

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

RESPONSIBILITY

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

COURSE CORRECTION

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

LOVE AND RESPECT

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



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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



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.

This issue of HomeFront Magazine covers four different environments from *Spiritual Parenting*: Out of the Comfort Zone, Responsibility, Course Correction, and Love and Respect. The environment of Out of the Comfort Zone will allow you and your family members to understand what it means to step out of your own natural strength in order to rely upon the Holy Spirit to give you what you need to obey God. Then, the environment of Responsibility will awaken each family member to the realization that God has entrusted the good news of salvation to us to proclaim to others. Next, the environment of Course Correction teaches us that God isn't interested in punishing us when we sin, but rather healing us from the inside out. Finally, the environment of Love and Respect gives us the framework by which we should treat every person in our lives, and by doing so, reflect the love of God to others.

The investment you make over these next several weeks will pay dividends and faith formation for a lifetime. May God bless you as you assume the role of spiritual leadership, and build a foundation of loving Jesus together in your home.

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

WHAT ARE HOMEGROUPS?

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

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

DISCIPLESHIP STEPS AT NEW LIFE CHURCH

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

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

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

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

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

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



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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.

5

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

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

8

LOVE AND RESPECT

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

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

3

FAITH COMMUNITY

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

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

6

RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

9

KNOWING

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

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

4

SERVING

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

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

7

COURSE CORRECTION

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

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

10

MODELING

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

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

LESSON ONE

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: I AM
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 3-4

God has big plans for your life—but they aren't always easy. In fact, sometimes His plans require you to do something scary or difficult and you may feel inadequate for the job. But if you trust in God, He is faithful to help you.

God asked Moses to do something very scary and difficult one evening as he was tending his father-in-law's flock of sheep. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a bush on fire—only it wasn't burning up. As Moses hesitantly approached the burning bush, he heard the voice of the Lord calling his name: "Moses, Moses." Moses answered quickly, "Here I am!" Before Moses could come any closer, God gave him specific instructions to remove his sandals. God doesn't have an issue with shoes or stinky feet. **Instead God used this moment to establish His holiness.** He said, "I AM the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Read through the story of Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3 and 4. Moses desired to honor the Lord with his life, but he was also a timid, fearful man. He was just the man for the job. Why? God knew that Moses would be dependent on Him and give all glory and honor to Him.

DISCUSSION

- When God told Moses to go speak to Pharaoh, how did Moses respond?
- When Moses expressed fear and doubt, how did God respond to Moses?
- To bring assurance to Moses, what did God do or provide for Him?
- Have you ever had to do something that caused you fear or uncertainty? Did you trust God? How did it turn out?
- When God told Moses to say, "I AM" sent Him, what does this name show us about the character of God?

2

CREATE

In Joshua 3 and 4, the Israelites were able to cross the Jordan. God worked in a powerful way. After they had crossed, God instructed the Israelites to put up stones to remember what God had done for them. Like the Israelites, we can remember God with these stones. When God answers a prayer simply display that prayer request on one of these stones as a way of recognizing how God has shown up.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- rocks (that lay flat on a surface)
- 20 gauge jewelry wire
- needle-nose pliers
- scissors or wire cutters
- acrylic paint and paintbrushes
- Mod Podge
- marker (for wrapping wire)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Start by painting the rocks using paintbrushes and acrylic paint. You may need a few coats to fully cover the rocks.
2. While you are waiting for the paint to dry, use the needle-nose pliers to wrap the end of the wire a few times around the marker. Straighten out the wire beneath the marker. Slide the marker out of the wire coil.
3. Once the paint on your rock is dry, apply a layer of Mod Podge to the rock. This will form a nice coat over the paint and keep the paint from flaking off.
4. After the Mod Podge is dry, take the wire (2"-3" below where it is already coiled) and wrap that section around the rock. Leave the 2"-3" standing straight up.
5. Cut the wire and use the needle-nose pliers to secure the end to the wrapped wire.

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.

WORSHIP While You Wait

“WAIT FOR THE LORD; BE STRONG AND TAKE HEART AND WAIT FOR THE LORD.” (PSALM 27:14).

I hate to wait. Turns out that in our instant-everything generation, I'm not the only one. We insist on instant internet, instant information, instant food, instant friends, and instant gratification. No wonder it has become such a struggle for us to wait on the Lord and His timing. However, the Bible is filled with places where people wait. There are tons of verses that encourage us to wait for the Lord (Lamentations 3:25; Psalm 27:14; Psalm 37:7; etc.), but waiting is actually out of our comfort zone. It is uncomfortable to wait. It is uncomfortable to be still and trust that the Lord is moving.

Gather your family, and spend sometime reflecting on prayers you're waiting on.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Why is it hard to wait?
- What are the things that you are most longing for in your prayers?
- What are some ways we can worship God even while we wait?

Then, take some time to worship. God is worthy of our praise/awe/worship even while we are waiting. Before we have His response, we can worship Him. If your family came up with some ways to worship, try one of those. If not, consider praying together and praising God. Find a song your family loves and sing it together, have everyone write out a thank you card to God, or put on some worship music and have a dance party.



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: Joshua 1:9

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know how steadfast your heavenly Father is.** Even in the moments when you may not be able to see the goodness the Lord your God is bringing, I pray that you will cling to His Word, His Spirit, and His truth. May you be reminded that your heavenly Father will never fail you and will always be with you wherever you go. In your deepest moments of discomfort, may you feel strong and courageous knowing that God is working on something glorious!



LESSON TWO

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE



1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is Faithful

SCRIPTURE: The book of Esther

Being Queen sounds like a life of luxury and ease right? In the true story of Easter, it meant stepping Out of the Comfort Zone and walking by faith. Read the story of Queen Esther together as a family. If your kids are younger, read the story from a children's Bible. If your kids are older, consider reading the whole book (10 chapters) over the course of several days, or read it for yourself first and choose several passages to read together that will give your kids the gist of the story.

DISCUSSION

- What did Queen Esther do that was out of her comfort zone?
- How do you think Esther might have been feeling when she went to talk to the king?
- How do you feel when you are out of your comfort zone?
- When is a time you took a risk that forced you to rely on God? (Parents, consider sharing your answers for this question first to model for your kids.)

2

GAME TIME

FAITH WALK

And who knows but
that you have come to
your royal position for
such a time as this?"

(Esther 4:14)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- blindfold
- an open space
- pillows, stuffed animals, Frisbees, water bottles, etc.

BEFORE YOU START

This game will force players out of their comfort zone and require them to trust each other to succeed. Gather your supplies and invite your family to join you in a large open room or a grassy space outside.

TIME TO PLAY!

Have players pair up. Blindfold one player while the rest of the players scatter the gathered objects over the floor of the open space. The objective of the game is for the partner who can see to direct the blindfolded partner across the open floor while avoiding the objects. The trick is the directing partner can only use his voice. If the blindfolded person touches any of the objects, the partners must start over. To make it more challenging, family members can time each group to see how quickly they can accomplish the challenge. After everyone has gone through the game you can rotate partners so family members can engage with different people.

Courage Crowns

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 often asked His prophets to do strange things to help the Israelites understand His message. Esther did a courageous thing to help save her people. Their obedience was a worship response to the Lord's direction. Let's make a fun crown to remind us to step out in faith like Esther did.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- premade paper crowns or construction paper, scissors, and stapler
- markers
- jewel stickers or other decorations

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Buy or make a paper crown for each family member. You can buy paper crowns at a craft store or draw and cut out your own. Consider searching for crown templates online and printing out one to trace. It may take multiple pieces of construction paper to make a crown big enough to fit around a head, so use a stapler to hold the pieces together.
2. Once you have the crowns ready, brainstorm and write on them a few ways you could take risks this month that would force you to rely on God.
3. Finally, add some finishing touches to your crowns, like jewel stickers or other decorations.

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 19:26; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 28:19-20

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know that all things are possible with** God! He has equipped you with His mighty power to share the good news of Jesus and to make disciples of all nations. Don't be afraid, beloved child of God; He is with you always. You can depend on Him.

Blessing



LESSON THREE

RESPONSIBILITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God Blesses
SCRIPTURE: Genesis 15:1-6

In Genesis 15, God blessed Abraham and told him that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. I imagine Abraham was totally blown away by this promise. But God also asked something of Abraham; in Genesis 17 God told Abraham that he would have a son if he remained faithful. Then, after Abraham had his son Isaac, God promised to Isaac in Genesis 26 that his descendants would be countless, but again only if he remained faithful.

We aren't so different from Abraham. God offers us abundant life and also asks us to remain faithful to Him. God called Abraham to a new land to live a life that looked different from those around him. We live with that same call on our lives.

Abraham couldn't understand God's promise. At this point he was old and he had no children. How could God possibly give him children? And grandchildren? And great-grandchildren? Read verse 6 again. Even though the promise seemed crazy, Abraham believed God and dedicated his life to being faithful to God. Sure he didn't get it all right—none of us will—but he chose daily to be responsible with the things he had been given.

DISCUSSION

- What does it mean for us to be faithful to God?
- How can you be responsible with the things you have been given?

2

CREATE

WATER Color WORLD

There are so many ways to respond to God in worship ... but when thinking about painting—holding a brush in your hand and unleashing vibrant colors onto a canvas through graceful, sweeping motions—it is a small reflection of God's work in creation. He paints the sky each morning and evening leaving grand swaths of color behind as the sun rises and sets. He intricately designs rainbows and stars to be the installations of beauty on His great sky canvas.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- white paper (1 sheet per family member)
- permanent marker
- watercolor paint
- paintbrushes (1 per family member)

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Set aside a time as a family to read aloud a Psalm that speaks of God's greatness and how all the world is His. Psalm 145 is a great place to start.

2. Then, encourage each family member to choose a verse that stood out and turn it into an art piece. You might decide to have each person write her verse out with a permanent marker on a piece of white paper, or you might type up and print out the verses in a font you each like.
3. Once each person has a typed or written copy of his verse, use watercolors to paint all over the page, embracing art as a form of worship. (Just make sure your letters are dark enough to show through the watercolors!)



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.

Counting the Stars

“GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD. HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER” (PSALM 136:1).

Stillness. Have you ever thought of stillness as an act of worship? When we pause, we have opportunity to soak in what the LORD is speaking to us through His word and creation around us.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- paper and pencil for each person
- a clear night
- time

WHAT YOU’LL DO

1. Find a clear night to go outside as a family.
2. Give each person a blank piece of paper.
3. Have everyone “map” out a portion of the sky. Draw about 5 to 20 stars that you see in a certain section of the sky.
4. Then, next to each star, have your family members write one way they can be faithful to God.
5. Hang your star maps somewhere prominent as a reminder to live out the responsibility we have as children of 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: Colossians 1:16

BLESSING:

(Insert child's name), **may you know that your heavenly Father loves you.** He loves you so much that He not only created this entire world, but He trusts YOU to take care of it. May you be in awe of all the things that He has created—the vastness of what the Lord has done and can still do.

LESSON FOUR

RESPONSIBILITY

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus is the Good News
SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28

The environment of RESPONSIBILITY reminds us that God has commissioned us to be His ambassadors of grace and good news to those who don't know about the gift of God's love and forgiveness.

Matthew 28 closes the book of Matthew. In it we find the Great Commission. At the beginning of the chapter, Mary and Mary Magdalene witness a miracle. After a violent earthquake, the tombstone was rolled back by an angel whose appearance was like lightening. He encouraged the women not to be afraid and commissioned them to go tell the disciples the good news that Christ had risen and gone ahead of them to Galilee. Then, in Matthew 28:19, Jesus told the eleven disciples to "Go and make disciples of all nations..." This commissioning was for the disciples, but it is also for us. We are to go into the world, sharing the good news that Jesus is the risen savior, teaching, and modeling to people how to worship and follow Jesus, and baptizing those who choose to trust and follow Him. Our job is pretty straight forward, we get to give testimony to and share, how we have experienced God at work in our lives and how we have seen Him work in the lives of others.

DISCUSSION

- Is there someone that God is asking you to "GO" to and share His good news?
- Write down that name and begin to pray for them. Then, when you feel that it is the right time, go to them and tell them how the good news of Jesus has affected you!

2

GAME TIME

Ready, Set, Draw



ANGEL

STONE ROLLED AWAY

DIRECTION ARROWS

EARTH

HEARTS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Hand drawn pictures of the good news story
- 6 sheets of blank paper per player
- 1 marker or pen and blindfold per player
- timer

BEFORE YOU START ...

1. Draw pictures of the good news story. Ideas are included in the sidebox. Cut out each card and stack the card upside down.
2. Set out blank paper, a pen, and a blindfold for each player.

TIME TO PLAY!

Invite your family to the game area and have each player sit at a spot with paper, a pen, and a blindfold. Explain to your family members that you will flip over a card revealing one part of the good news story. They may examine it for a brief time, and then once you say so, they must put on their blindfolds.

Once blindfolds are on, players may locate their papers and pens and prepare to draw. Once you say, "Go," players will have 30 seconds to one minute (depending on the age of your kids) to do their best job recreating the picture they just saw. Once time is up, remove blindfolds, and you or another adult judge the works of art! The person whose drawing is closest to the original wins the round!

Flip over the next card and repeat the process. Be sure to keep track of the winners, as the person who wins the most rounds wins the whole game!

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.

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD;
THE SKIES PROCLAIM THE WORK OF HIS HANDS. (PSALM 19:1)

Noticing the beauty around us leads us to worship the One who made it all, the Savior of the World. The environment of Responsibility reminds us that God has entrusted His world to us. Just like God has given us our bodies, strengths, money, and so on to steward, God also entrusts us with nature. We do not own it, but He allows us to enjoy it, and He gives us the privilege of participating with Him in taking care of it.

This month, let's worship God by thanking Him for the good news and all the wonderful things He's made. **As you go about the next few weeks, be on the lookout for things in nature that draw you into worship.**

One activity that might serve as a helpful reminder for your family is Creation Bingo. First, you'll need to make a Creation Bingo card for each family member (example to the side). Then, have each person fill in his three blank spots with additional things he wants to keep an eye out for. Once the cards are filled out, bring them along everywhere you go (in the car, on a walk, etc.). Most of the items on the card are simply things to notice, pause, and praise God for. However, a few items require a little extra effort as they are ways you can participate in caring for God's creation. Look for the items on the card (and complete the creation care tasks) and cross them off as you go until somebody gets a bingo (five spaces in a row in any direction). For an additional challenge, you might keep playing until someone crosses off all 25 spaces!

Creation B I N G O				
sun		sunrise	sunset	lake, pond, or stream
purple flower	yellow flower	pink flower	rainbow	cool rock
	star		butterfly	dragonfly
ant	snail	worm	squirrel	pick up a piece of trash
pull a weed	recycle a can or bottle		moon	bird

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 145:3-13

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know the gracious and compassionate God who entrusts you with the responsibility to tell the stories of the wondrous things He has done.** May you trust His abundant goodness and joyfully sing of His righteousness, because His desire is for you to proclaim His glory that all people would know His faithfulness. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and you can be sure of His promises.

LESSON FIVE

COURSE CORRECTION



1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Saves

SCRIPTURE: John 8:1-11

The terrified woman stood with slumped shoulders and head down, whimpering sadly. Tense energy filled the air. The crowd of teachers and Pharisees surrounded the woman who had just been caught breaking the law. The men clenched stones in their hands, ready to punish her, but their angry gaze was on the Rabbi, Jesus.

The men had literally dragged this woman to the temple to trap Jesus. They wanted to see if He would obey the ancient law of Israel, or if He would let her go free and unpunished, which would make Jesus guilty of breaking Israel's law.

All eyes were on the Rabbi, Jesus. How would He respond?

At first, Jesus did not say anything. Then, calmly but authoritatively, He told the Pharisees that whichever one of them had never sinned should throw the first stone at the woman.

As the last Pharisee reluctantly gave up, just the woman and Jesus were left. In a gentle, loving voice,

Jesus asked the scared, humiliated woman to look around and see that no one was there to accuse her. Her tearstained face revealed her disbelief ... her life had just been saved!

Parents: This portion of Scripture talks about a woman caught in the act of adultery. Be sensitive to the maturity level of your children before reading.

Either read the narrative above aloud to your family or read John 8:1-11. Also read Hebrews 10:24 aloud.

DISCUSSION

- When you think of God, do you picture God being more like the Pharisees in the narrative or more like Jesus?
- Do you feel like you deserve punishment for anything you have done wrong?
- How would you have felt if Jesus had saved you like He saved the woman?

2

CREATE

Savory Saltiness

These can be made during your family night and kept fresh for a least five days. Serve with a few pieces of cheese and you have the perfect after-school snack to remind you of **COURSE CORRECTION**.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 sticks salted butter
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 2 sleeves saltine crackers

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat the oven to 275° F.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the Italian seasoning and seasoned salt.
3. Remove from heat.



4. Using tongs, dunk the saltines in the mixture and place on a rack over a baking sheet. This is a good step for your little ones.
5. Pour remaining butter mixture evenly over crackers.
6. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Package in an airtight container.

As an optional topping, simply slice a block of cheddar cheese to approximately 1/2"-thick slices and use alphabet cookie cutters to cut out your message!

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.

Whatever is True Whatever is Lovely

One of the goals of course correction is to train our children's minds, hearts, bodies, and souls to know and love God. It's our privilege to introduce our children to the One who created their courses. As parents, we partner with God to reveal His nature to our children and sit in a front-row seat to watch how God has uniquely created each child He entrusts to us. What an honor God has extended to us to be a part of shaping another's life!

We all know that if we are told NOT to think about a pink-and-white-striped elephant sitting on a purple velvet couch, we will immediately have that silly image float through our minds. Because of human nature, this concept also influences how we go about course correction with our children. As soon as we position something "off limits," the focus narrows down to that off-limits object. **It can be a challenge to teach kids that we have been created with God-given limits.** Many of our limitations are part of the original design of humanness, not a product of the fall in the garden. In this sense, course correction should be about reminding our children where they can freely go, be, and do.

How can we "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24)? God gives us the answer in Philippians 4:8:

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.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- dictionary
- paper and pen or computer
- scissors
- empty container

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Look up the definitions to each adjective in Philippians 4:8 with your children.
2. Next, write ways you see each member of your family demonstrate each word.
3. Then list how you see those qualities in God.
4. Take each list and cut it into strips and place them in a jar, a small gift bag, or a box.
5. Throughout the month pull out those strips and speak them over one another.

The environment of COURSE CORRECTION is that it is more than just pulling your hair out trying to get your kids to stop their bad behavior. It's not about punishment. Sure, it includes a season of pain, but it doesn't stop there. It goes on to build up in love and gives a vision of a corrected path. Course correction isn't just an endless flurry of stops and do nots. It's an opportunity to shower your children with love. After all, isn't that how we want to be disciplined?

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 103:8-13

BLESSING:

"(Child's name), **may you know that God loves you SO much.** He loves you when you're on your best behavior. He loves you when you're at your worst. He loves you when you're playing, when you're eating, and even when you're sleeping, not doing anything at all. Nothing you do can ever make Him love you more or less. More than you can ever know or imagine, God loves you."

One easy way to build your kids up in love is to pray blessings over them—to speak life-giving words of truth right into their weary souls.

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.

LESSON SIX

COURSE CORRECTION

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is Just
SCRIPTURE: Jonah

Have you ever experienced a moment when God asked you to do something and you had to choose to obey—or not? From an early age, we are all exposed to the choice of obedience or disobedience. Will we follow our parent's corrections? Jonah, a man who knew God's voice and was chosen to be the mouthpiece of God, found himself in a place of choosing either obedience or disobedience.

As we read the story of Jonah, we know that Jonah chose the path of disobedience. Maybe Jonah was fearful of what would happen to him, or Jonah was frustrated that God had sent him to people who were wicked and did not deserve mercy. Jonah's disobedience is not an isolated event. Disobedience has been a theme in the human story from the beginning.

Adam and Eve faced the same choice Jonah confronted. The serpent tempted Adam and Eve to disregard what God had directly told them by questioning God's words and God's character. Because

Adam and Eve were suspicious of God's goodness, they willingly took the fruit and ate it, initiating a cycle of sin and disobedience for all of humanity.

So what does God do with our disobedience? For Jonah, God showed His justice by sending a storm and a fish to guide Jonah toward the path of obedience. For Adam, Eve, and the rest of humanity, God sent Jesus as the example of perfect obedience and the pathway to perfect obedience. The invitation to repent and to return to obedience is available to you today. God is always offering you grace and forgiveness.

DISCUSSION

Are there any areas in my life that I need to repent of to both God and people? Take some time to share and then pray over one another.

2

GAME TIME

Roadblocks

ROADBLOCKS: Consider the story of Jonah in the Bible. God called Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh to tell the people to turn from their sin. However, rather than obeying God, Jonah ran. He fled the presence of God and found himself being swallowed up by a great fish! When we are disobedient to the Lord and pursue our own desires, we often find ourselves running into bad situations. We think we know what is BEST. While playing this game, remember our need for **COURSE CORRECTION** to navigate the roadblocks of life.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- painter's tape (for inside) or duct tape (for outside)
- items to be used as obstacles (pillows, chairs, etc.)
- cookies
- plastic water bottles
- Ping-Pong ball and cup
- prizes (candy, toys, etc.)

TIME TO PLAY!

1. First, create a path in a room or outside using the tape.
2. Once the tape is placed on the floor, choose someone to go through the obstacle course.
3. The player must hop on one foot and stay on the tape pathway all the way to the finish line.
4. At any point, if the person falls off the line, he or she must return to the beginning of the course.
5. Here's the kicker! Every 30 seconds, a roadblock will be added to the course that the player must complete before advancing on the path toward the finish line.
6. The roadblocks are listed on the next page. Remember, once the player completes a roadblock, he must continue hopping on one leg until the next roadblock. Whoever is able to complete the course on one foot the fastest wins a prize! Repeat the challenge until everyone has had a turn to try the game!

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.

Prayer of Confession

Course correction is rarely easy and can be uncomfortable if not painful. However, when God calls us into obedience we will see the fruit of His calling. God will use us to show His love for the world, if we are willing to listen. The world will know who we are because of our willingness to let God correct us and guide us. The good news is God's great grace. He never gave up on Jonah or the Ninevites and He won't give up on you either.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

The Prayer of Confession is a powerful prayer to use to repent of our own selfishness and acknowledge our need for God's grace in our lives. God is always good, even when we, like Jonah, have turned away. With your family, pray this Prayer of Confession and then, if someone feels comfortable, have her share how she has seen God correct the course of her own life.

*Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against You
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved You with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us,
that we may delight in Your will,
and walk in Your ways,
to the glory of Your name. Amen.*

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 71:15-16

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know that your Father in heaven is merciful and compassionate.** He desires that you travel along the path He has for you, listening to His voice along the way. Trust that whenever you stray off course, He will provide correction to bring you back onto the path of obedience.



ROADBLOCKS

1. Move one cookie from your forehead to your mouth without using your hands
2. Throw a plastic water bottle up in the air to land standing straight up.
3. Bounce a Ping-Pong ball from one surface to another and land the ball in a plastic cup.

LESSON SEVEN

LOVE AND RESPECT

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: Jesus Serves

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 20:28

Who is the greatest? According to Jesus, the greatest in the kingdom of heaven isn't the most powerful, nor the wealthiest, nor the most well-respected. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who are humble enough to love people with simple hearts—not seeking status or favors from others, but truly loving and serving them. Jesus even said of Himself that He came to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:28).

DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 18:1-5 with your family.

1. What does it mean to be “the greatest”?
2. Why does it make us feel so good to be “the greatest” at something?
3. How does Jesus surprise His disciples when He explains what makes someone great?

Then, read Matthew 20:28 together.

4. What did Jesus say His own purpose was?
5. If that was Jesus' purpose, what should our purpose be?
6. Why can that be so hard for us to do inside our family?

Have each member of the family think of the most meaningful way the other members of the family can love and serve them in the next week. Is it spending time with them? Is it asking about someone's day? Is it throwing a football in the backyard? Is it help with the dishes? **Have each person share his or her idea and then challenge each family member to love and serve each other in those specific ways during the next week.** Be sure to privately follow up with family members to see if they have served each other before the week runs out.

2

GAME TIME

Musical Hoops

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 4-6 different colored Hula-Hoops or string
- device to play music loudly
- 1 small piece of paper per player
- pen
- small bowl

BEFORE YOU START

When you're ready to play, (inside or outside) spread out the Hula-Hoops or form circles with string with a fair amount of distance between each one. Then set up a device that can play music at a pretty decent volume. Kids will need to hear it. Lastly, write an “x” on one piece of small paper and an “o” on all the rest. Fold up the papers and place them in the small bowl.

TIME TO PLAY!

1. Have everyone draw a piece of paper and memorize the symbol they have (either “x” or “o”) and then put it back. This is a secret!
2. When you start playing the music. Players can walk, run, dance, etc. all around the Hula-Hoop area, staying outside of any hoops until the music stops.
3. Once the music stops, you will call out multiple color options and allow multiple kids inside one hoop. For example, call out red, orange, and yellow. If two kids are in each hoop, those six would move on to the next round and everyone else would be out.
4. Here is where the secret papers come in. The person who drew the “x” must give up his win, if he had it, to someone else.
5. Continue playing and this time only call out two colors, then only one. The last few people remaining are the winners!

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.

Ten Minutes

Our heavenly Father desires to spend time with us, and we desire to spend time with Him! Could it be, true worship happens when we connect to the heart of God. When we think of worship, we often get caught up on what activity to do, but God cares more about the time we spend. Worship happens through singing, giving, loving, serving, sacrificing, working, and (according to Romans 12:1) simply living for Him.

This week try the “10 Minutes” system with your families. Toward the end of the day, one parent spends 10 minutes with each child for personal one-on-one time.

Be firm on the time, but flexible on the task. You can set the kitchen timer, and one child and parent will slip off to a quiet bedroom. She decides on the task, and the parent participates for 10 full minutes. You may color, read a book, play dolls, or tell stories. Don't be concerned about the activity as much as with connecting with the heart of your child.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Ten minutes for each child in the family
- A timer
- A room for one on one time

HERE ARE FOUR TIPS FOR CREATING A GOOD 10 MINUTE ENVIRONMENT.

1. **No disruptions.** During 10 Minutes, our family knows not to interrupt. Unless the house is burning down, no one is allowed to enter the room.
2. **No cell phones.** This kind of ties back to the first tip, but make a point not to bring your cell phone. Checking alerts becomes too tempting.
3. **Say yes!** Sometimes kids come up with crazy ideas, but for those 10 minutes LOVE and RESPECT their desire and say, “Yes!” to their requests.
4. **Once a week is great!** Life happens and we don't always get to end the day with 10 Minutes. Don't worry if you can only do it once a week.



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

LOVE AND RESPECT

1

GOD'S WORD

GOD STATEMENT: God is Welcoming

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:9

The Oxford dictionary defines hospitality as “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.” The Bible is filled with instructions on how to treat others with love, so why this emphasis on hospitality?

From a biblical perspective, hospitality is treating strangers as friends and offering both an arms-wide-open welcome at our table. While the context of the 1 Peter 4:9 passage referred to Christians welcoming travelers into their homes, hospitality extends beyond our table and our homes. God wants us to care for others by inviting them into our lives and our hearts. **First Thessalonians 2:8 says, “We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become so dear to us” (CSB).**

The world can be a very inhospitable place. Oftentimes our natural tendency is to congregate with those who think and act like we do, and we can, in turn, exclude or ignore those who are different or with whom

we don't agree. Even though many of us know the pain of being rejected, we may not readily choose to include those outside our circle.

Let's consider this: “How would you treat the presence of Christ in your midst?” Of course, He is God and would be revered as holy, but to begin to think about that image of God in everyone He has created is a sobering thought” (*Spiritual Parenting*, page 172). Our response then is this: to be intentional to welcome the stranger, include the outsider, and forge friendships with those who are lonely, different, or unpopular—and do so with a joyful spirit, no grumbling. In this we share the love of God with others, showing them due respect as people created in His image.

DISCUSSION

What does it mean to share our lives with others? What is one practical thing you can do to include or offer hospitality to someone you know who is lonely, outcast, or different?

2

CREATE

Looking for Love

This game is designed to help us consider others before ourselves. Have fun as you practice showing love and respect to others.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 3 colored index cards per person
- pen or pencil
- candy
- bin to hold the cards

HOW TO PLAY

First, each person should select 3 colored index cards and a pen or pencil. On the papers, write one way you can love the person who receives the card then sign your name on the paper and fold it.

Here are some ideas:

- I will do the dishes
- I will clean your room
- I will do your chores for the day
- I will give a word of encouragement
- I will give you a gift
- I will make you laugh
- I will give you a hug
- I will speak a blessing over you

Once you have written on the paper, put it inside the bin. Then hide the cards. Once all of the cards are hidden, send the players on a hunt. **Open your card and redeem the act of love inside.** Repeat the game as long as attention allows.

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.

LOVE First

“BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE. HONOR ONE ANOTHER ABOVE YOURSELF.” (ROMANS 12:10)

Jesus is the perfect model of how to love others. In the Bible, we find story after story of how Jesus went out of His way to feed, heal, and care for those around Him. When the world labeled others as outcasts, Jesus welcomed them with open arms. He shows us that regardless of anyone's age, status, or tradition, we are all worthy of love and respect.

The unique way Jesus lived should cause us to stop and reflect on our own lives. We are called to show the world the love Jesus has given to us. This can be difficult when we are confronted with people who are rude, have different values than we do, or question our beliefs. At times, our children can even challenge us in these ways, which can be frustrating. But how do we choose to treat people—even the difficult ones—with both love and respect? We must see everyone in the image of God, as a beloved child of the King of Heaven who deserves love and respect simply because God created him or her.

AS A FAMILY, TAKE SOME TIME AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS BELOW.

- How can I put others above myself?
- Are there ways that I haven't been loving or respectful?

Share your thoughts and ideas of ways each person can put others before themselves in daily life. You may choose to make a list to post and discuss throughout the week at dinner. Take a few minutes to pray together for these opportunities.



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SCRIPTURE: John 7:38, Isaiah 58:11

BLESSING:

(Child's name), **may you know that God's love is abundant.** May your life be filled to overflowing with the love and goodness of the Lord, pouring out onto those around you. May you know that He desires to give you abundant life through Himself. May you receive His Spirit so His springs of living water flow from within you.

FAMILY VERSE

*Let us consider
how we may
spur one
another on
toward love
and
good deeds.*

HEBREWS 10:24



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