

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource



HE IS
RISEN

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KNOWING

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

MODELING

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

STORYTELLING

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

IDENTITY

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



A Note From Michelle

Spring is truly remarkable! There is new life abounding everywhere we turn. From puppies being born and bright colored flowers to butterflies emerging from slumber, we are reminded of a God who creates, restores, renews, and RESURRECTS. This issue of *HomeFront* will focus on four of the ten environments from my book, *Spiritual Parenting*, through the lens of spring and the sacred holiday of Easter.

The environments of **KNOWING** and **MODELING** will allow you to focus on who God is and how to emulate Him to your children. The environments of **STORYTELLING** and **IDENTITY** will kindle afresh your love for God's redemptive plan and offer you and your children a compelling counter-identity to thrive in.

Over the next eight weeks, I encourage you to set aside time for a Family Night with your family members and/or with your Community Group, to spend time together in God's Word, prayer, blessing, and of course some creative fun along the way.

We have added a couple special games (see if you can find them) as well as several QR codes to enhance your experience throughout the magazine. I encourage you to use these to engage all of your children's senses.

There are many voices vying for your children's attention, make sure that during this sacred season, they will be able to hear the voice that matters the most...their Heavenly Father's.

God bless you in your role as you disciple your children, grandchildren, and those entrusted to your spiritual care.

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Discipleship Steps at New Life Church

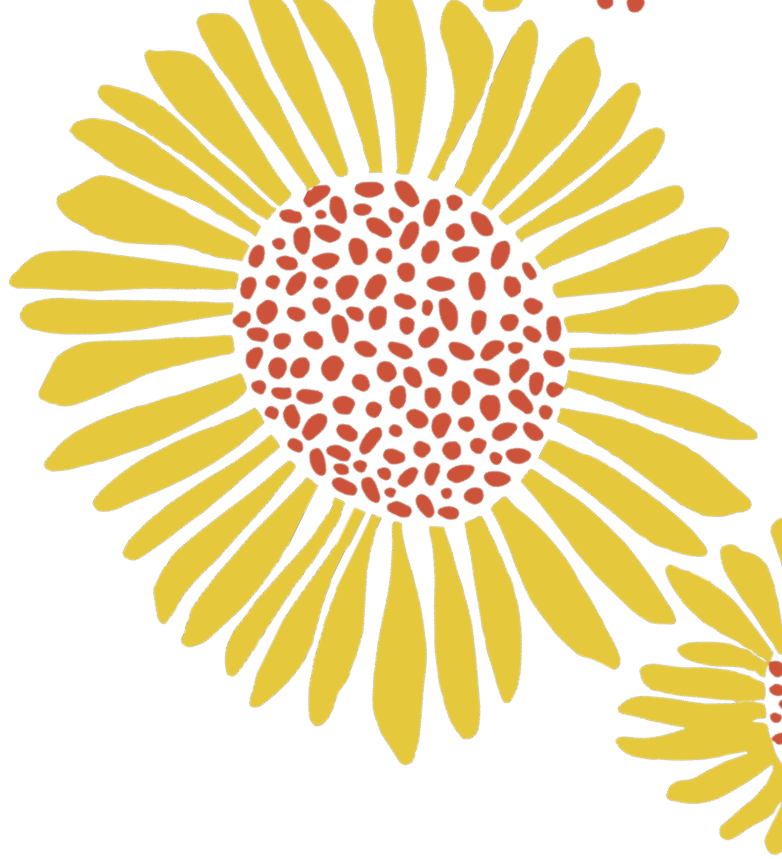
Parents are the spiritual nurturers of their children's faith and are the main disciplers in their lives. We are committed to engaging, empowering, and resourcing our parents and families to succeed in their God-given role. Time and resources make this role challenging in our busy world. At New Life 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 be involved.
- SPIRITUAL PARENTING** A six-week class that dives deep into what God's Word says about parenting.
- HOMEFRONT MAGAZINE** A magazine designed to aid in successful homegroups or family nights for your own family.
- FAMILY NIGHTS/COMMUNITY GROUPS** Families meeting in homes to do life together (as individual families or combined with other families) and grow in their relationships with God and each other.
- PARENT DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES/EVENTS** Throughout the year, we offer special courses and events tailored toward inspiring, equipping, and supporting you as you nurture your children's faith.

How to Use This Resource

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. Individual Family Nights or Community Groups (which participate in Family Nights together with other families) are an opportunity for you to gather with several other families who are in similar life circumstances and grow together. Your Community Group 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 Community Groups, and each volume contains a full semester's worth of gatherings.

You can still access previous editions of HomeFront magazine at homefrontmag.com. If you would like more information about Community Groups, 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.



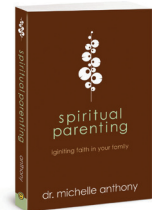
Spiritual Parenting

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 Successful Start

Feeling prepared and ready can greatly increase the quality of your Family Night or Community Group. Flip to the last two pages and find a supply list and both FAMILY TIME VERSE's. The verses are designed to be cut off the magazine and framed or displayed in high traffic areas of your home. Scan the QR code on the verse to hear our personalized Scripture song on Spotify. Simply flip the cut out page before lesson five and enjoy "hiding His Word in your hearts" together.

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FAMILY NIGHT/COMMUNITYGROUP

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IDENTITY

MODELING

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.

DID YOU KNOW?

Each lesson helps you lead your family through four sections.

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.

2 CREATE or GAME TIME:

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

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.

4 BLESS:

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.

RESOURCE

THINKING AHEAD

Let's make a plan and set your family up for a successful and less stressful family night or homegroup. Consider gathering all the materials needed for the next four environments, place them in a tote and be ready to pull them out for the evening!

Knowing

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Construction paper or plain white paper
- Scissors
- Pens or markers
- Plastic Easter Eggs (optional)
- Glory definitions on lesson page
- Yellow cake box mix
- 1 stick of butter melted
- 2 cans of peaches or pie filling of your choice
- White paper or card stock
- Watercolor paints (and glass of water for rinsing)
- Paintbrushes
- White crayon

Storytelling

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Four white coffee filters per flower
- Scissors
- At least two or more colors of watercolor liquid paint (can be found on amazon).
- Eye dropper
- Pipe cleaner for stem
- Dry erase board or piece of blank paper for each participant
- Dry erase marker or pencil for each participant
- Bible
- Timer

Modeling

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- One coffee filter per family member
- Two pipe cleaners per family member
- Pillow for the target
- Jelly Beans
- Empty Jar for each family member

Not sure What to do with all the extra coffee filters? use them to clean you mirrors. spray your cleaner and wipe clean with no lint. Remember the face looking back at you is a child of the King!

Identity

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 8 large marshmallows
- 1/2 c. melted butter
- 4 tbsp. half sugar/half cinnamon mixture
- 1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls
- 2 sticks for each family member (small branches, twigs, craft sticks, etc)
- Yarn, string, twine, or strips of fabric (various colors)
- Craft glue or hot glue gun

EXTRA FUN

Be on the lookout! See if you can spot the yellow letter hidden in each lessons text. Write them in order in the blanks below to discover a special message!

LESSON ONE

KNOWING

1 GOD'S WORD Hidden Truth

GOD STATEMENT: God is Truth
SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 25:2

Hide and seek is a classic game all ages love to play. There is a thrill of finding the perfect hiding place and excitement grows as the seeker searches and gets closer. When they finally find the one hiding, squeals of joy often erupt! Pause and allow one or two people in your group to share a time they found a great hiding place. Was it fun to wait on the seeker? Did anything funny happen while they waited? God enjoys sharing this process with us too. **In Proverbs 25:2, the Bible tells us God has hidden some treasures for His children to discover!**

"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings." (Proverbs 25:2)

When we have questions about life, instead of quickly answering, God often allows us time to look for it. This process helps us to KNOW God. **We can search the Scriptures, pray, and ask our community of believers for help.** Excitement comes as the truth is discovered. Maybe there's even a joyful squeal or two? As a family, discuss the following questions and have fun practicing "searching out a matter" in this weeks worship response!

DISCUSSION:

1. Define Glory. Use the definitions in Game Time below, if needed.
2. What does it mean for God to conceal a matter and why does that bring God glory?
3. What does it mean to search out a matter and why does that bring glory to mankind?

2 GAME TIME A Glorious Discovery

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Construction paper or plain white paper
- Scissors
- Pens or markers
- Plastic Easter Eggs (optional)
- Glory definitions

- Worshipful Praise
- Renown
- Thanksgiving
- A state of great gratification or exaltation
- Splendor
- Beauty
- The height of achievement
- Honor

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Cut your paper into 8 strips.
2. Let your family use markers or pens to write one glory definition on each strip.
3. Allow a member one minute to hide the strips of paper.
4. Then allow one minute for the remaining players to find the strips and bring them back to start.
5. You can continue playing with a variation as long as the group is enjoying the game.

VARIATION:

- Parents vs. Kids
- Group hides papers and one person races the clock to find them all.
- Tuck each glory definition into a plastic Easter egg to find. As you open the egg, remember Jesus death burial and resurrection was a hidden treasure in the Old Testament and is now a glorious discovery!

3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Search It Out

God has placed valuable gems in His Word and we can worship Him by spending time reading it.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Bible for each family member

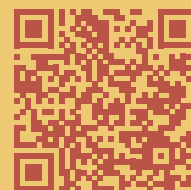
WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. One family member will be the leader.
2. The leader says "Every one ready?" and the remaining family members get ready to search!
3. The leader will call out a key word, or scripture address in the discovery list below and count down from three.
4. The remaining family members use their Bible to search out the matter and raise their hand when it's found.
5. The leader calls on one at a time to share if there are multiple verses or the first one if it's a single verse.
6. If something stands out to you, be sure to worship and give glory to God for making a way to know Him.

DISCOVERY LIST FOR LEADER TO READ:

- Look in the index in your Bible and find the word JOY. Turn to a verse listed under the word and raise your hand once it's found. Take turns reading the verses we discover together!
- Look up John 14:1
- Look up Jeremiah 33:3
- Look in the index of your Bible and find the word HOPE. Turn to a verse listed under the word and raise your hand once it's found. Take turns reading the verses we discover together!
- Look up Proverbs 8:17
- Look up Hebrews 11:1

To finish Worship Response, scan the scripture QR code and listen to the memory verse together.



4 BLESSING

Jesus First

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 29:13

BLESSING: (Child's name), may you learn to seek the Lord with all your heart. As you grow, may you run to Him with your questions and not to the world, always remembering we are here to help guide you and encourage you to know Him more.

LESSON TWO

KNOWING



1 GOD'S WORD The Real Thing

GOD STATEMENT: God is Real
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:15-20

Artificial Intelligence is becoming increasingly better by the day. Have you tried the real or not real challenge where you try to choose the real thing? For fun, look above at the two pictures. Can you tell which field is a real photo? It might be hard to pick the correct picture. They both have beautiful flowers, but only one is a real location.

Sometimes, it can also be hard to know if a person is trustworthy and a real teacher. In Matthew 5, Jesus begins teaching the sermon on the mount. This is a long sermon that covers many topics like relationships, charity, worry and prayer. As He finishes teaching these truths, He leaves us with a very important section.

Read Matthew 7:15-20 out loud. Jesus' ending words warn listeners to beware of false prophets, or those who pretended to have a word from God. How do we know if someone is pretending? **Jesus says we will know them by**

their fruit. The metric is simple. Don't follow a teaching until you've observed the teachers fruit. Does that person proclaim Jesus as the Son of God, our Savior? Does that person love other believers? Talk through the discussion questions below and encourage each other to do some digging and be on the lookout for good fruit!

DISCUSSION:

1. Why would a false prophet come dressed in sheep clothes?
2. How does Jesus tell us to recognize a true prophet?
3. What is one way the world might be trying to trick you?
4. How can you put it to the test?

Answer on Page 10

2 GAME TIME

"Cobbler Time"

Assemble this easy recipe and let it bake while everyone plays this super fun game named Cobbler Time. Then enjoy some warm fruit cobbler after the family blessing.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Yellow cake box mix
- 1 stick of butter melted
- 2 cans of peaches or pie filling of your choice

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Empty the cans of fruit into a 9 x 18 baking dish
2. Pour the yellow cake mix on top of the fruit filling.
3. Pour the butter on top of the cake mix.
4. Bake according to the cake box and enjoy!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 or more players
- A large open space

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mr. Wolf stands at one end of the room while the sheep stand at the opposite end of the room.
2. Sheep yell out, "what time is it Mr. Wolf"
3. Mr. Wolf answers with a time, like "3:00", the sheep then take three steps toward Mr. Wolf.
4. The sheep repeat the question "What time is it Mr. Wolf?" and move forward each time.
5. When the wolf says "Its cobbler time" the wolf tries to catch one of the children who are running back to the wall at the start of the game.
6. If the wolf catches one of the children then that child joins wolf and the game starts again until all the sheep have been caught.

Have lots of fun and at the end, take time to remind your family not to get caught by a "wolf in sheep clothing", but to be good watchers who look for good fruit!

3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Bear Much Fruit

It is important to remember we are also called to bear fruit. Read John 15:5 and think about how abiding in the vine produces fruit. Scan the QR code across to quietly play this song as you create a lovely watercolor reminder.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- White paper or card stock
- Watercolor paints (and glass of water for rinsing)
- Paintbrushes
- White Crayon

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Use the white crayon to draw a piece of fruit. Make sure to press down hard enough to leave wax on the paper.
2. Then begin to paint strokes over the piece of paper with the watercolors.
3. This will reveal the fruit!



4 BLESSING

Stay in the Vine

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: John 15:5

BLESSING:(Child's name), may you stay connected to the vine, and bear much fruit. May you love others and bring glory to God the Father because you are connected to Him.

LESSON THREE

MODELING

1 GOD'S WORD Let's Talk!

GOD STATEMENT: God is Teacher

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Spring is in the air! What things do you notice are coming back to life? Are there birds singing, flowers blooming, or a sweet smell as you walk outside? Each year as the new season approaches once again, we feel refreshed and can be reminded of an approaching event like EASTER! That's the thing about repetition, it helps us remember!

Just think, **have you heard a true Bible story told over and over?** Maybe you noticed in God's Word, His retelling what happened multiple times or commanding the Israelites to keep the seven yearly feasts? In the New Testament, as believers, we're told to keep meeting together as the day approaches. This model of repetition is one of God's ways of keeping each generation close to Himself.

When we begin to talk about His Word, we're following His model! **Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 out loud.** Then, lead your family in the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think God would want us to repeat His truth over and over again?
2. Why would He encourage us to write them on our door frame or tie them on our hands?

Share with your family that we quickly forget how good God is to us, and we need constant reminders so that we can thrive!

2 GAME TIME Dance and Lead

This game will be like a groovy mix of "Follow the Leader" and "Freeze Dance", so get your best dance moves ready!

BEFORE YOU PLAY:

- Choose one person to be the leader first. Consider going in order from oldest to youngest. This will allow the little ones to get a better idea of how the game is played.
- Next, choose someone to be in charge of the music. This person will play and pause the music however he chooses.

TIME TO PLAY:

1. To start the game, the person in charge of music will press play.
2. Once the music starts, the elder should begin dancing however she wants, and everyone else must dance the same way.
3. When the music pauses, everyone should freeze, and the leader must tag someone else to take a turn leading the dance. Continue taking turns, making sure everyone gets a chance to lead.

Remember, similar to how you put your dance moves into actions in this game, **God calls us to put our faith into action.** It's important to see Christ in others and for others to see Christ in us by the way we live our lives. God is big, and He is moving!

ANSWER: B is the real thing



3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Write These Things

Spend a few moments brainstorming with your family creative ideas for placing reminders of God's truths around your home. Choose a few verses that focus on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus to help prepare your hearts for Easter. Some ideas for reminders might be to make a Bible verse sign to hang on the front door or gate. How about letting each child write his favorite verse in pencil inside the door frame of your home? Or put index cards with Scripture verses in their rooms.

Once you've decided a way to keep God's Word visible, put your faith into action and do it! Keep it simple so you can actually accomplish the challenge. By placing these verses in prominent places all over your home, you are modeling how important it is to remember God's Word.

4 BLESSING

Follow Him

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

BLESSING: (Child's name), may you follow Jesus all your days, and may you talk about His great love with those around you as you sit at home, along the road, when you lie down and get up.

LESSON FOUR

MODELING

1 GOD'S WORD Ready to Act

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is our Model

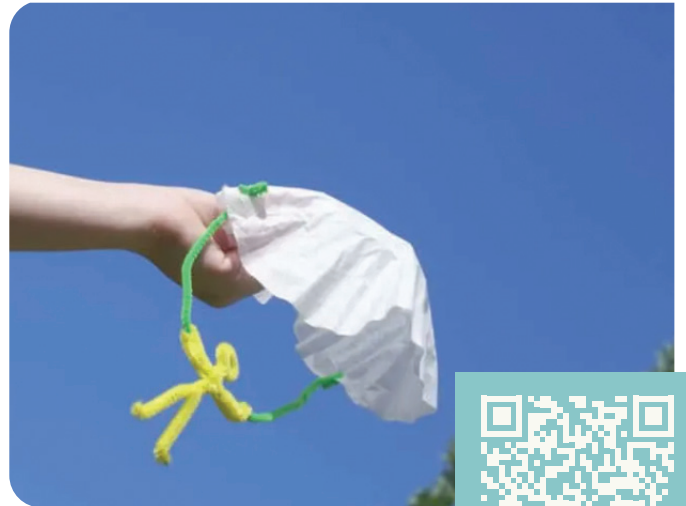
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:9-13

Kids, have your parents ever asked you to do a household chore? If so, did you know how to successfully complete the request? Most likely, your parent or guardian showed you the steps to complete the task. They may have modeled the chore many times before so you could see it in action.

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus is teaching about prayer. He says not to be a hypocrite, not to use meaningless words, but instead to be respectful and to be humble in prayer. Christ then prays a model prayer to show the listeners how to speak with God. Isn't that so kind of Jesus to go beyond simply saying something, but to also provide an action we can follow? **Read Matthew 6:9-13 together.** Use the discussion questions to think more about living out our faith.

DISCUSSION:

1. Have you wondered how to pray to God the Father?
2. What stands out in the model pray just read?
3. If a friend asked you how to pray, would it be helpful to point them to this passage?
4. Would you be willing to sit with them and help them practice praying?



2 CREATE Jesus Brings Hope

Through out Jesus' three years of ministry on the earth, He consistently modeled for us. We can look to His example when speaking to God the Father, or even how to live well with those around us. He is our hope! For create this week, have fun making a simple parachute man to remind us that Jesus came down to bring us hope.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- One coffee filter per family member
- Two pipe cleaners per family member
- Pillow for the target

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Scan the QR code above to watch a tutorial YouTube video from stlmotherhood.com
2. Then help each family member make a parachute man.
3. Lay a pillow in the floor as your target landing spot.
4. Designate a launching location and take turns dropping your parachute guy to see who makes it closest to the target.

Remember, Jesus modeled hope while here on earth and **He hit the target every time!**





PURPLE (THE COLOR OF ROYALTY):

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,"

Identify God's attributes and offer a prayer of praise. God knows and loves us intimately because He's our Father, but he's also holy, high, and lifted up an worthy of our praise.

YELLOW (LIKE MUSTARD FROM A MUSTARD SEED):

"your kingdom come,"

Discuss and dream together what heaven and spending eternity there will be like. Thank God that He loves us and wants to spend eternity with us. Pray for others to come to know Him and be able to spend eternity in His kingdom too.

GREEN (THE WORLD GOD CREATED):

"your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Pray for your world, your leaders, your community, your church, and your neighborhood. Pray that God's will would be done here as it is in heaven.

WHITE (THE BREAD OF LIFE):

"Give us today our daily bread."

Thank God for being your Provider. Brainstorm as a family the specific ways God has met your needs, and praise Him. Pray that your family will continue to trust and depend on God for everything you need.

RED (JESUS' BLOOD):

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Recognize the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. Be mindful of people you need to forgive and perhaps ways you may need to ask for forgiveness. Confess and ask for forgiveness.

BLACK (DARKNESS):

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Pray to have your eyes opened to ways you may be tempted. Ask God to help you always see another path to take. Use this time to share with your children an age-appropriate temptation that you may struggle with and ask your child to share too.

ORANGE (ENTHUSIASM):

"Amen!"

Amen literally means "so be it". Take this time to thank God for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sin. Celebrate together that Jesus rose from the dead and He's alive today. Then, all together, shout, "So be it!"

WORSHIP RESPONSE

3 Jelly Bean Prayer Jar

L4

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Allow each child to have his own prayer jar.
- Jelly beans to fill each jar.

BEFORE YOU START:

1. Explain that each color of jelly bean will correspond with a particular part of the Lord's Prayer.
2. For the first several days, you may want to model the time of prayer by leading it for your family.
3. Encourage your children to take turns leading as they feel comfortable (and if they're old enough).
4. Repeat daily until Easter. Then celebrate by eating the jelly beans and take time to thank God for Jesus and to remember all of the ways God heard and answered your prayers.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

- Lay out your jelly beans as a help to follow the model pray Jesus gave us.

4 BLESSING Our Example

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: John 13:15

BLESSING:(Child's name), May you always look to Jesus Christ as your perfect example.

He loves you and wants to use you to show love to others. May you become a great model for those around you.

LESSON FIVE

STORYTELLING

1 GOD'S WORD Jesus Wins!

GOD STATEMENT: God is Hope
SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:54-62

Adam and Eve had just sinned. Their whole world had been turned upside down and they were scared. Then, God called Adam's name. What should he do? God was going to be so mad wasn't He? From behind a bush, Adam weakly answered his Creator's call, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." What would happen now?

The most amazing thing happened. After questioning the couple and bringing to light what had taken place, God told a one sentence story directed to the enemy that brought eternal hope for all mankind.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
Genesis 3:15

At first glance, this doesn't sound like a great story, but look closer. God is revealing through story that one day, a virgin woman would give birth to a Son that the enemy would kill. But that's not the end of this story! The Son would ultimately crush the head of the enemy! **He is victorious.**

Wow, what a gift. In the midst of sadness, God gave a short story of hope for Adam and Eve to cling to and to share with each generation.

Four thousand years of waiting later, Jesus came.

And now two thousand years later, we remember that Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary, He walked the earth living a sinless life, and was indeed victorious over sin and death!

DISCUSSION:

1. Share a time when you took your fears to the Lord. How did He bring you comfort?
2. Do you remember how to seek and find from Lesson One? Have you practiced looking in Gods Word when you need help?

Remember, God recorded His story of redemption in the 66 books of the Bible. When you need hope, go to the source. Jesus Wins.

2 CREATE New Life Flowers

Create these beautiful coffee filter flowers as a way to remember that Jesus gives us new life. We are no longer slaves to sin, but free in Him!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Four white coffee filters per flower
- Scissors
- At least two or more colors of watercolor liquid paint (can be found on amazon).
- Eye dropper
- Pipe cleaner for stem



WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Gather all your supplies and scan the QR code to watch a tutorial video from YouTube.
2. Enjoy making these pretty flowers.
3. Display them this month as a reminder that through Christ we have eternal life!



3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Share Your Story

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

Sometimes when we read this amazing verse, it's easy to forget how powerful and life changing the message really is! As a family, take time to share your story. When did you realize your need for a savior? How has life been different since becoming a follower of Jesus? Celebrate with one another how great the love of God is that He gave his one and only Son. Scan the QR code below to listen to this month's memory verse song and celebrate God's love.



4 BLESSING

Eternal Life

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: John 6:47

BLESSING:(Child's name), may know you always love the story of Jesus and believe it is true. In Christ you have eternal life. May you share your story with anyone ready to hear, so they too may believe!

LESSON SIX

STORYTELLING

1 GOD'S WORD

Tell the Story

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Makes Us Strong
SCRIPTURE: Acts 7

There was a problem. The new Church was growing. Fast. And each day when food was served, a certain group of widows were being overlooked. Something had to be done. So seven men full of the Holy Spirit and of good reputation were chosen to take care of these precious women.

Meet Stephen—a man full of faith. He served and cared for the Church. He loved the story of Jesus. In fact, in Acts Chapter 7, Stephen is wrongfully accused and brought before the council to give a defense. Without skipping a beat, Stephen begins to tell the story. He starts way back with Abraham and tells the epic story of God's people all the way to King David, using storytelling to make a strong point, in hopes of pricking the listeners heart for change.

Prick their heart he did! But instead of a repentant heart, the council became furious and prepared to stone him. Before they could carry out this awful deed, Stephen looked up. The heavens open and he sees our wonderful Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Do you wonder if the sight of Jesus reminded him of Christ's words on the Cross? **Jesus asked the Father to forgive His captors.** Stephen reflected this immense love by asking "Lord, do not hold this sin against them".

As we approach Easter Sunday, let's remember how the story of Jesus death, burial and resurrection gives courage in hard moments. Knowing His story makes us confident and faithful.

DISCUSSION

1. We often talk about the BIG God Story. Starting from the beginning, can you try to retell the story?
2. How might knowing this story well help you speak to others confidently about Jesus?

Remember, when we know the story, our lives look different. **We see the lost world with loving eyes and want to bring others to meet Jesus too.** You'll hear a powerful modern day story of a young woman during Worship Response. Listen how she loves to share the story of her Savior no matter the cost.



WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Set the time for 1 minute
2. Each player then draws a picture of or writes down the title of his favorite Bible story.
3. When the timer ends, everyone show their story.
4. Start the 1 minute timer again and try to put all the favorite stories in the correct order of the BIG God story!
5. Use the Bible if needed to get the right order.

2 GAME TIME

Right Order

This is a fun way to practice repeating the most wonderful story ever told so you'll be ready to share when someone else needs to hear the good news!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Dry erase board or piece of blank paper for each participant
- Dry erase marker or pencil for each participant
- Bible
- Timer

3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Encouraging Words

Tom Doyle loves to tell stories. Stories that keep you on the edge of your seat, excited to see how Jesus will show up this time. Three decades ago, on a trip to Israel, the Lord started an adventure that no one saw coming. Tom fell in love with the Holy Land, and overtime, began to hear amazing stories of how **"The Man in White" was appearing to Muslims in the middle east.**

As any good storyteller would, Tom began writing down these amazing encounters. When the opportunity arose, he eagerly shared the stories with the western Church. Some people felt uncomfortable with the supernatural encounters, but many were deeply moved. It was obvious the Lord had a mission for this storyteller.

Tom went on to author *Dreams and Visions*, two more books, and a fourth titled *Women Who Risk – Secret Agents for Jesus in the Muslim World*, with his wife JoAnn Doyle, who has a heart for Muslim women. This on fire for Jesus couple continues sharing stories of the often overlooked.

They've made it their mission to come along side these new believers in love. Uncharted Ministries was launched in 2017 to **"Inspire the Body of Christ to rise up join the new great awakening among Jews and Muslims in the Middle East and in uncharted territories around the world."** Visit unchartedministries.com to learn more.

Their love for storytelling runs in the family. Josh Doyle, their son launched the **I Found The Truth** YouTube channel "to give every Muslim a chance to hear the Gospel through the stories of former Muslims who have risked it all to find the Truth." During Worship Response, gather together and **scan the QR code to watch how Marziyeh found the truth.**



Marziyeh's Story

FROM I FOUND THE TRUTH

4 BLESSING

Faithful

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.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:3

BLESSING: (Child's name), may you let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. May the true story of Jesus make you strong.

LESSON SEVEN

IDENTITY

1 GOD'S WORD With Great Joy

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Saves
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28

Resurrection Sunday is almost here! As we prepare our hearts with thanksgiving and praise for what the Lord has done, we can also celebrate with great joy what His victory means for our IDENTITY.

Remember what happened in Genesis 3? That's when sin entered the world and Scripture teaches that each of us inherited and continue to sin today (Romans 5:12). The wages, or payment, for sin is death (Romans 6:23). **In the Old Testament, priests regularly offered sacrifices to temporarily cover sin until the ultimate sin sacrifice would come.**

Jesus came to put an end to these sacrifices. At His death, Jesus took on the past, present, and future sin of those who believe in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). He died a horrific death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin.

Three days later, Jesus conquered Satan, sin, and death with His resurrection (Matthew 28). Because He lives, our sins can be forgiven, and we can be reconciled with God (John 14:19). Our new Identity is redemption, forgiven, and free. For this we can shout for joy!

DISCUSSION

1. Matthew 28:8 says the women left Jesus and the empty tomb with great joy. How might you have reacted if you had been there and had seen the empty tomb?
2. As we think about how Christ resurrection offers us new life, what is one of your favorite adjectives describing this new Identity?

2 CREATE Resurrection Rolls

These rolls aren't just a delicious treat: they're a great hands-on way to think about Easter. Each treat ends up hollow, representing the empty tomb left after Jesus rose from the dead. Your children will be amazed by the transformation!

Each part of the recipe represents how Jesus' body was prepared for burial.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 8 large marshmallows
- 1/2 c. melted butter
- 4 tbsp. half sugar/half cinnamon mixture
- 1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees
2. Open can of crescent rolls and separate into triangles.

The rolls represent the linen wrapping used in covering the dead.



3. Dip one marshmallow into melted butter.
The marshmallow represents Jesus' body, and the butter reminds us of the oils used to anoint Him.
4. Roll the marshmallow in sugar/cinnamon mixture.
The mixture represents the spices used in burials.
5. Place the dipped and coated marshmallow in the center of the crescent triangle. Fold and pinch the edges tight. The marshmallow may drip as it melts. Put each crescent-wrapped marshmallow on a slightly greased cookie sheet.
The mixture represents the spices used in burials.
6. Bake the rolls as directed on the package.

The oven represents the tomb

During baking, the marshmallow melts, leaving only the puffed crescent roll. This represents how Jesus rose from the dead, leaving nothing in the tomb but linen wrappings.



3 WORSHIP RESPONSE

Identity Cross

We are bombarded with lies from the world—lies telling us we're worthless, ugly, shameful, and simply **not enough!** However, because of what Jesus did on the cross, we have a new identity—an identity found in Him.

As you make these crosses, talk about God's amazing love for us. Listen again to the John 3:16 Scripture song and marvel together that God would be willing to give His one and only Son for us to be in relationship with Him.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 sticks for each family member (small branches, twigs, craft sticks, etc)
- Yarn, string, twine, or strips of fabric (various colors)
- Craft glue or hot glue gun



WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Cut the yarn, string, twine, or strips of fabric into short sections (each about six to 12 inches long).
2. Put a dab of glue at the top of your first stick and start wrapping a section of yarn, string, twine, or fabric around it.
3. Once you finish wrapping one section, put another dab of glue on the stick and repeat with another section. Repeat this process until you've completely wrapped the stick, creating your own unique design while you work. Then wrap the other stick in the same way.
4. Form the two wrapped sticks into a cross and tie them together to hold them in place.

4 BLESSING

Rooted

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.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 3:16-20

BLESSING: (Child's name), may you be rooted in God's love. His love for you, is deep and wide and long and high, and it makes you complete.

LESSON EIGHT

IDENTITY

1 GOD'S WORD Disciple Maker

GOD STATEMENT: God Gives the Holy Spirit
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:21-22, Romans 5:8

After Christ rose from the grave, He appeared to many and gave a new command,

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Our new commission comes a wonderful role—disciple makers. We have the privileged of leading others to follow Christ in a life changing way, and the best part is Jesus promises to be with us always even to the end of the age.

After His ascension to return to heaven, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit as the seal of our salvation and as a guarantee of our future Inheritance. Until that day, He is our teacher and will guide us as we share Jesus with others.

DISCUSSION

1. Allow each family member to share the name of someone they know who needs to hear the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection.
2. Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to use you as a witness to these specific people.
3. Thank the Lord for redeeming you and adopting you into His family!

GAME TIME 2 Guess What I'm Doing

In the game of Charades, a player tries to guess what another player acts out— a person, action, or thing. Playing Charades can be a great way to reinforce the concept behind the environment of IDENTITY.

In our version of Charades, we want your family to act out something that could be identified with Christ— something He did or a value He encouraged. For example, you many choose to act out reading the Bible, loving a neighbor, praying, or maybe even healing someone.



WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Start with the youngest family member as the first "actor".
2. When another family member guesses correctly, it's that person's turn to be the actor.
3. Get creative: The acting can be done silently or with words.
4. Do what works best for your family.

I AM
Free From
Condemnation
ROMANS 8:1-2

I AM
God's
Workmanship
EPHESIANS 2:10

I AM
Justified
ROMANS 5:1

I AM A
Child of God
JOHN 1:12

I AM
Complete
COLOSSIANS 2:9-10

I AM A
Citizen of Heaven
PHILIPPIANS 3:20

I AM
God's Temple
1 CORINTHIANS 3:16

3 WORSHIP RESPONSE Identity Words

When we understand our true identity in Christ, we begin to trust that God is in control. We realize He will guide our path, and that path will ultimately lead us to exactly where He wants us. Gather your family and read the above statements that speak truth about your identity in Christ.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Your Bible

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Read each statement and the Scripture that supports it. Be sure to remind your family these aren't things we must attain but rather things God gives us freely.
2. After reading each passage of Scripture, let these truths settle over your family. Encourage a few minutes of silence.
3. Then make time for everyone to process and ask questions about what these truths mean.
4. Read through the statements a second time and celebrate this is our IDENTITY—who we are in Christ.

4 BLESSING His Love

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 3:16-20

BLESSING: (Child's name), may you know Jesus love for you is where your identity comes from. God dwells in your heart, and His goodness is at work in your life.

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.

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.

8

LOVE AND 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.

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.

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.

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!

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!

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.

10

MODELING

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

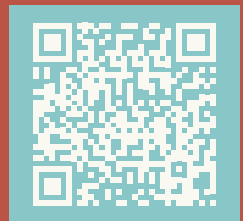
Biblical content needs a practical living expression in order for it to be spiritually impacting. This environment serves as a hands-on example of what it means for children to put their faith into action. Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others are watching to see if we live what we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



APRIL
FAMILY TIME VERSE

For God
so **loved**
the world that
he gave his one
and only Son,
that **whoever**
believes in
him shall not
perish but have
eternal life.

HomeFront



LISTEN HERE

MARCH
FAMILY TIME VERSE

NOW *faith*
IS **CONFIDENCE** IN
WHAT WE
FOR AND *hope*
ASSURANCE ABOUT
WHAT WE DO NOT SEE.

HEBREWS 11:1 (NIV)

HomeFront



LISTEN HERE