

2021 | March | April

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

LOVE & RESPECT

"GOD FILLS ME WITH HIS LOVE
SO I CAN GIVE IT AWAY."

STORYTELLING

"GOD HAS A BIG STORY, AND I
CAN BE A PART OF IT!"

It's NEVER- ENDING LOVE



HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

DISCIPLESHIP STEPS AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HomeFront

How to Use

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

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

2 There are four weeks of devotionals and activities. When you have a fifth week in the month, let the kids plan the family night.

3 Remember to HAVE FUN! Family night does not have to be perfect. If you spent time with God and with one another, it was a great family night.

Our Mission

INSPIRE

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

EQUIP

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

SUPPORT

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



LET'S BE SOCIAL



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NLC Family Min



new life
CHURCH

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A Note from Michelle



Dr. Michelle Anthony

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

@TruInspiration

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

In this issue you will be focusing on the environments of **LOVE AND RESPECT** and **STORYTELLING**.

- The environment of **LOVE AND RESPECT** puts on display the way in which we lead and care for our children. As we show them love and respect in the way we listen, speak, and respond, we teach them how to show those things back to us and to those in their lives. We show it first before we expect to see it from them.
- The environment of **STORYTELLING** allows our children to understand the great narrative of the Bible, which emphasizes redemption. When we and our children know the story of God, we start to see that we are also a part of this story and desire to find our place in it. We further understand that God is asking us to share our stories of redemption with others so they in turn will be able to find their place His story.

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

Editor's Note



It has officially been one year since I became the editor of HomeFront magazine. As I write this, I'm filled with gratitude for all of the people who contribute to this kingdom resource—writing articles, taking pictures, making crafts and recipes, and so much more. Moreover, I am overwhelmed at the families who take our small offering and implement it into a family night, a conversation, a bedtime story, or any moment of discipleship.

If you are new to **HomeFront**, let me give you a few tips on how to use this resource. Within the following pages, you will find devotionals, craft ideas, a family game, conversation starters, and more that are designed to give you ideas for an amazing family night or a simple car ride conversation. It does NOT matter if you get through all of it in one month. What matters is that you have resources available for one or all of those intentional moments of discipleship with your children. We hope to make it easy for you so you can focus on your child's heart.

For March, this issue's God's Word takes a deep dive into understanding God's love for us. For a dynamic family night, read one week of the God's Word devotional, pair it with the game activity that features Love and Respect challenges, and wrap up the time by speaking a blessing over each of your children. If you are able to do a family night each week, use another God's Word devotion and the Serve jar project, and end with a blessing. Repeat with a new activity each family night.

April is filled with cute crafts, yummy recipes, and stories to share all about Easter and the resurrection. As you page through the April half of the magazine, you might learn something new or be inspired to love greater.

Finally, may you know that your heavenly Father loves you dearly. **May you be reminded in this season that He sent His Son to die on the cross for your sins so you do not have to live in shame, darkness, and death.** May you be filled with joy as you experience His unconditional love, forgiveness, and salvation.

Holly Newman

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

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

did you know

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



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
*An Awakening for
Today's Families*

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY
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10

ENVIRONMENTS

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

2

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

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

1

RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

3

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

SERVING

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

4

LOVE & RESPECT

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

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

5

STORYTELLING

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

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

6

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

KNOWING

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

7

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

IDENTITY

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

8

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

COURSE CORRECTION

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

9

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

FAITH COMMUNITY

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

10

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

MODELING

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



Ideas | Supplies | Notes



FAMILY VERSE

Dear
friends,

LET US

Love

ONE ANOTHER,

for love comes from God.

Everyone who loves has been
born of God and knows God.

WHOEVER

does not love does not know
God, because God is love.

1John 4:7–8

GOD'S WORD Week 1

GOD STATEMENT: GOD IS LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:19

"We love because he first loved us."—1 John 4:19

Love is one of the central themes found throughout Scripture. The message of Christianity is the story of God's love given to the world in the person of Jesus Christ. One of the most popular verses in all of the Bible is "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).

Almost everything must have a cause. The Oxford dictionary defines *cause* as "a person or thing that gives rise to an action, a phenomenon, or condition." For example, a person got a cavity because he did not brush his teeth, or school got cancelled because it snowed 15 inches last night. **The apostle John desires us to see that even our love has a cause.** The love that we have for ourselves, others, and most importantly, God, does not come from one's self. This love comes as a product of God loving us first.

One of the most beautiful aspects of the gospel is not that we chose to love God, but that He first chose to love us. Despite the fact that He knew we would be broken, sinful, even unfaithful, He chose to love us. **The ultimate proof or confirmation of this love is found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** The apostle Paul once wrote "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." As a result, we have been given the freedom to love God, others, and ourselves as a response. We are given the ability to see others and ourselves in the way that God does.

DISCUSSION

In what ways have you seen God's love for you and your family play out in your life? In what ways have you been able to love God, others, and yourself as a result of God's love for you?

by Tim Shepherd, Pastor of Student Ministries

GOD'S WORD Week 3

GOD STATEMENT: GOD IS LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:8-9

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."—1 John 4:8-9

The word *love* has meant many different things through the years. Today, we may say we love our brother or sister, just like we would say we love pizza, and, with minimal description attached to those statements, they sound the same. Here in 1 John, we read "God is love," and this love is *agape* love (Greek), which is the highest form of love possible, a perfect fatherly love God has for us as His children. What an extravagant **LOVE!**

God has lavished His love on us; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God's love is neverending, unfailing—it's perfect. Earlier in 1 John 2:6 we're encouraged to "live as Jesus did," and Jesus lived a life of love. Because we are instructed to be

imitators of God, we must love like God, serving others, forgiving generously, showing compassion and kindness. One of my favorite characteristics of God is that He gives to us generously and there is no greater gift than His Son, Jesus.

As Mother Teresa said, "Intense love does not measure, it just gives."

The way Mother Teresa loved was extravagant; she must have known God well because Scripture tells us that "whoever does not love does not know God." God wants you to know Him and walk in love, being imitators of God.

DISCUSSION

How have you seen *agape* love in your life? Is there a way you can show *agape* love to your siblings or parents?

by Leah Tisthammer, Women's Admin Assistant and Family Ministry Event Coordinator

GOD'S WORD Week 2

GOD STATEMENT: GOD IS LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:7-9

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God."—1 John 4:7

One might argue that the greatest apologetic or defense for the Christian faith is not a theological construct. It is not church, an act of service, or a religious idea. The greatest defense for the Christian faith is revealed in the believers' ability to love one another.

In an attempt to test Jesus, a teacher of the religious law asked, "'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:36-39). Jesus understands that one of the greatest difficulties in life is to love another like one loves oneself. Loving other people doesn't always come naturally. In fact, it can be very difficult.

However, this is the criteria by which John says one is a follower of Jesus. He says that "everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). Love requires patience, kindness, humility, and a host of other things—all of which are signposts to a life lived in relationship with Jesus.

In Jesus's final words to His disciples, He states: **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).** The bedrock of a life surrendered to Jesus is one's ability to love others the same way that God has loved us. By this the world will see who really is Lord of one's life.

DISCUSSION

Who would you or your family define as your neighbor? Is there any person you think might not fit into that category? In what ways can you love the person or people you dislike the most?

by Tim Shepherd, Pastor of Student Ministries

GOD'S WORD Week 4

GOD STATEMENT: GOD IS LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:17-18

"This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."—1 John 4:17-18

The Oxford dictionary defines *fear* as **"an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat."**

The first time we encounter fear in the Bible is directly after Adam and Eve disobeyed God. That initial act of disobedience resulted in fear, shame, and separation from God. Fear is among the most powerful of the negative emotions we experience. It draws us away from whatever—or whomever—we determine to be a threat.

Fear is mentioned more than 300 times in the Bible. One of the most common uses is the fear of God. Now, this month we've been learning that God is love. If this is true (which it is), then how can we love Someone we fear?

The passage today reminds us that fear has to do with punishment. Our sin deserves punishment. And if God is just (which He is), He should make us pay for our sins. However, sinful people can't get rid of sin on their own. And everyone in the world is guilty before God. But because God is love, He took the punishment for our sin on Himself. Jesus paid the price by becoming sin for us and then giving us His righteousness. What an awesome exchange! Now, God's love can be poured out to us and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are filled with reverence and awe for God, who has no equal! If God is for us, who can be against us? God is not only with us; His loving presence is in us to help us love others. God's Holy Spirit living in us produces the fruit of love. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us."

DISCUSSION

How does knowing almighty God, your loving heavenly Father, is *for* you and always *with* you change the way you think about fearful circumstances? What is one way you can show God's love to others this week?

by Jill Nardini, Family Ministries North Elementary Teacher

SHEPHERD'S PIE

In honor of St. Patrick's day, enjoy this classic Irish dish as a family. Traditionally, the Irish use ground lamb. We chose to use the English version with ground beef. This shepherd's pie is filled with lots of veggies and a thick layer of smooth potatoes—a yummy comfort food perfect for March!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 pounds russet potatoes (4 or 5 large), peeled and diced
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 cup whole or 2% milk
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 lbs lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 (10 ounce) bag frozen vegetable medley
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Heat the oven to 400° F and place the rack in the middle of the oven. Meanwhile, boil the potatoes in a large (3- to 4-quart) pot with 2 quarts of water and 1 teaspoon of salt, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender (15 to 18 minutes). As the potatoes are cooking, prepare the filling. Heat the oil in a large oven-safe skillet. Brown the meat over medium-high heat until meat is thoroughly cooked (about 10 minutes). Add the vegetables, water, flour, ketchup, onion powder, and garlic powder. Cook, stirring occasionally for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and allow the sauce to thicken while you mash the potatoes. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot. Add the milk, butter, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt and mash to a smooth consistency. Stir in the egg yolk. Top beef mixture with the mashed potatoes using a large spoon to smooth as an even layer. Bake in the oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until potatoes begin to brown and filling is bubbling. Cool for 10 minutes before serving.



Easy Comfort

ST. PATRICK'S Day TREATS

Whether you always celebrate St. Patrick's Day or just leave the celebrating to the Irish, some green treats can add a fun flair to the end of a long winter. Your kids will enjoy making these with you!

Green Milkshake

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup frozen vanilla yogurt or ice cream
- 1/8 teaspoon green Kool-Aid mix of choice

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Blend ingredients in blender until smooth. Serve immediately. Makes one milkshake.



Dipped Oreos

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- double-stuffed Oreos (or regular)
- green and white melting chocolate/candy melts
- green and white sprinkles
- wax or parchment paper

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Melt chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl (check and stir it every 30 seconds to make sure it doesn't overcook). You can buy green candy melts or just add food coloring to white chocolate. Dip each Oreo halfway into the chocolate and lay it on a sheet of parchment or wax paper. Shake the sprinkles onto each cookie while the chocolate is still warm. Let them sit and harden for 20 minutes.

Jello Rollups

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 small package green Jell-O
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 cup small marshmallows

WHAT YOU'LL DO

In a microwave-safe bowl, mix together Jell-O mix and boiling water. Stir until dissolved. Add the marshmallows and microwave for 30 seconds. Mix together until the marshmallows are completely melted. Pour mixture into a greased 8" x 8" pan and refrigerate for at least an hour. Use a knife to cut around the edges of the pan to release the Jell-O. Roll the Jell-O as tightly as you can. Cut 1" wide pieces using a sharp, thin knife.



POTATO *Leek* SOUP

This soup is simple to make but tastes like you have been in the kitchen for hours. The warm potatoes and crisp bacon will make the pickiest eater happy. Serve with an Irish cornbread.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 slices bacon, chopped
- 2 large leeks (the white and light green part only), chopped
- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 sprigs thyme or $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon dried thyme
- freshly cracked pepper and salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- crushed red pepper (optional)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Melt butter in a heavy pot over medium heat. Add bacon and cook until crisp. Leave bacon fat in the pot and add chopped leeks and potatoes; cook until the leeks are soft. Stir in white wine to deglaze the pot. Add stock, bay leaves, and thyme and season generously with salt and pepper. Simmer until the potatoes are very soft. Blend the soup with an immersion blender until creamy with just a few chunks. Remove from heat and cool slightly before adding the cream. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper or a sprinkle of crushed red pepper. The soup will thicken as it cools.

BLUEBERRY LEMON CREAM BARS

When a young person is learning to cook, it's important to find yummy recipes that will be a guaranteed success. This warm, melt-in-your-mouth dessert has only a few ingredients with very little mess and clean up. Older children can follow this recipe with little to no direction and contribute to the family night meal. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 package Krusteaz Meyer Lemon Bar mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy whipping cream
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- powdered sugar (optional)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease an 8" x 8" pan. Evenly spread the package of crust into the bottom of the pan and press firmly. Bake the crust for 8 minutes. The crust will be pale. While the crust is baking, add the filling pouch, whipping cream, and eggs to a medium-sized bowl and whisk together until well combined. Stir in the blueberries. When the crust is done baking, pour the filling over the hot crust. Bake 34 to 36 minutes or until center does not jiggle and the top begins to brown. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Adapted from Krusteaz





Simple Reminders

Every school year, our children bring home report cards stamped with letter grades. Our hope is that each child brings home a report card with all As. In some schools, the back side of the report card states nonacademic achievements in the form of character traits such as “shows respect to others” and “exhibits kindness toward others.” As parents, we can tend to focus on the letter grades more than the character achievements on the back of the report card. An educator once stated, “You can make all As and still flunk life.”

In today’s treacherous culture, it is important to focus more on character and less on the academic achievement or sports performance. The recent current events show us that we (Christians) have some work to do in teaching our children how to love everyone and show respect to ALL people.

We cannot force our children to give love and show respect. **It is a heart issue that begins with an attitude.** Children need to have an understanding of why it is important to give love and show respect to others. March’s God’s Word dives into the biblical understanding of love and respect. After reading the devotionals, practice these character traits in your home.

As a family, discuss what it means to show love and respect to others. How can kids show love and respect to their parents, and how can parent show love and respect to their kids?

CRAFT: LOVE AND RESPECT FAMILY STATEMENTS

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- sheet of paper or poster board
- markers, pens, or crayons
- picture frame (optional)

WHAT YOU’LL DO

Write your ideas from your family discussion on a piece of paper or poster board. If you would prefer a more permanent display, print your ideas on a piece of paper to place in a picture frame.

Display your poster on the refrigerator or on a table as a reminder of how you will choose to show love and respect to others.

by Shannon Baer, North Director of Operations and Strategic Systems



I LOVE *and* RESPECT

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 sheets cardstock, any color
- 1 sheet red paper (or another color on hand)
- 1 sheet lavender paper (or another other color on hand)
- 1 brass fastener
- glue
- scissors



BEFORE YOU PLAY

Create the game board: Cut a wide arrow from one sheet of your cardstock for your spinner and fasten it to the middle of your other sheet of cardstock using your brass fastener. Cut 4 red circles and 4 lavender circles, and glue the circles onto your cardstock, alternating red and lavender, in a circle around the spinner. Make one WILD space by cutting one red and one lavender circle in half and putting them together to form one space. Cut about 20 red and lavender squares to use as your cards.

Before you begin, talk with the group about how they would identify someone who loves and respects God and others. Share the biblical definition of love and respect, referring to the following Scripture passages. Discuss how God first poured out His love on us through the death and resurrection of Christ and how the community of believers can respond by loving and respecting one another.

LOVE

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

RESPECT

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

TIME TO PLAY!

- Each red card and red spot on the game board represents RESPECT.
- Each lavender card and lavender spot on the game board represents LOVE.
- Mix up the 40 red and lavender cards and place them in the middle of the table.
- Have each player take one card from the pile.
- The first player will spin the spinner. If the spinner lands on a red (RESPECT) spot, the player has to tell the other players with a matching red card what she respects about them. If the spinner lands on a lavender (LOVE) spot the player has to tell the players with a lavender card what she loves about them.
- Once the player's turn is over, players set their cards aside and draw new ones from the pile.
- The game is over when everyone has had a turn or until you run out of cards.

RESPONDING

WITH LOVE & RESPECT



Sometimes, the people we love most are the ones we treat the worst. We may snap at our spouses or push our siblings; those actions have long-lasting effects on others.

As a family, observe two apples and talk about how they both look alike. Take one of the apples and pass it around to each family member. Take turns saying unkind words to the apple, such as “You are ugly” and “You are stupid.” Toss the apple on the floor and hit it on the table or counter several times.

Now, take the second apple, pass it around gently, and use kind words, such as “You are beautiful” and “I love your red color.”

When you are all done, cut both apples open and look at their differences. Notice that the apple you were unkind to probably has bruising on the inside while the other apple is unblemished. Talk about how our words and actions can hurt others, even when we can’t see it from the outside.

Take some time to pray as a family. Use the weekly prompts to guide your discussion and prayer time.

Week **1**

“We love because He first loved us.” How do we respond to God’s love? What specific ways can we love and respect others?

Week **2**

What is the greatest commandment? (To love God and to love others.) How can we show our love to God? How can we show love to others this week?

Week **3**

God disciplines us because He loves us. God’s kindness leads us to repentance. What helpful discipline have you experienced in your life?

Week **4**

When we are rooted in God, He produces the fruit of the Spirit in us. How can you use a particular fruit of the Spirit to love others this week? (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

SERVE JAR

Growing up in a household of all girls with varying personalities often made it hard to work together. But I noticed that when we all had a common goal, we tended to work together better. Whether helping one another do extra chores around the house to get money to go to Skate City, or concocting a plan to talk our mom into getting us McDonalds, we each played a role to reach the end goal. All parents want their kids to get along, but, as Christians, we also want our kids to learn to serve others out of Christ's love (1 Peter 4:10). This month's Serve project will challenge each member of your family to work together as one body to help those in need.

Take a glass jar and label it "The Serve Jar" by using a dry erase marker or by simply taping a piece of paper to the jar. Then take some time as a family to think of a nonprofit organization (homeless shelter, food pantry, missions organization) that needs supplies. **Once you choose an organization to help, have everyone in the family start putting extra money in the jar during the month of March.** Consider raising money by doing extra chores around the house, shoveling snow for neighbors, or giving a portion of the money you've earned from a job. Place the jar in a visible area of the house (the kitchen is usually a great option). At the end of the month take the money collected and go shopping as a family to pick up the supplies needed (maybe blankets, towels, and socks for a homeless shelter or canned/boxed food products for a food pantry). If possible, deliver the supplies to the organization, and then celebrate as a family what God has done through your hard work and serving others.

by Rayshawne Hayes, Friday Night Elementary Coordinator



*Serve as
a family*

BLESSING

Bless with Your Words

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

Week 1

1 John 4:19

(Child's name), may you know that the Father loves you. May you know that God's love for you is not based on your accolades, your achievements, or your accomplishments. Rest in the truth that while you and I were sinners, Christ died for us. May the cross be the ultimate representation that no matter where you find yourself today, you are seen, known, and radically loved by God. May you carry the love you have received from Christ to your friends, to your family, and to your community. May His love remain richly in you so that you may extravagantly display God's heart in your words, your actions, and your thoughts.

Week 2

1 John 4:7-9

(Child's name), may you know that the Holy Spirit has empowered you to love God, to love yourself, and to love your neighbor. Remain confident that your ability to love is not dependent on you but on Christ inside of you. May you never try to give what you have not first received. May your love shine like a bright light in a dark and hurting world. Let the light of Christ's love shine radiantly wherever you go and with whomever you talk to.

Week 3

1 John 4:8-9;
Romans 8:38-39

(Child's name), may you know that nothing can separate you from the love of God. Receive the truth that no height, no depth, no power, no principality, no future, no past, and no person can take you away from the love of Jesus. May you always remember that God is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and overflowing with genuine love for you. Live in the freedom and the confidence that on your best days and on your worst days, the love of Christ toward you is steadfast and faithful.

Week 4

1 John 4:17-18

(Child's name), may you know that the love of Christ is stronger than all fear. May the perfect love of Christ replace shame, guilt, insecurity, comparison, and anxiety. May this day, this week, this month, and this year be full of moments where you are made perfect in the love of God. May your roots grow deep in the love of God so that no lie of the enemy can convince you that you are unloved. May the truth of God's love define you, encourage you, and lead you into a secure identity in Him.

by Victor Mendoza, Associate Pastor of Students

JOURNAL

remember and celebrate

prayer

thankfulness and praise

APRIL

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

Shopping List

[illegible]

Ideas | Supplies | Notes

Ideas | Supplies | Notes

FAMILY VERSE

PRAISE BE

to the

*God
&
Father*

of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has
given us new birth into a

LIVING HOPE

through the resurrection of

Jesus Christ
from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

GOD'S WORD Week 1

GOD STATEMENT: JESUS REDEEMS
SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 26:17-30

I can still remember some of my favorite meals shared with loved ones on Christmas, Easter, and birthdays; the food and company were so sweet.

I've tried to replicate those meals each year for my own family and keep the traditions alive. Just like my favorite holiday meal, there's another meal we remember: the Last Supper.

For days, Jesus had been preparing His disciples for what would come next: "The Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2). At the table that night they gathered for a special celebratory meal, the Passover—a tradition. But this night was going to be different. Jesus began a new tradition as He took bread, broke it, and gave thanks, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body," and for the cup, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (vv. 26-28).

When the disciples were growing up, at Passover, their families would sacrifice a lamb for the forgiveness of sins. But now they were witnessing the Lamb of God take away the sins of the world by dying on a cross and rising again on the third day. At the Last Supper, Jesus promised He would partake of this meal with His followers again someday in His Father's kingdom. I can only imagine how amazing that meal will be—better than all my favorite holiday meals combined! So, until that day comes, we take the bread and cup to remember and celebrate what Jesus did at the Last Supper and on the cross.

DISCUSSION

Just like Jesus told us to take communion and remember HIM, do you remember a very special meal you've shared with the people you love? (Consider taking communion together.)

by Leah Tisthammer, Women's Admin Assistant and Family Ministry Event Coordinator

GOD'S WORD Week 3

GOD STATEMENT: JESUS REDEEMS
SCRIPTURE: MARK 15:21-41

Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." —John 19:30

The passage for this week is the center point of all of history. Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden and brought sin, death, and separation from God into the world, God promised to restore humanity to Himself through a Redeemer. This promised Redeemer, or Messiah, would bring salvation and set up a righteous kingdom where God would rule with perfect love and justice. But nearly everyone misunderstood who this Messiah would be and how God's kingdom would come!

As you read these verses, imagine the stories of those who encountered Jesus. Simon, traveling along the road, was forced into the scene to carry Jesus' cross. Soldiers, just doing their jobs, took advantage of the situation by gambling for Jesus' clothes. Criminals, paying the price for their crimes, ridiculed innocent Jesus. The Jewish religious leaders, who were waiting for the Messiah, totally missed His coming. People passing by mocked Jesus. Many

demanded that Jesus come down from the cross to prove He was the Messiah. Women who followed Jesus stood at a distance.

People were confused, indifferent, disappointed, angry, and sad. Finally, a Roman centurion exclaimed, "This man truly was the Son of God!" Everyone saw Jesus from his or her own perspective and made a choice of how to respond. Jesus wasn't murdered; He laid down His life. He died the death we deserved to give us life. Jesus came to break the curse of sin by taking the sin of the world on Himself as the sacrificial Lamb of God. (See John 10:14-17.)

In order to save others' lives, Jesus didn't save His own. "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13 ESV).

DISCUSSION

Read this passage and envision yourself at the cross. How do you think you would've responded? What would you tell someone about who Jesus is and why He came?

by Jill Nardini, Family Ministries North Elementary Teacher

GOD'S WORD Week 2

GOD STATEMENT: JESUS REDEEMS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 22:47-65

Jesus had walked many miles with His disciples. He had invested His heart into these men, teaching them the ways of the kingdom of God and commissioning them to heal the sick and raise the dead. Jesus went as far as to call them His family. ("Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother'" Matthew 12:49-50.)

So when Judas, one of the disciples, betrayed him for a few pieces of silver, how hard must that have been? Judas went on to greet Jesus with a kiss, a friendly greeting. Although this greeting was typical for that time, Jesus pointed out the irony of the moment saying, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Although heartbroken, moments later Jesus did not hesitate to show His love and compassion by healing the ear of the soldier arresting him.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6

NKJV). I encourage you today to share your life with faithful friends. Jesus is the ultimate faithful friend. Circumstances in life don't go as we plan, and relationships can hurt, but Jesus understands. When we feel like things aren't going well, remember Jesus and what He went through for us. He understands, He cares, and He faithfully gives us grace and mercy each day. "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him"' (Lamentations 3:19-24).

DISCUSSION

Have you ever felt betrayed? Based on how Jesus responded, how can we respond to hurt in our own lives?

by Leah Tisthammer, Women's Admin Assistant and Family Ministry Event Coordinator

GOD'S WORD Week 4

GOD STATEMENT: JESUS REDEEMS SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his Name."—John 20:31

The past three weeks, we've focused on what Jesus endured because of His great love for us. We've seen how the wages of our sin brought His death. But this week, we rejoice! Jesus is alive! And because He lives, we who believe in Him will never experience spiritual death and separation from God.

So, who were the first to receive the good news of Jesus' resurrection? It wasn't announced to the rich or powerful, Israel's religious leaders, or even Jesus' disciples. Like the lowly shepherds in the field who first heard of Jesus' birth, the first to hear the news were women. Women were not highly regarded in that culture. In fact, a woman's testimony would not even hold up in court. But here it is recorded in all four Gospels that Jesus first appeared to women! This passage says that the women ran from the empty tomb to tell Jesus' disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. However, the disciples needed to see Jesus for themselves to believe. (See Luke 24:11.)

It's been nearly 2,000 years since Jesus rose from the dead, and most of us have never met the risen Jesus. However, we trust the witness of those who saw Jesus alive and were faithful to write their stories for us to believe and follow Him. We've also had the good news passed down to us by our parents, friends, and church leaders. But now it's our turn. We need to share the good news of God's love and salvation through Jesus so everyone can have eternal life with God.

If you're ever afraid to tell others about Jesus, consider the women in this story. They weren't concerned about how others would respond; their joy compelled them to share! And now, we have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us to help us to be witnesses. Because we love God, we want all people to find their place in The Big God Story.

DISCUSSION

Have you received God's gift of salvation through Jesus? Write down your testimony of how you became a Christian and what Jesus has done in your life. Whom can you share your story with this week?

23 *by Jill Nardini, Family Ministries North Elementary Teacher*

DEVILED EGG CHICKS

If you are looking for a way to help your younger child eat more protein, turn the classic recipe of deviled eggs into Deviled Egg Chicks. Make these chicks together for a fun activity, and then enjoy your protein-packed snack. Your littles will think the egg chicks are adorable ... but not too adorable to eat!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 6 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- stuffed green olives, cut into disks for the eyes
- red bell pepper, cut into triangles for the beak

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Place eggs in a pot and cover with cold water. Bring water and eggs to a boil on high heat. When water comes to a boil, turn off heat and let sit for 12 minutes. Drain hot water and cover with cold water to cool the eggs. Peel the eggs, cut in half, and place the yolks in a bowl with mustard, mayonnaise, and salt. Mash the mixture until smooth. Fill the egg whites with the yolk mixture. Place the eyes and beaks to complete your Deviled Egg Chicks.



Family Fun

ASPARAGUS *Gruyère* TART



For some reason, asparagus has gained the reputation of a highly sophisticated vegetable. It is often served for special occasions or dinner parties. This visually pleasing dish of asparagus and cheese is the perfect appetizer to prepare ahead for an Easter midday lunch. Invite a family to share Easter lunch while reading through God's Word resurrection devotion (p. 22).

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- flour for work surface
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 2 cups (5 1/2 ounces) Gruyère cheese, shredded
- 1 1/2 pounds medium or thick asparagus
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- salt and pepper
- balsamic glaze (optional)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Preheat oven to 400° F. On a floured surface, roll the puff pastry into a 16- by 10-inch rectangle. Trim any uneven edges or press firmly to get an even rectangle. Place the pastry on the baking sheet. Using a knife, cut the dough 1 inch in from the edges to mark a rectangle. Pierce dough holes with a fork at 1/2-inch intervals. Bake until golden, about 15 minutes. Remove pastry shell from oven and sprinkle with Gruyère cheese. Trim the bottoms of the asparagus spears to fit inside the tart shell. Alternate the asparagus ends and tips, and then brush with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Bake until spears are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Drizzle with balsamic glaze if desired.

CHOCOLATE

Peanut Butter

PEEP SKILLET



Marshmallow Peeps make an appearance every Easter. Although they are fun to look at, many people don't relish eating them by themselves. However, Peeps combined with chocolate and peanut butter? Yes, please! The fun colors and shapes make this s'mores skillet a simple and delicious dessert you will want to spoon into your mouth.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 cups chocolate chips (dark and milk chocolate mix)
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 packages Peeps marshmallows, the more colors the better
- graham crackers

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Place the chocolate chips in a 9-inch oven-safe skillet in an even layer. Drop spoonfuls of peanut butter on top of the chocolate chips.

Spread the peanut butter evenly over the chocolate chips. Cover with a layer of Peeps marshmallows. As you arrange the layer, try to stuff as many in as possible while paying attention to the color pattern. Heat the broiler to high. Place the skillet underneath for 1 to 2 minutes, just until the marshmallows get golden and the chocolate chips are melting. Watch the skillet carefully. If the chocolate isn't melting, turn the oven to 350° F and let the skillet sit for about 4 to 5 minutes. Serve hot with graham crackers for dipping.

KEY LIME PIE

A good pie crust is one of the fundamentals of cooking.

One of the easiest and most forgiving crusts is a graham cracker crust. While many pie options use a buttery graham cracker crust, one of the tastiest pies is a key lime pie. Take an afternoon, turn on some music, grab your apron, and enjoy making this delicious, tart key lime pie together with a family member.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Crust

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted

Filling

- 3 cups sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3/4 cup key lime juice
- 1 tablespoon grated lime zest
- whipped cream, for garnish
- lime slices, for garnish



WHAT YOU'LL DO

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a medium bowl combine the ingredients for the crust. Using nonstick spray, cover the bottom and sides of a pie plate. Press the graham cracker mixture into the pie plate, evenly covering the bottom and sides. Bake in the oven for 8 minutes. While baking, combine condensed milk, sour cream, lime juice, and zest in a medium bowl and blend until smooth. Pour ingredients over the graham cracker crust. Bake in the oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until tiny pinhole bubbles burst on the surface of the pie. Do not brown. Chill the pie for 1 hour in the fridge. Once cool, garnish with whipped cream and lime slices.

CREATE

Easter Story Squares



It's safe to say that most everyone loves a good story.

Stories have the power to excite us and transform us. They can take us on amazing adventures and have the ability to teach us great lessons. As followers of Jesus, we know that His story is the greatest—and we are called to share this story with others.

During this Easter season, become comfortable sharing the story of the death and resurrection in your own words. Create these story squares to help you share the story of Jesus in a fun and creative way.

PRAYER

May the love of your heavenly Father give you the courage to share His story with others.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- wood blocks, tiles, rocks, or paper squares
- paint, colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- paintbrushes and water (if using paint)
- Bible

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Set your materials on your workspace. Then, together as a family, paint or draw images on your chosen medium that will help you tell the Easter story in your own words. Images might include: palm branch, Passover cup and bread, silver pieces, rooster, dice, crown of thorns, cross, tomb. It may be a good idea to read the gospel accounts of what happened the week between Palm Sunday and Easter as a family and decide on images together. Then, you can take turns telling the story. Challenge each other to share the story of Jesus with others this season.

by Kendra Baker, Early Childhood Coordinator



FAMILY EASTER OLYMPICS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1-2 eggs (plastic or real) per person
- 10 plastic or paper cups

BEFORE YOU START

Paul says that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead we are to be pitied above all people (1 Corinthians 15:17-19). However as we reflect on this season of Easter, our confidence can lead to immense joy. In this deep joy, we celebrate together, so we present for your enjoyment the Easter Family Olympics!

TIME TO PLAY!

Join with your family and get ready for a fun and competitive series of games. With your eggs (real or plastic), compete or just participate in the following games!

1. Egg bowling

- Set up 10 cups in a pyramid formation.
- Roll your egg toward the cups and try to knock them down.
- The person who knocks down the most cups wins!

2. Egg toss

- Pair up. If your family has an odd number of people, invite neighbors to join!
- Start a few feet away from your partner. Gently toss an egg (underhand is best) to your partner.
- If your partner catches the egg, you both take a step backwards, and then your partner throws the egg back to you.
- The team with the most tosses wins!

3. Egg balance

- Begin on your hands and knees.
- Have a partner place the egg on your back.
- Lift into a bear crawl position.
- Crawl as far as you can before the egg falls off.
- The person who crawls the farthest wins!

4. Egg squats

- Have each person place an egg between their knees, holding it so it doesn't break or drop.
- After the egg is placed, each person should attempt a squat. You will get one point for every successful squat that doesn't result in a cracked or dropped egg.
- Whoever has the most points wins!

For more fun, make some homemade medals with things from around the house (like yogurt lids or cookies) and award the winning people or teams in a dramatic ceremony at the end of your Games. Special bonus to the individual who can come up with a hilarious anthem for your family to sing together at the awards ceremony.

SPRING

Reflections of Christ

"Mom, the trees are naked," my then five-year-old daughter exclaimed. "Yes, but isn't it amazing how God planned for those trees to be clothed with their new leaves when spring comes around?" I responded. Each



year, spring speaks a beautiful message—that life triumphs over the dead winter season. It sounds very similar to the gospel story—the resurrected Christ conquered death and brings new life to all who believe. Spring reflects the resurrection of Christ. Coincidence? No way!

God planned Jesus' death and resurrection long before the world began. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 1:20, "[He] was chosen before the creation of the world." God, in His infinite wisdom, knew man would sin and made a plan to redeem humanity back to Himself. God was already thinking of you, of me, before He created us. Filled with deep love for us, the Father had to make a way to save us. Jesus, the Son of God—sinless and pure—stepped into The Big God Story to die for our sins.

Don't these truths make you want to worship and praise God for His amazing grace and relentless love for us?

This month, take time as a family to reflect on the story of redemption.

Week **1**

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Matthew 26:26-29. Discuss the importance of remembering and celebrating Christ's death and resurrection. Take communion together.

Week **2**

Journal your prayers; pause and listen to the Holy Spirit. Then thank God for His gift of salvation and His love for you. Encourage young children to draw as they sit and listen to the Holy Spirit.

Week **3**

Celebrate the risen Savior with your favorite worship and songs of praise.

Week **4**

Discuss as a family who may need to know about Jesus and ways you can share The Big God Story with them. Write down their names and pray for each one.

by Evie Swart, Director of Midweek

SERVE

JOIN THE STORY

Imagine

with me for a moment that you are before the cross; a crowd surrounds you, and their loud mockery and jeers ring in your ears. The subject of their focus is a 33-year-old man—beaten and bloody and hanging from nails in His hands and feet. The man is barely breathing. The crowd continues yelling foul words and curses and you remember, just a few days ago, the same crowd welcoming Him with palm branches and cries of “Hosanna.” Hope had filled your heart when you had heard those cries, and now, as you witness the death of this supposed Savior King, that little beacon of hope begins to disappear. This wasn’t the promised King dying in the midst of a hard-fought battle, nor was His loud cry the cry of victory, but of defeat.

Or was it?

This moment of history was not the end of the story as some had feared but the beginning. The war that had begun with a single act of human disobedience in the garden was being won with a single act of His obedience. The King was going to die so all those He loved could live forever with Him.

And we carry this story with us. **Better yet, we join His story by obeying God and actively serving Him and His body, the community around us.** As we serve, we become not just bearers of His Word but doers. We don’t just tell His story; we become a part of it.

And with this, I want to extend an invitation to join in The Big God Story. To serve as Jesus served. We invite you and your family to choose an area inside your local church or a nonprofit. There are numerous serving opportunities in the church. Perhaps you and your family might be interested in greeting. Or perhaps you all are led to assist in a kindergarten classroom. These positions do not call for a professional theological background; rather they call for diligence and willing hearts. How will your family say yes to entering The Big God Story?

by Olivia Bennett, Midweek Curriculum and Ministry Assistant

BLESSING

Bless with Your Words

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

Week 1

The Last Supper
(Matthew 26:17-30)

(Child's name), may you know that every single one of your sins has been forgiven because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. May you rest in the knowledge that you are perfectly loved because you have been created in God's image and forgiven for every sin, past, present, and future. May you walk in freedom, believing this truth because it is a gift from God.

Week 2

Betrayal and Beating
(Luke 22:47-65)

(Child's name), may you know that Jesus is our healer. He can heal all wounds because He is all-powerful. May you know Jesus endured much pain so you could know Him as your Savior, your protector, and your refuge in times of trouble. May you find comfort knowing Jesus loves you and wants to heal every wound you have.

Week 3

The Crucifixion
(Mark 15:21-41)

(Child's name), may you know that Jesus is the Son of God. May you find comfort in knowing that He wants to know you and love you uniquely. May you find rest and peace because God gave you the free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus. May you know God will never leave you or forsake you.

Week 4

The Resurrection
(John 20)

(Child's name), may you know that Jesus is the risen Savior. May you know that Jesus is walking this life with you through the presence of the Holy Spirit. May you find peace and comfort knowing the Holy Spirit is with you always.

by Catherine Gerstenberg, Student Ministries Coordinator

JOURNAL

remember and celebrate

prayer

thankfulness and praise

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

CONNECTING CONVERSATIONS

GET YOUR FAMILY *Talking*

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

1. If you could go on one vacation for spring break, where would you go and what would you do?
2. Pretend we can do anything we want in our own city; what would you want to do?
3. If you met Jesus back in Bible times, do you think you would believe that He was the Messiah?
4. If you could tell one person about the Easter story of Jesus' resurrection, whom would you tell?



Perhaps you are among the few who are traveling to the beach or a national park for spring break. However, there is a good chance that your spring break plans have been cancelled, changed, or modified at least several times. If you find yourself staying home for the week of spring break, this doesn't mean you shouldn't have fun with your kids. Below is a list of fairly inexpensive, fun activities to do right in your own city. Can you get through everything on the list?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Take a hike on a new trail | 7. Play a family board game |
| 2. Visit a local museum | 8. Take a bike ride to an ice cream shop |
| 3. Try geocaching | 9. Cook a meal together as a family |
| 4. Host a family movie night | 10. Visit a farmer's market |
| 5. Explore a new river and try to catch a fish | |
| 6. Paint a canvas picture | |

The Little Kite & God's Gift



A story to read to your littles

The wind was blowing, but it was not a shivery, cold wind. Has the cold wind ever made you shiver? The cold wind always made the little kite shiver. Thankfully, winter was leaving to make room for spring. The little kite could feel it—the wind began to lose its frosty chill as the warmth of spring took over.

Now the little kite really did love winter, for it was the season of Christmas. The diamond-shaped kite had been a beautifully wrapped gift under the Christmas tree. Although the family had excitedly admired him when he was unwrapped, the little kite was a gift that would have to wait until spring for outdoor fun and play.

The family placed the little kite in a closet for safekeeping with all the Christmas decorations. He was glad to share a shelf with the Christmas nativity. Baby Jesus looked snug in the hay. The little kite had learned that Christmas was a celebration of Jesus' birth. Over the winter months, he was warmed by thoughts that the baby in the manger was God's special gift to the world. But as for what kind of gift, he wasn't sure.

The little diamond-shaped kite had been patient. Easter Sunday had arrived! The family finally took the little kite out of the closet. They removed his packaging and began to assemble him. He felt his diamond-shaped sail stretch over his cross frame. The family tied knots in his string and secured it to all the right points. Lastly, the family unraveled his colorful tail—the little kite was dressed in his Easter best. He was ready to fly!

Upon launching, he had no trouble catching the wind. The wind was steady and fresh. Flying was amazing! He soared over the churchyard. Life was emerging everywhere. The tree's buds were blossoming while colorful flowers brightened the church's garden.

As the little kite swooshed past the church's roof, a familiar shape caught his eye. The warm breeze whooshed him up and over a cross. Suddenly he remembered that his own sail was stretched out over a cross. The little kite felt each point of the cross as he shifted in the breeze.

Now he understood why Jesus was God's special gift to the world. Jesus had lived a perfect life and showed the world what God was like—loving, good, just, and forgiving. Certain people didn't like what Jesus was doing or saying, so they put Him to death on a cross. Miraculously, Jesus did not stay dead! God's power raised Jesus back to life! Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the grave made the way for people to be a part of God's family. People could have new life by following Jesus.

The little kite was thankful for spring—a season that brought life. More importantly, the little kite was thankful for Easter Sunday. He was glad to remember and celebrate God's gift to the world! **Jesus provides a way for new and everlasting life to everyone who believes. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life" (John 6:47 ESV). Do you believe?**

by Laurie Bennett, Director of Early Childhood

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

ELEMENTARY

Empty TOMB ROLLS

When my daughter, Noella, was five years old, she asked me why we didn't attend church. At that moment, I looked at her and said, "We do now." Immediately, I decided to search for a home church. Three months later, we found our place at New Life (thanks to Dan and Jon Egan). That first time was one of the few I had been to a church.

I didn't grow up in a very religious family, so I began learning the stories of the Bible along with Noella. **I loved the idea that she and I were walking this path together and fully wanted to enjoy the stories and teachings of the Bible in the format she was learning.** During the beginning of our walk with the Lord, a friend of mine shared a tradition with me that her mom did with her as a child and she continued to do with her kids. They made Empty Tomb Rolls as a fun way to illustrate the story of the empty tomb to younger kids. I contacted my friend's mom who lives in Florida and she just happened to be planning a trip to visit over Easter. She invited Noella and me to join their family to make Empty Tomb Rolls! Since that first Easter, we have made them every year ... often inviting new friends to learn about them with us! **It is a tradition we will continue.** I look forward to one day making them with Noella's children!



A family tradition

Each item represents an element in the resurrection story:

- Large marshmallows—body of Jesus
- Large crescent rolls—the wrapping around Jesus' body or the tomb
- Melted butter—oils of embalming
- Cinnamon and sugar mix—spices used to anoint Christ's body
- Oven—the tomb
- Cavity in bun—the empty tomb or the empty cloth

We use rolls from a can, but homemade rolls are great also!

Give each child a marshmallow and have her roll it in the butter, sugar, and cinnamon, and then place it on one crescent roll triangle. Have the child fold the crescent roll triangle over the marshmallow and pinch the sides together VERY tightly—completely sealing the marshmallow inside the dough. While doing this you can discuss Matthew 27:62-66 and how Jesus' tomb was sealed and very well guarded. There was no way anyone could enter or

exit the tomb.

Then bake your rolls according to the directions on the can. While the rolls are baking, we discuss what happened on Good Friday and the fact that Jesus was in the tomb for three days (Matthew 12:40). You can also talk about what it means to sin and be forgiven and about the grace of God (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Once the rolls are done baking, it is time to talk about the resurrection! (Matthew 28:1-20).

When the kids look inside their rolls, they will see that their marshmallow (Jesus) is GONE! He is risen!

This is a fun way to spread good news!

by Tara Novotny, New Life Friday Night Set Up and Support Coordinator

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

STUDENTS



THE POWER OF A GOOD STORY

Some of my favorite childhood memories are of times my dad crawled into bed with me and told me a story. He used toys from around the room as props and flashlights to mimic lightning, and he had an incredible skill for making sound effects. I would get lost in the story (one he was most likely making up on the spot) and fall asleep to the wonder of his storytelling ability.

I have since come to realize that stories strike the heartstrings so profoundly because we were made for them. Telling, listening, and being caught up in stories is how God fashioned our souls. Even though Hollywood is a multi-billion-dollar machine and novels sell by the millions, our souls' love of storytelling was made for so much more than fictitious entertainment. It was made for stories that create deep connection with others. These stories won't follow the typical story arc, have riveting drama, or engage us with fist-clenching action, but they will carry in them the weight of God's image. God is a storytelling God, and He has given us an innate desire to tell the story of what He is doing with our lives. We long for our stories to be heard.

So what does this look like in day-to-day life? The temptation is to satisfy our longing to be heard by finding any and every moment in our conversations to voice our story's current twists and turns. This isn't wrong, but it isn't best either. Our endless comments may very well kill the connection story is meant to foster. Instead, we can take our cue from Jesus and ask questions to help others voice their stories. Jesus often asked questions before giving a comment. If we are to "love one another" (1 John 4:7), and God has created humanity to tell the stories God is writing, then the most loving thing we can do for another is to offer that person space to storytell. **As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "As our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them."** Therefore, ask questions out of genuine, Spirit-given curiosity, listen with the ears of the Father, and watch the wonders God will do. **Stories matter—the question is whether or not we will listen to them.**

Read 1 John 4 and then answer the following question in a journal or notebook.

FOR CONSIDERATION

How can you love your peers well this week by listening to the current chapters of their life stories? Write down a specific time, place, and person with whom to practice this style of God's love.

by Pastor Chase Windebank, North Associate Pastor of Student Leadership

Stories matter



LISTENING GENEROUSLY

Just recently, my husband and I celebrated our 37th wedding anniversary. When friends or family members hear the number of years we have been married, they often ask about the “secret” to a healthy and happy marriage.

Our individual reactions to this question are quite telling. I usually chuckle and say that we simply got lucky! My hubby on the other hand never misses an opportunity to mention that our marriage has been successful because we both strive to serve the other. Truth be told, both answers are probably valid.

The environment of Love and Respect is a powerful lens to look through when considering the “secret” to marriage. Listening to one another generously is an aspect of showing respect (to anyone, but is very effective in a marriage).

Several years ago, I had expressed a bit of disappointment in the amount of effort my hubby had been putting into celebrating my birthday. I had no doubt that he loved me as his actions speak loudly and consistently on a daily basis. He brings me coffee in the mornings, he affirms me physically, emotionally, and vocationally, he is an awesome father and an all-around nice guy. Birthdays, however, just weren’t something he felt were all that important. When I communicated that I sure would love a little bit more of a birthday “plan,” he LISTENED. Rather than becoming defensive, he truly heard me.

The following year, as my birthday approached, I tried not to get my hopes up (too much). To my surprise and delight, my hubby indulged my love for people, my love for adventure, and my love for baseball and planned an EPIC birthday celebration. It’s important to note that we lived in Southern California at the time and Amtrak runs along the west coast, stopping at many popular beach cities. The afternoon before my birthday, my husband picked me up and took me to an Amtrak station and simply told me we were going on an adventure. What I did not know was that at each of the next four stations, he had pre-arranged for friends or family (or both) to get on the train. Imagine my surprise when the train began to fill up with people I love! The final stop was San Diego where he had pre-arranged for the group to attend a Padres game followed by an overnight stay in the city. The true gift of that birthday was the fact that my hubby listened generously and responded thoughtfully.

Full disclosure? Listening generously is not easy.

Many times, this posture demands more of us than we have available in our own strength. Therefore, this generous act of listening compels us, especially as married couples, to rely on God’s Spirit. God knows we can’t love the way He calls us to on our own. Furthermore, He doesn’t even expect us to. But He does want us to go to Him, lean on Him, and learn to let His power course through our hearts and minds so we can be the kind of people who so excel in love that others take notice (see John 13:34-35).

by Patti Fenton, Family Ministry Associate Pastor

DEPLOYMENT DOS AND DON'TS

Over 12 years of marriage, five moves, four deployments, three kids, and a lot of grace, we have learned more about love and respect than we ever thought we needed to know! Here are few things we've gleaned.

- Positive mindset is critical.
- Celebrate and count it a success from the very beginning.
- Spend some time dreaming up the reunion.
- Imagine that first embrace after months of being apart.
- Acknowledge that there will be challenging days, weeks, or even months but there will also be incredible moments you feel His love shining on you.
- KNOW that you will gain closeness and incomparable strength.
- Most importantly, cling to the Word of God.



You CAN do ALL things through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13). His grace is SUFFICIENT for you (2 Corinthians 12:9). He will shelter you with His wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection (Psalm 91:4). Meditate on these truths together long before the deployment begins and keep those happy imaginations in your heart.

Prepare and intentionally plan up front to keep your connection strong and help you through the tougher moments. Consider doing the same devotional or reading the same book while you're apart. My husband and I spend time writing out different Scriptures that we pray over each other and our family throughout the deployment. Involving kids in the process is especially helpful. As best as you can, plan for special times of recurring communication that everyone can look forward to. Create short video clips for each other or the kids to save for times when communication is not possible, or when it's just a tough day and you need a smile. My husband has made it a practice to write out cards for our kids with pictures, encouragement, and fun drawings for each week that he is away. He makes several before he leaves to account for the travel time, and the rest are prepped and ready to go so he can easily keep up during his deployment. Whatever you decide to do that will speak to you and your family, the time and intentionality up front make an incredible difference.

Deployments can often come with many unexpected changes or difficult moments on either side. These can be anything from the deployment getting extended, uncomfortable living quarters, frequent communication becoming more limited, the dishwasher breaking, or a child severely acting out. It is how you plan and then choose to react to the unexpected challenges that will make the greatest difference in keeping your love and marriage strong. My husband and I feel very passionate about the importance of always believing the best of your spouse, remaining flexible, and not allowing any room for blame or bitterness.

While it is absolutely necessary to be genuine and share your heart, frustrations, or sadness, remaining positive serves both parties more effectively.

Make it a priority to share the good things, the happy little moments. We aim to keep the hope and excitement alive—that we will be doing life together again soon. We have fun talking about dream dates, going to church as a family, and what God has for us in the future.

By honoring my husband's deployment experiences, I have had a special privilege of providing the support that makes the greatest difference for him as he struggles to leave his family yet longs to serve his country. He reciprocates with love for me and our family. **We are in this together and so are you.** We pray His all-sufficient grace over you and your family.

by Riann Ballenger

Riann is a military wife currently stationed in the Washington, D. C. area with her three adventurous boys, which includes her husband, John. She has worked with children and families in some capacity for the greater part of her life—teaching elementary school, volunteering in children's ministry, and now as the Family Ministries Assistant at Capital Life Church in Arlington, VA. She is passionate about sharing joy with others, stomping through creeks and woods with her boys, and making her husband laugh!



LET YOUR HAIR DOWN

Have you ever had a burden that seems to fill the air around you? Everywhere you go, you are constantly aware of this *thing*. Often these burdens emit a stench that's nearly impossible to escape. But recently I read a passage that opened my eyes—and my nose—to a different perspective.

As Jesus prepares for His death in John 12, we find Him with His friends and disciples in Bethany at a celebration of what He has done—performing the miracle of all miracles by raising Lazarus from the dead. Everyone (save Judas) is full of faith. Martha serves the meal because that's what she desires most to do. Lazarus reclines at the table with Jesus because once you've died and come back to life, what else are you supposed to do?

And Mary in her own beautiful way is at the feet of Jesus, holding the most expensive perfume in the house. She takes the perfume and pours it onto Jesus' feet. And in a gesture not unlike David's undignified worship (see 2 Samuel 6), she takes down her hair, maybe even unbraiding it, and uses it to wipe the ointment onto Jesus' feet.

Let's pause. Now, I don't know about you, but keeping my hair down requires a lot of effort. My work is my family, and family work is messy. Even if I'd like to keep my hair down, the messy business of my work generally forces me to keep my hair up and tucked away. Most days, it's the first thing I do in the morning as a symbol of order, decorum, and preparation to get to work.

But for Mary, letting her hair down, soaking it in perfume, and scrubbing Jesus' feet was not dirty work.

Full of faith, Mary was compelled to participate in the hour that was coming for Jesus. She understood His burden and she took on a burden of her own. With a powerful sacrifice she helped Jesus usher in the hour He knew He must face. And as she completed this work, "the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (John 12:3).

Yes, perfume on Jesus' feet. But it is somewhere else, too.

I can't forget that Mary's hair was still filled with the fragrance of Jesus' burial oils as Judas argues against her sacrifice. I can't forget that Mary's hair is soaked and aromatic as the party winds down. And as she went to bed that night, the smell of the perfume transported her back to earlier in the day, reminding her of the gift that she shared.

It's in her hair.

It's easy to get grossed out, but I think most moms know what I mean when I say, "It's in her hair." Some days, it means cleaning mud, lice, gum, and blood. But many days, it means our fears, our concerns, our prayers. Whatever "it" is, these burdens are always with us. And their fragrance hangs in the air around us and fills the house.

Moms, we are "Mary" to so many. There are burdens all around us. Each one tempting us to resist being transformed into new life. Let's be willing to get it into our hair. Let's be willing to carry the fragrance of difficulty and pain. Let's be willing to let it, with Christ, bring us into new life.

by Katie Hoover

Katie is the official mom of the Haus of Hoov, an entertaining family of five that lives in Colorado Springs. She previously held the role of licensed professional counselor for 14 years working with teens and young adults. She loves God, her family, and laughing uncontrollably, in that order and all at once.



EYE CONTACT

I'm always paying attention to how things work. I like understanding systems and patterns in life so I can learn how to best interact and be successful. This includes everything from how stores schedule clearance discounts to the pattern the city uses to grid stoplights. If I can figure out the system, then I can get the best deal and strategically hit as many green lights as possible. Most things in life have a system or pattern, and with a bit of intentionality one can both figure out the system and interact with it to his or her benefit. Then ... you have kids.

Kids aren't systems. Have we all figured that out yet?

Being a dad can definitely benefit from intentional study. Sure, I can figure out the systems for when my kids need sleep or study, comfort or challenge, quiet or crazy. But then there are moments when, instead of figuring out all the theory, we're simply called to give availability and eye contact.

Is anyone available like a dad? My dad passed away more than a decade ago now. In the years after his passing, I pondered a lot about what it meant to have a dad, and eventually to be a dad. One trait I kept coming back to was how my dad always gave me a

special measure of availability. A lot of you know what I mean. To our kids a dad's availability is a means of God's grace. Grace is the gift of God's favor. To make ourselves available to our kids is to show them a gift of our unique favor. This is more than just our grace—it's a way by which we and our kids experience God's grace.

Then, eye contact. **It's said that our eyes are the window to our soul.** But what about all those moments I'm with my kids but not giving them my eye contact? You know ... those moments when we're in the room, on the field, or at the studio with our kids and not making eye contact. This came to a head for me when we were talking to a counselor about some behavior issues with one of our boys. We got to a point of talking about kids needing our attention, and I presumptively offered up, "Yeah, I need to unplug from work and put the phone down." Then the counselor said something that struck me sideways. Instead of "Yes, of course that's it," the response was "Maybe, but what he really needs is your eye contact." Eye contact, because a child isn't a system to figure out but a person in a relationship, one we are meant to give our full selves to.

Here's the finale though. It isn't just us dads giving our availability and eye contact to our kids, but it's also us recognizing that we are already receiving the same from our heavenly Father. He's available to us. He's got His eye on us. He's given us all of Himself through Christ and the Spirit. May the love you receive from the heavenly Father be what fills you up to go and become like Him.

*by Evan Reedall, Marriage and Family Ministries Executive Pastor
Downtown*

TOUGH TOPICS

Spiritual Milestone Questions

"How do I help my child to make a decision about salvation?"

"How do I know if my child is ready for baptism?"

Some of the most important spiritual conversations we will have with our children are also the ones we may not always feel confident about. As a family pastor, questions such as "How do I help my child to make a decision about salvation?," "How do I know if my child is ready for baptism?," and "When should my child take communion for the first time?" are the most common that I receive.

While there are differing opinions within Christianity about such milestones, **my position has been one of "readiness" rather than chronological age.** So how does a parent determine readiness?

1. Does your child show interest in conversations about God, Jesus, and the Bible?
2. Does your child show curiosity and ask follow-up questions when you talk about these things?
3. When teaching your child about how Jesus wants us to live (kindness, forgiveness, sacrifice, service, etc.), do you see a desire to align with such character qualities?
4. Does your child show joy in following God or sorrow when disobedient?
5. Does your child show eagerness to participate in church or other church-related activities?
6. Does your child show attentiveness to prayer or remind you to pray if you neglect it?
7. Has your child asked you to participate in any of these things?

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

"When should my child take communion for the first time?"

These questions help you gauge the **"readiness of heart" in your child versus simply your child's ability to participate in "religious behaviors."** As you discern the heart of your child longing to engage with the heart of God, your child is ready to make a first choice to follow Jesus.

The first "yes" is often in a prayer of confession of sin and surrender of life choices to obey Jesus, accompanied by gratitude for the gift of salvation and being part of the family of God. **There will be many more "yes" moments in the journey of faith as your child grows and learns more about what it means to live the Christian life.**

Since baptism is an **outward expression of an inward decision**, baptism follows a salvation decision. Baptism is a public proclamation of one's faith decision and should be done when a child expresses a desire to do so. It's important to allow our children to see others in the family of God getting baptized so they have the opportunity to sense when they are ready to do the same. Often children will see baptism and salvation as one in the same, but it is important for parents to help them see that they are separate decisions. **The first is a personal response to God's invitation of grace while the second is a public response to tell others about their salvation decision.**

Communion, from a biblical point of view, is for believers who have chosen to wholeheartedly follow Jesus with their lives. Flowing out of the discourse Jesus gave at the Last Supper, **Christians take communion to remember Jesus' death and the sacrifice He made on the cross to forgive our sins.** Children are ready to take communion when they have accepted Jesus into their hearts and lives, have chosen to follow Him, and understand that Christ's death has saved them. **Taking communion is an act of worship to commune with Jesus in a personal way, remembering and thanking Him for His provision of grace.**

Practically speaking ...

SALVATION DECISION

Some children are ready to make a salvation decision to follow Jesus as early as preschool, while others delay this decision into their junior and senior high years. While we can create an environment for discussion and even give opportunities to make this decision, it must be done when a child determines this commitment for him/herself.

"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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17).

BAPTISM

This often takes place sometime between the elementary years and teenage years for kids raised in Christian homes and are a part of a church community, but others delay this decision well into their adult years.

"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 28:19-20).

COMMUNION

Based on the rhythm of your church, children will be exposed to communion at differing ages. As long as your children have made a decision to follow Jesus, communion can be taken at any age, providing they enter into it with a posture of gratitude for the sacrifice of what the elements of the cup and the bread represent—the shed blood and broken body of Jesus.

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:19-20).

Engaging in spiritual conversations, exposing your children to others who are participating in these milestones, and sharing your own experiences can all add meaning and support to these beautiful sacraments of our faith.

I encourage you to celebrate these milestones of salvation, baptism, and communion with those in your family and faith community. Take pictures, record videos, and surround your children with those who will bless them and support their decisions and faith moments throughout their entire lives.

by Dr. Michelle Anthony

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

SPIRITUAL GRANDPARENTING

WALKING ALONG THE WAY WITH MY GRANDBOYS



teaching diligently

I teach kids at our church. Our team plans activities to help parents to be spiritual leaders in their children's lives. We encourage them to pray with their kids and to give them blessings. One day, I realized that I have two little guys I see frequently that I have a lot of influence over—my own grandsons! I started asking God to show me ways I can point them to Jesus.

God told the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to teach their children about His commands all through the day and night.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (ESV)

To follow these commands today, we can write God's words on our bathroom mirrors, on notecards on our car dashboards, on our laptops, or even on our hands. I started writing "abide" on my palm after I saw a friend do

that. Good reminders and good ways to have God's Word in front of us. This can inspire us to bring up God's Word with our kids.

Back to my boys. We spent the afternoon in a mountain stream surrounded by beautiful scenery and lots and lots of rocks here in the Rocky Mountains. I was asking God to show me ways that I could speak to the boys of His love and character. The rocks seemed like a natural place to start. "Daniel, the Bible says God is like a rock. What is a rock like?" "Hard, big, strong," answered Daniel. "Yes, God is our rock, and we can run to Him when we're afraid."

It doesn't have to be a big, long dissertation. My grandsons are four and eight. Our talks have to be quick and meaningful.

Once, we were leaving a restaurant. I prayed quickly, "Lord, give me something to tell Daniel." There was some leftover snow in the parking lot that Daniel was kicking around. God gave me an idea. I said, "Daniel, God says when He forgives us, He makes our hearts whiter than snow." That snow was leftover and mushy and dirty, but I think he got the idea.

One night, Phillip (4) watched me light a candle. I said, "Jesus is the Light of the World. He is a light in the darkness." Phillip took it all in and had quite a bit to say about Jesus and light and darkness.

Jesus followed His Father's commands from Deuteronomy. He told His disciples stories and object lessons about lights and rocks, fig trees and flowers as He walked along the way. Ask Him for ideas and then keep your eyes open. Use the things around you to point your children and grandchildren to Him.

by Mindy Harrington

Mindy works with kids at Woodmen Valley Chapel. She loves spending time with her grandboys and can't wait to meet the new one coming in May. She and her husband, Dave, live in Colorado Springs.

Check out this idea chart at: <http://bit.ly/HFGrand2021>

Mountains	If I have faith that I can move mountains, but don't have love, I am nothing.	1 Corinthians 13:2
Mountains	Though the mountains be shaken, God's unfaithful love for you will not be shaken.	Isaiah 54:10
Mountains	Before the mountains were born, or you brought forth the whole world, You are God.	Psalms 90:2
Mountains	I lift up my eyes to the mountains, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.	Psalms 121:1-2
Mountains/feet	How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.	Isaiah 52:7
Plug	You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes.	Acts 1:8
Rocks	God is my Rock.	Psalms 18:2
Rocks	If the people don't praise me, the rocks will cry out.	Luke 19:40
Salt	Jesus says we are the salt of the earth.	Matthew 5:13
Snow	God says our sins will be washed white as snow.	Isaiah 1:18

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING FAMILY MINISTRY EVENTS

PARENTING CONFERENCE

- March 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- World Prayer Center
- Register online at newlifechurch.org
- Children's ministry provided for all ages

DOWNTOWN MOMS DISCIPLESHIP

- First and third Tuesdays every month, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- New Life North
- To register or receive additional info, email jheiser@newlifechurch.org

MOMS CONNECT—NORTH CAMPUS

- March 2, 16; April 6, 20
- World Prayer Center
- For info, email laurbucks@gmail.com

HELP CLUB FOR MOMS

- In person and online
- For info, email debweakly@gmail.com

FAMILY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

VINTAGE MINISTRY

- February 17 and March 17, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- Vintage—Information and Orientation Meeting
- For info, email Dennis P. J. Russo at vintage@newlifechurch.org
- Come and find out how we are engaging in our city, what we are planning, and how to get involved with the elderly.

PRISON MINISTRY

- Information Meetings, February 24 and March 24
- 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- For info, email Justin Archuleta jarchuleta@newlifechurch.org
- Join us if you would like more info about mentoring parolees, how to get involved in prison ministry, and the launch of our new Friends and Family of the Incarcerated Support Group

HOMELESS OUTREACH MINISTRY

- The last Saturday of every month, 10:00 a.m.
- For info, email Esther Archut at outreachevents@newlifechurch.org

EASTER OUTREACH PARK HILL NEIGHBORHOOD

- April 3, 11:00 a.m.
- We are looking forward to serving the families in the Park Hill neighborhood with the gospel. This outreach event will include an Easter egg hunt, face painting, animal balloons, and much more.
- Please contact Esther if you would like to volunteer for this very special event: Esther Archut outreachevents@newlifechurch.org

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH CLASS

Our Foundations of Faith class is designed for those seeking to grow in their walk with Jesus—whether you have been saved for one day or for years. In this class we will provide training and resources for your continued walk with the Lord, and answer questions you may have about going deeper in the faith.

- Six-week class schedule: Jan. 19-Feb. 23, April 20-May 25, Aug. 25-Sept. 28, Nov. 2-Dec. 1

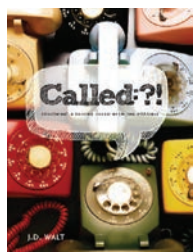


ATTEMPT SOMETHING BIG

“So often we think love has to be this grand thing, and sometimes it is a grand thing, but sometimes it’s as simple as just listening to another person and hearing their story.”

—Adam Weber
Asbury Seminary Graduate 2007

Visit asbury.to/thrive to hear our podcast interview with Adam Weber, lead pastor at Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.



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