing is that I get frustrated with my children for acting in these very ways. I am proud of Declan now, but I am worried about what will happen as he grows older. I am worried because I know I have room to grow, and I do not always take advantage of it.

Becoming a father has stretched me into the uncomfortable and pushed me to recognize my own shortcomings. I want the same for my son. I want him to be pushed and stretched, and as a marriage and family therapist who spends a lot of time with teenagers, I see firsthand what can happen when this work of self-examination and character focus is neglected.

“I SPEND MY DAYS WORKING WITH A GOOD MANY FATHERS AND SONS... AND WHAT I CAN SAY WITH CERTAINTY IS THAT SONS LEARN FROM WHAT THEIR FATHERS DO—HOW THEY LIVE, LOVE, AND SERVE—NOT FROM WHAT THEIR FATHERS SAY.”



We can all resonate to some degree with the idea that teaching our sons to serve has more to do with service than teaching. Plato said it well in stating, “The best way of training the young is to train yourself at the same time; not to admonish them, but to be seen never doing that of which you would admonish them.” This is no easy task, and it suggests that true fathering is about living out what we desire to teach our children rather than simply telling our children what we hope they learn.

I spend my days working with a good many fathers and sons, in addition to raising a tiny son myself, and what I can say with certainty is that sons learn from what their fathers *do*—how they live, love, and serve—not from what their fathers say.

It’s a sobering reality as I seek to raise children of my own. I have learned to say a great many things well, but have I learned to do them well? Do I show with my life that being stretched and uncomfortable is not something to be avoided but walked through and embraced?

My encouragement to any father, myself included, is to help our sons grow by being willingly stretched, to help them serve by having servants’ hearts, and to show them how to live life in a manner we can be proud of. This will not happen by becoming critics of our children’s behavior. It comes from a willingness to address our own areas of growth and needed change.

I may currently be at times selfish, distracted, entitled, impatient, disinterested, and proud. So is my son. And the most uncomfortable thing for any man is to own the things in himself that ought to change and seek to change them.

by Max Ziegenhagen

Max is a marriage and family therapist and owner of North Family Counseling. He is passionate about reconnecting families to what really matters. Working and residing in Colorado Springs, he and his family enjoy the outdoors, good food, and time with friends. Max is an avid speaker on topics related to family life, teenage experience, and addiction and depression. Additionally, he writes and illustrates kids’ books. He is glad to do what he loves.

THE ULTIMATE UN-COMFORT ZONE

“Marriage is ____.” How would you fill in that blank right now? Marriage is **hard**. Marriage is *great*. Marriage is a *constant struggle*. We move in and out of seasons in all things of life, and marriage is no exception. Sometimes marriage is the primary source of joy and strength in our lives ... and sometimes it is the pressure-filled, tension-inducing weight of all weights. Ah. Marriage.

As we look at the idea of comfort zones, it makes me think of marriage as the ultimate un-comfort zone. Sure, we know our spouses better than anyone and can be more “comfortable” with them than anyone else. (Who else would I ever let use my toothbrush because our toddler lost hers? #TrueStory)

But, my spouse also becomes the biggest challenger to my “personal comforts” in comparison to anyone else. My friends don’t tend to openly challenge me to get off my phone, to be more attentive to others, or to rise to a more mature level of communication. My spouse, however, becomes a reflective tool God uses to help me confront myself.

So, maybe it is safe to fill in the original blank with “uncomfortable.” How many times have I taken a break in conversation with my wife in frustration and, after calming down, come to realize that she probably has a more accurate perspective on me and the situation than I have. My comfort with her leads her to know me more intimately than anyone, and it also means massive discomfort because she can call me out more with more precision than anyone. So, what should we do with this potentially uncomfortable confrontation of ourselves?

First, **recognize** your reaction to the discomfort of confrontation. That’s it. Just recognize that you have moments of discomfort and confrontation with your spouse and it causes some reaction in you. Call it fight, flight, or freeze. Call it anger, defensiveness, or frustration. All I’m saying is growth through discomfort starts by **recognizing** your reaction.

Second, **practice curiosity**. We can become curious about our own emotions and reactions to learn what on earth is going on. For instance, when your spouse brought up that topic again, why did it make you react that way? Or why did your spouse speaking in that tone make you go system shutdown? When I say, “Be curious,” what I mean is enter into the uncomfortable space of inspecting yourself and ask, “What’s going on?”

Finally, **own yourself**. We spend so much time avoiding ourselves and our emotions that when we get to this point it can be novel and hard. Accepting who you are, where you are, and how you are can be out of our comfort zones. God has used my wife more than anyone else to show me myself. But once I know and own myself, it can become a starting point from which I can humbly grow and mature in the Lord and in marriage.



by Evan Reedall

Pastor Evan loves family. He is married to Karen and has two incredibly fun boys, William and Alistair. He has been on staff with New Life Downtown since 2013, currently serving as the Executive Pastor of Marriage and Family. Having recently earned an MA from Denver Seminary, he finds himself with more time to enjoy the finer things of life ... like playtime, date nights, and the honey-do list.

Leading a Kingdom Legacy

Keepsake treasure boxes are the best! Somewhere we all have one tucked away. My favorite treasure boxes are strategically placed in my basement, filled with pictures of family, friends, events, and travels that have taken us near and far. These photographs hold more than images of the past. They tell a story of a family ... my family and the many others God placed in our lives who became our extended family as we served together in ministry.



Upon opening any one of these boxes, a flood of memories sends me, our daughters, and our granddaughters into hours of conversation, laughter, and tears. These captured moments remind us of our journey together.

My husband and I were blessed with two amazing daughters. They served together with us in ministry as my husband pastored small congregations throughout their childhood and into their college years. Small churches were often not equipped with an established staff or an army of volunteers. This meant that as a young mother, I stepped into roles of teaching, music ministry, nursery, and any other areas of service that needed attention—all the while with our young daughters at my side. They learned firsthand the joy of serving the Lord, our family, and the body of Christ locally and around the world.

Recently I asked our youngest daughter what made the biggest impact in her life in regards to serving. Her response was this: **“When I think about the impact serving others as a family made on my life, the reality is while growing up I really didn’t know there was anything different.** Compassion, caring, and giving were just part of what we did. It was the natural response in our home. It wasn’t strange or awkward. It brought us joy and peace in knowing that we could be the hands and feet of Jesus. Serving others wasn’t a chore or a

requirement to meet community service hours. It was part of who we were as a family. It’s a natural part of who we are to this day. Hearts that are moved by a compassion bigger than ourselves, making the choice to reach out to the hurting and lonely, to help meet needs with the resources God has provided for us and to share the good news of Jesus in both word and deed. **These are powerful things to pass on to your children and not easily taught.** It is a way of life that is lived in front of you, that you are raised in—and a legacy that will be passed on to the next generation.”

Her words made me think of the family legacy that my husband and I can now share and leave with our granddaughters. They love to open those treasure boxes of pictures to see and hear the stories about their parents and grandparents.

Some of those pictures now include them! Their little faces shine brightly among the precious faces of our Hispanic/Latino church family where my husband and I served as children’s pastors for several years. They also joined us on many occasions as we served several years later in another church as outreach ministry directors. Although they were small, they still remember serving with Nana and Poppy. They have memories of us studying, teaching, leading, and serving others in both big and small ways. **Seeds have been planted, and we will continue to water those seeds while praying for the harvest that God will bring through their lives for His glory.**

Those treasure boxes have now traveled with us to Colorado where we live with our oldest daughter and her family. I currently serve on the Family Ministries Team of our church as the Nursery Coordinator. Funny story is that when we moved here three years ago, I had a serious conversation with God. I had made the decision that it was time to retire from children’s ministry with this move. God had other plans. Several months after the move, I answered the call to serve in the church nursery and from there God’s plan unfolded. My granddaughter Annabelle serves as a Junior Nursery Volunteer alongside me every Sunday. Savannah loves to help with the creative side of the lesson preparations and Selah, the youngest, jumps in and pushes strollers for the little ones that need a little extra TLC.

Someday our granddaughters will open their own treasure boxes and share testimonies of God’s love and faithfulness with their families. **A legacy of serving is one of the best legacies we can leave in the hands of this future generation.** As grandparents we have the ability to reinforce the value of serving to our own children, their children, and future children to come.

by Christy Thomas, Nursery Coordinator

Facing FEAR

The entire house was dark, and I had been lying in bed for several hours trying to fall asleep. Every little noise made me jump even with the covers pulled up over my head. My eyes felt droopy, but I couldn't fall asleep because of my paralyzing fear. I am not sure if I thought a bad person would enter my bedroom or a monster was under my bed. But as an eight year old, I was terrified to sleep alone in my bed. For over a year, I had been able to ignore my fear by using coping mechanisms such as begging a sibling to sleep with me or sneaking into my parents' room to sleep on the floor. On that night just 30 days before my ninth birthday, my family had had enough of the middle of the night interruptions. It was time to face my fear head-on.

My parents challenged me to sleep in my room alone every night until my birthday. If I could do it, they would award me with a new bedroom makeover. It wasn't just a bribe to them. They wanted my environment to represent a new beginning and to celebrate my accomplishment. The entire family gathered around me each night before bed to pray over me and to show their support in helping me conquer this fear. For the first few nights, I wanted to give up, and I am sure my parents wanted to let me give up because I didn't fall asleep until after 2:00 a.m. **Nevertheless, my entire family knew that fear is something we have to face to see growth.** With their encouragement, prayers, and Scriptures placed all around my room, I was finally able to sleep alone, in the dark and peacefully.

Do you have a younger child who is afraid of the dark or of a large dog? Or perhaps an older child who is afraid of taking a risk, failing in front of her peers, or standing up to a mean classmate? Everyone, from young children to adults, experiences fear at one time or another. In fact, we all experience fear in different aspects and seasons of life. **Ultimately, learning to deal with fear is an important life lesson.**

As parents, it is in our nature to want to protect, care for, and love our children. If one of our children is afraid, our first response is to make it all better. Unfortunately, we cannot make everything better for them as they grow up. And, if we don't encourage our children to tackle their

fears at a young age, they will lack the tools to continue to conquer fears or even difficult tasks as adults. **Consider helping your child in a different way by using the following tips:**

- Be patient as you listen to your child talk about his fear. Sometimes just talking about a fear can help your child move past it.
- Pray about the fear with your child. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).
- God wants to help us overcome our fears. Teaching our kids to first run to God with their fears is key. Through God, all things are possible.
- Help your child take ownership of conquering her fear through practical solutions. For example, if your child is afraid of an intruder, make locking the door her nightly responsibility. If your child is afraid of public speaking, encourage her to practice in front of the family or in front of a mirror.
- Together, look in the Bible for relevant verses. Memorizing a Scripture to speak over and over when afraid can bring peace and confidence.
- Books and movies with powerful storylines can inspire children to overcome fears and be brave.
- Give lots of praise and encouragement no matter how small or big the accomplishment. Every act of conquering a fear is worth celebrating.
- Repeat the steps above over and over. Conquering a fear usually doesn't happen quickly. Most importantly, don't negatively reinforce the fear by giving in to rescuing your child or allowing him to give up. It is worth the time and effort to disciple your child through the fear.

by Holly Newman, Pastor of Parenting and Families

ASK

OUR PASTORS

How do you talk to a young child about the role of the Holy Spirit?

We have explained to our kids that the Holy Spirit is GOD'S Spirit who comes to live in us as we invite Him in. The Spirit is, according to the Apostles' Creed, the "Lord" and the "Giver of Life," and so when the Spirit comes into us He makes us alive with the life of God. The Spirit also produces good FRUIT in us, and so we have always taught and talked to our kids about the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, etc.

Answer from Pastor Andrew Arndt

What tips can you offer to help children become confident praying in front of people?

This is a great question that reveals your intentionality as a parent. First, the more our children hear us pray out loud as parents, the more they'll begin to learn the language of prayer. Second, we can create safe environments for them to practice, like at the dinner table, before bed, etc. Lastly, we can help our kids pay attention to the different ways God is answering their prayers. Keeping a family prayer journal and recording God's faithfulness can go a long way in helping build our children's faith, which can result in a growing confidence to pray in front of others.

Answer from Pastor Gabe Jenkins

What are some of the things you do with your children that build your relationship outside of spiritual practices?

As a dad of young children, I admit that I struggle to join their world of crafting, make-believe, mess-making, and imagination. I've found that positive relational connections have come through simply bringing them along with me and intentionally including them in the task. For example, during a trip to Home Depot, I hold their hands, walk at their pace, show them the list and help them pick things out, or let them push the cart. Icing on the cake is a quick stop at the park and chasing them for 10 minutes or a small treat on the way home. These are the days I get "You're the best dad ever!" during bedtime hugs.

Answer from Pastor Collin Stoddard

COMMENTS

TO OUR FAMILIES

Our staff has been praying for your families during this COVID-19 crisis. There is no quick and simple way to navigate processing emotions and losses sustained during this crisis. This is especially true with children. Be patient and prayerful about how to navigate the emotional ups and downs. It will take time for life to get back to "normal" and for you to move past the pain. The family unit is the strongest support system that can help children process a trauma. A few ways you can lead your family are to talk openly about the situation, protect your child from the negativity of the media, affirm your constant love and stability, and choose to see the blessings and God's gifts in the middle of the trauma. Our pastors and staff are here to pray with your family and assist with any needs you might have regarding this situation. Don't hesitate to reach out.



Help! My Teen Is Self-Injuring

A Crisis Manual for Parents

DR. MARK MAYFIELD

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