

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

FAITH COMMUNITY

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

SERVING

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

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

RESPONSIBILITY

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

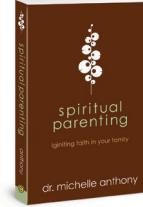


HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

19



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

Summer is a “Kairos” season for us as families. The word “Kairos” is the Greek word for “an opportune or seasonably ripe moment”. While kids are often out of school for an extended period of time and sports schedules and homework are at a minimum, we have an opportune moment to seize in their lives. **As you plan out your summer, take some time to ask God** to guide your planning to include more time together as a family, intentional opportunities to serve others, be in community with Christian believers in your faith community, and space to pray, bless, and be in God’s Word with your kids.

In this issue of HomeFront, you will focus on the environments of **Faith Community, Serving, Out of the Comfort Zone and Responsibility from my book, “Spiritual Parenting”**. I encourage you to read these chapters in preparation for your summer experience. Each chapter will serve as a catalyst for ways that God might be writing your family’s story over the next few months to spend more time with those who love Jesus, serve others in a posture of asking “what needs to be done?”, depend upon God’s Spirit to help you outside of what is comfortable and even “safe”, and take seriously the responsibility God has commissioned us with to “share the good news of Jesus” with those He brings into our lives.

May God bless you and each member of your family this summer as you seek to walk in step with His Spirit.

Dr. Michelle Anthony is the Sr. Executive Pastor of Family Ministries at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO and Director of The Initiative for Faith and Family. 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.

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.

HOMEFRONT MAGAZINE A quarterly magazine designed to aid in successful homegroups or family nights for your own family.

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

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.



HOMEGROUPS

Issue Five

CONTENTS

HELPING YOU CREATE
A SUCCESSFUL HOMEGROUP

LESSONS

Issue Five

6

LESSON ONE FAITH COMMUNITY

- A Sharing Commitment
- Breakfast Banana Pops
- Drawing Our Community
- Bless

8

LESSON TWO FAITH COMMUNITY

- Hoping Together
- Rock, Paper, Scissors...Cheer!
- Pray it Forward
- Bless

10

LESSON THREE SERVING

- A New View of Martha
- Hot and Cold
- Serve One Another
- Bless

12

LESSON FOUR SERVING

- The Example
- Let Your Light Shine
- Secret Service Agents
- Bless

14

LESSON FIVE OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

- You Can Depend on God
- Bubble Art
- Be Still
- Bless

16

LESSON SIX OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

- A Straight Path
- Trust Walk
- Calling on Him
- Bless

18

LESSON SEVEN RESPONSIBILITY

- Responsible to Love Others
- Howdy Neighbor Dominoes
- Called to Pray
- Bless

20

LESSON EIGHT RESPONSIBILITY

- Carry Jesus With You
- Walking Tacos
- Cheerful Givers
- Bless

21

**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.



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HomeFront

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.

LESSON ONE

FAITH COMMUNITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God Created Community

SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:31-37

A SHARING COMMITMENT

Read Acts 4:31-37. This passage tells us about a time in biblical history after the Holy Spirit had been given to those who believed in Jesus Christ and His salvation. The **FAITH COMMUNITY** was so impacted by the power and love the Holy Spirit brought that they couldn't help but share what they had, encourage and support one another, as well as gather together to worship.

As summer approaches, don't neglect to weave in a regular commitment to be involved in your local church. **If you don't make it a priority, it will be far too easy for the time to get gobbled up by other entities.**

DISCUSSION

- In what ways do you see the Holy Spirit helping our family to share with our faith community?
- In what practical ways can we encourage or support others?
- How do you sense God giving you a desire to be with other Christian believers for fellowship or worship?
- What is one thing you would be willing to give up to make being part of a faith community in our local church a priority?

Adapted from Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today's Families

2

CREATE

BREAKFAST BANANA POPS

Consider making these treats on your family night. Make extra to share with someone in your FAITH COMMUNITY.

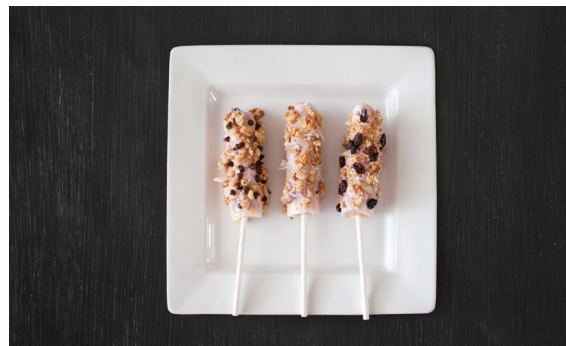
What a blessing to receive a pre-made breakfast!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 bananas
- yogurt of choice
- granola
- add-on ideas: mini chocolate chips, coconut shreds, cinnamon sugar, raisins, etc.
- popsicle sticks

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Pour granola into a very shallow dish or plate.
2. Peel bananas, cut in half, and insert popsicle sticks.
3. Dip bananas into yogurt—or spread yogurt on bananas with a butter knife or small spatula.
4. Roll into granola and add-ons.
5. Place on a parchment- or waxed-paper-lined tray and freeze.
6. Keep uneaten pops in the freezer until ready to 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.



Drawing Our Community

While your breakfast banana pops are freezing, gather your family at the table and give each member a blank piece of paper. Set drawing supplies within reach and discuss different ways we worship God. Share that one way is through art.

Read Mark 12:31, **talk about what it means to love your neighbor as yourself.** Ask the following questions and allow your family to illustrate their answer. Share the art and have fun guessing what each artist draws in an encouraging manner.

Jesus' command to love one another speaks to the heart of what it is to truly be in community with one another.

QUESTIONS

- *Who is my neighbor?*
- *What does it look like to love myself?*
- *How do I love others as I love myself?*

Take time to read the below blessing and finish your night enjoying the yummy banana pops and community fellowship.

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 her.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 12:31

BLESSING:

(Child's name), as you begin the school year, may you always remember to show others the same love God has shown you and be willing to invite others into your community.

LESSON TWO

FAITH COMMUNITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is Our Hope

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 10:23-25

Hoping Together

Being part of a **FAITH COMMUNITY** is **special and important**. God created us to live in community with one another, that we may experience the sweetness of love and support from others. Our faith community are the people who remind us of our hope and the one who is faithful, Jesus. They speak words of encouragement, and walk alongside us through all life brings. **Remind your children that being part of a faith community does not just mean we receive the love and encouragement of others**, but we are to regularly gather and pour out encouragement to others. What a wonderful and beautiful design!

DISCUSSION

- Who is a part of our faith community?
- How can we encourage them to remember our hope in Jesus and love others?
- Why do you think the author of Hebrews instructs believers to continue gathering together?

2

GAME TIME ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS...CHEER!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Family and Friends

BEFORE YOU START

Gather everyone around in the same area. Explain to your family and friends that you are all about to participate in an epic rock, paper, scissors tournament! Explain the rules to rock, paper, scissors for anyone who does not know.

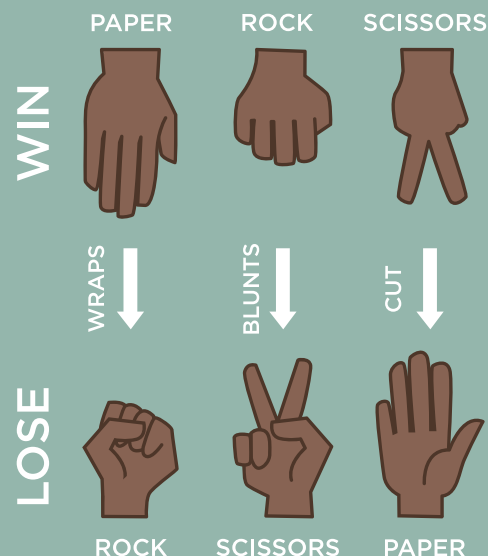
WHAT YOU'LL DO

Pair up everyone in the room. If there is an odd number, make a group of three. Two people from the group of three will play one round. The winner of that pair will then play the third person for the tournament.

Explain to the group that everyone will begin the first round when you say, "go." **The people who lose the first round will cheer for the people who won.** Then all of the winners will move on to the second round. They will pair up, play the round and, again, the people who lose will cheer for the winners. Continue playing rounds until the group ends with one final winner whom everyone cheers for.

Rules: You and a partner each make a fist with one hand and rest it on the flat, open palm of your other hand. At the same time, you both lift your fists up and

gently tap them back down on your palms three times. As your fists hit your palms, both people say, "rock ... paper ... scissors." On the word scissors, and the third and final tap to your palm, both players say and display (using their hand that has been in a fist) either a rock, a paper, or scissors. For a rock, you keep your hand in a fist, for paper, you open your hand flat, and for scissors you stick out your index and middle fingers. Paper beats rock, rock beats scissors, and scissors beats paper. If both players land with the same thing, they do it again. The person who loses the round is out.



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.



Pray it Forward

We need each other. We need our faith community, and our faith community needs us. We are to encourage one another, help one another, and pray for one another. **If our faith community is marked by people loving one another well, it should be an attractive witness to the outside world.** We are called to reach out to those who do not know God, and to invite them into this community of faith.

This month, as a family, do a fun “pay it forward” activity rooted in generosity and prayer. Throughout the month, encourage your children to donate to a giving fund. Designate a specific jar or bowl and display it in a prominent place in your home as a visual reminder that you are collecting money for this activity. Every time a family member places money in the jar, say a prayer for the family who will be blessed by your generosity.

WE ARE CALLED TO REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD, AND TO INVITE THEM INTO THIS COMMUNITY OF FAITH.

At the end of the month, choose a drive-through restaurant to go to for dinner one night. **Before you go to dinner, write an encouraging note to go along with your giving fund.** As you drive through the restaurant, hand the employee your giving fund and ask him to use it to pay for the order of the car behind you. Hand him your note as well and ask him to give it to the people in that car. Then as you drive away, pray for the people you just blessed. Pray that they would come to know Jesus and that they would become part of a loving faith community.

4

BLESS

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SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 12:27

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you live a life worthy of the your calling to the body of Christ. May you be completely humble and gentle, patient, and most importantly, show love to others.**

LESSON THREE

SERVING

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Offers Rest

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:38-42

A New View of Martha

Read Luke 10: 38-42. Often, when we read this story of two sisters, Martha gets a bad reputation. We quickly dismiss her as doing something wrong. There are a few things that remind us otherwise. First of all, Martha is the one who invited Jesus in the first place. Without her, the divine visit would never have even occurred. The Bible says she “opened her home to Him.” That’s hospitality and a servant’s heart on display. Also, we have to realize that preparations, cooking, and other hosting activities are needed when inviting someone over. Martha’s activities were not bad – someone had to do them. Where Martha goes astray, though, is when she orders Mary to leave Jesus’ side and join her in the kitchen. Martha’s serving was needed and so was Mary’s attentiveness to the guest. That day, Martha learned how important simply being with Jesus is. Perhaps Mary, too, was thankful for Martha’s generous heart and passionate service. As we live in the environment of SERVING, **may we not forget the power of resting at Jesus’ feet and listening for His voice. In all of our activities, may we charge ahead with energy and vision, being careful not to criticize those who aren’t joining us in the tasks at hand. For they may be responding in a different way to God’s call and invitation.**

DISCUSSION

- What kind of preparations do you think Martha was doing?
 - What needs to be done when you invite over a special guest?
 - How would you describe Martha’s attitude?
 - Jesus tells Martha that “only one thing is needed.” What do you think that one thing is?
 - What do you think Jesus means when he says “It will not be taken from her?”
- Hint: Matt. 28:20.



2

GAME TIME

Hot and Cold

Bring your children into a room in your home that has a few things that need to be done. This can look like toys that need to be picked up, clothes that need to be folded and put away, dishes that need to be taken to the kitchen; any task in which your child is able to use as an act of service. Encourage your children to look for even small acts of service, as everything is helpful.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Play a game of “Hot and Cold” with your kids to help them find things that need to be done. As your child gets increasingly closer to a task, call out “warm, warmer, and hot,” and if they begin to stray away from a task, call out “cold, colder, and freezing.” Once they have found what needs to be done, encourage your child to help serve the family by completing this act of service.

LET'S PLAY IT A DIFFERENT WAY

After your child has become more in tune with being able to recognize things that need to be done around the house, reverse the roles a little bit. This time, allow your child to find an act of service on her own and complete it while you are not looking. After she is finished, your child gets to play the “Hot and Cold” game with you, guiding you to the act of service they accomplished!

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.



Serve One Another

"WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?"

The environment of SERVING asks the question, "What needs to be done?" What if, as a family, you created a space in which your kids could practice asking this very question? Do this by cooking a meal with them!

Choose a simple meal that requires multiple steps and write or type out a kid-friendly version of the recipe. Make sure the recipe includes several easy steps. Before you begin, explain to your children that everyone must work together to complete each step in order to create a finished meal. **Encourage your kids to ask, "What needs to be done?" after each step.**

Later, as you eat the delicious meal you created together, remind your kids that they finished the meal because they asked, "What needs to be done?" for each step and then completed that step. Share that we can ask God to show us what needs to be done, and He will guide our hearts and show us all of the different ways we can serve His people and the world around us.

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.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:9-13

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

LESSON FOUR

1

GOD'S WORD

SERVING

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is the Model
SCRIPTURE: John 13:3-15

The Example

Can you imagine kneeling on the ground, holding someone's dusty, dirty, smelly feet, and gently cleaning them off? What an incredible picture of service! Jesus demonstrated that sometimes we're going to need to get a little messy in order to serve others.

In complete humility, Jesus—the Son of God—took on the task of washing His disciples' feet. He wanted to show us what true servanthood looks like. Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:14-15).

With this passage, Jesus isn't necessarily asking us to wash one another's feet. Instead, He's asking us to put aside anything that hinders us from answering the question, "What needs to be done?" What holds your family back from serving those around you? What would it take to enable your family to start following Jesus' example more fully?

As a family, read John 13:3-15. **Discuss what it might been like for Jesus to wash the disciples' feet.** Remind your kids that the roads back then were dusty and unpaved, and everyone wore sandals. Think about how smelly and muddy their feet must have been!

DISCUSSION

- Ask your kids why they think Jesus chose to wash the disciples' feet.
- How is this an example of how we can serve those around us?
- Do you think your friends and family see you as an example of service?

2

CREATE

Let Your Light Shine

Matthew 5:16, reminds us that when we serve, others are watching. We can put our good deeds on display and glorify God when we answer the question, "What needs to be done?" What if we chose to let our light shine before others in this way in every situation we entered?

As a family, talk through some ways you can "let your light shine." Then allow each family member to create a candle to tangibly remind her that serving others allows our light to shine brightly in this world.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- white candles in tall, clear, glasses (1 for each family member—you'll find these at most dollar stores and some grocery stores)
- Mod Podge
- paintbrush
- copy of verse found on page 22-23
- ribbon, twine, or fabric strips (optional)



WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Paint the back of the Family Verse with the Mod Podge and stick it to the candle.
2. Use more Mod Podge to paint over the top of the verse and be sure to coat it well.
3. Allow it to dry completely. Don't worry—it will dry clear!
4. Optional: Wrap the candle with ribbon, twine, or fabric strips.

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.

SECRET SERVICE AGENTS

As we dive into what it means to serve Christ and serve others, it is important that we heed Jesus' warning to "be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If [we] do, [we] will have no reward from [our] Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:1).

Here, Christ is calling us to a life of secret service to Him and others—asking that we do good, but not simply for the purpose of being seen. He wants us to serve out of obedience to His calling on our lives, and as an act of faith in Him.

As an act of worship this month, give your family the mission of being "secret service agents," secretly serving wherever they see need. Remind them that serving is a way of worshiping God. Share with them Romans 12:1. Then, encourage them to find different ways of serving around the house and around the neighborhood, and to be constantly looking for situations in which they can serve others. Encourage them to find some way to serve that the whole family can do together as well.

Be sure to explain the "why" behind the whole secrecy element. **This is a great opportunity to open God's Word with your kids. Matthew 6:1-4 talks about never letting "your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret."** Read this passage with your kids, so that when you commission them to be the secret agents, they can serve with excitement towards the One whom they are serving, and will also reward them in secret.



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.

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:3-4

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you follow Christ's example of serving others.** May God reveal His perfect plan and purpose for your life and use you according to His will. May your daily circumstances allow you to serve others and to utilize the unique gifts God has given to you.

LESSON FIVE

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is Trustworthy
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 33:18-34:7

You Can Depend on God

Read Exodus 33:18–34:7 together as a family.

God was there when Moses was born. God was with him throughout his life and allowed his actions to shape him for a time such as this. Moses didn't understand yet that it would take everything in him to trust in God to do what God called him to do. "How am I supposed to do this, God? Don't you know who I am?" Moses wondered. **God replied by saying, "Who you are doesn't matter. Tell them who I AM."**

What a position to take! Instead of being used by God based on what we can and can't do, we look to the One who made us. When we understand that God called us, we can remember that God will also provide. It's a tough position to be in! **However, when we come to a place of depending on God for everything we have, it allows us to remember that God gives us our very breath.**

In this part of The Big God Story, Moses wants to see God. He desires to know Him better and trust Him more as he is **Out of the Comfort Zone**. God is faithful, and He reveals Himself to Moses.

Take a second look at Exodus 34:6 and the first part of verse 7. In it, God proclaims Himself to be a loving and compassionate God who cares for all of our needs. Take some time to explain what these characteristics of God mean for your children.

DISCUSSION

- Which of the characteristics listed in Exodus 34:6-7 allow you to trust God more?
- How have you seen these attributes of God in your own life?
- When depending on God, why is it important to know the true character of God?
- How can your family remember this truth?

2

CREATE



When God asks us to step Out of the Comfort Zone it can feel scary. But God is trustworthy. He sees the big picture and knows that He's creating something beautiful with our lives. Our job is to trust Him when things don't make sense. This is a truth you can share with your children as you create beautiful bubble art together.

Simply mix food coloring with the bubble mix and blow bubbles onto paper. As the bubbles land and pop, a colorful work of art will appear. And it goes without saying that this project is best done outdoors!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ½ gallon water
- ⅓ c. dish soap
- 1-2 tbsp. glycerin (gives bubbles staying power; can be found in the first aid area of a drugstore)
- food coloring (various colors)
- 1 small container for each color of food coloring

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mix all of the ingredients listed for the bubble solution and divide into smaller containers. Use one container for each color of food coloring you choose to use. You can increase the intensity of the color by adding more drops.
2. Give each person a pipe cleaner and invite her to shape it however she'd like (circles, hearts, etc.). This is a terrific activity for little hands! The fuzziness of the pipe cleaners will soak up the bubble solution and make outstanding bubbles.

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.



As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

Learning to be a disciple of Christ can most definitely take us **OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE**. When Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His teaching, Jesus treated her as a disciple, even though she was an unusual and unexpected disciple for her time. Jesus showed her, and all of us, that we're all called to follow Him and become disciples, no matter how unexpected or uncomfortable it might seem.

Disciples live lives of devotion to their master. This means that because of their love for their master, they're excited to follow Him and remain loyal to the end. **We can never be Jesus' devoted disciples without His help.** Only through the power of God's Spirit can we be people who live as God's disciples, depending on Him in every situation in our lives. For this reason, it's imperative that we learn to hear His voice through all the distractions.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Time

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Gather your family and ask God to help you set your minds on Him
2. Spend some time in prayer, sitting silently at the feet of Jesus, our Master.
3. Ask Him to help you learn to recognize His voice and let go of things that get in the way of hearing His voice.
4. Have soft worship music playing if desired. Suggestion: Soak album on Spotify (New Life Worship).

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.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:16-17s

BLESSING:

"(Child's name), **may you never lose heart.** Always remember to depend on the Lord, for even in troubled times He is renewing you day by day.

LESSON SIX

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is the Way Maker

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 1:1-7 and Proverbs 3:5-6

A STRAIGHT PATH

As a family, read Proverbs 1:1-7. Explain to your children that the book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom, instruction, and insight. **Then turn to Proverbs 3:5-6 and read these verses.** Verse 5 points to the Lord being the One in charge. When we trust and submit to Him instead of leaning on our own ways (or what we think makes the best sense), then He'll make our paths straight. **God's ways are always better, and His thoughts are always higher!** It's hard to trust God when things don't make sense, but let's be honest: He has a pretty good track record.

DISCUSSION

- What do you think it means to "trust in the LORD will all your heart" (Proverbs 3:5)?
- What are some ways you can submit to God?
- Are there areas of your life where you need to trust Jesus more?

Take a few minutes to write down three things (or areas) in your life with which you'd like to trust the Lord better. Then take these to God in prayer. **Trust Him—even if it doesn't make sense.**

2

GAME TIME

Trust Walk

Gather everyone in your family for this all-play! This fun game will give your family members some serious bonding time as they learn to trust one another in a blindfolded trust walk.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- You'll be using your entire home and/or yard, so be sure to clear the walkways.
- You'll also need to grab a scarf or handkerchief to use as a blindfold.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Choose one person to lead and another person to be led. As you decide who the leader will be, keep in mind that it may be helpful to start with an adult. This will give the younger kids a chance to better understand the game before they begin leading others.
2. Give the blindfold to the first person to be led, and have him put it over his eyes. Then have the leader take the blindfolded person's hand. The leader will guide him through your home without saying anything. It's the leader's job to make sure the blindfolded person doesn't run into walls or trip over toys. Encourage the leader to move slowly, especially with the young ones.

Give each person the chance to be both the leader and the person being led. And remember—no talking!

ADD A TWIST

- In this version, use only one room or go outside. Have the person wearing the blindfold start at one end of the room or yard. The leader will then stand far from the person being led and call out directions on how to walk to the opposite side of the room or yard. The leader will give instructions on when to stop, turn, etc.
- Once you've mastered this, add a few simple obstacles around which to guide one another. Consider using outside water obstacles like water tunnels or slip and slides! This will be a little more difficult, so you may want to stick to the older kids with this one!

REMEMBER!

It may have seemed a bit scary at first for you to be led somewhere while being blindfolded. It's so much easier to get places when you know exactly where you're going. But once you began to trust the person leading you, it probably became a little easier.

Similarly, sometimes in life God leads us to places we don't understand or places that make us feel uncomfortable. Know that you're being led by Someone you trust: God! **Even though we may not know where we're going, He does, and we can always trust Him.**

3

WORSHIP
RESPONSE

L6

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.

Calling on Him

This month, use Psalm 116:1-7 to guide your family's time of worship. Read this passage out loud together and then reflect on it. Share with one another which verses or phrases stood out to you and why. Ask each family member: "Is it easier for you to remember to trust and worship God when life is going your way or when life is hard or doesn't make sense?" and "What truths about God do you cling to in difficult times?" Talk about how you can encourage one another to worship God at all times, in the best days and in the days when you're stretched far beyond your comfort zone.

End your time together by singing a worship song familiar to your family. **God loves it when we, as His children, call out to Him in the midst of joy or pain.** In either case, doing this shows our dependence on Him to care for us and our trust in His goodness and faithfulness through both the highs and lows of life.

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.

Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow.

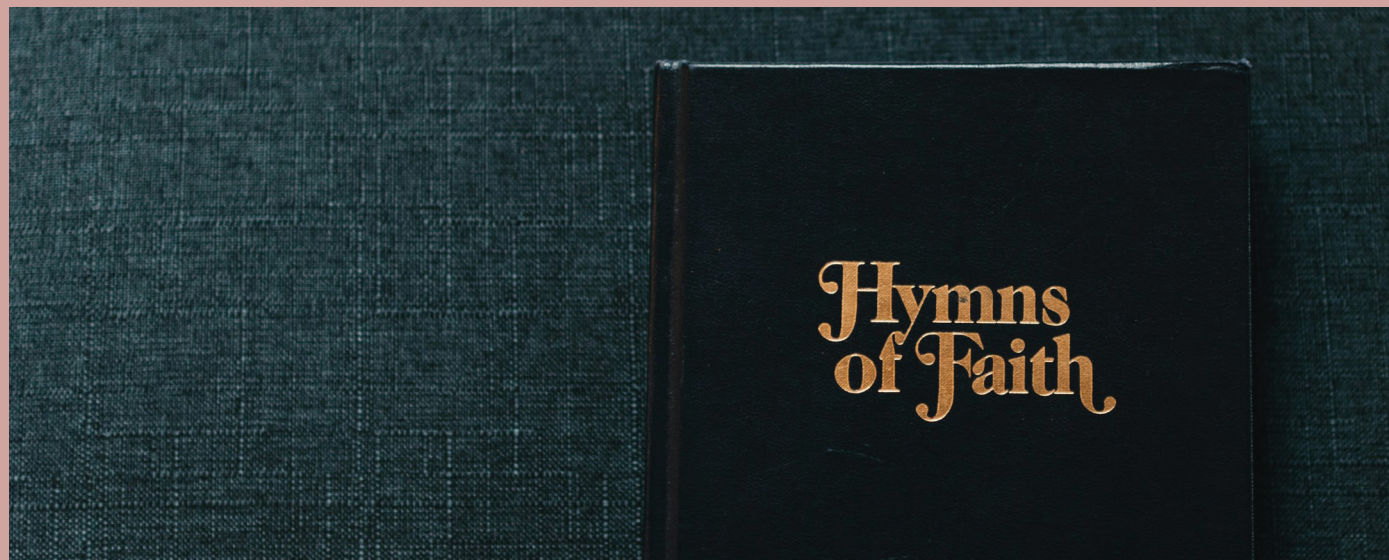
Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Lord, save me!"

The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you.

Psalm 116: 1-7



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.

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 3:5

BLESSING:

"(Child's name), may your knowledge of God lead you to unwavering trust in God leading your life. In times when you may feel out of your comfort zone, be reminded of the truth of who God is. Be encouraged to step out with great boldness because of God's steadfast character. May God help you choose to act swiftly when He calls you to action. And may He help you to model total trust and surrender in your life when you sense Him leading you into an area that is difficult for you.

LESSON SEVEN

RESPONSIBILITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Teaches Responsibility
SCRIPTURE: Luke 10

RESPONSIBLE TO *Love* OTHERS

In Luke 10, an expert in the law comes to Jesus and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. In response, Jesus asks the man to tell Him what the law says. The man replies, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Jesus affirms his answer, but the man wants to justify himself and asks, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus then tells the parable of the good Samaritan, highlighting the fact that even our worst enemies should be considered neighbors who ought to be loved.

Parents, take a moment before entering into the family discussion to reflect on your responsibility to love the world around you as Christ does and if your life reflects a selflessness. **If parents serve others wholeheartedly, invite in neighbors, and openly talk about God’s heart for the world, the student will begin to grow in her understanding of who God asks her personally to love as He would love.** Often your children will follow how you handle this responsibility.

DISCUSSION

1. Who around you does God desire for you to invest in and to intentionally love as Christ does?
2. Why do you think Jesus asks us to love our enemies?

2

GAME TIME

Howdy Neighbor Dominoes

WHAT YOU NEED

- set of double-nine dominoes (for 4–8 players)
- pen or pencil
- paper



BEFORE YOU START

Turn all of the dominoes facedown on the table and shuffle them well. Give each player seven dominoes. The remaining dominoes make up “the house.” Dominoes in the house must remain facedown throughout the game.

TIME TO PLAY!

1. **Play 10 rounds.** Round one begins with the double-nine domino laid faceup in the center of the table. Round two begins with double-eight, round three begins with double-seven, and so on, all the way down to double-zero. At the end of each round, the goal is to have the fewest amount of points in your hand.
2. To begin, have the player with the double-nine domino place it in the middle of the table. Next, the players must lay six matching dominoes—

dominoes with nine dots on one end—around it. If a player doesn’t have a matching domino, he must draw from the house. If he fails to draw a matching domino, the next player goes. **Once you have six dominoes touching the center domino, you’ve formed “the neighborhood.”**

3. Once the neighborhood is in place, each player can lay a matching domino at the end of any of the six dominoes. Long chains of dominoes matching end-to-end will form on the table through the course of the game. **These are called “streets.”** If a player doesn’t have a domino that matches the end of a street, he must draw from the house. If he fails to draw a matching domino, the next player goes.
4. If a player lays a double-number domino, the domino is placed horizontally at the end of a street, and all players must shout, **“Howdy, neighbor!”** Then the players must attach three matching dominoes to this domino, one at a time, before any further plays can be made elsewhere. (This is similar to how the game begins.)
5. A round ends when a player plays all of her dominoes, the house is empty, or no other moves can be made. Then the players who still have dominoes can tally up their points, with each dot on a domino counting as one point. The double-zero domino counts for 50 points.
6. Play another round, and at the end of the 10 rounds, see who has the fewest points. That person is the winner!

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.

Called to Pray

WHAT YOU NEED

- globe or world map
- blindfold

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." **We have a responsibility to pray not just for ourselves but also for people around the world, even people we don't know.** This is actually the most powerful thing we can do for them, because it entrusts them to the resources and care of God, the One who knows exactly what they need and loves them more than we ever could.
2. Blindfold one family member and have him spin the globe or hold the map. Have him randomly place his finger on the globe or map, and then remove the blindfold while he keeps pointing to that spot. Ask him to read the name of the country he landed on.
3. **Together, as a family, pray for the people in that country.** If your children aren't sure about what to pray for, spend some time discussing the country. Ask your kids if they know any facts about that particular country or know of any needs the people in that country may have. If your kids have never heard of the country, do a quick Internet search and look up a few key facts about it. Then make a brief list of things your children can pray for.

4

BLESS

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SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1:9

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know how steadfast your heavenly Father is.** I pray that you will cling to His Word, His Spirit, and His truth. May you be reminded that your heavenly Father will never fail you and will always be with you and help you love your neighbor. In your deepest moments of discomfort, may you feel strong and courageous knowing that God is working on something glorious!

LESSON EIGHT

RESPONSIBILITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Forgives and Heals
SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:1-12

Carry Jesus With You

Can you imagine being in a crowded room in your home when all of a sudden someone breaks a hole into the ceiling? That's what the men in Mark 2 did. They felt so responsible for their friend that they dug a hole in the roof and lowered their friend down to get him to Jesus! God asks us to feel the same urgency and responsibility in sharing and showing our faith to family and friends who don't know Jesus.

The men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus to be healed physically, but Jesus did more. Jesus knew the man's deepest need was peace with and forgiveness from God. **Only God can change someone's heart toward Him and offer forgiveness of sins, but we get to be part of the process as we take on the responsibility of planting seeds of faith in our friends' lives.**

Do you have friends who need to be "brought to Jesus"? You might not be able to carry your friends to Jesus on a mat, but you can invite them to come with you to church! Write down the names of three friends

and a different way to show Jesus to each one. You can demonstrate your faith through your actions as well as talk about your faith. Jesus uses many unique ways to draw people to Himself!

DISCUSSION

As a family, read Mark 2:1-12. Notice how the friends showed their belief in Jesus by taking responsibility for their paralyzed friend and bringing him to Jesus.

- The packed room was an obstacle in getting the paralyzed man to Jesus. Are there any obstacles in our lives that make it tough to share Jesus with our friends?
- The men took responsibility for their friend's condition, and Jesus saw their faith. For which person or people do you feel responsible?
- The men showed their faith by bringing their friend to Jesus, and Jesus affirmed their action of faith by healing the man. How have you demonstrated your faith with actions?

2

CREATE

Walking Tacos

This month we're considering our responsibility to love our neighbors.

These Walking Tacos are the perfect way to enjoy dinner while exploring your neighborhood at the same time.

Try to meet families you haven't met before. Talk about ways you can serve and love your neighbors. Pray for the needs of the families you know. Discuss ways you can share what it means to follow Jesus with neighbors who don't know Him yet.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 lb. ground beef or turkey
- 1/2 c. diced onion
- 1 (1 oz.) taco seasoning packet
- 6-8 snack-sized bags of chips

Suggested Toppings:

- black beans
- lettuce
- tomato
- shredded cheese
- sour cream
- ranch/salsa mixture (1:1 ratio prepared ranch dressing and your favorite salsa)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Brown beef or turkey and drain fat.
2. Add onion to meat and sauté a couple of minutes until soft.
3. Add taco seasoning and a half-cup of water and simmer until water is absorbed.
4. If serving immediately, pour into a bowl. (Optional: Combine meat and black beans and keep warm in slow cooker.)
5. With bags sealed, crush chips with hands.
6. Open bags; scoop in meat and desired toppings.



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.

Cheerful Givers

We often think of worship as singing, but we can worship God in lots of different ways! We can worship God through prayer, obedience, sharing our faith with others, caring for the poor, having a good attitude, using the gifts God has given us, and more.

We can also worship God with our money. Some people think God gives them money so they can be comfortable and have lots of things. However, the Bible tells us that money is actually a tool God gives us that we can use to bless others (2 Corinthians 9:6-9). God is a generous God, and part of how we reflect God's image and become like Christ is by being generous with our love, time, and money. **Money is a resource we can use to help make Jesus known in this world!**

We have an awesome opportunity each time God entrusts us with money to use it for His kingdom and not just for building our own. We have the responsibility to care for other people, not just ourselves, and money gives us a great way to help accomplish this big job entrusted to us by God.

This month, read 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 as a family. Read from a Bible translation everyone can understand. Then discuss these questions:

- What does it mean to be a "cheerful giver"?
- How can giving money be an act of worship to God?
- What is one way your family could give money this month to help someone come to know Jesus better?



Brainstorm both local and global options—and don't forget your own church! Make a donation to the person or organization you agree upon, and pray as a family that God would use that act of worship to draw someone to Himself.

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SCRIPTURE: Galatians 6:2

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know the joy that comes from caring for others.** May your heart be open to the needs of people around you. May you give of yourself, help those who need it, and carry the burdens of your neighbors. (Child's name), always remember that by helping someone else, you are truly serving Jesus. May your life be filled with the blessings that come from meeting the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of others. Amen.

LET
YOUR
LIGHT



SHINE

BEFORE OTHERS THAT THEY MIGHT



SEE

YOUR
GOOD
DEEDS

AND

GLO RIFY

YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

MATTHEW 5:16

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MATTHEW 5:16

LET
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BEFORE OTHERS THAT THEY MIGHT



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GOOD
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GLO RIFY
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MATTHEW 5:16

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MATTHEW 5:16

LET
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LIGHT



BEFORE OTHERS THAT THEY MIGHT



YOUR
GOOD
DEEDS



GLO RIFY
YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

MATTHEW 5:16

And let us
consider
how we may spur
one another
on toward
love &
good deeds.

Hebrews 10:24