

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

STORYTELLING

*"God has a big story, and
I can be a part of it!"*

IDENTITY

*"I belong to God,
and He loves me!"*

FAITH COMMUNITY

*"God's family cares for
each other and worships
God together."*

SERVING

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



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STORYTELLING

11

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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A NOTE FROM MICHELLE



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's and grandchildren's spiritual growth to set aside time on a regular basis to engage in spiritual conversations and activities that are both fun and developmental.

The environment of **STORYTELLING** allows our children to understand the great narrative of the Bible with its emphasis on redemption. When we and our children know the story of God, we start to see that we are also a part of this story and desire to find our place in it. We further understand that God is asking us to share our stories of redemption with others so they in turn will be able to find their place in His story.

The statement that sums up this environment is: "God has a big story, and I can be a part of it!"

The environment of **IDENTITY** 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.

The statement that sums up this environment is: "I belong to God, and He loves me!"

The environment of **FAITH COMMUNITY** invites our children into a safe refuge away from some of the hostility and temptations of the world. It is a place to have a "spiritual family" of those from older and younger generations who help us grow in our understanding of who God is. The faith community is critical in allowing our children to hear the faith stories and journeys from others outside of their own parents, which often fosters a great trust in the truth of Jesus and His Word during times of questioning or doubt.

The statement that sums up this environment is: "God's family cares for each other and worships God together."

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

WHAT ARE HOMEGROUPS?

We believe parents and grandparents are the primary nurturers of their children's and grandchildren's faith, and we want to inspire, equip, and support you in that endeavor. HomeGroups are an opportunity for you to gather with several other families who are in similar life circumstances and grow together. Your HomeGroup will gather for eight weeks each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer). This is a time for you to share a meal, learn more about God, engage with each other, and bless your children. HomeFront is the curriculum for our HomeGroups, and each volume contains a full semester's worth of gatherings.

You can still access previous editions of HomeFront magazine at homefrontmag.com. For the holiday season, a special 8 week edition of HomeFront will be available for your family to use in your home. If you would like more information about HomeGroups, or would like to sign up for a group near you, email parents@newlifechurch.org. Thank you for investing in the spiritual health of your family. We hope this magazine will serve as a practical guide for you as you seek to establish a spiritually-rich environment in your home.

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.

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

HOMEGROUPS Families meeting in each other's homes to do life together and grow in their relationships with God and each other.

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

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS Evenings designed for parents to discuss tough topics with and hear from leading experts. Held throughout the year.

OTHER PARENT COURSES AND EVENTS Throughout the year, we offer special courses and events tailored toward inspiring, equipping, and supporting you as you nurture your children's faith.



8

HOMEGROUPS *Issue One*

CONTENTS

HELPING YOU HAVE A SUCCESSFUL
FAMILY NIGHT IN YOUR HOME

LESSONS

Issue One

6

LESSON ONE STORYTELLING

- What's the Real Story?
- "Once Upon a Time..."
- Dwell On These Things
- Bless

8

LESSON TWO STORYTELLING

- The Hall of Faith
- The Big God Story
- God Statements
- Bless

12

LESSON THREE IDENTITY

- Raised With Christ
- A New Name
- Set Your Minds
- Bless

14

LESSON FOUR IDENTITY

- This is Our Story
- Family Story Madlib
- Set Your Minds
- Bless

16

LESSON FIVE FAITH COMMUNITY

- One in Spirit and Mind
- See the Need
- One Spirit
- Bless

18

LESSON SIX FAITH COMMUNITY

- Glad Hearts
- Giving Thanks
- A Song of Gratitude
- Bless

20

LESSON SEVEN SERVING

- What Serving Looks Like
- "I Love to Serve" Jar
- Go and Do Likewise
- Bless

22

LESSON EIGHT SERVING

- How Do We Use Our Gift to Serve Others?
- Fabric Tic-Tac-Toe
- I Have a Gift to Give Others
- Bless



17

DID you
KNOW

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.



NewLifeChurch

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10 ENVIRONMENTS

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

1 STORYTELLING

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

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.

2 IDENTITY

"I belong to God, and He loves me!"

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.

3 FAITH COMMUNITY

"God's family cares for each other and worships God together."

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.

4 SERVING

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

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!

5 OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

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.

6 RESPONSIBILITY

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

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.

7 COURSE CORRECTION

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

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.

8 LOVE & RESPECT

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

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.

9 KNOWING

"God knows me, and I can know Him."

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!

10 MODELING

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

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.

LESSON ONE

STORYTELLING

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

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

WHAT'S THE REAL STORY?

God's redemptive narrative gives 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 we 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 His glory.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:1-2

GOD STATEMENT: God is love

Romans 12:1-2 reminds us that God is calling us out of the the world's ways and wants to reorient our lives to His way. It is essential to find our part in His story and help our families glimpse the part in His storyline they are uniquely gifted to play. Today's culture tells us life is all about me. When observing God's Word, we see life is really all about God. God's Word is a love story—a story of the heavenly Father pursuing His created sons and daughters in order to have a personal relationship with each of them.

In His story, He is the main character. Sometimes we are tempted to believe we are the main character, that the story is really about us, because after all, we are in every scene. But that's a lie. **It's a lie that our children are told on most TV advertisements, social media platforms, and in pop culture songs.** By remembering

the true story, we are able to understand the deep and constant love of our Heavenly Father.

DISCUSS:

- Why is it easy to think life is about our happiness?
- In what way do we see God's love in the Bible?
- When was the last time you told the story of how God's love brought you salvation? Take time to share with your family now.

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, you are full of love, and you freely gave that love to us in your son Jesus. **You showed your great love to us, that while we were still sinners, Jesus died for our sins so that we could be in relationship with you.** Thank you for loving us no matter what. Amen.

2

CREATE

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

"ONCE UPON A TIME..."

Practice sharing your story. It's powerful no matter your age, and the good and bad elements of your story encourage family members to see God's redemptive work in your life. Together, your family can make a God's Storyboard. Simply cut out pictures from magazines and glue them collage-style onto a posterboard to remind you of things or people God has used to write His story in you. Examples include a picture of a father and son that remind you of your father telling you about Jesus, or a picture of a bed can remind you of bedtime prayers. Food photos might remind you of God's provision.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- magazines
- glue sticks or white glue
- poster board
- pens or colored markers (optional)
- scissors

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 78:1-7

PRAY: Lord, you have designed our family to declare your faithfulness and love to those around us and for generations after us. Help us live faithfully in following you and displaying your love and grace to others.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- After you complete your collaborative creation, have each person share a few pictures and why they chose them to tell their story of faith.
- Allow each person to find a picture they are curious about and ask who put it on the collage and why they did so.
- Hang the collage in your home for the month, reminding each family member that God is still using people and events to continue writing His story in your family.

L1

3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God. There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

DWELL ON THESE THINGS

The Bible tells us to not be conformed to this world but rather to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. One of the ways we can live lives that are holy and set apart is by allowing God to renew our minds. God's Word is a beautiful way to renew our minds, and God even tells us what things we should dwell on in order to be authentic storytellers by the way we think, speak, and live.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Bible
- sticky notes
- markers or pens

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- Read Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8
- Discuss what it means to be transformed or renewed and what it means to dwell on things.
- Take some time to be still before God and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what He wants to tell you in these passages of Scripture. You can play soft worship music in the background to create a worshipful space (optional).
- Have each person write down one or two areas

they would like the Holy Spirit to help them dwell on. For example, on their sticky note, they can write, "I will dwell on what is pure by being careful of what I look at online or watch on TV." If your children are younger, you can write it down for them.

- Conclude in prayer.
- Encourage your family to place the sticky note(s) somewhere to help remind them of their response to God's Word as an act of worship to Him.

PRAY:

Holy Spirit, you are the one who is at work to bring transformation to the places in our lives that are not fitting for telling your story of love to others. Thank you that as we dwell on the things that are good, pure, holy, and true, you are renewing our minds and making us into the people God wants us to be.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:20

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name], **may you remember that you are a living example that tells the story of Jesus when others see you talk to you.** May your words, thoughts, and actions reflect the love and grace you have received. May others be invited into this grand story by your life and testimony for God's glory.



LESSON TWO

STORYTELLING

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

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

THE HALL OF FAITH

God's redemptive narrative gives 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 we 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 His glory.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 11 (NLT)

GOD STATEMENT: God is Faithful

Read chapter 11 in the book of Hebrews in the Bible (suggested translation: New Living Translation on a Bible app for ease in storytelling for children). Have family members write down names of people in the Bible that they hear as you read through the chapter. This chapter recounts a concise version of God's faithfulness to His people throughout Scripture and, because of that, how each one put their faith in God. This faith allowed them to do mighty, good, and difficult things. After reading you can discuss the following questions.

DISCUSS:

- How many different names/people were you able to hear about in this chapter?
- What is the one thing each of them had in common?
- If God was faithful to all of these people in the Bible, do you think He will be faithful to our family? Why or why not?
- Would you like to put your faith and trust in God the way that these people did in the Bible? If so, pray together and receive God's gift of salvation and forgiveness of sins.

PRAY:

Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for my sin. I know I am a sinner and, without you, I would not be able to have a relationship with God. I receive your free gift of salvation and commit to living by faith and following you by the power of the Holy Spirit all the days of my life. Amen.



Sometimes the best conversations happen around simply planning and having fun together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful by asking questions at the end of the laughter.

THE BIG GOD STORY

Often, we tell fragmented stories of God, Jesus, or other characters in the Bible, and we do so in ways that aren't linear. Even most children who know the stories of the Bible can't tell you whether Abraham was born before David, or if baby Jesus was alive when baby Moses was. What happens is that our stories are told in isolation and often don't tell the bigger story where God is central. Instead, baby Moses is the key figure one day, Noah is the key figure one day, and Jesus is merely the key figure on another occasion. By putting each story in context of the main story, we can begin to elevate Jesus, the Redeemer, to His rightful place in the story line.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A Bible or Bible app
- The Big God Story characters (see resources; cut out ahead of time)
- The answer key (see resources)

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- As a family you will work together to put the Bible characters in chronological order so they tell The Big God Story the way it happened in history. The good news is that because of Jesus, we are invited to play a part in this grand story as well. I wonder what part YOU will play?!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Assign one adult to hold the answer key.
2. Work together putting each character in order of history from the Bible.
3. Begin with Adam and end with The Return of Christ.
4. When you get stuck, ask for a hint from the person holding the answer key (or by looking it up in the Bible for a more advanced game).
5. When finished, have each person identify one person they want to learn more about how they put their faith in God.
6. Next, have each person identify one way he/she can put their faith in God right now.



STORYTELLING

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3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship to God for who He is and what He has done. While we often worship through singing, there are other ways we can actively give our worship to God.

GOD STATEMENTS

After reading a passage in the Bible (or in the future when picking your child up from church) ask this question: "What do I know about God?" As you do this you will come up with a God Statement such as God is Powerful, or Jesus is Compassionate. Ultimately, this will shape you more than just learning about what a certain character did or did not do in the Bible.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A Bible or a Bible app
- A piece of paper
- A pen or pencil

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- After reading the verse or verses, come up with something you know is true about God from the verse(s). Ask this question: What do we know about God from this verse?
- Create an agreed upon God Statement and take turns writing it down on your paper. For the younger ones, they can simply call out the God Statement while having an older sibling or parent write it down.
- Each person will have a turn and then pass the paper and pen/pencil to their right.

EXERCISE:

Example: Read John 3:16. (What do you know about God?) God Statement: God is Love

1. Read I John 1:5. God Statement:
2. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:16. God Statement:
3. Read Genesis 1:1. God Statement:
4. Read John 14:6. God Statement:
5. Read I Corinthians 1:9. God Statement:

PRAY:

God, you are worthy of all of our worship because you are good, peace, love, truth, powerful, righteous and the Creator of all things. We praise you for who you are, and we thank you for inviting us into a relationship with you through Jesus. Help us know and serve you better this day. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:7

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name], **may you remember you are a living example who tells the story of Jesus when others see you are talk to you.** May your words, thoughts, and actions reflect the love and grace you have received. May others be invited into this grand story by your life and testimony for God's glory.

LESSON THREE

IDENTITY

"I belong to God, and He loves me!"

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional:

RAISED WITH CHRIST

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:1-4

GOD STATEMENT: Christ is Life

Christ broke the ultimate power of death when he submitted to the cross and was raised again. We die a physical death but do not stay dead or separated from God. This amazing reality is not based on what we accomplish on our own or do with our own power; it is a gift from God to us. No matter who we are or what we have done in the past, the beautiful truth is that we have been raised with Christ.

Because this is our identity, God wants us to focus our minds on Christ. **If Christ has defeated death and made life possible for us, it is worth our time and energy to think often about what Christ has done and what the implications are for us.** The promise, again, is not that death won't be a part of our story (death is even a part of Jesus's story). The promise is that even though we die, we live forever (John 11:25).

DISCUSS:

- What are some of the "things above" that this passage is encouraging us to think about?
- How can we live even though we will die? (See Colossians 3:3-4 and John 11:25)
- What is something new about the way I see myself after reading this passage?

PRAY:

Christ, you are life. Thank you for your sacrifice that destroyed the power of death and made life possible. Guard our minds as we think about you and what you have done for us. Help us continually remember that our life is in you. Amen.

2

CREATE

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

A New Name

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A notecard for each member of the family
- Pens, markers, pencils, etc.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 2:17

PRAY: God, our identity is found in You. Help us see ourselves through your eyes. Help us feel loved and cared for and appreciated. And help us love, care for, and appreciate those around us. Amen.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Write your name on the top of your notecard. You can make it as fancy or plain as you wish. When everyone is done, pass your card to the left. Take a moment and think about the person whose card you have. What is something you want them to know about themselves? Think about who they are and what they mean to you. Then make up a new name for them that captures the essence of what you thought about. Write this new name on their card. When everyone is done, pass the card again. Do this until you get your card back. Then take turns reading your alternate names out loud for everyone. If you need clarification, allow the person who wrote it to explain what they meant.

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship to God for who He is and what He has done. While we often worship through singing, there are other ways we can actively give our worship to God.

L3

SET YOUR MINDS

The Bible tells us to not be conformed to this world but rather to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

One of the ways we can live lives that are holy and set apart is by allowing God to renew our minds. God's Word is a beautiful way to renew our minds, and God even tells us what things we should dwell on in order to be authentic storytellers by the way we think, speak, and live.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Preferably silence (soft, quiet instrumental music is acceptable if needed)
- A notebook, or paper to write on
- Something to write with

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:1

PRAY:

God, my mind is constantly racing with thoughts.

Help me take charge of the thoughts in my mind and focus them on you. You are a great big God, and I will never be able to think all the thoughts about you there are. Holy Spirit, come and remind me of things I have forgotten and teach me things I have not learned yet. Amen.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Sit in pure silence (if possible; if not, you can play soft music in the background). Close your eyes. Your mind will begin to flood with all kinds of thoughts. Some of them may be important: things to do, stuff to remember. If an important thought comes into your mind, open your eyes and quickly write it down. Once the thought is written down, move on. Try to focus your mind on God. **Think** about who God is. Think about what God does. When a thought comes up that is not about God, just move on. (If it is important, write it down; if it is not important, don't dwell on it.) Spend one minute focusing on God (this will feel a lot longer than you think). Don't be hard on yourself; be gentle and have grace. When the time is up, write down something that stood out to you from your thoughts.

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:9-11

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name(s)], **may you know that God sees you and loves you.** Know that you matter to God, and He is for you. May you learn more about God every day as you spend time thinking about Him, and may He continue to reveal Himself to you. Amen

LESSON FOUR

IDENTITY

"I belong to God, and He loves me!"



1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional:

THIS IS OUR STORY

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4:1-24

GOD STATEMENT: Christ is Life

From time-to-time, God told Israel to set up a memorial to commemorate a significant moment in its history.

The purpose was so future generations would see and ask their parents about them, and their parents would tell them what God had done. While we may not gather piles of stones anymore (although that would certainly get people's attention!), we still have an opportunity to establish markers and signposts for our families that remind us of God's activity in our lives.

Part of what is special about being human is that our identities contain elements of the stories of those who have gone before us (as well as being a part of the stories of those who will come after us). Sharing stories is a great way to remember what God has done and how God has been faithful to our family members, and these stories encourage us especially when we are in places where it seems like God is hiding.

DISCUSS:

- Tell of a significant moment in your life when God arrived.
- Can you remember any stories of God's activity in generations before yours?
- Why is it significant to mark the moments when God does something impactful?

PRAY:

God, we know You show up in real and powerful ways. We pause to remember some of the ways and some of the times when you have arrived in the past and reflect on what that tells us about you and ourselves. Thank you for including us in your story, and for bringing us into your family. Amen.

2

GAME TIME

Sometimes the best conversations happen around simply planning and having fun together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful by asking questions at the end of the laughter.

FAMILY STORY MAD LIB

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- The Family Story Mad Lib resource
- Something to write with

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4:21-22

PRAY:

God, thank you for your activity in the story of our family. Help us to see where you have been present and active in our lives. Amen

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Fill out the Family Story, mad-lib style! Your family story may not look exactly like the outline, and that's okay. Make adjustments where needed and remember that this is your story. Have fun with it!

3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship to God for who He is and what He has done. While we often worship through singing, there are other ways we can actively give our worship to God.

SET YOUR MINDS

L4

The Bible tells us to not be conformed to this world but rather to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. One of the ways we can live lives that are holy and set apart is by allowing God to renew our minds. God's Word is a beautiful way to renew our minds, and God even tells us what things we should dwell on in order to be authentic storytellers by the way we think, speak, and live.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A stone or item of significance that will stand out

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4:2-3

PRAY:

God, may we always remember all that you've done for our family. Holy Spirit, bring to our attention the times when you moved among us, and help us remember and celebrate your faithfulness in our lives. Amen.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Gather as a family and place your item of significance in the middle of your circle. Speak about ways in which God has shown His faithfulness to your family. As each of you share, think about the various ways that God's activity can be seen. When everyone has had a chance to share all they want, choose one of the stories that had a major impact on your family. If you have several important stories, you can select a theme that connects them. Agree on a location to set your item of significance in your home. Place it somewhere everyone will see it. As you see the item throughout your days, it will serve as a reminder of what God has done in the life of your family.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:23

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name(s)], may you know that God loves you and cares for you. May you have eyes to see when and how God shows up in your life. May you feel His presence with you. And may you remember that you are a part of the big God story. Amen.

LESSON FIVE

FAITH COMMUNITY

"God's family cares for each other and worships God together."

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

ONE IN SPIRIT AND MIND

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-11

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is Humble

Jesus is God. Instead of using that to his advantage, he humbled himself, became one of us, and suffered alongside us. Christ's example is one of humility, gentleness, and kindness. When we talk about putting others ahead of ourselves, the focus is not on what we don't have or what we're missing out on; the focus is on helping others and making sure they have what they need.

Paul used the example of Jesus to remind us that we can humble ourselves and look after each other's needs. We want to be like Jesus, who did not take advantage of his position as God to make his life easier. **Paul asks us to follow that example and look out for each other as well.**

DISCUSS:

- Am I motivated by selfish ambition or vain conceit? Do I make decisions based on what I can gain even when it means others have to go without?

- What is the difference between focusing on what I am giving up versus focusing on what I can give away to someone else? Which one seems like biblical humility?
- What will happen if everyone in our faith community started acting with this kind of humility?

PRAY:

Jesus, you are so humble. Help us as we try to look out for each other. Help us see the ways in which we can serve others, as you modeled for us while you were here. Allow us to care for each other with joy and good attitudes, seeing our actions as a reflection of your humility and not simply a burden on ourselves. Help us see the needs around us and understand how we might be able to help. Amen.

2

CREATE

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

SEE THE NEED

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- some notecards
- a pen or pencil
- a decorative bowl

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:3-5

PRAY:

God, please give us eyes to see what can be done and hearts that understand what others are needing. Help us recognize what we can do to help those around us. Amen.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Take the notecards and pass them around to all who can write. As a family, talk about some people from your faith community you might be able to help. Write their name down on the top of one of the cards, and then talk as a family about what their needs might be. Write down a few different needs on the front side of the card, then flip the card over and brainstorm some ways you might be able to help them with their needs.

Put the cards in a bowl in the middle of your dining room table (or another prominent place where your family often gathers). For the next month, pull out a card when you are all together and discuss when and how you might be able to look to the interests of others.

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God. There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

ONE SPIRIT

L5

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- a speaker or a phone
- an instrumental playlist, like Soak from New Life Worship

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-2

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Listen to an instrumental playlist, allowing the music to form the background of your worship response. In Philippians 2:1-2, Paul asks several questions about our experience as Christians. As the music carries your heart to a posture of listening and heightened responsiveness, consider the following questions:

- Does being united with Christ bring any encouragement into your life?
- Do you receive any comfort from the love of Christ?
- Do you experience any fellowship/relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- How is God tender and compassionate with you?

After you have spent some time pondering these questions, turn your attention toward your brothers and sisters in Christ (your faith community).

- Is there anyone in your faith community that you don't have a good relationship with?

- Is there anyone you struggle to love?
- Is there any conflict in your faith community?

Be honest with yourself. We do not always get along with everyone in our own family, much less in our larger faith community. There will be conflict and tension. We cannot ignore it, turn away from it, or just leave this community for another one. God invites us to deal with it.

Take a few moments and talk together as a family. Is anyone struggling with your faith community. Talk about it as a family. What is going on? Why is there tension? Then, as a family, talk about what you are being asked to do about the situation. Paul instructs us to deal with them in the same way Christ treated us. Let Jesus's example guide you as you consider how you can be "likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."

PRAY:

Lord, we are grateful that you show us compassion, humility, and grace. Help us keep the unity of the faith community by treating our fellow brothers and sisters in the same way. Make clear what you are asking of us, and help us obey you as we work for the unity of your body.

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:9-11

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name(s)], **may you be encouraged and comforted by our gentle God.** May you feel God's compassion on you, and may you experience God's grace as you strive for unity. May you be reminded that our God's name is above every name, and that same God humbled himself and became like us. May you follow his example and bring Glory to his name

LESSON SIX

FAITH COMMUNITY

"God's family cares for each other and worships God together."

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

GLAD HEARTS

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:42-47

GOD STATEMENT: God is Relational

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

God loves when people are united. From the beginning of the church, God's plan was for His people to gather, share in each other's lives, and have a common spirit. Read the passage for this week and notice how God's people came together and began living their lives differently once they became a part of a faith community.

There were shared meals, quality time, and collective learning opportunities. United by a common identity, the community of faith grew by leaps and bounds, and everyone was taken care of. When the faith community responds this way, God is honored and the community benefits.

DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between going to church and being a part of a faith community?

- Church looks a little different now than it did 2,000 years ago, and that's okay. Who are the members of your faith community that you have a strong, consistent relationship with? Who else might you want to be intentional about connecting with?
- Why do you think the original faith community had "glad and sincere hearts" as they gathered together?

PRAY:

God, you are so good. You know we need relationships around us to thrive. In your wisdom, you have built a community of people who gather and share life together. Help us find ways to connect with our faith community and support them as they support us. Make our hearts glad as we find encouragement and strength from the other Christians in our lives who make up our faith community. Amen.

2

GAME TIME

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

Giving Thanks

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- a ball or something small and soft you can throw

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 30:19

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Sit in a circle and take a minute to think about where you are. Consider what you might need during this time, and allow yourself to feel all your feelings. Try to

articulate what you need from God or those around you.

Now think for a minute about ways that God has shown up for you in the past. And although it can be hard to see, think about how God might be present in your current moment.

After you've had a few minutes to consider, now you're going to have an opportunity to share with each other. Take the ball and say something you're thankful for. This can be from God's activity in your life or the presence of someone else. Then take the ball and toss it across the circle and that person says something they're thankful for. Continue around the circle until everyone feels they've been able to adequately share.

3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God. There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

A SONG OF GRATITUDE

L6

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- some paper
- a pen or pencil
- your Bible

SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 16:34

PRAY:

God, give us words to express your goodness and kindness to us. Remind us of ways you have cared for us in the past and promises you are making for our future. Show us how we can be there for the other members of our faith community, and help us all have glad hearts as we share our lives with each other. Amen.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- You are going to write a song of thanksgiving (it can be a poem for those who are not musically

inclined). Start by thinking together as a family about ways God has provided for you in the past. This can be material things God provided, emotional or spiritual moments of comfort when you needed it, or times when God arrived in the midst of difficult situations.

- Next, think of some of God's promises in Scripture. Ask yourselves what God might be speaking over your family and find a Scripture or two that speak to that promise.
- Then take both lists and write them down as a song or poem. This does not have to be a chart-topper; it doesn't have to rhyme or have a certain flow. Include both your needs and your gratitude, calling out to God for help and remembering his faithfulness.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 16:34

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name(s)], **may you know God is good and he loves you very much.** May you remember what God has done and how God has shown up in your life. May you be encouraged by the stories of those around you, and may you find comfort in your difficult times as you know you are not alone and God is with you.

LESSON SEVEN

SERVING

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

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

WHAT SERVING LOOKS LIKE?

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:25-37

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is Merciful

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches us that loving a neighbor means showing mercy and being willing to stop to meet a need, even of someone we may not like. Jesus said a priest and a Levite saw a wounded person on the side of the road but did nothing. They looked and passed by on the other side.

Have you ever wondered why? Were they in a rush and had to get to the temple or a celebration? Then came a Samaritan. In those days, the Jewish people looked down on the Samaritans and did not treat them well. Jesus said the Samaritan took pity, was filled with mercy and compassion, and was moved to action. It did not matter who the wounded person was. He stopped to help. The Samaritan saw someone in great need and showed mercy.

DISCUSS:

- What is the difference between feeling bad for someone and showing mercy?
- Have you passed by a need and not stopped to help? Why?
- How might God be asking you to be more like the Good Samaritan in your life? Who are your neighbors? How can you serve them?

PRAY:

Jesus, you are merciful. We want to be more like you. Give us eyes to see the needs around us, a tender heart to respond, and a willingness to help and serve others, no matter who they are. Teach us to love God wholeheartedly and to love our neighbors. Amen.

2

CREATE

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

"I LOVE TO SERVE" JAR

In the story of the Good Samaritan, a vital component of the parable is a compassionate heart that moves one to action. Our kids can develop a heart to serve others by learning to ask the question, "What needs to be done?" By asking this question and creating opportunities for our kids to respond, we allow them to put faith into action. The Bible tells us in James 2:17 that faith without works is dead. To help your family practice exercising their faith muscles, consider creating an "I love to SERVE" jar as a family

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- mason jar
- large sticky notepad
- scrap paper
- pens or colored markers
- craft supplies to decorate the mason jar

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-5

PRAY: Lord, you lived a selfless life and gave your

life for us. Thank you for being an example to us. Teach us to be tender-hearted and compassionate and to look out for others.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- Brainstorm as a family the different ways you can serve and "look out for the good of others." You can use a large sticky notepad to jot down ideas. To help your kids become other-minded, discuss

the ways you can serve each other in the family. Then look outward to your neighbors, the church, the city, and the world.

- Have each one choose different acts of service that the Holy Spirit is impressing on their hearts and write them on scraps of paper.
- Decorate the mason jar together.
- Fold the scrap paper and place them into the mason jar.

- Pray together.
- Once a week, each family member picks an act of service to carry out.
- After a month of doing "what needs to be done," share your learning experiences and reflect on how serving others has impacted you.

L7

3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God. There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

GO AND DO LIKEWISE

After Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, he said to the religious leader, "go and do likewise." Similarly, Jesus wants us to obey and do the same. Sometimes it is hard to help people, especially those who may not be nice or kind; or it could require sacrifice, which may not be easy. Following Jesus means obeying what He asks us to do.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Bible
- sticky notes
- markers or pens

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
- Discuss what love means. If you have younger kids, you can print out images of people being kind, loving, patient, and selfless. Visuals help drive home the point for younger ones.
- Take some time to be still before God and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what is challenging to obey in this passage of scripture. You can play soft worship music in the background to create a worshipful space (optional).

- Have each one write down one or two areas they would like the Holy Spirit to help them work on so they can obey God. For example, on their sticky note, they can write, "I will obey God by speaking kindly to my brother/sister or praying for ____ (someone they may not be getting along with).
- Conclude in prayer.
- Encourage your family to place the sticky note(s) somewhere to help remind them of their response to God's command to love others.

PRAY:

Holy Spirit, you are our helper. We want to be obedient to Jesus by serving and loving others. Please help us love, especially when it is hard or we do not want to. Thank you that we can trust you to change and equip us.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13:4; Matthew 25:40

BLESSING:

[Insert your child/ren's name], **may you remember that you are His beloved child, and His love is in you.** You can trust God to help you to be patient and kind by showing mercy and love to others. May you know that as you serve others, you are serving Jesus.

LESSON EIGHT

SERVING

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

1

GODS WORD

Spending time together in God's Word is a powerful way for your kids to learn who God is while instilling a love for the Bible from an early age. Take some time to read the passage above together and then read and answer the questions in the following devotional.

HOW DO WE USE OUR GIFTS TO SERVE OTHERS?

SCRIPTURE: Acts 9:36 - 42

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is a Blessing

A woman in the Bible named Tabitha used the gifts God gave her to help those in need. She saw the poor needed clothes and decided to put her sewing skills to good use. She made robes and clothing for the widows and served others. The Bible tells us in Acts 9:36 that she was "always doing good and helping the poor." We know Tabitha blessed many people around her because of the many who showed up at her house when they heard that she had passed away.

The disciple of Jesus named Peter was nearby and was asked to come to Tabitha's house. Full of faith in God's power to raise the dead, Peter prayed, and a miracle happened; life returned to Tabitha. Many people heard about the miracle, saw Tabitha alive, and believed in the Lord. God used Tabitha and Peter to serve and

bless others and to bring glory to God. When we serve others, we become light bearers, pointing people to God with our good works (Matthew 5:16).

DISCUSS:

- What are some gifts and talents God has given you?
- How can you use those gifts to bless others?
- Sometimes, being a light and using our gifts and talents to serve require faith. How can you exercise your faith?

PRAY:

Lord, thank you for the gifts and talents you have placed in us. We desire to shine brightly and glorify you with our good works. We offer our lives as a living sacrifice. Help us trust you and step out in faith to be a blessing to others.

2

GAME TIME

Sometimes the best conversations happen around creating or working on a project together. Don't forget to make this time engaging and purposeful.

FABRIC TIC-TAC-TOE

Tabitha used her sewing skills to bless the poor in her community. Turn sewing materials into a fun game of tic-tac-toe and enjoy spending time together.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- fabric ribbons
- ten different-sized buttons
- scissors

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Cut out four strips of ribbon and place them on a table or the floor. Create a tic-tac-toe design with the four strips of ribbon.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Take turns playing against each other. Two players a turn.
2. Each player will have five buttons and take turns putting them in empty squares.
3. The first player to put down three of their buttons in a row (up/down, across, diagonally) wins.
4. Celebrate and bless the winner with an encouraging word.

3

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God. There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE OTHERS

L8

God has given each of us various gifts and talents. Think about some famous people you know. Name the talents they have. God gifted each of them, and with dedication and practice, they became outstanding in their field. You may not be a professional basketball player, a Grammy award singer, a renowned baker, or a famous writer, but you have gifts that can be used for God and His glory. All that is required is a willing heart to serve.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Bible
- colored or plain paper; index cards
- pen, markers, or coloring pencils
- stickers or craft supplies to decorate with

- Call out the gifts you see in each other and spend time in worship, thanking God for giving you those talents.
- Write down 1 Peter 4:10 on an index card or paper and commit to memorizing this Scripture as a family. Younger kids may want to decorate their memory verse paper.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:10

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- During God's Word this week, you had the opportunity to think about how to use your gifts to bless others.

PRAY:

God, we praise you for the gifts and talents you have placed in each of us. We are fearfully and wonderfully made and have been purposed to do good works and to serve others faithfully.

4

BLESS

Offer this blessing to your child/children at the end of the night. Place your hand on his/her head or shoulder and look him/her in the eyes as you speak these words:

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10

BLESSING:

[Insert your child's name], **may you know that your Heavenly Father loves you.** He has created you to do good works and chosen you to be a light to the people around you. People will see God's love on display as you serve and love them



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