

2022 | September | October

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource



FAITH COMMUNITY

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

SERVING

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



HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

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.
- 2** Pick a God’s Word devotional, recipe, and one of the other activities titled Create, Game Time, Worship Response, or Serve. At the end of your time together, speak a blessing over your family members.
- 3** There are four weeks of devotionals and activities. When you have a fifth week in the month, let the kids plan the family night. Remember to HAVE FUN! Family night does not have to be perfect. If you spent time with God and with one another, it was a great family night.

Our Mission

INSPIRE

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

EQUIP

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

SUPPORT

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



LET’S BE SOCIAL



Nlcfam.org



Nlcfamilies



NLC Family Min

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.



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A NOTE FROM MICHELLE



worships God together.”

The environment of **SERVING** encourages a posture of the heart that asks the question, “What needs to be done?” It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and reminds us that we’re called to a cause bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that, as followers of Jesus, we’re to view our lives as living sacrifices we generously give away!

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

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

The statement that sums up this environment is: “God’s family cares for each other and

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@TruInspiration

EDITOR’S NOTE



faith. When we live within the context of a healthy faith community, we can spur one another on in love and good deeds as we **SERVE** God and people together.

The Family Time Recipes for the month of September provide fun recipes that you can make in your slow cooker. Consider partnering with friends, family, and others within your faith community to hold a “Crock Potluck.” Use this issue to create your recipes, games, conversation starters, and even blessings to speak over everyone who attends. In the month of October, create a seasonal fall garland filled with various ways you can serve others as a family and individually. This will be a fun and festive way to keep the question, “what needs to be done?” in the forefront of your days.

Dear Families, may you know how very much your Heavenly Father loves you. Remember, you are not alone. May He lead and guide you to your faith community that you may live a life of abundant and joyful worship as you seek Him each day.

“It’s the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!” --A.A. Milne, Pooh’s Grand Adventure

Blustery days, changing leaves, and the way the air smells when fireplaces burn throughout the neighborhood seems to bring fall to life. There is a sense of anticipation that I feel when the calendar changes in the last quarter of the year. Ever since I was a kid September through December were always special to me. The start of the new school year, parties, pillowcases filled with candy, Thanksgiving, my birthday, and then a few weeks later... Christmas! There is a common thread among all of these: people. In and of themselves, none of the events I shared wouldn’t be the same experienced alone. No, it’s the people, the community who gathers and experiences these aspects of life together that make it so special.

Choosing to do life together within the **FAITH COMMUNITY** can be so rich and have a depth in relationship that is unlike anything we experience elsewhere. Our faith community, in its truest form, is such a gift. We learn together, laugh, cry, and walk through the best and worst seasons of life together. God has given us a tribe with whom we can live out our lives of

Cristi Thomas is the Editor in Chief of HomeFront magazine and Associate Pastor of Family Ministries at New Life Church. She has been a leader in children and family ministries within the local church and parachurch organizations for more than 20 years. Cristi loves music. One of her favorite things is going for a drive, windows down, and singing her favorite songs with all she’s got.

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DID you KNOW

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



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
An Awakening for Today's Families

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY
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10 ENVIRONMENTS

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

1

STORYTELLING

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

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

2

IDENTITY

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

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

3

FAITH COMMUNITY

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

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

4

SERVING

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

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

5

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

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

6

RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

7

COURSE CORRECTION

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

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

8

LOVE & RESPECT

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

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

9

KNOWING

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

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

10

MODELING

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

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

“HOW **good** AND
pleasant IT IS WHEN
GOD’S PEOPLE

LIVE
TOGETHER IN
unity.”


PSALM 133:1



Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God’s Spirit in these words who transforms. We come to know God more when we’re willing to open our hearts and listen to His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with this verse and think of creative ways to invite your family to be open to God as they commit the verse to memory.

Consider purchasing an 8" x 10" frame to hold your family memory verse each month!





BLESSING

Bless WITH YOUR Words

A BLESSING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK OVER ANOTHER WORDS OF LIFE, HOPE AND TRUTH. PARENTS, TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY EITHER AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF THE DAY TO SIT YOUR CHILD DOWN, LOOK THEM IN THE EYES, AND SPEAK THESE BLESSINGS OVER THEM AS A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE FOR THEIR LIFE.

PARENTS:

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27 over your children:

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." We were designed to grow together in community. This month, speak these words of encouragement, commissioning, and Scripture over your children as they discover what it means to be a part of the faith community of Christ followers.

WEEK ONE

(Child's name), may you know that you are a child of God and have a special part to play in the faith community. May you discover your part in each day as you faithfully follow Jesus.

WEEK TWO

(Child's name), may you know God's presence each day. As you seek after Him, may you share the peace and unity of Christ with others.

WEEK THREE

(Child's name), may you know that your Heavenly Father loves you. He has given you everything you need to love others deeply. May you trust that His love is enough to forgive the shortcomings and flaws of others.

WEEK FOUR

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

GOD'S WORD

IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF *FAITH COMMUNITY*

WEEK ONE:

The following story was taken from the book of Acts. This week, read the story aloud to your family and discuss the questions below.

Jerusalem was abuzz with excitement. Something was happening. Something big.

The young couple, along with their three small children, felt energy in the air as they walked down the dusty road to the meeting place. As they entered the already-crowded house, they were greeted with hugs, kisses, blessings, and smiles. As the family made their way further into the home, the husband met his wife's eyes and winked. They were surrounded by people who loved them, despite hardly knowing them at all!

This couple, like so many others in the room, were new to this group of Jesus followers, and they were almost in disbelief of what they were experiencing. As they scanned the room, they agreed they had never seen life lived like this before!

People of all ages, backgrounds, and economic levels were under one roof, eating together, praying, laughing, sharing stories, and crying together.

The two older men sitting against the wall had been bitter enemies for decades. Then they heard about the One who forgave even His executors, and amazingly, the men forgave each other and were now sharing a meal!

The woman pouring wine had been sick to the point of death just a week ago, and the doctors had given up on her. This group of believers-in-Jesus went to her house and prayed for her ALL night, and in the morning, she woke up miraculously healed!

The man near the doorway had lost his job and had no money for food for his family of eight. His neighbor, the elderly woman holding the baby, sold some of her family's land and gave the man enough money for three months of food!

It was examples like these, acts of love and generosity, that had attracted the couple to the group and to Jesus. *If His followers can serve each other this well*, they thought, *Jesus must be who He claimed to be*. Their response was to follow Him too!

And so it went at house after house in Jerusalem. But it didn't stop there. And it didn't stop then. In fact, the invitation to live like Jesus' first followers is still offered to us today! What will we do? How will we respond?

DISCUSS:

- Have you seen people care for one another in the ways this story describes?
- What was required of the people to live like this?
- How can we as a family love and care for people in our faith community like this?

WEEK TWO:

Have someone in your family read Acts 2:41-47.

Explain how this was the beginning of what we call the “church.” Following Jesus meant that the lives of those who followed were characterized by things such as generous sharing, enjoying meals with each other, healings and miracles, worshipping God together in prayer, and learning from the apostles’ teachings and sacrifice.

DISCUSS:

- What do you think the people in the cities and towns thought when they saw Jesus’ followers living in this way?
- Do we, as a family, live in this way? If so, how?
- What are some ways that we can live, more intentionally, in community with others?

WEEKS THREE AND FOUR:

Discuss the similarities and differences between how those in Acts 2 experienced “church,” and how you experience being part of the church now.

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to creatively “be” the church in a way that helps another Jesus follower feel supported, loved, and provided for.

Over the next couple of weeks, consider participating in the activities below. You may also choose to create your own list. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. Visit someone who is sick or hurting. Have your children paint pictures, make cards, etc., to remind your friend that he or she is not alone. Pray for healing, peace, and strength.
2. Share a meal in your home with a person or family with whom you would like to display God’s love, generosity, and hospitality.
3. As a family, choose several possessions and sell them (on craigslist.com or at a garage sale, for example), and give the money to a brother or sister in Christ with a financial need.

by Jason Kliewer, contributing writer and ministry leader

Faith Community CROCK POTLUCK



AUTUMN...

is a season to gather with family, friends, and faith community for cozy food, conversation, and time together. This month, consider having a “Crock Potluck” with your family, neighbors, and faith community. Encourage people to have fun and get creative. In the September portion, we’ve provided fun recipes, conversation starters, activities and blessings to get you started.

Cut or trace these feathers as templates for
September **CREATE** at your dinner!

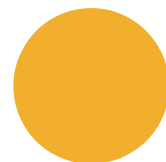


PARTY CONVERSATION STARTERS

This conversation starter will be a fun way for you and your kids to get to know the people God has placed in your faith community. Once you play this game one time, encourage your family to try and find out more facts to stump other members for the next time you play.

Each person takes a turn quizzing the group about something they may not know about someone attending the Crock Potluck.

- Guess which person in our group spent a year serving as a missionary.
- Guess who in our faith community went to college in another country.
- Guess who in our church played semi-pro baseball.





FAMILY TIME RECIPE

Hearty Sirloin Chili

PREP: 30 min. **COOK TIME:** 6 hrs. **YIELDS:** 6

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup flour
- salt and pepper
- 2 pounds sirloin, bite-size chunks
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 jalapenos, seeded and chopped (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 3 cups beef stock
- 4 cups canned crushed or diced tomatoes
- 2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 ounce) can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- garnish: shredded cheese, red onion, scallions, chopped fresh tomatoes, chopped jalapeno, sour cream, tortilla chips

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. In a large resealable bag, combine salt, pepper, and flour. Toss sirloin cubes with flour to coat. Shake off excess flour.
2. Heat oil in large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Cook and stir sirloin in pot until browned on all sides. (This is the key to deep flavor!) Remove meat to a plate.
3. If necessary, add more oil to pan and add onions and garlic. Cook onions and garlic over medium heat until onions begin to soften. Stir in green and red peppers (and jalapeno, if you choose), and cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Add chili powder, cumin and oregano. Stir until fragrant.

4. Combine sirloin and vegetables in crock pot, add broth, beans, and tomatoes, and stir gently until blended. Cook on **HIGH** for 6 hours or **LOW** for 10 hours.
5. Serve with garnishes.



Slow Cooker Cornbread

PREP: 10 min. **COOK TIME:** 1 1/2 - 2 hrs.

YIELDS: 8 servings **IDEAL SLOW COOKER:** 6-quart

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups cornmeal
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 cups buttermilk
- 2 large eggs

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Melt butter in a 6-quart slow cooker on **HIGH** heat and spread it around so it coats the bottom of your slow cooker.
2. Stir together cornmeal, flour, sugar, and baking powder in a medium mixing bowl. Then stir in buttermilk and eggs. Pour the mixture over the melted butter and spread evenly.
3. Cover the slow cooker and cook on **HIGH** for 2 hours.
4. Use a toothpick to check for doneness. Insert the toothpick into the middle of the cornbread. If it comes out clean, it's done.
5. Let cornbread cool slightly and serve with a spoon.

Autumn Apple Crisp

PREP: 30 min.

COOK TIME: 2-4 hrs.
depending on heat setting

YIELDS: 6-8 servings

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FILLING

- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

TOPPING

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed light-brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 cup butter, cut into pieces
- 6 large tart cooking apples, cut into 1/2-inch wedges (10 cup)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

FILLING

1. Coat the bottom of a 4-quart slow cooker with melted butter; set aside.
2. In an extra-large bowl, combine granulated sugar, flour, ginger, and cinnamon.
3. Gently stir in apples. Transfer apple mixture to the prepared cooker.

TOPPING

- In a small bowl, stir together, flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
- Using a pastry blender, cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in walnuts.
- Sprinkle topping over apple mixture.
- Cover and cook on LOW for about 4 hours, or on HIGH for about 2 hours (partially uncover in the last 30 minutes to harden the topping), or until apples are tender. If desired, serve with ice cream.



Pie Pops

PREP: 15 min.

COOK TIME: 15-20 min

YIELDS: 16-18 2" pops



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- store-bought piecrust dough
- 1/4 and 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- canned pie filling (peach, cherry, apple, etc.)
- 6 1/4 lollipop sticks (available at craft stores, including Wal-Mart)
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- coarse sugar or sprinkles for top
- cookie cutters

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. Roll out pie dough on a floured surface about 1/8 inch thick.
4. Have your kids cut out shapes (2 matching for each pop) and place them on your baking sheet.
5. Allow kids to place about 1 to 2 teaspoons of filling on one cutout, keeping it at least 1/4 inch away from the edges.
6. Lay a 6-inch lollipop stick in center of shape, with the top of the stick near the top of the shape.
7. Next, have the kids place the matching shape on top and press together gently with their fingers to seal the pieces together.
8. Use a fork to crimp edges, being careful to seal edges around the stick. Then poke a fork into the top of the pie pop one time so steam can vent.
9. Brush top of pie with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar.
10. Bake pies for 15 to 20 minutes until barely golden brown.
11. Cool for a few minutes and then transfer to a cooling rack.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

We have all seen it: flocks of birds flying together in close formation—the flocks can vary in size but they live together within community with one another.

As people, we aren't that much different. We need one another. As a part of a faith community, you know that these are the people you call first when you need prayer. You understand that you can count on them to stand in the gap for you and your family when things are rough. They will also be the first people you call when God has answered your prayer and you want someone to rejoice with you.

This month, to remember the prayers of your faith community, create these paper prayer feathers and write prayer requests on the feathers. Place the feathers in a prominent place in your home so you see them often and remember to pray. Be sure to add praise reports on the feathers too. Doing this will encourage your children to pray for others and not just for themselves. It will remind them that we are all part of one big family that cares for each other and worships God together.

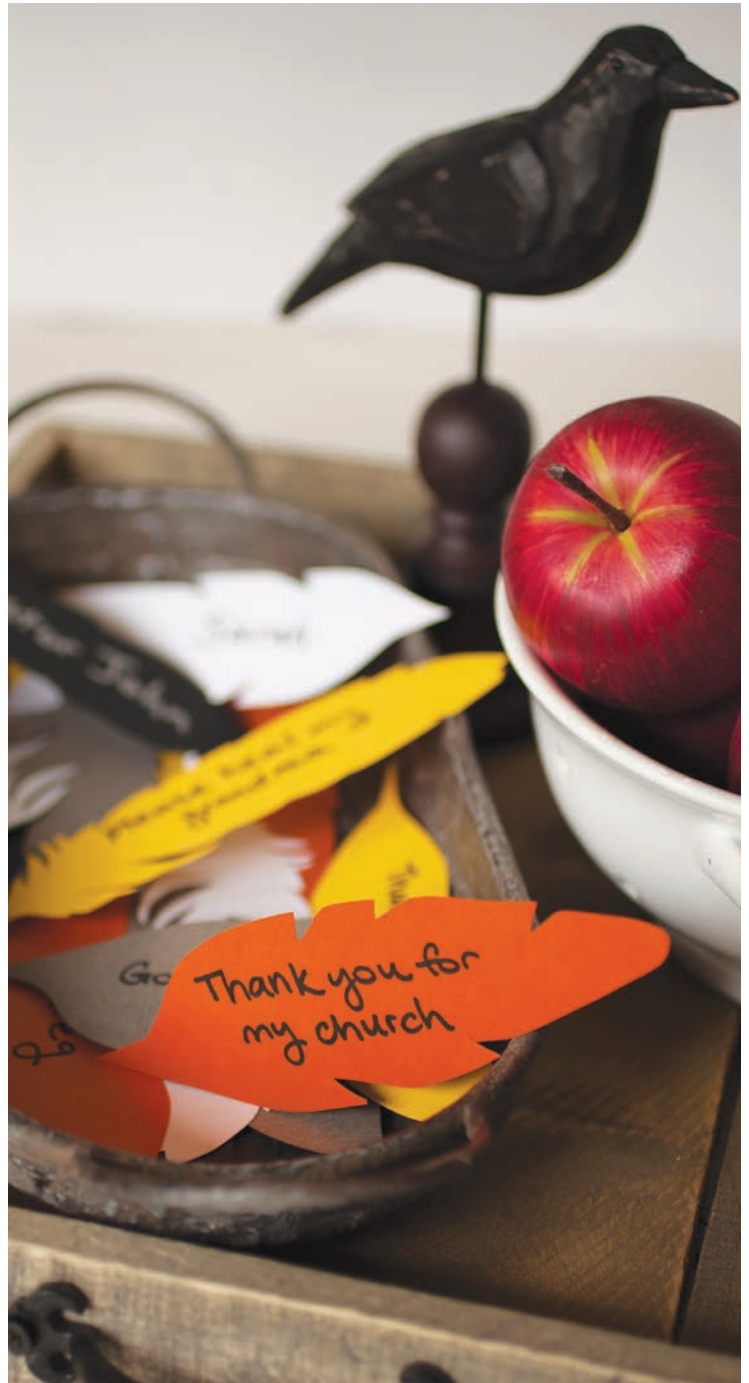
WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- colorful paper
- scissors
- feather template (found on page 6)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Trace the feather template on the colorful paper.
- Trim the outside edge of the feathers.
- Write names of people to pray for, prayer requests, or praise reports on the feathers.
- Find a time to pray together for your faith community.

by Debbie Guinn, Children's Pastor Rock Harbor Church, Costa Mesa, CA



Musical Dice

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 6 pieces of paper or cardboard
- 6-sided die (use a regular die or create your own large die out of fabric or foam)
- music

BEFORE YOU START

Number the pieces of paper from one to six. Then spread them out in a large space. If you are playing with a small die, make sure there is something flat to roll it on. Invite family, friends, and neighbors to play this game together—the more the merrier!

TIME TO PLAY!

Choose one person to be the first game master. This person will stand in the middle of the space with the six-sided die. Have everyone else start by standing by one of the six numbers. The game master will count down, “Three, two, one, go!” the music will start and everyone will need to move around the numbers. Then the game master will yell, “Stop” and the music will stop. Everyone should stop at one of the numbers, and it’s okay to have more than one person at each number. The game master will choose an action (e.g., 10 jumping jacks, act like a lion, dance like a ballerina, sing “I’m a Little Teapot”). Once he has called out the action, the game master will roll the six-sided die. Anyone standing at the number rolled will have to do the called-out action. After that group completes the action, the game continues and everyone can walk, hop, skip, or run to another number. After a few rounds, switch the game master so everyone gets a turn to call out actions and roll the die.

DISCUSS

In the game we just played, was it more fun to do the actions by yourself or when you joined your friends? Why?

The more people we had at a number, the easier it became to obey and to be silly. God has created us to live in community. When we work or play together with others, we are experiencing part of who God has created us to be.

by Krista Heinen, Contributing Writer



WORSHIP RESPONSE



"AND A CHILD WILL LEAD THEM"

My earliest memories of "big church" were sitting with my mom and singing hymns at the top of my lungs. I would pretend to read the lyrics from the hymnal and everyone around me would say how cute it was. There were no musical instruments at our little church, so you can imagine how loud I really must have been with just voices to carry the tune.

I was born with a birth defect that caused me to be completely deaf in my right ear. Even so, as the years went by, I was rooted with a love for all types of music. This led me on a journey to explore gospel music, southern gospel, and eventually mainstream worship music. Regardless of the genre, from pop to jazz, music has always been spiritual for me. It has been an incredible gift to learn Scripture and to learn how to worship.

Now, as a parent, I have seen the effects of how exposing my children to different styles of worship music at young ages is influencing them. My daughter, Mazie, who was born with the same birth defect as I was, was already showing signs of being a music lover by her first birthday. I remember when my son, James was two, we started bringing him in to worship with us on the weekends. He would sing at the top of his lungs—yep, just like mama!

We were worshipping together as a family and showing him what it looks like to worship as a faith community. We were amazed at how quickly he learned the songs and would just randomly start singing them at home while playing with his superheroes.

Isn't it interesting that at the youngest of ages, worship is defined and understood within the

confines of music and music alone? Music is a great starting point for understanding how to worship our Creator. This foundation has allowed me to further expand my definition of worship and recognize that worship exists in other ways, too—sacrificial giving, prayers of adoration, and so much more. It's an obvious practical step to suggest that as parents we invite our children into our environment of worship in "big church," but wouldn't it be interesting this month if you, the parent, invited yourself into your child's environment of worship? To have our kids see us worshipping alongside them is an opportunity to affirm their approach to worshipping their Creator. In this way, we allow their foundation to be further cemented by our example. My prayer for you this month is that through these practical steps you will have a hand in shaping the next generation's approach and understanding of worship that includes, but is not limited to, music.

by Keri Larson, contributing writer, studio-session singer and worship leader in Los Angeles, CA

PARENTS, CONSIDER JOINING YOUR CHILDREN IN THEIR WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT AT SOME POINT DURING THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER. SING, PRAISE AND ENGAGE IN WORSHIP ALONGSIDE THE CHILDREN. THIS IS A GREAT WAY TO MODEL WORSHIP AS A FAITH COMMUNITY WITHIN THEIR SPACE. IN ADDITION, IT WILL HELP PREPARE YOU AND YOUR KIDS TO WORSHIP TOGETHER IN OUR NEXT FAMILY SERVICE THIS THANKSGIVING WEEKEND.

SERVE

Serve Challenge

As we look at the idea of gathering together with friends, neighbors and family for a Crock Potluck this month, there are people who don't have the option to share in this sort of meal with their faith community, or maybe they aren't connected with a faith community. This is where you, as a believer of Christ, can step in to serve those around you.

Think of someone in your neighborhood who may not know the living God or someone who doesn't seem connected with a community and invite them into yours. Invite that person to your Crock Potluck feast! Get to know them better and be intentional to include them in the group.

Some people don't have food, don't have a home, and ultimately don't have a community of believers around them. Your faith community feast could be a fantastic time to do a food drive and donate to those who may not have the opportunity to feast. Ask those who have gathered to "bring an item, give an item." For example, serve your community by bringing a potluck item to your feast and an additional food item for the drive to provide for someone else within your city. Everyone will be able to model and share God's goodness over a feast!

by Casey Thompson, Contributing Writer, and Olivia Bennett, Midweek Curriculum and Ministry Assistant , NLC North



Be DEVOTED TO
ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.
HONOR ONE ANOTHER
ABOVE YOURSELVES.

Never BE LACKING
IN ZEAL, BUT KEEP YOUR
SPIRITUAL FERVOR,
SERVING THE LORD.

Romans 12:10–11

BLESS WITH YOUR WORDS

A BLESSING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK OVER ANOTHER WORDS OF LIFE, HOPE AND TRUTH. PARENTS, TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY EITHER AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF THE DAY TO SIT YOUR CHILD DOWN, LOOK THEM IN THE EYES, AND SPEAK THESE BLESSINGS OVER THEM AS A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND HOPE FOR THEIR LIFE.

WEEK 1

1 PETER 4:10 NIV

(Child's name), may you know God's gifts of grace come in many forms. You have received a gift to serve others. May you always remember the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for you and serve Him and others faithfully.

WEEK 2

EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV

(Child's name), may you know that you are God's dearly loved child. He has created you to do many great works that have been prepared for you. May you live a life of joyful worship as you trust and follow Him each day.

WEEK 3

MATTHEW 6:33 NIV

(Child's name), may you seek first God's kingdom and all His righteousness, and trust that everything you need will be given to you.

WEEK 4

EPHESIANS 5:1-2 NIV

(Child's name), may you remember that Jesus lived a life of service. May you become more like Him each day. May He give you a compassionate heart with eyes to see the needs around you. And may your life put His love on display so that the hurting world might see Him.

God's Word

Week One

GOD STATEMENT:

Jesus Is a Servant

Service can take many different forms, but the idea and motivation remain the same: to put the needs and desires of others before our own. Jesus sums up this call by reminding us that “even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

We understand that we have a biblical mandate to serve. We know we should serve because God tells us to serve. However, what's the “why” behind our service?

We know we can't be saved through serving, because salvation comes only through God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). We also know serving doesn't make us any holier in God's eyes, because only faith yields righteousness before God (Romans 4:2-3). Considering this, the question remains: Why does God call us to serve?

We see the answer clearly in 1 John 3:16-17: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”

Christ calls us to serve because He first performed the ultimate act of service for us: He took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross. And since we've been purchased with Christ's blood, we lay down our “right” to our own lives and give our lives for the sake of others. We serve others in response to Jesus' love for us.

God calls us to serve others because He first served us. As a result, our lives aren't our own.

DISCUSS

- Why does God call us to serve others?
- Read 1 John 3:16-17 together.
- What does it mean to lay down your life for another person? How does this impact the way you think about serving other people?

by Joel Stanton, contributing writer, Newport Beach, CA

Week Two

GOD STATEMENT:

God Is Worthy of Our Service

READ ROMANS 12 TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.

The early church couldn't even think of worship outside of this concept of service. The Greek word for worship is *latría*. This happens to be the same word for service. *Latría* is service. *Latría* is worship. So, the New International Version renders Romans 12:1 like this: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” The original Greek text can also be translated, “This is your spiritual act of service.” The two are inseparable. It's the same word. For us to be worshippers with our lives, we must learn to be servants as well. We must enter every situation and ask the question, “What needs to be done?”

After reading Romans 12, circle back and reread Romans 12:1. As a family, list the ways you can worship God with your life. Make three lists and title them “Past,” “Present,” and “Future.” List the ways each person has responded to the question “What needs to be done?” and how you as a family have responded in the past. Then talk about right now. How is your family responding to God now? Finally, talk about your future—again, as an individual and as a family unit. What are some ways you can serve God as a spiritual act of worship in the future?

by Michelle Anthony (excerpt from *Spiritual Parenting*) Executive Pastor of Family Ministry, NLC North





God's Word

Week Three

GOD STATEMENT:
Jesus Is Our Example

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

READ EPHESIANS 5:1-2

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

DISCUSS

As a family, discuss the questions below. Close your time together in prayer. Encourage each family member to participate. Consider asking each person to pray about a specific prayer point. You may choose to use the topics in the questions you have just discussed, or something that came from your family discussion.

- Do we decide to serve because we must or because we get to?
- What kind of attitude do we have when we serve?
- What does Scripture encourage us to think about/dwell on? How would this impact our attitude and perspective?
- What do you think is the "way of love?"

by Cristi Thomas, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, NLC North

Week Four

GOD STATEMENT:
God Is Leader

Following Jesus requires faith. Trust and obedience are two prongs of this faith. When we lean into who God is we are trusting Him with our lives, knowing they are no longer our own. Because He is trustworthy, we can follow Him in obedience freely, knowing that we will be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Becoming more like Jesus involves living as He lived and serving others. Let's take a look.

Read Matthew 14:13-21. What do you see Jesus do in this passage? Yes, He performed miracles by healing the sick and feeding over 5,000 people—this is amazing. But take a look at the beginning of this section in Scripture. Jesus had recently heard the news that His cousin, John the Baptist, had been beheaded. How do you think He was feeling? Sorrowful, heavy hearted, perhaps even tired? Scripture tells us that He withdrew to be alone and in hearing this, crowds of people followed Him. How did Jesus respond? Yes, He had compassion on them. He served the people selflessly. And as His followers, we have His spirit, the very Spirit of God within us, empowering us to do what He has set before us to do.

DISCUSS

- What does it mean to be the hands and feet of Jesus?
- How do we serve selflessly?
- What might God be asking of you in this season?

by Cristi Thomas, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, NLC North

FALL IS IN THE AIR



Slow Cooker Sloppy Joes

YIELDS: 6 sandwiches

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 lb. ground meat (beef, turkey, or chicken)
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
- 6 oz. canned tomato paste
- 1 packet sloppy joe seasoning
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 6 hamburger buns or rolls (consider using small slider buns to make it more fun for kids)
- shredded cheese (jack or cheddar)

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS:

- lettuce
- coleslaw
- tomato slices
- red onion slices
- dill pickle slices

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. In a large skillet, brown meat with onion and bell pepper. Drain any excess fat.
2. Transfer cooked meat and vegetables to the slow cooker.
3. Stir in water, tomato paste, and seasoning packet.
4. Cover and turn heat to low. Allow to simmer for four to five hours, stirring occasionally.

5. Just before serving, warm the buns or rolls in the oven for five to 10 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Set out all desired toppings.
7. Now have each member of the family serve up a sloppy joe for another person. Make sure you ask each person which toppings she would like.



October Soup

"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers."

-L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 c. diced onion
- 2-3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 lb. Italian sausage
- 32 oz. chicken stock
- 1 (15 oz.) can cannellini beans
- 1 bunch kale, washed and roughly chopped
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. In a pot, heat olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add onion and garlic and sauté; stir frequently and make sure ingredients don't burn.
3. Remove sausage from casing and add to the pot. Use a wooden spoon to break up sausage and continue cooking until lightly browned. Drain excess grease if necessary.

4. Add chicken stock and cannellini beans to sausage mixture and continue to cook over medium heat.
5. Bring to a simmer.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste.
7. Add kale and continue to simmer until kale is wilted and tender.
8. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese on top.

Fall Fruit Cones



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 12 waffle cones
- 1 pound fresh apples, diced
- 1 pound fresh pineapple, diced
- 1 1/2 cups cantelope, diced
- 12 ounces fresh blueberries
- 12 ounces red grapes, halved
- 4 kiwis, peeled and diced
- 1 (15 ounce) can mandarin oranges in juice, drained well and sliced into halves

HONEY LIME DRESSING

- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 teaspoons lime zest (about 2 medium limes)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Add all fruit to a large mixing bowl.
2. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the honey, lime zest, and lime juice.
3. Pour dressing over fruit just before serving and toss to evenly coat.
4. Scoop fruit into cones using a slotted spoon so dressing can drain. (Too much dressing will cause the cones to become soggy and leak.)

Homemade Caramel Apples

Gather your kids and have them help you create this fun fall recipe.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 8 large tart apples
- 8 wooden chopsticks for handles
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 (14 ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- toppings of your choice
- baking sheet
- parchment paper
- candy thermometer

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Dip apples in boiling water for a few seconds, using a slotted spoon, then dry with paper towels to remove any wax from the peels. Set apples aside to cool completely, about 30 minutes.
2. Insert sticks into the bottom of each cooled apple through the core for a handle.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Stir brown sugar, sweetened condensed milk, corn syrup, and butter together in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, then reduce heat to medium. Cook until a candy thermometer reads 248 degrees F, stirring constantly to prevent burning, about 25 to 30 minutes. A teaspoon of caramel dropped in a glass of cold water, should form a firm ball. Remove caramel from heat and stir in vanilla extract.
5. Working quickly, dip each apple into the hot caramel to completely coat the apple and about 1/2 inch of the wooden handle. Sprinkle apples with any desired toppings while still hot. Let caramel apples cool on the prepared baking sheet, about one hour. Use caution, caramel is very hot.



FALL

Garland

This month, make a festive fall garland to hang in your home and watch it fill up with the ways your family intentionally chooses to serve others.

Encourage each family member to brainstorm age-appropriate acts of service they would like to do at some point this month (washing dishes, emptying the garbage, taking care of a pet, doing laundry, baking cookies for a teacher, making an encouraging card for a friend or relative, etc.). Try including acts of service done within the home, acts of service that will benefit those outside of the home, and acts of service that can be completed together as a family. Have each person choose a few activities that will be especially stretching for them in addition to activities that are already part of their normal routine. This way, as your family is called into greater service this month, you will also be encouraged to recognize the things that you already do to meet the needs of those around you!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- fall-colored felt or fabric
- burlap
- scissors
- twine
- fabric marker or paint marker
- small clothespins
- basket
- optional: newspaper

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Cut several small pennants out of fall-colored felt or fabric.
2. Trace the leaf shapes on this page to create a template. Cut several leaves out of burlap.
3. Using the clothespins, attach each pennant to the twine to create the garland. You may choose to leave space between the pennants where you'll later pin the burlap leaves.
4. Using a fabric or paint marker, write an "act of service" idea on each leaf. (You may want to put newspaper underneath the burlap in case the ink seeps through the holes.)
5. Hang the banner in a prominent place in your home and place the leaves and small clothespins in a basket nearby.
6. Throughout the month, as you complete each act of service, add the corresponding leaf to the garland, either by hanging it between two pennants or clipping onto the top of a pennant.

by Emily Ganzfried, Contributing Writer



Telephone Game

This version of the “Telephone” game will get your children thinking about different acts of service in a fun way.

Gather your family in a circle on the floor. The person to start the game should think of an act of service, such as washing the dishes or making someone else’s bed, and then whisper it into the ear of the person next to him. That person should whisper what she heard into the ear of the next person, and so on. Once the act of service reaches the last person in the circle, she should say it out loud to see if it stayed the same or changed while traveling through the circle. Usually by this time the message will be so different from the beginning that it will have everyone giggling hysterically!



Pictionary of Service

Play “Pictionary” with a twist! This game will have your family sketching different acts of service.

Before you begin, write down different acts of service on pieces of paper. Fold the papers and put them in a bowl. Then, depending on the size of your family, split into two teams (or keep things simple with one big group).

If you split into teams, choose one person to take a piece of paper with an act of service on it. Then give him 45 seconds to sketch it out while his teammates try to guess the act of service. If they guess correctly, they get one point. If not, the other team gets the chance to guess. Then it’s the other team’s turn.

If you decide not to split into teams, just take turns sketching out the acts of service you choose while everyone else tries to guess each one (no need to keep score for this version). Have fun!

by Heather Kasparian, Contributing Writer



What Is My Part?

The environment of SERVING encourages us to ask the question “What needs to be done?” This can seem like an overwhelming question when we look at all the pain and need in our world. So much needs to be done. But we don’t have to answer this question on our own. When we’re intimately connected with God, He will answer this question for us. We have the comfort of knowing we can go to God continually and ask Him what part He wants us to play in meeting the needs of our world. He will break our hearts for what breaks His. He will open our eyes to the things that need to be done. He will be faithful to answer us every day if we look to Him and ask, “Lord, today, what needs to be done, and what is my part in that?”

At the beginning of the month, take a few minutes to gather your family for prayer. Explain to them you’ll be spending the next week asking God to show you what needs to be done. Share with them that God sees and knows all the pain and need in our world, and He has a special part for each of us to play in healing that pain. **If we ask Him, He will show us what He wants done.** As you pray, ask God to give you His love and compassion for this world. Then ask Him to open the eyes and ears of each family member in the coming week so you may see and know what needs to be done around you. Pray that He would begin to show your family what unique part each of you can play in His story in this coming month.

Next, explain to your family the following plan for the coming week: Each time you head out into your community—whether getting in the car to drive somewhere, walking around your neighborhood, heading to the park or the store, wherever you go—simply pray out loud, “God, please show us what needs to be done.” Encourage your family members to point out things that need to be done. Maybe you see a lot of trash at your neighborhood park that needs to be picked up. Or you notice your neighbor just had a baby and could use a meal. Perhaps you hear about children in other countries who need to be sponsored. **Jot down what you notice in your “family serving notebook.”** If you have older children, you may want to get each family member their own notebook. Remind your family that as you notice needs around you, this is God talking to you and showing you His heart for our world.

At the end of the week, gather as a family and read through your notebooks. Pray over the things you wrote down and ask God to show you how your family can meet these needs. **Pick a few of them and make a plan for how you will do those things this month.** Remind them that as you do this, you’re joining God in caring for this hurting world. What a privilege to be able to partner with and be used by Him!

by Laura Weber, Contributing Writer



THE ACTS OF SERVICE GAME

Folding Clothes

Growing up in a pastor's home, we often had a house full of people. Last-minute meetings, Bible studies, and impromptu counseling sessions were the norm around our home. To prepare for guests, we had a family tradition that made "tidying up" fun and a way that we could serve each other. My mom created a big box filled with all the tasks that needed to be done for our home to be ready for guests—bathroom sinks to be cleaned, bathroom mirrors to be wiped, trash cans to be emptied, vacuuming, setting the table, toys put away, pillows plumped, front porch swept, and so on. Mom would rally "Team Edwards" around the box, and quickly remind us that this was a way of answering the question, "What needs to be done?" On her "Go!" we would all grab a task and scurry off to complete it.

This month, create your own Acts of Service Box or Jar as a fun way to serve one another.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Blank tags or cards
- Box or clear glass jar
- Markers

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Gather your family around the table with all the supplies.
2. Brainstorm family acts of service to be added to the jar. (i.e., folding laundry, cleaning a sibling's room, walking the dog, making dinner, simple yardwork, sorting mail)
3. Once the list is finalized, give everyone some blank tags and markers to create the tags.
4. Place serve cards in the jar or box.
5. Set aside a time to play the game and see how many acts of service can be completed in 20 minutes.
6. Consider putting another spin on the Acts of Service Game. Place the jar or box in a visible and easily accessible place in your home. Encourage your family members to choose an "act of service" card from the container when no one is watching and complete the task. Once the task is complete, have the person who completed the task write an anonymous word or note of encouragement on the back and place it on the refrigerator for the rest of the family.

by Ali Bray, Contributing Writer



spiritual parenting

an awakening for today's families

Please go to **newlifechurch.org** to register
for your class. For questions: contact
Evie Swart at **eswart@newlifechurch.org**

JOIN US:

at 11am in room 246

Aug. 28

Sep. 4, 11, 18, 25

Oct. 2

*Breakfast will be served and kids ministry
is offered for children ages birth to 5th grade.*