

# HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

## KNOWING

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

## MODELING

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

## STORYTELLING

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

## IDENTITY

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



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



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

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY  
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## A NOTE FROM MICHELLE



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

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

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

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

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

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# WHAT ARE HOMEGROUPS?

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

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

## DISCIPLESHIP STEPS AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

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

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

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

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

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

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



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**DID you  
KNOW**

### *Our Mission*

#### INSPIRE

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

#### EQUIP

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

#### SUPPORT

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



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# 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 AND RESPECT

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

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

## 9 KNOWING

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

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

## 10 MODELING

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

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

# LESSON ONE

KNOWING

1

## GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is Messiah  
**SCRIPTURE:** John 4:1-30

## Known By Messiah

**The woman in this story probably had a routine down pat and maybe this day was just like any other.** Did she hope to interact with anyone, or did she look forward to her time alone at the well? Regardless, she did have a visitor that day and small talk wasn't on the agenda. At first glance she had already labeled him ill prepared for obtaining water, stuck-up, and a Jew (which is important because Jews too did not associate with her type: Samaritan). But Jesus wasn't any of those things.

You see, **anytime Jesus interrupts your rhythm in life, it is worth paying attention to.** Check out John 4:1-15 for the interaction, but verse 16 is where we see the woman's secret(s) unfold.

At this point water was no longer the need but she didn't run away for she knew she was having a conversation with someone who knew her. She knew all the skeletons in her closet meant those around her would never truly understand her, but this man was different. **He had love in His eyes and a tone of compassion in His voice.** He didn't air her dirty laundry for the world to judge, yet He confirmed that her secret was true and offered her a way out of sin by showing her where the true source of living water is found, in Him.

### DISCUSSION

- How do you think the woman traveling to the well felt about having to go by herself everyday?
- When she arrived at the well, who does The Bible say was there sitting beside it?
- The Bible tells us that Jesus cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Isn't it great that Jesus cared enough to talk to the Samaritan woman when she was lonely?

2

## CREATE

## Nothing is Hidden

**Jesus saw the depth of this woman's heart and He loved her.** He does the same for you and me. In a world where you can be in a crowd and still feel alone, He sees you; He knows you. He tenderly calls each of us to reach down and bring our secrets to light, so the light of the gospel can transform the dirtiest of secrets into new life for His glory.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Bible
- paper or cardstock
- watercolor paints (glass of water for rinsing)
- paintbrushes
- white crayon

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Gather your supplies. Use the white crayon to draw or write something on a white piece of paper. Make sure to press down hard enough to leave wax on the paper. Then begin to paint strokes over

the piece of paper with your watercolors. This will reveal your hidden message or drawing.

2. Read Psalm 139 together.
3. Say: God knows everything about us! Even what is hidden in the depths of our hearts! Just like He told the woman at the well everything about her life, He knows yours too! Nothing is hidden from Him. He wants to reveal the things inside us that make us feel shame or sadness or loneliness so He can set us free. He wants to wash you with His Living Water and make a beautiful picture of your life.
4. Ask: Is there anything hidden in your life—something you've done or maybe something that's happened to you—that makes God sad? Remember, He wants the best for you! (Psalm 38:18; 1 John 1:9)

Pray together, asking God to give us courage to reveal the hidden things in our lives. **Thank Him for knowing you inside and out and loving you with an everlasting love!**

## 3

WORSHIP  
RESPONSE

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



# OUR PRAYER PLACE

## ACTION

*Throughout the month, encourage family members to get away to your prayer place to pray. They can grab the journal and jot down some of the things they want to talk to God about.*

Environments matter. Every space we enter communicates something, whether we're aware of it or not. The right environment can encourage us to act or think a certain way.

In Luke 5 we read that the word about Jesus was spreading. People were coming from all over to seek Him out for healing and teaching. Then Luke 5:16 tells us, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Jesus cared about His prayer environment. He withdrew for prayer to a place where He could be alone and truly pour His heart out to His father.

How about you? Do you have a place you like to pray? Maybe it's a cozy chair facing a window, or a seat at the kitchen table

This month decide as a family on a family Prayer Place. Walk around your home together and decide where would be a good place for people to "get away" to pray just like Jesus.

## WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Once you've picked the place, set out a journal or some paper in that spot.
- Throughout the month, encourage family members to get away to that spot to pray.
- They can grab the journal and jot down some of the things they want to talk to God about.
- After each prayer, leave the journal there.
- When someone else feels the urge to get away, they can go to the spot and pray through the prayers that are already written or add their own to the journal.

## 4

## BLESS

A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement. Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 149: 14

**BLESSING:**

(Child's name), **Our big God knows everything about you. He loves you and has a journey just for you.** May you know how deep and wide His love is for you. May you allow Him to take your hand and guide you in this amazing adventure He has for YOU.

# LESSON TWO

KNOWING

# 1

## GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is God  
**SCRIPTURE:** John 14:1-10

## Knowing God

As twenty-first century Christians, we can easily take for granted the idea that to know Jesus is to know God. Of course, Jesus is God. If we want to know what God is like, we can just look at Jesus. This is almost commonplace to us.

However, in Jesus' day, this idea would have been absolutely crazy, and even blasphemous! To a good first-century Jew, there was only one God. Believing in and following the one true God, Yahweh, is what set Jews apart from the pagan cultures around them that worshipped lots of different deities. So when Jesus came on the scene and started making claims like, "If you really know me, you will know my Father as well," and "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father," He would've angered a lot of people!

Through His resurrection, we can know Jesus is God.

### DISCUSSION

- What does Jesus mean when He says if someone has seen Him, they've seen the Father?
- What are some things we can know about God's character by looking at Jesus' life?

# 2

## GAME TIME

### COUNTING My Jelly Beans



### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- copy the numbered cards (1 per player) found on pages 22-23
- pair of dice
- jelly beans
- bowl or jar

### BEFORE YOU START

Pour the jelly beans into a bowl or jar and place it, along with the dice, in the center of your game space. Set out the number cards for each player.

### TIME TO PLAY!

Instruct each player to sit in front of a game card and make a little circle around the jelly beans and dice. Choose the oldest member of the group to go first.

This player will roll the dice in the center space (for example, she rolls a 3 and a 5) and add the two numbers together (for a solution of 8). She then must find the solution numbers (8s) on her game card and cover each with a jelly bean. This player will then pass her dice to the person on her left who will take his turn. The first person to create a complete straight line (horizontal, vertical, diagonal), wins! You can even play to blackout, which is when the card is completely full. This is a fun game to play over and over—as long as the jelly beans haven't been eaten up!

Cards found on pages 22-23



# 3

## WORSHIP RESPONSE



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

### How do we know God better? How does our family grow closer to God?

One way is to regularly get into creation, into nature. Marvel at the hibiscus blooming in the garden; stare in wonder at the hummingbird collecting nectar; observe the moon waxing and waning, and debate if it is really made of cheese.

Another part of our rhythm is to read and talk about the stories of Jesus. The Bible itself tells us that if we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus. And in these Jesus-stories, we see Him loving those who were hurting, and showing compassion on the men, women, and children who had nowhere else to turn for help. We see Jesus healing and giving hope!

We also listen for God, so we can learn His voice. We listen for Him to speak to us in silence and in prayer. We try to pay attention in case He speaks to us through those around us.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Bible

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Gather as a family and decide if you would enjoy a daytime nature walk or an evening under the stars.
2. Spend time together observing creation and sharing how it tells us about God.

# 4

## BLESS

**A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement.** Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 7:7

### BLESSING:

(Child's name), **May you know that your Heavenly Father loves you.** May you know that He sees you, He loves you, and He knows you. May you know that you have been personally invited to know Him in return. He longs to make Himself known to you! May you seek Him with your whole heart, and trust that He is who He says He is. May you be confident in knowing that His character and His love for you will never change. He loves you as a son/daughter, He wants nothing more than to be in a close personal relationship with you!

# LESSON THREE

## MODELING

# 1

### GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is the Light of World  
**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Timothy 4:12,14, Matthew 5:16

## The Light For All Ages

The warm light of the oil lamp illuminated the letter in the darkness of the single-room, mud house. As the rest of the family slept, the young man read one line over and over, letting the words of his most beloved friend and mentor seep into his heart and into his soul. **“Let no one look down on you because of your youth,”** As Timothy silently mouthed the phrase again and again, careful not to wake anyone, he slowly relaxed and exhaled. The words calmed him, encouraged him, empowered him.

He had the very Spirit of Christ in him! “Age” and “experience” were nothing compared to the Holy Spirit of the living God! In spite of his doubts and the doubts of others, he began to realize that he could, and would, lead this growing church. He would reflect the light of Jesus to them, helping them shine the love of God into the dark world around them!

### DISCUSSION

- Why did Timothy feel like he was not good enough to lead the church? Was that true? Why or why not?
- What are some God-given gifts and abilities you can use to shine the light and model Jesus to your friends?

# 2

### GAME TIME

## Shining The Light

**Typically, when we think about modeling, we look at it through the lens of how we can best model the life of Jesus for others.** When it comes to our children, this desire can be even more powerful. However, we must remember that it does not stop with just us modeling for our children, but they too are asked to put their faith on display for those around them. In this game, your children are constantly in pursuit of those in darkness in order to shine their light upon them. Similarly, empower your children to do this in the real world they live in every day. Remind your children that they are called, just like adults, to show others who Christ is through how they live.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Flashlight (1 or more)

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Invite your family to join you outside. Explain to the group that they will be playing a fun version of tag called Flashlight Tag, which incorporates a little bit of Hide and Seek. Assign one person to be “It.” If you'd like, the players can draw straws or numbers to determine whom this will be.
2. The person who is It will be given the flashlight, which must remain turned on at all times. Be sure It knows that he may not cover up the flashlight to hide the light. The light must shine during the whole game.
3. To start the game, It must cover his eyes and count up to a set number (i.e., 100). Choose an appropriate number for the age of your kids. During the counting, the other players must find places to hide. Once It finishes counting, he may begin to search for the hidden players. If this person spots someone, he must shine the light on that person's body, avoiding her eyes, and shout her name. Once a player has been tagged in this way, she is out of the game. The best way to avoid being tagged is to keep running and hiding behind things so the light cannot touch you.

Once everyone is out, select a new person to be It and play again!

## Journey to the Cross

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

**Take time now to prepare as a family for Holy Week, Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday.** Following is a simple way to respond in worship toward God for sending His Son Jesus to be the Light of the World.

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

- 8 circles cut out of clean paper to represent a stone
- a small cross (can be handmade from sticks)
- a pen to write scripture on the circles
- Playdough

**WHAT YOU'LL DO**

1. Write day 1 on the front of one circle. Repeat for all 8 days.
2. On the back write the following scripture:
  - Palm Sunday: Matthew 21: 6-9
  - Holy Monday: Matthew 21:12-13
  - Holy Tuesday: Matthew 24:42-44
  - Holy Wednesday: Luke 22:2-6
  - Maundy Thursday: Last Supper, Mark 14:22-26

- Good Friday: Mark 15:25-26
  - Holy Saturday: Luke 23:55-56
  - Resurrection Sunday: Mark 16:2-6
3. On Palm Sunday, begin to move the cross one stone further on Jesus's journey and read the Scripture card for that day. On Friday, seal the tomb (you can model one from playdough). Then for two days nothing moves as you read the cards; only the stillness of the tomb remains. You may consider from sundown on Thursday to Easter morning, adding to the feeling by living only by candlelight. No TV, no phones, no lights, only candles—a fast of sorts—and an experience of darkness that can only really be conquered by Jesus, the Light of the World.
  4. Then talk, remember, ask questions about what it would have been like if we had been there, if we had walked beside Him, loved Him, watched Him die, and thought He was really gone. Talk about what it means to us now, that He did ALL of this because of His unending, perfect love for us. Pray as a family that this story never loses its impact on our hearts, and for those still in darkness to experience the Light of the World in their lives too.
  5. Then Easter morning arrives with the opening of an empty tomb and the excitement of declaring He isn't there—"He is RISEN!"

*See lesson four Worship Responds for a sample photo.*

**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.



**Share a cup of this yummy lemonade together before blessing your children.** Next time they drink it, they'll be reminded of the prayer and commission to shine.

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED**

- 15 medium-sized lemons
- 12 cups water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ice

**WHAT YOU'LL DO**

1. Squeeze 12 lemons to get 3 cups of juice.
2. Slice 3 lemons and put the slices in the freezer.
3. Combine lemon juice, water, and sugar into a large container and stir well.
4. Add ice and frozen lemon slices just before serving.

**SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 2:14-1

**BLESSING:**

(Insert child's name), may you know that Jesus loves you so much. His love for you is so deep that He has entrusted you with being His model in this world. May you feel the weight of this responsibility, and may it also bring you great joy. May you reflect Jesus to everyone you meet through your words, actions, and attitudes. May many people come to know, love, and serve Jesus by watching your life and example

# LESSON FOUR

## MODELING

# 1

### GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is the Sacrificial Lamb  
**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3

## Amazing Love

**Astonishingly, we can know what God is like. How?** We look at Jesus. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is the exact representation of God's nature. By observing Jesus in the Easter story, we see a powerful picture of God that can replace fear with peace in our hearts.

At the cross, Jesus took the worst treatment mankind could deliver—hatred leading to violent death—and His response revealed what God is really like. Jesus responded not with more hatred, violence, or revenge, but with forgiveness—not with retribution, but with love.

He went one step further—after He died, Jesus was raised from the dead. He did not come back and punish His disciples who misunderstood and deserted Him. He did not come back and destroy the soldiers who crucified Him. When Jesus appeared to individuals or groups after His resurrection, His first words were always “Do not be afraid” or “Peace be with you.”

**Jesus, in His death and resurrection, revealed a loving and forgiving God who invites us to live and relate to God in peace, not fear.**

### DISCUSSION

- Do we need to be afraid of God?
- How did Jesus model the Love of God? (a possible answer would be: He was the Sacrificial Lamb)

# 2

### GAME TIME

## Hide and Go Peep



**Jesus was not defeated by death.** He paid our debt, yet He is still alive and desires us greatly! As you talk to your children about this, encourage them to consider the hidden marshmallows they will find throughout the game. The wonderful difference is that God always knows where we are and who we are ... and He loves us still!

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 12 plastic eggs
- 1 marshmallow chick or bunny
- permanent marker
- 2 dice
- bowl or basket
- pen
- paper

### BEFORE YOU START ...

Using the permanent marker, number the eggs 1 through 12. Place the marshmallow chick or bunny inside any one of the eggs. Spread the eggs out on a table with the numbers visible. Set the dice out on the table and you're ready to play!

### TIME TO PLAY!

**Invite everyone to the table.** Explain to your family that each person will take turns choosing to roll one or two dice. Once a player has rolled, she will open the egg with the corresponding number (add the dice together if she throws two). If the marshmallow is inside, she will get one point. If the marshmallow is not inside, she will not get a point.

If this player finds the marshmallow, then you will need to scoop all the eggs into a basket and, away from the players, put the marshmallow into a new egg, and lay the eggs back out for the next roller to take his turn. If that player does not find the marshmallow, then he will immediately pass the dice on to the next player.

**The first person to find the marshmallow five times wins the game.** Play as many rounds as your family would like!

## 3

WORSHIP  
RESPONSE

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

# GOD *Honoring* SPEECH

As we move along the "Journey to the Cross" stones created last week, let's add another layer of celebration. **God-honoring speech!** This can be done in the evening especially if your family is observing livign with no extra light.

Jesus came that we might be saved and our lives transformed. He often spoke about the difficulty of taming our speech. James 3 sheds light on how hard it really is!

**If you would like to make God-honoring speech a priority in your home, gather around the table to brainstorm some phrases your family can use to model Christ's love.** Write out each phrase on a piece of paper, hang the papers up as reminders and then practice using the phrases throughout the week at home, at school, and at extracurricular activities. Touch base the following week to discover how your children were able to share God's love with each other and in your community!



## ACTION

## JOURNEY TO THE CROSS THIS WEEK.

Save your stones in a special place to use next year!

## 4

## BLESS

A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement. Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** John 3:16

**BLESSING:**

(Child's name), **may you know that your heavenly Father delights in you and wants a relationship with you.** He desires to show you how to love one another as He loves you. Always remember that Jesus modeled perfect love when He laid down His life for you. May you allow His light to shine through you for all the world to see.

# LESSON FIVE

## STORYTELLING

# 1

### GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** God is Master Storyteller

**SCRIPTURE:** Leviticus 23

## Feasts and Festivals

At creation, God set in motion His plan for His people to recognize and experience the wondrous lights in the sky, the sun and moon, as markers of days and seasons that would signal the rhythms for planting and harvesting, working and resting, remembering and celebrating.

As God's people observed His appointed feasts and festivals (Leviticus 23:2), God called them to relationship and to a remembrance of His faithful and wondrous deeds. Let's look at the Spring feasts in a bit more detail.

### THE LORD'S APPOINTED FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

**Passover:** God as Deliverer. The Israelites celebrated their deliverance from the Egyptians as well as God as their deliverer. In the New Testament, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb of Passover to offer deliverance from sin for people from every age.

**Unleavened Bread:** God as Redeemer. This feast celebrated God's miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. In the New Testament, Jesus broke unleavened bread with His disciples and said, "This is My body." Jesus was without sin as His body was broken during His crucifixion to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

**First Fruits:** God as Trustworthy. First Fruits represented the joyous occasion of the first grain harvest of the spring. In the New Testament, Jesus resurrected as the "first fruits" offering on Sunday, the day after the Passover Sabbath.

### DISCUSSION

- Why do you think God wanted His people to keep feasts and festivals?
- What times of the year and in what ways do you remember and celebrate?

# 2

### CREATE

## Silly Stories

This fun game can be played inside or outside, so take your pick and round up the family. As you have fun sharing your silly stories, you can also have fun sharing real stories about God. We all get to be a part of God's big story, and we can share what He's doing in our lives.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 medium-sized, perfectly square boxes (gift boxes work well)
- Permanent marker
- Draw images on all sides of the box.

### USE THE IDEAS BELOW OR COME UP WITH YOUR OWN.

- kitten
- suitcase
- storm cloud
- octopus
- cactus
- music note
- airplane
- pizza
- crab
- monkey
- fruit
- elephant



### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Each person will take a turn rolling the "dice."
2. Then she'll create a story based on the two images she rolled. For example, if someone rolls an octopus and an airplane, he might start the story by saying, "Once upon a time there was a very friendly octopus who decided to become a pilot. He worked hard to buy himself a giant airplane so he could fly around the world to visit his sea-creature friends."
3. Once that person finishes his story, he will pass the dice to the next person, who will roll them and start a new story.
4. Encourage your kids to get creative, and have fun!

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

# THE BIG GOD STORY

**God is the Master Storyteller and we are a part of His true story.** Take time to remind your children and grandchildren they are a special character by creating a Storytelling Timeline.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- butcher Paper or poster board
- markers

## WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Begin by drawing a timeline and listing some familiar names from The Big God Story.
  - Old Testament: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, The Feasts, Joshua, Deborah, Ruth, Elijah, etc.
  - New Testament: Mary, Joseph, JESUS, Peter, Paul, etc.

2. After the New Testament names, leave a large gap and label it "You and Me."
3. Then, at the end of the timeline, mark Jesus' return.
4. Make another smaller timeline on the bottom of the butcher paper or poster board and label it "Last 100 Years."
5. On that timeline, begin adding names and birth years of your family members over the last 100 years. Allow your children and grandchildren to fill in their own names.
6. Now, draw a line from each person's name on the "Last 100 Years" timeline up to the big timeline above.
7. As you connect the lines, share as much as you know about each person, especially when it comes to his or her faith in Christ and how God has used or is currently using that person in His story.

**By simply connecting the two timelines, you are showing your children and grandchildren where their lives fit into the grand narrative of The Big God Story.** Share with them that their lives are just as much a part of God's story as were the lives of the people recorded in the Bible. Remind them that God has a unique plan for their lives and wants to use them to continue sharing His story and inviting others into relationship with Him.

*Old Testament*

*Adam and Eve Noah Moses Law and the Feasts given*

*New Testament*  
*Mary and Joseph*

*You and Me*

*Last 100 Years*

*Great Grandma*

**A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement.** Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 145:3-6

**BLESSING:**

"(Child's name), **may your eyes never fail to see the wonderful work of God all around you.** May your ears never stop listening compassionately to the stories of others. May your lips never cease to declare your own story of God's great power and love in your life.

# LESSON SIX

## STORYTELLING

# 1

### CREATE

## Storytime Popcorn



### What could be better than story time and popcorn?

This family night includes reading parables. Invite your family to snack on this savory popcorn while they soak in Biblical truths.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- juice and zest of 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- Kosher salt to taste

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Place popped popcorn into a large bowl.
2. In a small saucepan heat 2 tablespoons of coconut oil on medium-low heat.
3. Add the chili powder and stir well to combine.
4. Add the juice of one lime leaving a bit of juice in the lime to spritz right before serving.
5. Stir to combine.
6. Bring to a low simmer, remove from heat, and stir.
7. Drizzle over the prepared popcorn.
8. Toss to coat.
9. Finish the popcorn off with a spritz of lime juice and sprinkle with lime zest and salt.

# 2

### GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is Master Teacher

**SCRIPTURE:** Various Parables

## The Parables of Jesus

Jesus would often share parables with large crowds and later explain their meanings to His disciples around a meal or in some other informal setting. Today, choose one of the parables listed here and read it together.

### 10 OF THE 46 PARABLES JESUS USED:

- **Parables 1–4** Matt. 5:14-15; 9:16-17; Luke 6:46-49: Lamp on a stand. New and old clothes. New wine. Wise and foolish builders.
- **Parables 5–6** Luke 7:41-47; 8:16-39: Forgiveness. Lamp stand again.

- **Parables 7–8** Luke 12:15-21, 35-40: Bigger barns. Servants must be watchful.
- **Parables 9–10** Luke 12:42-48; 13:6-9: Wise and foolish servants. Unfruitful fig tree.

### DISCUSSION

- Who were the main characters of the parable?
- What did you like or not like about the parable and why?
- What does this story teach us about God, others, and ourselves?

*Jesus used 49 different parables to teach truth*



## 3

WORSHIP  
RESPONSE

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

# IT IS Well WITH MY Soul



This hymn was written in 1873 by Horatio G. Spafford, a highly respected attorney in the city of Chicago. Mr. Spafford was also an elder in the Presbyterian Church. In 1871 his young son died of pneumonia and then later that same year, the Great Chicago Fire spread across the city taking much of Spafford's fortune and property.

Late in the year of 1873, The Spafford's along with their 4 daughters planned a retreat to Europe as a vacation of sorts. Prior to their departure, Mr. Spafford was needed to attend to some important business that came up abruptly. He decided to send the family on ahead where he would meet up with them in Europe in a few days. Mrs. Spafford and the 4 daughters, Annie, Maggie, Bessie, and Tanetta departed on the ship the S. S. Ville de Havre.

On November 22, 1873, after being out to sea for four days, their ship was struck by another ship, the Loch Earn, a British steamship. Of the 313 passengers and crew only 61 passengers and 26 crew survived. Mrs. Spafford, was rescued a short time later, alone. She was

found clinging to debris in the water. When she arrived in Cardiff, Wales a few days later, she sent a telegram to her husband simply stating, Saved Alone.

Mr. Spafford left Chicago immediately to reunite with his wife. While crossing the ocean it was said that he was called by the captain to the stern of the ship and told that they were approaching the location of the accident. **Standing over the waters where his children perished, he began to pen the words to this classic hymn.\***

## DISCUSSION

- What is your response in difficult times?
- How could worship affect us when we walk through hard situations?
- Do you think God teaches us about Himself even when things aren't easy?

\* Story taken from [backstorysongs.com](http://backstorysongs.com)

## 4

## BLESS

A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement. Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 145:7

### BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know that your heavenly Father loves you.** And may you readily recognize and accept the part God has written for you in His story. God's story is full of wonderful goodness and His joy and righteousness will follow you as you faithfully follow the Lord your God.

# LESSON SEVEN

## IDENTITY

# 1

### GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is the Good Shepherd  
**SCRIPTURE:** John 10:11-18

## Our Good Shepherd

**What is a shepherd?** According to the Oxford Dictionary, a shepherd is a person who tends sheep and guides or directs them in a particular direction. Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd. What an incredible picture He used to give us more understanding of His identity and our identity in Him. Spend a few moments discussing the following questions to reflect on your identity in Christ Jesus.

### DISCUSSION

1. What does Jesus say a Good Shepherd do for His sheep?
2. In contrast, what does a hired hand do when he sees the wolf approach?
3. Did anyone take His life from Him? (No. He laid it down because He wanted to.)
4. How does it make you feel to know Jesus laid down His life for you?

# 2

### GAME TIME



**When you think about "identity" a million aspects of your life may pop up.** Parents, maybe you're a teacher, a stay-at-home dad, a grandmother, a police officer, etc. Your children may identify as good students, soccer players, dancers, etc. We may identify with these titles, but they are not our identity. Our identity is "child of God," or a sheep with a Good Shepherd!

It may be a silly comparison, but when Mrs. or Mr. shepherd tagged a running player, that player became part of their flock without question. He just was. On a similar note, we have been "tagged" by Jesus, and there should be no question of who we are in Him. We just are. And what an amazing identity to have!

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Find a big open area for the game, indoors or outdoors. There will be running, so keep that in mind!

### TIME TO PLAY!

1. This game is a cross between "What Time Is It, Mr. Wolf?" and Sharks and Minnows. If you're playing outside, tell your family to dress for the weather and make their way out!
2. To start, select one person to be Mr. or Mrs. shepherd. This person will stand with his or her back to the rest of the players. Players should be standing 10 to 20 feet away from the fox. This is the starting line.
3. On your cue, instruct the players to ask the shepherd what time it is. The shepherd will then respond with a time, such as 4 o'clock. The players must then take the same number of steps forward (in this case, four steps). These steps may be as large or small as the players wish, no matter how close they get to the wolf.
4. Whenever the shepherd decides, she or he may yell in response to the question, "It's 12 o'clock!" When this happens, the shepherd will turn around and begin chasing the players with the intent of tagging one.
5. The players should run back to the starting line. Once the shepherd tags someone, that person becomes a sheep of the shepherd. Similar to Sharks and Minnows, after each round, the number of sheep chasing players increases until there are no longer any players. Then it's time to start the game with a new shepherd!

## 3

WORSHIP  
RESPONSE

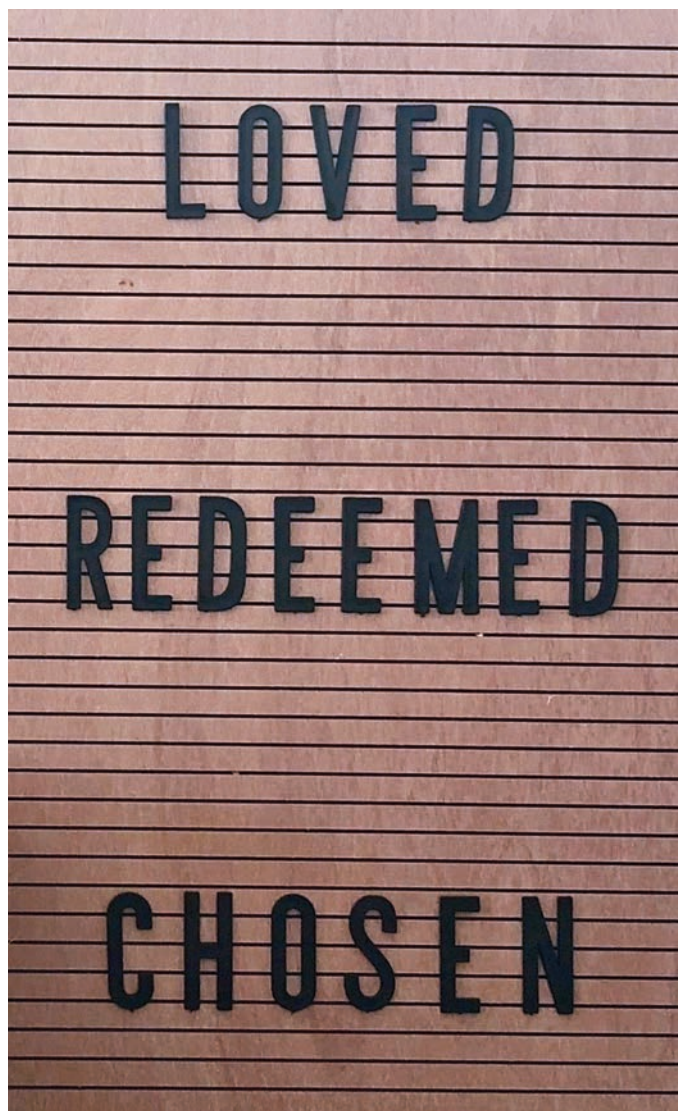
**Worship Response is a time to respond in a posture and attitude of worship toward God.** There are many ways we can actively give our worship to God.

# Gratitude

**Gratitude is a practice that shapes us.** When we practice expressing gratitude to God over and over, we become more grateful worshippers.

This month, we're focusing on the environment of Identity. **Here is a challenge to practice gratitude to God each day as a form of worship.** Don't thank God for just anything. Thank Him for who He says you are. Think through what's true about your identity in Christ Jesus (you're chosen, loved, adopted, forgiven, redeemed, etc.) and thank God each day for one of those things.

Here's what this could look like. **Encourage each family member to come up with a short one-sentence statement thanking God for some truth about her identity in Him.** (It can be as simple as "Thank you, God, for loving me!") Write down your statements and display them somewhere in your home. Then, once a day (maybe at dinner or before bed) have each person read his statement out loud. Say the same statement every day over and over for the week. Practicing gratitude to God for one of the amazing things He says about you will not only help impress in you a deeper sense of your identity but will be an act of worship to the One worthy of all of our praise.



## 4

## BLESS

**A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement.** Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 John 9:10-11

**BLESSING:**

As you pray the following blessing over your child, encourage him to look you in the eye and hold his hands out with palms facing up in a posture to receive the words you are about to speak.

(Child's name), **may you understand the deep love God has for you.** May you always remember He sent His one and only Son so that you might live. May this example of love set the standard for the way you love others throughout your lifetime. Never forget that God fills you with His love so you in turn can give that love away to others..

# LESSON EIGHT

IDENTITY

# 1

## GOD'S WORD

**GOD STATEMENT:** Jesus is the Final Passover

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Corinthians 5:7

# Passover

Do you remember in lesson five our discussing the **Spring Feasts God gave His people?** Jesus observed them with His disciples while He walked on earth, and as New Testament believers, we have the joy of recognizing Jesus Christ literally fulfills these feasts.

Read Leviticus 23: 1-8 again as a family and compare it to Mark 14:12-16.

## DISCUSSION

- Did you know the Nation of Israel still observes Passover?
- As a family, look up the date for Passover this year.
- How do you think Jesus felt as He approached His appointed time to be the Passover Lamb.
- How can we remember and celebrate His sacrifice for us?



# 2

## GAME TIME

# Overcoming Obstacles

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Various items for an obstacle course. Here are some ideas:

- cones to jump over
- large hoops to hop through
- jump rope to jump with
- small pools filled with water to "swim" through
- wooden plank to lay on the ground as a balance beam
- table to crawl under
- timer (optional)

## BEFORE YOU START

**Gather your family and discuss how difficult it was for Jesus to get to the cross to be our Passover Lamb.** He endured flogging from soldiers, listened as others insulted Him, carried His heavy cross to Galgotha and finally stayed on the cross for our salvation. As you have fun working through the obstacles, remember Jesus also overcame obstacles and was victorious!

## TIME TO PLAY

Invite everyone outside. Explain to your family that today they will get to work their way through a fun obstacle course! Take some time to demonstrate how the course works and how to make it through each obstacle.

**Once everyone understands how to complete the course, choose one person to go first.** As soon as one person is done, the next person may start. Encourage your family to cheer others on as they jump and dive through the course!

## 3

WORSHIP  
RESPONSE

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

# Do In Remembrance of Me

**Has your family observed a seder meal before?** The seder meal was established in Exodus 13:8 when Moses instructed the people to always remember God's rescue of them from Egypt. It is possible that Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples was a seder meal at which Jesus established the new covenant of communion.

**We can approach this seder tradition with the utmost respect.** People around the world still celebrate the seder on the eve of Passover. It is a story that unfolds with elements intended to draw the participants more fully into God's story and rescue. In modern times, families read from the Haggadah, which is a narrative of the Passover, and you can find many of these full Haggadahs online or in books.

Perhaps you want to plan and enjoy a seder this year! **It may also be special to observe communion as a family to remember the new covenant of Jesus.**

## Communion

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Bible
- A loaf of bread
- A cup of grape juice
- A hymn

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. As you begin, read 1 Corinthians 11:28. Allow family members a time to prepare their heart.
2. Take the bread and give thanks. Then break into peices and distribute to each participant.
3. Read Luke 22:19
4. Take the cup and read Luke 22:20
5. Pass the cup to each person to take a drink.
6. Sing the hymn together.
7. Finally read 1 Corinthians 11:26 and celebrate that we still remember His sacrifice and look forward to His return!

## 4

## BLESS

**A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passage, or words of encouragement.** Blessings can be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 John 3:16

### BLESSING:

(Child's name), may you know that your heavenly Father delights in you and wants a relationship with you. He desires to show you how to love one another as He loves you. Always remember that Jesus modeled perfect love when He laid down His life for you. May you allow His light to shine through you for all the world to see.

# COUNTING


*My Jelly Beans*


---

# COUNTING

*My Jelly Beans*

---

1	10	6	2	9
2	4	7	1	8
11	5		3	12
6	7	4	5	11
10	3	8	2	6

5	8	3	2	10
6	9	4	12	7
11	1		5	8
4	6	3	10	1
12	7	9	8	11

# COUNTING

*My Jelly Beans*

---

# COUNTING

*My Jelly Beans*

---

3	12	1	5	4	12	3	9	6	11
8	6	9	10	7	4	5	2	10	7
10	3		2	11	1	8		3	9
7	1	5	4	6	2	11	4	5	1
11	3	2	8	9	10	6	7	8	12

IN THE SAME WAY,  
★ LET YOUR LIGHT



BEFORE OTHERS,  
THAT THEY MAY★  
SEE YOUR GOOD  
DEEDS AND  
GLORIFY★ YOUR  
FATHER  
IN HEAVEN MATTHEW 5:16