

2022 | January | February

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

MODELING

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

SERVING

"Asks the question, "What needs to be done?""

A Season
**of New
Growth**

HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

HOW TO USE

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.

- 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.
- 2** 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.
- 3** There are four weeks of devotionals and activities. When you have a fifth week in the month, let the kids plan the family night. 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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LET'S BE SOCIAL

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HomeFront magazine is designed to help parents and grandparents disciple their children and grandchildren by creating environments in their homes that put God and His character on display. Each issue is created to give 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 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.



A Note from Michelle

In this issue you will be focusing on the environments of **MODELING** and **SERVING**.

- The environment of **MODELING** puts on display the way in which God seeks for us to live now that we are His redeemed people. Modeling serves as a powerful example of what Christ-centered living looks like. Often, we think we need to be perfect role models, but as parents we can model faith living when we get it right or when we get it wrong. Simply by acknowledging our efforts as a good representation or as a faulty one, we can establish truth in the hearts and minds of the next generation.

The short statement for this environment is: "I see Christ in others, and they can see Him in me."

- The environment of **SERVING** asks the question, "What needs to be done?" This is a question from the heart and is asking God to give discernment and wisdom for a need or situation. When we ask, "What needs to be done?" versus "What do I want to do or feel like doing?" we are entering into the life of a servant. Jesus shows us true servanthood by becoming the ultimate sacrifice because what was needed was salvation from our sins and relationship with the heavenly Father.

The short statement for this environment is: "Serving asks the question, 'What needs to be done?'"

*Dr. Michelle Anthony 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.*

@TruInspiration



Editor's Note

The beginning of a New Year will always be associated with "fresh starts" for me and my husband. After the business of the holiday season, we settle into a more restful pace and a predictable day-to-day routine. Naturally, we have more time to think about our personal lives and reflect on the previous year. My husband and I like to take a few days to reflect on the pace of our lives, our relationships with our kids and with each other, and then look forward to the coming year.

Perhaps one of your New Year's resolutions is to spend more time with family and that resolution led you to this magazine. Welcome! Whether you are new to HomeFront or a regular visitor, let me give you a few tips on how to use this resource. Within the following pages, you will find devotionals, craft ideas, a family game, conversation starters, and more designed to give you ideas for an amazing family night or a simple car ride conversation. It does NOT matter if you get through all of it in one month. What matters is that you have resources available for one or all of those intentional moments of discipleship with your

children. We hope to make it easy for you so you can focus on your child's heart.

Our family has family night on Sunday evenings. It just seems to be a night when everyone is home and able to focus on one another. We start with a fun dinner using one of the recipes or a family favorite and read one of the devotionals while mouths are full and ears are ready to listen. Afterwards, we pick a game, create, serve, or worship response article to do that evening. **There are intentionally four activities per month so your family will have one thing to do each week. Start by setting a consistent time to meet as a family.** Then, use whatever articles and resources within the magazine that strike you as a good fit. Remember, the goal is to spend time with your kids and enjoy it! The perfect family night does not exist. **There will be snags and setbacks, but your children will remember the effort, the togetherness, and the love you share in that hour of time.**

Finally, may you know that your heavenly Father loves you dearly. May you know that He is doing a new thing in you and your family. And may you know that **He is filling you up with His love to pour out on others. Amen.**

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 curricula 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. In her spare time she loves to get outdoors with her family.*

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FAMILY CALANDER

**DID you
KNOW**

It is our prayer that homes and churches would create environments for children to live in so their faith will grow in a community of common language and practice. To learn more about creating environments that 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

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.

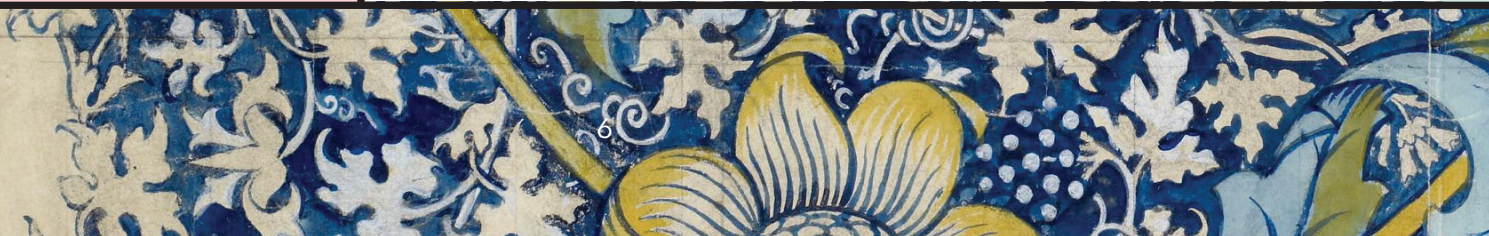
“God fills me with His love so I can give it away.”

5

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.

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



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.

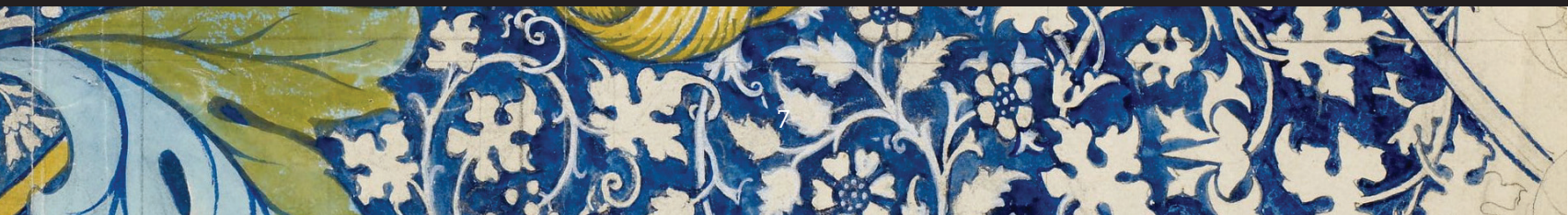
10

"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.

14



JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	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	31					

SHOPPING LIST

IDEAS | SUPPLIES | NOTES

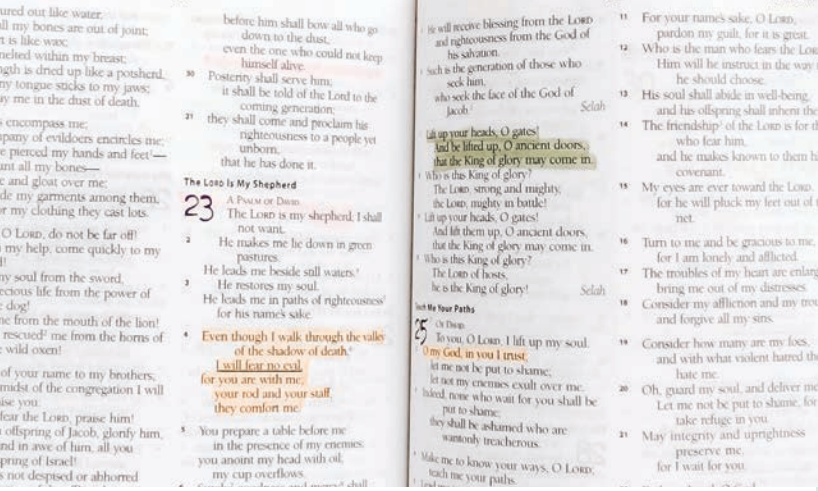
FAMILY VERSE

See, I am doing a
new thing!

Now it *springs* up;
do you not perceive it?

I am making *a way*
in the wilderness and
streams *in the* wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19



GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD IS FAITHFUL
SCRIPTURE:
MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23
(PART 2)

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
JESUS IS THE GOOD NEWS
SCRIPTURE:
MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23
(PART 1)

Jesus is the ultimate teacher. He never misses an opportunity to help us understand our heavenly Father, our new life in His family, or how to relate to one another. In this week's passage of Scripture, Jesus had a crowd of people following Him, wanting to learn from Him. He took this opportunity to teach them about how the "good news" of God's love and forgiveness impacts people in different ways. Jesus used a parable to teach them. **A parable is a story that illustrates a truth and helps people to understand that truth using language they understand.** Because Jesus was probably speaking to people who understood farming, He used a farmer's illustration.

Even today, people around the world struggle to grow food where there is poor or not enough soil. Jesus is telling you that good soil will grow strong faith in your life. You can have good soil by obeying Him, trusting Him, listening to Him, and loving Him. And, you can model this way of living to your siblings, friends, and family members. Having God's seeds of love and forgiveness, which will bear a huge harvest of love and forgiveness in your life, is one of the best ways to grow and share your faith with others.

DISCUSSION

Can you think of a specific way you can allow God's seed to fall on good soil in your life? Can you think of a specific way you can model this to someone else?

by Michelle Anthony, Executive Pastor of Family Ministries, New Life North

This week we are going to look a little deeper into the parable we learned about last week. As we look at the Scripture again, let's remember the four places where the seed fell. First, we see that the seeds fell on a path where there was no soil and the birds quickly came and ate it up. Next, we see that the seeds fell into some rocks and the soil wasn't deep enough to allow the seeds to take root; when the sun came out, the little sprouts quickly died. After that, there were some seeds that fell into weeds and the thorny bushes crowded out the little plants until they too died. Finally, the farmer's seed fell into good soil and this good soil produced crops that yielded thirty, sixty, or one hundred times what he had planted. Wow! That's a huge harvest!

We learned last week that this parable teaches us about how our faith grows when we hear the good news of God's love and forgiveness. **This love and forgiveness is the way the Kingdom of God is built.** There are people in our lives who are similar to all of these places. Some people don't understand God's love and forgiveness at all, just like the path with no soil. Others understand it a little and the good news starts to grow, but difficulties or doubts cause it to stop growing. But some are hungry to know and experience God and everything He has for them. You get to be a part of modeling His love and forgiveness, *but you are not responsible* for how it grows. Remember, our part is to model His love, but the "growing" part is up to our faithful God!

DISCUSSION

Let's be faithful farmers who scatter seeds of God's love!

Name a few friends or family members that you can model God's love and forgiveness to this week. What is a practical or fun way that you can do this?

by Michelle Anthony, Executive Pastor of Family Ministries, New Life North

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
JESUS IS LORD OF THE HARVEST
SCRIPTURE:
MATTHEW 13:12

At the end of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, Jesus finishes with a somewhat confusing riddle. Verse 12 says, “Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance.” If that seems cryptic, let’s put it in other terms. In the parable, Jesus taught His followers that when they hear a message, they should apply it to their hearts. This is just like planting a seed in soil that bears fruit. If one were to continue to take the seeds from the harvest and plant them again and again, there would be even more fruit.

In the same way, when your understanding of the Scriptures grows in your heart and you apply it to your life, it will become evident over time. As you understand faith and apply the principle of faith to your life, you will see evidence of this and it will build to more over time. The same applies to loving your neighbor or rejoicing in trials. As you steadfastly sow these seeds in the soil of your heart, you grow more love and more joy through your actions.

You can apply this same principle when you think about modelling Christ to your friends, family, and peers. **As you consistently sow love, peace, patience, and kindness to those around you, the fruit will show in your life as well as in theirs.** What a promise! A garden of life can grow by your example when you apply the Word and model Christ to those around you.

DISCUSSION

What is one way you can model Christ to those around you that will create more love and joy in others?

by Jordan Lewis, Director of Communications & Administration, New Life Friday Night



GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD IS TEACHER
SCRIPTURE:
MATTHEW 13:14-16

As we close our study this month on the parable of the sower and the seed, let’s look at a few verses Jesus recited that actually came from the Old Testament. These verses in Matthew 13:14-16 were first recorded in the book of Isaiah. Jesus uses these verses to warn people that there is more to listening than just audibly hearing words.

Genuine listening means that we take to heart what is being said and we allow those words to impact our actions. Taking the time to understand what is being said and understand how God’s words transform us when we put them into practice is an essential part of growing in our faith.

This week, as you think of the things God’s Word tells you or teaches you, consider how to do more than just memorize or recite them, but to also understand deeply in order to live accordingly. God desires that you will be more than just a “hearer” of the Word but that you would be a “doer” also (James 1:22). **And, Jesus is our best model of this way of living. He always listened, understood, and did what His heavenly Father desired.**

DISCUSSION

To be “doers” we must be able to understand what is being taught. **What are some tools or resources that will help you understand God’s Word better?** Who is someone godly and wise that you can model your life after and who can help you apply God’s Word?

by Michelle Anthony, Executive Pastor of Family Ministries, New Life North



Sausage Potato Soup

As the cold of winter sets in, warm and comforting soup is a crowd pleaser, especially when paired with buttery biscuits.

For busy nights, you can cook this soup earlier in the day, easily reheat it, and serve it as a quick, delicious meal. The rich, creamy flavor and delightful veggies are sure to make it a favorite during the winter months.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground Italian sausage, hot or mild
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 1/4 cup red potatoes, about 6 small potatoes
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- fresh parsley

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Preheat a large pot over medium heat. Spray the bottom of the pot with non-stick spray. Add the ground sausage, crumble to break apart and cook about halfway through. Cover partially and continue to cook, stirring occasionally until cooked through, about 10 minutes total. Set the sausage aside and reserve 1 tablespoon drippings. Add the drippings to the pot along with 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add the diced onions, celery, and carrots. Cook for about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the flour and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Then, add the chicken broth in small amounts and use a spatula to “clean” the bottom of the pot to add more flavor to the soup. Slowly stir in the heavy cream, hot sauce, soy sauce, and seasoning. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Clean the potatoes and pat them dry. Cut into 1-inch cubes and then add them to the soup. Simmer uncovered for 40 minutes until potatoes are tender. Add the sausage back in and stir to combine. Reduce heat to low and stir in the cheese. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Apple Cider Donuts

Is there anything better than donuts on a slow Saturday morning?

This easy-to-follow recipe can be a great way for your older kids to learn how to make donuts while you enjoy a hot cup of coffee. Serve these straight out of the oven with some eggs and bacon for a delightful, winter-themed breakfast.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Donuts

- 1 1/2 cup apple cider
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- pinch of ground cardamom, optional
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Topping

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

WHAT YOU'LL DO

In a small saucepan, bring apple cider to a gentle boil and let simmer over medium heat until thick and reduced to about 1/3 cup (15 to 25 minutes). Set aside to cool. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease donut pans with butter or nonstick spray. Set aside. In a large bowl sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, spices, and salt. Set aside. In a small bowl whisk together the egg, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until well combined. Whisk in the melted butter. Add the reduced apple cider, buttermilk, and vanilla extract, and mix until combined. Pour the mixture into the flour mixture and whisk until just combined and smooth. Don't overmix the batter. Divide the mixture between the donut cavities, filling about halfway full. A piping bag will make it easier and less messy. Bake for about 10 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the center of the donuts comes out clean. Let donuts cool in the pan for about 5 minutes and then transfer them to a wire rack. While the donuts are baking, make the topping. In a medium bowl mix together sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Once cool enough to handle, dip both sides of each donut in melted butter and then generously dip into the sugar mixture. Donuts are best served warm.



Polar Bear Oreos

If you are looking for a fun activity to do with your younger and older kids, these polar bear face Oreos are adorable and engaging. For those feeling extra creative, other arctic animals like penguins or walruses can be found online. Your family will have a blast dipping and decorating.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 package Double Stuf Oreos
- 1 bag M&M's
- 2 bags white chocolate melting wafers
- 1 package small edible eyes
- 1 cookie sheet fitted with parchment paper or a non-stick silicone baking mat



WHAT YOU'LL DO

Melt one bag of white chocolate in a microwave safe bowl for 20 seconds at a time, stirring in between. Gently pull apart the Oreos, making sure that the creme stays on one half of the cookie. Lightly press two yellow M&M's into the creme, so that half of each M&M sticks out of the cookie. These will be the "ears," so you want to place them at what will be the top of your polar bear face, about one finger width apart. Place the other half of the Oreo cookie back on top and slowly dip the top half into the melted chocolate. Lightly shake the cookie to get excess chocolate off and place onto the cookie sheet. Repeat steps with all the remaining cookies. Place cookies into the fridge for 10 minutes to harden before continuing. Next, place the Oreo cookie into the melted chocolate using a fork, lightly flip the cookie so that both sides get coated. Lightly tap the side of the pot to get excess chocolate off, and place the Oreo onto the cookie sheet. Place a non-melted white chocolate wafer onto the lower part of the cookie to make the nose. The, put a dab of melted white chocolate onto the letter side of a blue M&M and press onto the white chocolate wafer. Use melted white chocolate to attach two eyes to the cookie, above the nose. Repeat steps with remaining cookies. Allow cookies to dry for 30 minutes before enjoying.



Easy Teriyaki Chicken

Takeout can become a go-to on busy weeknights but can be a financial strain. Try this Easy Teriyaki Chicken instead! It takes less than 20 minutes to put together, tastes better than takeout, and is easier on your pocket book.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Chicken

- 1 1/2 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breast meat
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 tablespoons paprika
- salt and pepper to taste
- olive oil

Sauce

- 1/2 cup low-sodium teriyaki sauce
- 1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 tablespoons honey
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup uncooked rice or package of fried rice from store

WHAT YOU'LL DO

In a small bowl, combine the first five Sauce ingredients. Stir cornstarch into the liquid until it dissolves. Set aside. Cut chicken into bite-size pieces. In a plastic bag, combine flour, garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper. Place the chicken in the bag and shake until all pieces are well coated. Heat the skillet to medium-high heat and add olive oil. Place the coated chicken in the pan and cook until almost done. Add the teriyaki sauce on top and cook for a few minutes. Cook plain rice or packaged rice as instructed on package. Serve teriyaki chicken over rice.



The New Year is a good time to start a new habit or drop an old one. For some, the New Year can cause excitement and enthusiasm; for others, it may be a reminder of the less-than-stellar return on investment or a failure to keep up with previous goals.

As parents, we have the opportunity to model to our children a New Year's resolution practice that will guarantee to yield blessings and good fruit. It's the practice of hiding God's Word in our hearts. "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). **For us to know God's ways and to share His love and truth with others, we must know God's Word**—it's a deliberate act of storing and treasuring Scripture. God tells us in Matthew 13:23 that as we hide the seed (the Word) in good soil (our hearts), listen, and obey, the seed will bear fruit and yield a great return of blessings. Why not engage in a New Year's resolution that will be rewarding for everyone in the family and guarantee a harvest of righteousness? (See Galatians 6:9.)

Jesus often taught in parables and relayed spiritual truth through real-life illustrations. **Help your children learn the spiritual truth of hiding God's Word in their hearts with the following fun activity to engage their senses and help them understand the value of knowing Scripture.**

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 packet plant/flower seeds
- 1 small pot for each family member
- potting soil
- watering canister
- Scripture verse
- markers

WHAT YOU WILL DO

1. Pray and ask God for a Scripture verse to memorize as a family. You may choose to use the Family Time Verse in this issue.
2. Have each child decorate her pot with markers.
3. Put soil in each pot and follow instructions on seed packet for how to plant the seeds.
4. As you go through step three, explain to children that the soil represents our hearts, and the seeds are God's Word.
5. Practice repeating the Scripture verse together.
6. Water the pots and explain that the water represents the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need the Holy Spirit to help us remember God's Word and obey. The Holy Spirit waters the soil of our hearts and lets the seeds of God's Word grow.
7. Enjoy watching the seed germinate slowly. Explain that the process of memorizing God's Word will take time and patience. With faithfulness, care, and the help of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God will take root, and new life will grow.

by Evie Swart, North Pastor of Midweek



New Resolution

Fishbowl

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- scrap paper
- pen
- bowl
- timer



BEFORE YOU START

It's the New Year, which means a time to make New Year's resolutions. Take time as a family to discuss some changes you would like to make for the New Year. It could be something like prioritizing family night or working through a devotional book. It could be serving at your local church, or spending more time in the Word. Whatever they might be, take time to write out two or three goals or resolutions for each person.

HOW TO PLAY

This is a fun game where you will get to play three rounds exploring the New Year's resolutions that your family discussed. First you will take pieces of paper and write down the resolutions. For example, if your resolution was to spend more time in the Word, you might write down the word Bible or Scripture. Write down at least two to three resolutions per person. Once everyone has finished, put all the pieces of paper in the bowl. Then, have your entire family sit in a circle and divide the team in half. You should sit beside people who are not on your team, if possible.

It is time to play. **You are going to play three rounds.** The object of the game is to correctly guess as many of the words or phrases when it is your team's turn. Teams will alternate having one player from their team draw from the bowl. The player will try to get his or her team to guess the word or phrase on the paper in 60 seconds or less.

1 The first round is played like the game Taboo, using words to describe what is written on the paper. For example, if the word is Bible or Scripture, the player could say, "Jesus's words that we read." The player is not allowed to say any part of the word or phrase and cannot say "rhymes with." Keep guessing as many pieces of paper until the time is up. Add up the number of words guessed correctly. Add that to your team's score. Put all the paper back in the bowl.

2 During round two, the players only get to describe the New Year's resolution with one word. For example, if the paper states "Make cookies weekly," the player could say "cook." The team needs to remember the words that were mentioned in the first round. The teams continue to alternate with one-minute rounds each. Once all the papers have been guessed, you add up each teams' totals and place all the papers back in for round three.

3 During the last round, the players take one minute to act out their paper without speaking. Think Charades! The individual must use physical gestures to communicate the word or phrase on the paper. Once the papers are gone, you will add up the scores for the last time and tally the totals from the three rounds. The team with the most points wins!

by Mary Windebank, North Director of Elementary

SOWING SEEDS TO PRODUCE A HARVEST

Gardening is rewarding, especially when the seeds sown bring the inspiring results pictured on the packaging! The picture that comes to my mind is that of a mammoth sunflower. Sturdy, bright green stems of mammoth sunflowers grow to heights between 9-feet and 12-feet tall. Broad, heart-shaped leaves adorn the stems. Massive, 20-inch flower heads atop have a daisy-like, cheerful disposition with bright yellow petals encircling a brown center.

While living in Ohio, my husband was the master gardener of this impressive sunflower. It was not uncommon for him to successfully grow a line of these beauties along the brick wall of our home every summer. So, of course, when we moved to Colorado, he wanted to carry on this gardening skill along the wrought iron fence of our new home. He envisioned these beauties sprouting in early June, growing through the summer and then bursting forth in September with their bright yellow petals and brown centers turned up toward the clear blue skies—followed by a harvest of sunflower seeds that would weigh the heads down just low enough for the squirrels, deer, and other wildlife to feast on during the cool fall weather.

There was one slight problem. The sunflowers did not flourish as they did in Ohio. What happened? There were some differences that my husband did not take into consideration. Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed in Matthew 13 has some clues to what caused this different outcome.

The sunflowers at our Ohio home had a much healthier environment to flourish. Spring rains and summer storms kept the soil moist and watered the deep roots that were forming underground. The surrounding maple trees provided shade during the hottest points of the day, with just the right mix of warm sunshine to produce a stunning crop of sunflowers.

In Colorado, the soil is much drier due to the dry air, low humidity, and less rainfall. The soil is different and needs extra nutrients to provide a healthy place for the seeds to mature. The sun is closer, brighter, and hotter due to being at a higher altitude. Hailstorms happen here, too!

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Spend a few minutes thinking about ways to provide a better and safer environment for the sunflowers to grow in the new climate. Have each family member draw or write his idea on an index card, and then share your ideas.

Next read **Matthew 13:1-23**. Just as you discussed the natural elements that bring life to sown seed, now share how spiritual seeds can be sown to produce an eternal harvest in our personal lives and in the lives of others. Have each family member again draw or write an idea on his index card, and then share together.



- **Sunshine provides warmth and light.** How can you share warmth and light to others?
- **Trees provide protection and shade.** How can you share the love of God?
- **Fertilizer provides nutrients.** What are ways we can grow in our relationship with Jesus?
- **Know the environment.** Where can you learn more about growing in your faith?
- **Ensure a harvest.** Where can you sow seeds of your faith to share the good news of Jesus?

After you share together, gather your cards and place them in a bowl or even a plant container if handy. Pray together that God will help you as a family to grow together in His Word and to produce good seed for His kingdom.

by Christi Thomas, North Nursery Coordinator

WHAT NEEDS To Be Done?

“LET EACH OF YOU LOOK NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS” (PHILIPPIANS 2:4 ESV).

Our Family Ministries Executive Pastor, Dr. Michelle Anthony, occasionally shares about her father and how he inspired her to serve others. She remembers times that he would pile the family into the car and drive through their neighborhood or another neighborhood. His question to the family as they drove around was, “What needs to be done?” Occasionally her father would bring money to help the family complete what needed to be done, and other times they would find things they could do without money. Some of Dr. Anthony’s favorite serving opportunities with her family were purchasing groceries for a mom and her kids, helping change a tire, helping a man move, and gardening for an elderly woman.

Dr. Anthony was transformed by serving alongside her father, and now encourages her own family and our Family Ministries team to look around and ask, “What needs to be done?” This act of modeling a heart of service contradicts our natural human behavior to think only about ourselves and what we need. As we look around at what we can do to serve others, and then act upon what we see, God is glorified in our serving.

Below are some possible ideas to serve your neighbors to get you thinking. Look around and see what God shows you!



Make sure to ask your parent and your neighbor (as needed) before you get started!

- Help a neighbor bring in her groceries
- Paint a fence
- Shovel a driveway
- Help take down Christmas decorations
- Walk a dog
- Create a plan to plant flowers/plants in the spring
- Pick up trash
- Write notes of encouragement
- Get the mail for your neighbor
- Drop off a gift basket to a lonely neighbor

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

Action: Bring a notebook, a pencil, and your imagination as you and your family drive through your neighborhood or another neighborhood in your city. **As you drive around, ask each other, “What needs to be done?”** Write down the possibilities you see, then pray as a family and decide what projects you can accomplish together.

by Jeni Mason, North Family Care Pastor

BLESSING

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

MATTHEW 5

(Child's name), may you know that you are the salt of the earth. God has chosen you to be the flavor of His goodness and grace to a broken and hurting world. May you know that Jesus delights in being those things for you. May you never forget that God has called you to be His city set on a hill. May His goodness and grace continue to transform you into the image of Jesus day by day.

WEEK 2

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

(Child's name), may you know that you have been called to be the very hands and feet of Jesus right now! May you be an example to those around you as one whose speech, conduct, faith, love, and purity glorify the person of Jesus. Know that as you walk in these things you emulate the very character and nature of Jesus to the world. May you know that Jesus delights in seeing you walk with integrity, faithfulness, and love. He is proud to call you His own.

WEEK 3

EPHESIANS 5:1-2

(Child's name), you were created to be an imitator of Christ. May you be a son or daughter who walks in love as Christ has loved us and gave Himself up for us. May you know that this way of life is a sweet and fragrant offering to God. It fills His heart with absolute joy. May you know that God loves you and delights in the truth that you bear His image to the world every day.

WEEK 4

PSALM 119:105

(Child's name), God's Word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path! May you know that God has not abandoned you to walk in this world alone, but to walk with Him day by day. God delights in those who put their trust in Him and follow Him. May you know that, as you follow the footsteps of your Good Shepherd, you are paving the way for others to follow in your footsteps.



Journal

remember and celebrate

prayer

thankfulness and praise

February



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
30	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	1	2	3	4	5

SHOPPING LIST

IDEAS | SUPPLIES | NOTES

FAMILY VERSE

His master replied,

*Well done,
good and
faithful servant!*



You have been faithful with a few things,



*I will
put you in
charge of many
things.*

Come and share your
master's happiness!"

Matthew 25:21

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD IS GENEROUS
SCRIPTURE:
MATTHEW 25:14-30

Just like the servants in this passage of Scripture, you and I have been created with talents given to us from God Himself. God is a generous gift-giver and He invites you to faithfully invest in your gift so that it can be a blessing to those around you. An intriguing detail in Jesus' story is that none of the three servants compared their talents with the other servants. What if the servant who was given two talents compared himself to the servant with five talents? He would have missed his reward and the opportunity to bless people with his talents simply because he compared his gift with another.

I wonder if we often miss opportunities to bless people with our talents because we are too busy comparing ourselves with others. For example, I remember growing up and being so insecure with my singing voice. I wondered why my voice wasn't as strong as others. **However, the Holy Spirit reminded me that my job was not comparison but to faithfully take care of the talent He gave me.** This in turn led me to start practicing singing and developing my voice. With the help of my community and the Holy Spirit, I now have the privilege to lead worship and be part of building the kingdom of God with the specific talent God gave me.

In Christ, you have a gift given to you from God to build His kingdom. Don't waste even one moment comparing yourself to others. Instead, use these giftings to serve God's purposes in ways that will build the kingdom and bring glory to His name.

DISCUSSION

Take a moment and ask the Holy Spirit how He has gifted you. Next, discuss how you can use your specific talents to bless others, serve the kingdom, and glorify God.

by Victor Mendoza, Student Ministries Worship Pastor, New Life North

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD EMPOWERS
SCRIPTURE:
EPHESIANS 4:11-16

A common picture we see in the New Testament is the church being compared to a human body. Our bodies, just like the church, are made up of many members and each is significant for the body to function. God's creative and intentional design was that you and I could contribute our unique giftings for the body of Christ, which is the church, to be joined together in perfect unity. Psalm 133 tells us that God bestows His blessing where there is unity. In other words, when you and I are using our gifts in the world, we are a unified church body, which means God is blessing the world through us.

Have you ever thought, "If I left this room, no one would even notice?" In a large world with large places, large families, and large problems, it's easy to assume that we don't matter. We might ask, "In such a big world, how could my small gift be of any value?" Paul answers this question by reminding you and me that just like a body, every member is needed.

I have great news for you: you are not invisible to God. God not only sees you but He has given you talents that are meant to encourage, equip, and empower people. Whether you're an athlete, a musician, a performer, an intellectual, an artist, or anything else, God gave you your gifts to help bring the church into perfect unity. The church is better with you generously using your giftings.

DISCUSSION

How are you using your God-given gifts to bless other people? Can you remember a moment or time where God used your talents to encourage someone?

by Victor Mendoza, Student Ministries Worship Pastor, New Life North

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD IS INTENTIONAL
SCRIPTURE:
ROMANS 12:6-8

One of the amazing characteristics of God is that there is no end to His imagination. He has created a world full of people who are each unique and to whom He has given a limitless variety of gifts and talents. The world tends to focus on certain giftings more than others. A gift or talent may look like an athletic or artistic ability, but it can also be the way you see people—a gift for listening, a gift of generosity, a gift of boldness.

Look at the words Paul uses in Romans 12:6-8. First, he tells us that God has given us each different gifts. He then explains that we are to use these gifts in accordance with our faith—diligently, cheerfully, generously. He wants us to use them fully! He wants us to show the world that there is more to our gifts than using them for our own self-fulfillment. **There is a reason why we each have the gifts and talents we do.** When we use our gifts and talents fully and to serve others, we are honoring God and furthering His kingdom. We change those around us when we use what we've been given to love them. This gives meaning, purpose, and faith to how we were created.

God is an intentional God. He has designed you purposefully so that you can bless the kingdom of God in a particular way. Take time to learn and then embrace your gifts in order to use them to bring glory to Him by serving others.

DISCUSSION

Think about an area of your life God has gifted you in. Pray about what He had in mind when He gave you this gift. How can you impact and serve others with this gift? How do you think these gifts are meant to impact the kingdom of God?

by Annie Cribbs, Family Care Administrative Assistant, New Life North

GOD'S WORD



GOD STATEMENT:
GOD IS GLORIFIED
SCRIPTURE:
COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

Have you ever considered the idea that how you serve can be more impactful than the service itself?

Jesus embodied a heart of service. He served those around him, not out of obligation, but out of a spirit of love. Others tend to notice how we respond to the needs around us. When we act from a heart of service and humility, as unto the Lord, we bring true joy and kindness into the lives of others.

In Colossians 3:23-24, Paul reminds us that whatever we do, we are to do it with all of our hearts as we are actually serving Jesus. This truth can greatly impact our perspective, knowing we are serving Jesus by participating in His work on earth. In this, we can view service as a gift rather than a chore. Each time we serve, we have the opportunity to work hand in hand with Jesus by loving those He loves. This, in turn, blesses our hearts as much as it blesses the ones we are serving.

When our hearts are fixed on doing everything for the glory of God, we affect the atmosphere around us and create a kingdom impact. **Jesus changed the world by loving people well and with His help, we can do the same.**

DISCUSSION

Think about how you can impact the world around you by the way you serve. How can you serve those you come in contact with as though you are serving the Lord? How does it change your perspective when you think about the inheritance God has in store for you as His son or daughter?

by Annie Cribbs, Family Care Administrative Assistant, New Life North

FAMILY TIME RECIPES

French Pepper Steak (Steak Au Poivre)

Whether you are celebrating as a couple or with your kids, juicy steak is a stunning meal that warms your heart. This steak is quick and easy but will taste like it took hours to cook. Serve with red potatoes, salad, veggies, and a buttery roll for a beautiful Valentine's Day dinner.



Lemon Poppy Seed Pancakes

Breakfast can be a wonderful way to celebrate accomplishments or just to simply say, "I love you." The trick is it can't be a normal breakfast; it has to be a special treat. These pancakes bursting with lemon flavor are perfect for a special occasion. Add a special note and some flowers to make your family members feel loved.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup whole wheat flour
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup low-fat buttermilk
- ¾ cup Greek yogurt or sour cream
- zest of 2 lemons
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ⅓ cup poppy seeds

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Whisk together the dry ingredients listed above and set aside. In a separate bowl, blend the wet ingredients together and fold in the poppy seeds. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix well. For fluffier pancakes, mix ingredients until just combined. Lumps are fine. Grease pancake griddle or flat pan on medium heat. Cook until lightly golden on both sides. Best served with maple syrup, blueberry syrup, or cream cheese icing.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 14 ounce New York strip steak, or other good quality steak
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 cup cream
- ⅓ cup brandy or cognac
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Liberally season the steak with salt and pepper. Use your hands to press the seasoning into the meat. This will help your steak to stay juicy while cooking. In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add the steak to the pan and sear for 4 minutes. Turn and sear the other side for another 4 minutes for medium-rare. For medium to medium well, leaving the steak in oven-safe pan, cook in the oven for 5 minutes at 375° F. Transfer immediately to a cutting board to rest. In the same skillet on medium heat, add brandy or cognac. Allow the liquid to cook down for about 1 minute while using a whisk to scrape off any browned bits in the bottom of the pan. Once the brandy has reduced by half, add the cream and continue to whisk until combined. Add the Dijon mustard and remaining tablespoon of butter and cook until mixture begins to reduce and thicken, about 5 to 7 minutes. The final pan sauce should have a rich consistency. Reduce the heat to low. Slice the steak into ½ inch pieces. Pour the cream sauce over the top. Serve with potatoes and a steamed veggie. Enjoy.

Valentine's Day Charcuterie Board

Our family tradition is to have a Valentine's themed charcuterie board for dinner together. The children love the heart-shaped items, the freedom to choose their own items, and the fun of dipping into delicious sauces. Below is a savory charcuterie board to try as a family, but consider adding your own version of a sweet charcuterie board for dessert.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1/2 green bell pepper
- 1/2 red bell pepper
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper
- 1 loaf ciabatta bread
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 16 ounces salami
- 4-6 ounces sliced swiss cheese
- 4-6 slices of deli smoked turkey
- 4-6 slices prosciutto
- 1 zucchini
- 1/2 cup pecans

WHAT YOU'LL DO

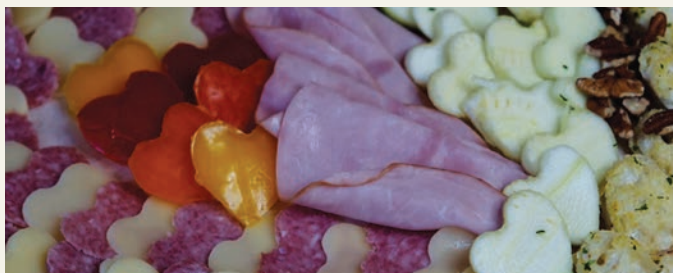
To make Bell Pepper Hearts: Cut the bell peppers into fourths and trim off any remaining seeds and veins. With the skin-side down, press a heart-shaped cookie cutter through the flesh of the peppers. You may need a paring knife to cut around the cookie cutter. Repeat until all the bell peppers are cut.

To make Cheese Hearts: Stack 3 to 4 slices of deli swiss cheese on a cutting board. Press a small heart-shaped cookie cutter through the cheese. Repeat until all cheese is cut.

To make Zucchini Hearts: With the ends of a whole zucchini trimmed, cut a zucchini into sections slightly larger than your cookie cutter, about 2 inches wide. Trim the peel off of one side of zucchini to create a flat area. Place a zucchini section flat-side down on a cutting board. Press a heart-shaped cookie cutter through the zucchini. Trim excess off with a paring knife. Repeat with remaining sections.

To make Ciabatta Hearts: Preheat oven to 350° F. Cut a loaf of ciabatta bread in half lengthwise. Brush the inside of the loaf with 1 tablespoon melted butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place the bread on a baking sheet for 12 to 15 minutes, until golden brown. Allow to cool. Remove the bread to cutting board. Use a small heart-shaped cookie cutter to create heart-shaped slices. You may need to trim around the cookie cutter.

To assemble the tray, start by placing the big items on the tray. Use smaller items to fill in holes. Try placing smaller items in jars or small bowls to add dimension. Overlap items slightly so the tray looks full. Fill in remaining spaces with nuts, crackers, seeds, dried fruit, or pickles. Enjoy!



Raspberry and White Chocolate Shortbread Cookies


These cookies are buttery and packed with mouthwatering goodness. With a generous dusting of confectioner's sugar on top, these heart-shaped cookies are the perfect festive treat. Send in a lunch box or a work lunch with a note that says, "Baked with love."

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup white chocolate, optional
- 1-2 tablespoon confectioner's sugar
- 1/3 cup raspberry jam (or strawberry jam)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar together using a mixer until soft and fluffy—about 2 minutes on medium speed. Add vanilla and salt and continue to mix. Gradually add flour in small amounts and mix until your mixture forms into a dough mass. Use your hands to form the dough into a ball, and then shape into a flat disc. Cover tightly in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350° F and line baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Once the dough is chilled, lightly dust a clean surface with flour. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough until it is 1/4 inch thick. Then, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out the cookies. On half of the cookies, use a smaller heart-shaped cutter to cut out the center of the heart. Place the cookies 1/2-inch apart on lined baking sheet and chill in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Bake the cookies for 8 to 10 minutes or until edges just start to brown. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire cooling rack. While cookies are cooling, melt the white chocolate in the microwave in a heatproof bowl for 30 second intervals while stirring well until chocolate is completely smooth. Spread a layer of chocolate on top of each full heart cookie and place the cookie with the smaller heart cutout on top. Using a mesh strainer, dust confectioner's sugar on top of the cookies. Then, add a teaspoon of jam in the center cutout of the cookie once the chocolate has set slightly. Repeat the assembly steps with each cookie.



CREATE

CREATIVE *Valentine*

When you think of Valentine's Day, what comes to mind? Maybe it's passing out valentine's cards at school, or those boxes of chocolates filled with all the delicious flavors. Perhaps you get anxious thinking about having to create elaborate Valentine's Day cards when you have no scrapbooking or card-making talent.

What if this year you and your family decide to use your own special gifts and talents to create a unique valentine? Think of a way to create a valentine using the things you love to do. Suppose you love to sing or act: create a video valentine where you sing a song or speak to encourage someone else. If you love to write: write a poem or a short story. Maybe you knit or crochet: grab some yarn and knit a blanket or scarf to keep someone warm during the cold months. If you like to bake: fill a basket full of goodies for a baked-goods valentine. If you love to draw or scrapbook: make a homemade valentine to go with whatever else your family creates. Think of someone you can bless with this one-of-a-kind valentine this year.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- an idea (goody basket, video valentine, blanket/scarf, etc.)
- supplies for your valentine (paper, flour, yarn, glitter, glue, etc.)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Think of someone you can bless with a valentine.
2. Come up with an idea (could be as simple as a homemade card, or a combination of some of the ideas above, or whatever else you can think of).
3. Take the time as a family to create your one-of-a-kind valentine.
4. Deliver the valentine to the friend, family, or neighbor.

by Kendra Baker, North Director of Early Childhood

Family Minute to Win It

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- toilet paper
- extra person
- empty cereal box
- scissors
- Oreos or small cookies
- 2 balloons
- 25 pennies

BEFORE YOU START

Oftentimes, when we think of “serving one another,” we think of big, noticeable ways to help someone in need. But serving others can also include the small things. Letting someone else go first. Handing someone something they can't reach. Giving up your seat to sit on the floor instead. Game time is a perfect opportunity to practice the “small” ways of serving. Although you are competing against one another, what are ways you can serve your other family members?

HOW TO PLAY

This game is divided into five rounds. During the rounds, each team or individual will have one minute to complete the tasks. Award one point for each task completed within the minute. Make sure to pull out your timers! Depending on your family size, you could divide your family in half and pick people from your team to represent the whole team. Or you could have everyone competing in each round individually. Do what is best for your family.

● Round One: Mummy Wrap

For this round you will need toilet paper and an extra person. Your goal is to see who can wrap toilet paper around another person in one minute. If you do not complete it, judge to see who used the most toilet paper.

● Round Two: Heart Puzzle

During round two you will need red or pink construction paper and scissors. First, fold the construction paper in half and cut out a heart. Next, cut the heart into a bunch of pieces like a puzzle. Lastly, start the timer and see who can put it back together in a minute or less.

● Round Three: Cookie Monster

For round three you will need to make or buy Valentine's Day cookies. You will want them small enough that you could eat them in one bite—about the size of an Oreo. To play, have another player set one cookie on your forehead. From there, see if you can wiggle the cookie into your mouth without using your hands and dropping it on the floor.


● Round Four: Balloon Battle

To play this round you will need two red or pink balloons. To begin the round, blow them up. Next, with a hand behind your back, see if you can keep two balloons floating in the air for an entire minute. If you succeed, you get a point for the round.

● Round Five: Penny, Penny, Who's Got the Penny?

For round five you will need 25 pennies. Your goal is to see who can stack 25 pennies in one minute without the stack falling. It is harder than it seems, so if someone completes the task, make sure to note their time.

SERVING



HEARTS
of Love
TO FILL YOUR CUP

When my daughter was little, she was so painfully shy that she wouldn't make eye contact with adults, let alone speak to them. The only exception was our beautiful neighbor, who happened to teach ballet. We enrolled our daughter in our neighbor's class, hoping that it would help her learn to interact with more people but with little expectation that ballet would become her passion. Seven years later she's at the dance studio four days a week and loves every second of it. A few years ago, she had the opportunity to join a worship dance team, and they were preparing dances that they'd perform at local schools and nursing homes, sharing the gospel through dance. **For the first time in her young life, my daughter made the connection that her talent was also a gift, and with that came the responsibility to use that gift for worship.** She began to understand that when she danced, it was up to her to make it an act of worship through her attitude.

In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, a master entrusted each of his servants with a small sum of money and then left town. Each servant was given "according to his ability" (v. 15), but no other instructions were given. When the master returned to them after some time, the first two men had doubled the sum of money they were originally given, while the other, crippled by fear of messing up, hid the money. He didn't lose it, but he also didn't use it.

Each of us has our own unique set of "talents"—abilities, finances, resources, giftings—so are we using them for our Master, or are we crippled by the fear that maybe we aren't good enough? What if we set

out to change our world, our neighborhood, our church, or our family by using our talents? What if we show our kids that they can change the world too? Similar to when my daughter figured out that dance could be worship and could be used to teach others about Jesus, what if we could teach each of our kids, "Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God"? (1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV).

Family Activity

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- large paper hearts
- a pen

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Give each family member a stack of paper hearts and a pen. Throughout the week, family members should write on paper hearts things they love about other family members (parents may need to help younger children). **Tape the hearts on family members' doors or place them at their spots at the table.** Read through the hearts at breakfast. Not only will your family members start the day with a sense of worth and value, but each person's cup will be filled so they can go pour into someone else. At the end of each day, ask your family to reflect on how the special reminder that they are loved impacted their day.

by Joanna Jones, Manitou Operations Coordinator

Family Serving Plan

It's fitting that the environment of serving falls in February because serving is the perfect way to show someone the purest kind of love: God's.


When I was young, my parents regularly displayed this love by serving people in our community. My favorite memory is serving faithfully every week in a kindergarten classroom on Sunday mornings. Even as a nine year old I was getting to participate in God's Grand Redemptive Narrative by helping little children know more about God and His big story. And participating in His story is something that we can all do.

Opportunities to serve—and love—God's people are all around us. As a family, take some time to pray together, listen for God's voice, and respond by coming up with a monthly or weekly serving plan. Choose one or two ways to commit to serve this month as a family, whether it is getting involved in your local food pantry, picking up trash in the neighborhood, caring for your neighbors lawn, or visiting the elderly. These are just a few ideas to inspire thoughts about serving.

As a family, print or create your own February 2022 calendar. Decorate together with stickers, jewels, printouts, markers, or any other craft item you want. Specifically highlight the dates your family has committed to serve in February. **Place your calendar in a prominent place as a reminder.**

We can all be a part of The Big God Story by serving each other and our communities. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13).

by Olivia Bennett, North Midweek Curriculum and Ministry Assistant



**USE THE
FEBRUARY 2022
CALENDAR
ON PAGE 42
TO DECORATE
AS A FAMILY!**

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

1 SAMUEL 12:24

(Child's name), may you know that you don't ever have to earn God's love by serving. May serving be something that brings you as much joy as the people you are serving. May you be blessed as you faithfully serve your Father in heaven and the people He places in your life.

WEEK 2

MATTHEW 5:16

(Child's name), may you know Jesus, the light of the world, has called you to shine. May you do good to others so they can see God in you. May you know the joy of glorifying your Father in heaven and never feel like you have to perform for His love.

WEEK 3

HEBREWS 6:10

(Child's name), may you know that God is fair, and He will never forget the work you do for Him. May you delight in helping others even if they forget to appreciate you. May you know how pleased God is when you serve and when you do it for the glory of His name. He is proud of you.

WEEK 4

2 TIMOTHY 2:21

(Child's name), may you know that you were created to do good works in Christ Jesus. May you find great pleasure in discovering the things God has already prepared for you to do. May you recognize the gifts and talents God has given you to complete those works and may you love the way He designed you.

by LaJean Hertel, Volunteer Director, North Family Care Ministry



Journal

remember and celebrate

prayer

thankfulness and praise



RESOURCES & SUPPORT

**life
together**

Carpool Conversations

New Year's resolutions aren't just for parents. If your children are old enough to write, they are old enough to think about their actions, be mindful of others, and think of ways to grow personally. The carpool or car time is a great opportunity to ask the following questions. Your son or daughter may not have an answer right on the spot, but it is a great time to think or discuss. At dinner or a later time, follow up with your child to help write down an answer. Keep the answers visible on a bulletin board, refrigerator, or bathroom mirror.

1. What would you try if you knew you could not fail?
 2. If you could pick anything, what would be your biggest triumph by the end of the year?
 3. How do you think you could deepen your relationship with God?
 4. How could you improve your relationships with your siblings?
 5. Is there anything in your life that is holding you back from accomplishing the questions above?
-

Keeping up with Kids

7 Healthy Habits to Teach Kids

Let's face it: the older we get the harder it is to establish healthy rhythms. Help your children establish healthy lifestyle patterns at a young age to bring them lifelong benefits!

1. Keep God first. Encourage your children to read Scripture and talk to God each morning when they wake up and to continue to pray throughout the day. Their days will go better when they focus on God. Help them take time to pause, let Him speak to them, and fill them up.
 2. Have a thankful heart. Studies have shown that being thankful can help kids be more positive, improve health, and build strong relationships. The Bible also asks us to have a thankful heart. Thankfulness teaches our kids to appreciate what they have and not to always look for more.
 3. Find ways to serve others. Our children are growing up in a self-focused culture, which brings isolation, entitlement, and laziness. Serving others helps us to take our eyes off ourselves and instead focus on the needs of others. Our culture needs children and adults who help others and look for ways to meet the needs of the brokenhearted.
 4. Limit screen time. The digital world has many benefits, but it can also distract us from focusing on things or people that matter. Consider modeling for your children setting limitations or designating a specific time of day for games, social media, or other uses of screens that lead to a sedentary lifestyle.
 5. Limit sugar and eat colorful foods. Life is better when we feel good. There are many health benefits to eating nutrient rich foods and limiting sugar. As a family, consider a rhythm of healthy foods during the week and splurges on the weekend. Sweets certainly have a place, but teaching your children moderation is the key.
 6. Enjoy physical activities. Expose your kids to a wide range of physical activities together as a family. You do not have to be "athletic" to enjoy a hike outside, bike ride on a trail, or paddle boarding in a lake. Teach your children to find something they enjoy that will get their bodies moving.
 7. Work hard. Often we think our children will grow up being hard workers. But a strong work ethic is not something kids are inherently born with, but rather is learned or developed. Take time to help develop a good work ethic in your kids and the ability to tough it out by adding in chores, odd jobs, volunteering, and working hard at academics.
-

The Beauty of Curiosity

Imagine for a moment: You've been transported to a strange place you've never been before. You see things you can't explain. The smells around you are overwhelming. The sounds fill your ears with mystery. There isn't much familiarity about anything around you except your loved one. She's been here before, and it seems she knows what she's doing. What a relief—she can help you navigate this strange world. All you have to do is ask for help.

Now imagine for a moment you're the one who is leading another through the strange land. Well, if you're a parent to a toddler, you have the opportunity to do this every single day.

To a toddler, this world is full of new experiences—new sights, smells, feelings, etc. The complexities can be overwhelming to your little one. Every day, he's looking for someone's hand to grab to lead him through the unknown terrain. As the parent, your trusted hand is often the first one he reaches for.

I'm not a parent yet, but I have seen how having my hands filled with my own responsibilities has stifled my ability to meet the toddlers in my life with curiosity. I am juggling so much that when they reach for my hand to help them understand their world, I'm not available. Or worse, I get frustrated that they ask for my hand. I mean, can't they see how full my hands already are?! I don't need anything else added on!

Too often, our schedules and days get filled to the brim and the little ones around us get pulled along as we run to each commitment. It is the familiar routine for us. For them, however, they're experiencing everything with a brand-new set of eyes, which naturally leads to curiosity. The season of life that toddlers experience is one filled with questions and wonderings. As the most trusted people in their lives, they sometimes smother us with this curiosity, causing us to snap back with short responses in an effort to quench their curiosity. But a toddler's curiosity refuses to be quenched. And often, these constant inquiries can be overwhelming, but there is a beautiful intimacy that can happen if we learn to slow down and open our hands to them.

Instead of seeing the curiosity of your young kids as a burden to you, take a moment to listen to it—be curious back about what they see, hear, smell, feel, etc. **Ask them questions that help them communicate their experience. Your kids look up to and trust you.**

Take time to enjoy an everyday activity with your child.

Often, they will communicate their desire for connection with you by asking questions.

Take a moment to read John 13:34-35. Listening and asking thoughtful questions is a great way to show the people in our lives that we love them. Jesus was the greatest example of patiently loving others. How often have you brought your questions to the Father, begging him to lead you through an unknown aspect of your life? His grace, love, and mercy guide us in peace. He is a great example of perfect love. As we model Jesus in our words and actions, including to our children, others will see Jesus in us.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How can you be intentional this week to meet your toddler with curiosity instead of frustration?

What is in your hands that you could let go of this week to make space for your kiddo's curiosity?

What are some questions you can ask your child when she shares her experience with you? Write them down so you can practice them!

by Shayleen Smith, Kids Ministry Director at New Life East. Shayleen is a food-craving, movie-loving, Colorado native who enjoys spending time with her friends, family, and doggos!

Serving in God's Kingdom

I don't know about you, but I grew up hearing the story of Mary and Martha told a certain way. As a kid, I remember learning that Mary did the right thing by sitting at the feet of Jesus and Martha was too busy and prioritized the wrong things. "We should all be more like Mary and not like Martha." While there is some truth to this, and even Jesus gently nudges Martha to embrace the present, I think there is something for us to learn from both sisters.

READ LUKE 10:38-42.

The Bible doesn't share much of the backstory on Jesus and Lazarus (Mary and Martha's brother), but we can infer from the text that Jesus and Lazarus were friends.

Growing up, perhaps their families spent time together or maybe the boys would enjoy a swim. What we do know is that when Lazarus was sick, people sent for Jesus and He came. Therefore, one could assume He knew Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, too. He had been to their house and there was an established relationship.

First, sitting at the feet of Jesus, as Mary did, was unheard of for women! Mary showed great boldness in going to sit and learn from Him. At that time, only men were allowed to study, read, or be with a rabbi like Jesus. Jesus affirmed Mary's actions in front of everyone to demonstrate she was welcome. He invites us to do the same, to be present at His feet.

Now, Martha "had opened her home to him" and was making preparations. Have you ever been to someone's house and it feels like she forgot you were coming? Nothing is ready, the house is a disaster, there is no place to sit, the toilet paper is out, you're not offered a drink of water. You might feel like an inconvenience or like you're imposing. Martha did not want Jesus to feel unwanted, but rather welcomed in their home. Because the authorities were already looking for Jesus, Martha risked everything by inviting Him to come. She was hospitable and generous to welcome Him, His friends, and even complete strangers. We could all be a little more like Martha.

Now, to all the moms out there, I know there is pressure from all sides. Our culture demands perfection from us at all times. I'd like to encourage you in two

areas. First, God is already happy with you. Before Jesus raised Lazarus, walked on water, multiplied any loaves or fish, healed any lepers, God was pleased with Him. So, moms, before you changed any diapers, helped with any homework, or provided any snacks, God was pleased with you. You may feel guilty because you are always having to be "Martha" and prepare for all the things of life and home, and you never get to be "Mary." God is not upset with you in your current season. He is already delighted and happy with you as a person.

Second, we all have something to offer. God has graced us all with various giftings, talents, passions, and abilities. **You have something God wants to cultivate in you and use for His glory on the earth.** Maybe you're great at being present and listening to people, like Mary. Or maybe you are queen of hosting and parties, like Martha. Both are necessary in the kingdom of God; both are valid and important ways to serve God.

Look at the hummingbird. No other bird flies like a hummingbird; they are so unique! Hummingbirds also contribute to the world through pollination. Without hummingbirds, we would not have as many beautiful flowers, tasty fruits, or healthy vegetables. We need the hummingbirds to do what they do best to make the world go around. Hummingbirds serve our world with their unique and special gifts that God gave them. You can serve those around you too, by cultivating and practicing your gifts and talents. You can use your gifts to serve someone right now!

ACTIVITY

Hummingbird Origami video tutorial ([youtube.com/watch?v=gn2iLmwvZPk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn2iLmwvZPk)). Make this hummingbird origami with your children and encourage them to give the birds to someone who serves them (a teacher, a sibling, a grandma, or uncle).

by Rachel Guttman, Children's Ministry Director, Midtown. She loves gardening and traveling. Rachel can be found in a hammock reading a book on a nice sunny day. She is passionate about discipleship and children encountering the living God.

CREATE A VISION BOARD

“What do you want to do with your life?” “What’s next for you after high school?” “What do you want to be when you grow up ... for the rest of your life?”

As my daughter is finishing the last semester of her senior year, I have heard relatives, neighbors, teachers—well, really almost everyone—ask her these questions over and over again. I can almost feel the pressure weighing on her shoulders and see the stress of making the perfect decision visible on her face. **My extroverted, fun, carefree daughter appears to be losing her joy as the weight of decision is constantly on her mind.**

I cannot help but think it shouldn’t be this way. But, as my own memories came floating back, I realize I felt this same pressure as a senior years ago. As I thought about my younger self, I remembered my mentor encouraging me to not focus on the one decision ahead of me, but rather focus on the “big picture and what it is going to take to get there.” My mentor sat down with me to dream without limits. She asked questions like, “If you could live anywhere, where would it be?” and “Would you like to travel when you are older?” As I gave my answers, she scribbled down on paper with her colorful, glittery markers. Suddenly, dreaming about college, my future, and my career was fun again.

That’s it! This is what my daughter needed to do. She needed to have fun dreaming about the future again. She needed help mapping out all the possibilities and narrowing it down to the actual plan. After searching online for ideas from parenting blogs, I found several resources pointing toward creating a vision board.

A vision board helps people to open their minds to many possibilities without limitations. It helps to refine dreams and goals as well as think through helpful strategies to walk them out. As the board hangs on a wall, door, or mirror, the vision board helps to visualize and bring focus to your aspirations and remind you of your dreams.

Whether you are in junior high or a senior in high school, a vision board is a great idea to start the New Year. Here are some tips to get you started:

1. **Write it down.** Think about and answer the following questions:
 - What are my two to three long-term goals?

- How can I improve as a person?
- What are the top dreams I would like to accomplish?
- What gifts and talents has God given me that I could use for His kingdom?
- What do I want my family to look like?
- What friendships and relationships are important long term?
- What career would be fun to do?
- Do I want to travel?
- What skills or knowledge would I like to have in the future?

2. **Find inspiration.** You will want to fill your board with pictures, quotes, words, drawings, and more. Look in magazines or publications, online, free stock images, social media pictures. Get creative. Gather up anything you have and begin to sort in piles based on categories that make sense to you. Use sticky notes help to keep it all straight.
3. **Put it together.** Start thinking about how you want to organize your board. Lay it out on a white poster board or a bulletin board. Start with the most important goal in the center and move out to the edges. Feel free to move it around and play with it until you love it. There is no perfect way to do this. It is perfect if you love it.
4. **Make it visible.** Once you are finished, think about where you want to hang your board. Pick a place that you see every day. It could be a bedroom wall, a mirror in the bathroom, the closet, the ceiling above your bed. Hang your board! The best part is you can always add more images, new goals, or even take some down.

Dream big! I pray that as you create a vision board you will experience joy and excitement at all the things God has put inside you and the possibilities ahead. God has made you with a purpose and it is to do GREAT things for His kingdom. Go be a light in a dark world.

by Holly Newman, Editor of HomeFront magazine

YOUR PRAYERS OUTLIVE YOUR LIFE



prayer

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” —John 17:20–21

“Prayers are deathless. They outlive the lives of those who uttered them.”
—E. M. Bounds

When we pray, we are sending a message forward to a time we will not see! Just like in the verse above, Jesus’ prayer for all believers is still being answered in you and in me. Our prayers transcend time and keep going, even into future generations.

Think about it! We can pray now for those in our lineage to know Christ and to serve Him with their whole hearts.

Our prayers will last longer than we do! We will die long before every prayer of ours is answered.

If you’re like me and weren’t raised in a Christian home, you can pray and have a completely different family lineage. God makes all the difference in our lives and brings lasting change. If Jesus doesn’t come back to earth until one hundred years from now, we will most likely have descendants on the earth. Your faithful prayers for your children and grandchildren will affect your great-grandchildren, and so on. Take God out of the box. Pray big prayers!

You could be affecting someone who will live in the future! When you pray for God to be real to your children and grandchildren and for them to know Jesus, you are in essence affecting your family lineage. We can’t make our children be Christians, but we can pray for God to reach their hearts in His perfect timing and ways. It’s our job to pray, trust, and obey, and God’s job to work in the hearts of our family.

Praying intentionally for your family is one of the most powerful things you can do, and a prayer binder is a great tool to help you keep your prayers organized all in one place. If you prefer, you can use an app like Evernote to keep your prayers on your phone. The most important

thing is to keep your prayers in front of you and pray them regularly! I use a prayer binder, but you can use whatever medium will help you most.

If you decide to complete this prayer project, give yourself a couple of weeks. It’s worth the effort and will change your life and the life of your family.

Prayer changes everything!

Here is a suggested daily prayer guide to help you on your way:

- **Monday:** Prayers for my husband and my marriage (fun, communication, intimacy, finances, etc.)
- **Tuesday:** Prayers for my childre
- **Wednesday:** Prayers for others—parents, in-laws, friends, etc. (great relationships, healing from illness, marriages). I also pray for my church and missionaries, etc
- **Thursday:** Prayers for myself—these are prayers for me to remember what is most important in this life and for God to help me be a good wife and Mam
- **Friday:** Prayers for our children’s education (homeschool or in the classroom)
- **Saturday:** Scriptures to pray (Scriptures that I love to pray personally and keep in front of me to remember)
- **Sunday:** Sunday sermon notes and things the Lord is teaching me

by Deb Weakly, Founder of Help Club For Moms



Jesus in the Chaos

What experiences in your life, past or present, would you recall as chaotic? Personal health—physical, mental, or a combination of both? Relationships—with coworkers, friends, or family? Current events—local, national, global?

Personally, I think of my mom. I miss her terribly. She passed away nearly six years ago from breast cancer. It is no secret that cancer is chaos—from one appointment to another, to finding a doctor who can figure out a diagnosis, to the numerous tests and scans, to deciding on the best treatment for organs riddled with cancer, to watching an earthly body quickly deteriorate.

My mom married my dad her senior year in high school. She loved my dad, but readily admitted she wanted to escape the chaos at home. As a little girl, my mom had to hide from the anger of a drunken dad. She had to grow up fast. When her parents divorced, she was left with the responsibility to care for her younger brother while her mom dealt with her own chaos. **Still at a young age, my mom attended church by herself and encountered Jesus. Jesus, the only One who brings order to the chaos.**

My mom was determined to be a different wife and mother than her mom. Of course, she wasn't perfect. I am reminded of words from Dr. Michelle Anthony's book *Spiritual Parenting*: "It's not about being a perfect parent, but pursuing a perfect God." **My mom knew she couldn't be different without surrendering to and relying on a perfect God—she made a choice to follow Him.** I am forever grateful for her choice. Through Jesus, my mom modeled for me how to keep a clean, orderly home, how to be resourceful, and how to courageously try and learn new things. She modeled prayer, faith, and an excitement for God's Word. Again, there were plenty of bumps and bruises along the way, but Jesus was in it. Jesus redeems the chaos.

Failing health, rifts in relationships, and an utterly broken world make us keenly aware that sin is chaos. But there is One who willingly broke into it all, at the cost of His own life, to speak with all power and authority to make a way in the wilderness and wasteland. Isaiah 43:19 reminds us, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Jesus is the way in the chaos.

Jesus does not shield us from the fact that we will experience pain and difficulty. We read in John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." He overcame this world to usher in the kingdom of God. Jesus is peace and has overcome the chaos.

As I encounter dealings with chaos—anxiety, fear, grief, heartache, sickness, despair, and disappointment—how do I respond? I realize each encounter is an opportunity to respond to who Jesus is. Will I say yes to letting Jesus bring order to the chaos, redeem the chaos, and be the way in the chaos? Will I allow Jesus to be the peace in the chaos and trust He has overcome the chaos?

As I think of my precious mom, I see how God used her journey with Him through this life to model trust in His character. Only through Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit can we, as moms, model His kingdom of order and peace to our families and this chaotic world.

by Laurie Bennet, Director of Early Childhood and Curriculum

Just Like You

It was cold enough as it was, but once the sun tucked itself behind Pike’s Peak, there was no more warm touch of its rays to ease the sting of the freezing winter’s evening. A sporadic breeze sent icy snowflakes every which way, making it impossible to reliably shield one’s face from their bites. The otherwise mild winter day was rapidly descending into the type of evening perfect for gathering with the family for a roaring fire, good movie, and a bowl of warm, buttery popcorn—but that’s not where Dad was. He was outside racing against nature’s deadline to put up new siding to replace the tattered stuff that came with the old house. And if that’s where Dad was, that’s where we Windebank boys were too.

We weren’t out there because he needed the help. In fact, now I realize we were more than likely slowing him down. We were out there because we wanted to be with him. If it meant numb fingers and toes and stinging ears and noses, then so be it. We wanted to be with Dad doing what Dad was doing. He was always doing “a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19) around the house or under the car, so we craned our necks and stood on tiptoes to get the best glimpse possible, not only of the task but of how he was doing it. God desires to father us in this way and for us to be caught up in a longing to be with Him in whatever He’s doing simply because He is doing it.

Now decades removed, I see that my desire to be with my father was not an accidental one, but one he cultivated in me by inviting me to do what he was doing alongside him. **To this day, I love asking God what He’s doing and how I can do it with Him every day because my dad leveraged the everyday tasks he had to do to sow that desire in me.** It would have been more time efficient to tell me what he had done after the fact (and it would have saved him countless dollars, too!), but he decided to invite me into the process. By modeling how the Father invites us to be co-laborers with Him (Romans 8:16-17) and laborers in His field (Luke 10:2), my dad

sowed seeds of curiosity for what God the Father is up to, a heart ready to learn, mess up, and repeat as I bring His kingdom to earth as it is in heaven, and a desire to invite others in my life to labor in Christ with me.

Dads, your children want to be with you no matter what you’re doing. Are you changing the pesky smoke alarm battery again? Ask them to climb up on your shoulders to help you. **This small invitation is more than just what our children want—it’s what they need to see the Father in the right light.** Many of us are task-oriented people by nature. We want the task done and done right the first time. I don’t know about you, but when I’m in that mode, there’s no way my son would want to ask to help me because he would feel like a burden rather than a delight. I have to ask myself, “Is this how I want him to perceive a father? Too busy with important work to slow down and do it with him?” Our job as dads is to help our children see what God is like (Matthew 5:14-17), so the question we need to ask moment by moment is what sort of portrait of God are we modeling for them?

DAD CHALLENGE

- 1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how you’ve been modeling His likeness for your children.** Allow Him to correct you where necessary and for the strength to keep what you’re doing well going.
- 2. Next, write out a list of all the projects you’ve been putting off around the house or on the car.**
- 3. Ask God to help you accomplish each of those tasks with one of your children.** (Obviously don’t give your toddler the chainsaw so you can catch a break, but you know what I mean!)

by Chase Windebank, North Student Ministries Director, Student Leadership



Hobbiting for Life

The holidays are over, 2022 has commenced, and maybe you convinced yourself that a New Year's resolution was a good idea, which we all know most likely will be forgotten by summer (if not already).

What I really know is that about this time of year my wife and I usually look at one another and declare that we need a "hobbiting" month. This is a month where we block off the calendar and say "no" to as much as we can. (Just in case you aren't familiar with Tolkein's fictional race of the Hobbits, they are "plain quiet folk, and have no use for adventures." and their homes are "a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.")

My wife and I call for a hobbiting month because the endless hurry and obligations of life often leave us with empty tanks emotionally and physically. A full schedule is not a bad schedule, but it is often fatiguing. **A life "well spent" or "intentionally invested" are usually how we try to put a positive kingdom perspective on all the things we've been giving ourselves to, but at some point we still need a hobbiting break to fill us back up.**

Even with a hobbiting break, many of us know that an absence from work does not equate to the presence of rest and renewed life. Maybe going to a beach and doing nothing is your idea of rest, but I'd be willing to bet your doing "nothing" on vacation actually looks like doing a whole lot of things that return life to your person. Renewal of life to your "life-tank" is what I want to highlight to all of us right now and ask a few questions:

Keeping in mind these nine areas of your life and your marriage: emotional, physical, intellectual, relational, financial, recreational, vocational, family, spiritual.

Ask: What is bringing you life? What is draining life from you?

I know I'm talking a lot about you in the midst of an article on marriage. However, Christian marriage is a sacramental design, meaning that your marriage is an outward sign of an inward working of God's grace in your life. You are designated by God to be a primary person through whom God ministers grace to your spouse. So, the idea that I'm challenging you to be intentional about "rest from something" in order to "participate in something" that brings you life means your spouse will be paramount to success. As you reflect on those personal inventory questions above, I leave you with these questions to discuss with your spouse:

Share two things that fill you with life that you could be practicing more of.

How would practicing that thing positively affect yourself, your marriage, and the other areas of your life?

Which Love Languages fill you and your spouse up? (Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, Quality Time, Gifts)

How can you champion your spouse's "life tank" being refilled?

by Evan Reedall, the Executive Pastor over Marriage and Family Ministry at New Life Downtown. He really loves married life with Karen (spouse) and all things active and playful with their two boys, William (6) and Alistair (3).

Filling
Rest

NLC FAMILY

UPCOMING 2022 EVENTS



Nlcfam.org



Nlcfamilies



NLC Family Min

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT	DESCRIPTION
Child Dedication	Sunday, February 6	9 am and 11 am service	Worship Center @ New Life North	Lori Welch: lwelch@ newlifechurch.org	We believe child dedications are for the public declaration of parents to raise your child to know and understand God and a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. Dedication is a commitment to pray, love, teach, and direct your child in the truth of Scripture while discipling him or her into a relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Women's Community Nights	Tuesday Nights: January 26, February 1, and February 8	6:30 pm	World Prayer Center	Leah Tisthammer: ltisthammer@ newlifechurch.org	Join us for three weeks of community, conversation, worship, and break-out sessions led by women in our New Life community!
Men's Night Out	Thursday, February 24	6 to 8 pm	Theater @ New Life North	Chad Jeffreys: cjeffreys@ newlifechurch.org	Join us as we rally the men of the church together for a fun and powerful night. We'll laugh, eat a hearty meal, experience powerful worship, and be strengthened by a time of Spirit-empowered ministry. MNO is also one of the best opportunities of the year for guys to meet our Fireteam small group leaders and learn more about getting connected in community.
Parent Orientation (North)	Sunday, February 13	9 am or 11 am	New Life North- 11025 Voyager Parkway- in room 246	eswart@ newlifechurch.org	Parent Orientation is an opportunity to engage with our families who attend North and Friday night congregation by highlighting the way in which we provide ministry to New Life Kids and New Life Students. At Parent Orientation we want to communicate our vision for these ministries, familiarize you with the curriculum we're using, and highlight ways for you to get involved.
Spiritual Parenting (North)	Sunday, February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27	11 am	New Life North- 11025 Voyager Parkway- in room 246	eswart@ newlifechurch.org	Spiritual Parenting is a 6 week class that dives into 10 environments that put God on display in our homes. Learn about identity, responsibility, serving others and course correction to name a few. Register online to attend the class and receive your free book.
High School Retreat Experience	February 25-26 (Not an Overnight Experience)	Friday, 5 pm to 10 pm & Saturday 9 am to 10 pm	Ponderosa Retreat and Conference Center	RuthAnn Massey: Rmassey@ newlifechurch.org	Our High School Retreat Experience is an opportunity for High School students 9th-12th grade to come and encounter the presence of God in worship, community, and God-centered teaching. This experience is a couple days of unhurried time with the Lord, friends, and some fun and games. If you are a high school student, you won't want to miss out!

FEBRUARY 2022

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

NOTES

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SERVING

WHAT
NEEDS TO
BE DONE?



LOT # 777
PACKED FOR ALL ETERNITY

\$ LIFE OF CHRIST

SEEDS OF FAITH

Beautiful growth; makes a sweet fragrance to the Lord; attractive to a lost world

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read God's Word daily
2. Hide it in your heart
3. Pray without ceasing
4. Watch your faith grow

More details found in the Bible

PACKAGED BY

HomeFront



Find us online
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Sprouts in
One Day

Frost Hardy
YES

Seed Depth
Deep Sow