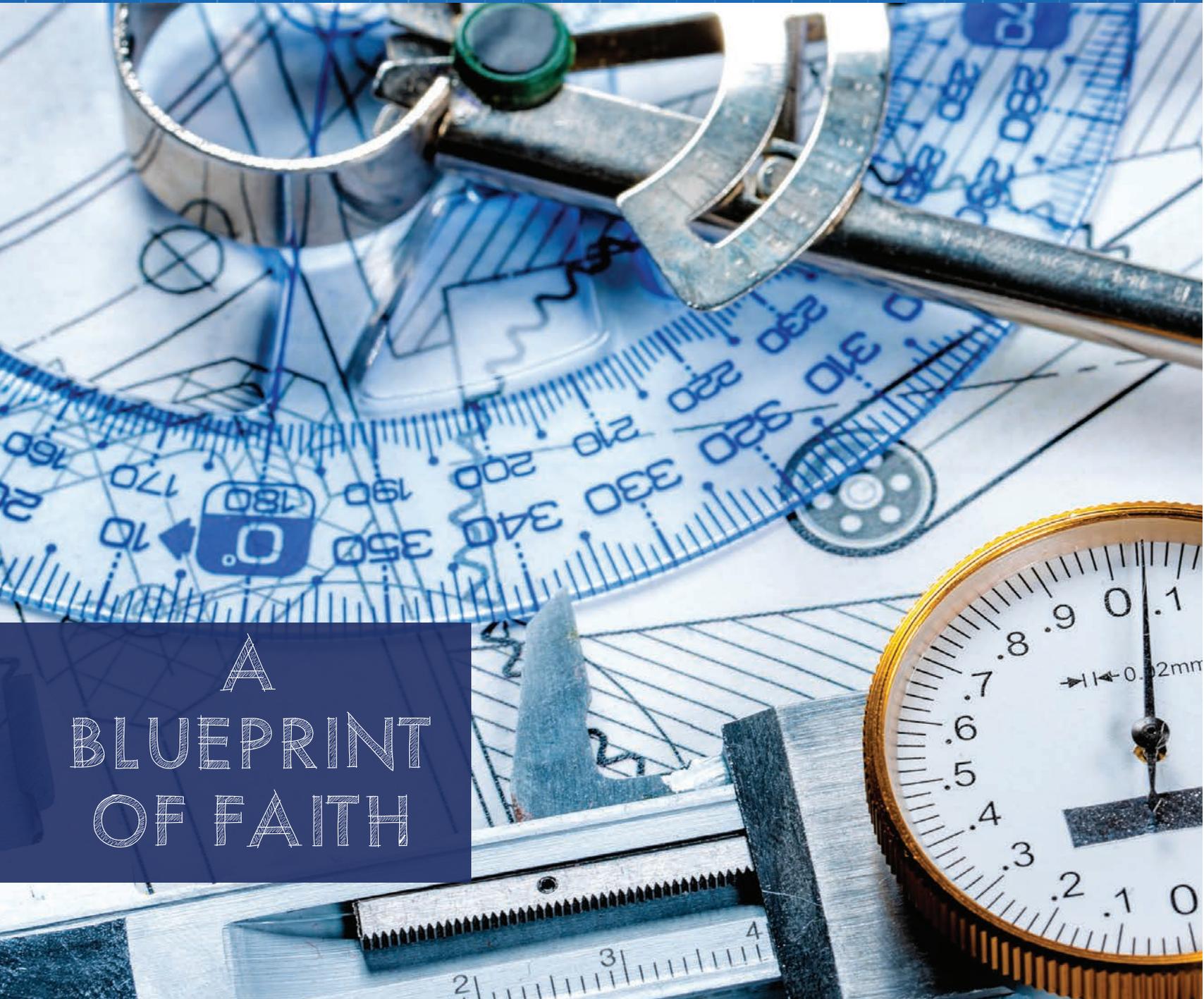


2022 | May | June

# HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource



## A BLUEPRINT OF FAITH



HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

### KNOWING

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

### IDENTITY

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

## Discipleship Steps at New Life Church

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# HomeFront

## HOW TO USE

- 1** Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening around a meal, breakfast on a Saturday, or a break between sporting events. Just commit to "family time" once a week.
- 2** Pick a God's Word devotional, recipe, and one of the other activities titled *Create, Game Time, Worship Response, or Serve*. At the end of your time together, speak a blessing over your family members.
- 3** There are four weeks of devotionals and activities. When you have a fifth week in the month, let the kids plan the family night. Remember to **HAVE FUN!** Family night does not have to be perfect. If you spent time with God and with one another, it was a great family night.

## Our Mission

### INSPIRE

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

### EQUIP

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

### SUPPORT

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



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# 16

## LET'S BE SOCIAL



Nlcfam.org



Nlcfamilies



NLC Family Min

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**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 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.



**A Note from Michelle**

In this issue you will be focusing on the environments of **KNOWING** and **IDENTITY**.

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

The statement that sums up this environment is: "God knows me, and I can know Him."

- The environment of **IDENTITY** 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.

- The statement that sums up this environment is: "I belong to God, and He loves me!"

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

@TruInspiration



**Editor's Note**

**This May and June, we will spend time in the Spiritual Parenting environments of KNOWING and IDENTITY.** God's design for mothers and fathers within the family is a beautiful picture of faith formation. Mothers have been designed to nurture our faith and help us to see and **know** who God is. When we know God and His love for us, we are then able to find our identity in Him. Fathers represent so many facets of God's character and their words can speak into the **identity** God has given us. The strength and gentle care of fathers are vitally important in the faith development of our identity in Christ.

Our parents are the people who give us our first impressions and understanding of who God is. The mantle of this responsibility can be heavy. But God has not left us alone. He is good and has given us His Spirit. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can begin to disciple our kids and help them to know God and fully live in the identity He has given them.

**God's blueprint is that faith would be passed on from generation to generation in the context of the family.** In this issue you will find a beautiful story of the legacy of faith in **Spiritual Grandparenting**. You will be encouraged to turn up the volume in the ways you champion your children in the **Mom Blog**. As you make plans for family nights, consider choosing one of the recipes to prepare together as a family. Then, as you are gathered for dinner, read the **God's Word** article for the week, and discuss the questions together around the table.

Dear Family, your heavenly Father loves you. **May you know that He rejoices over you with singing. He has given you everything you need in Him to show your children Who He is and who they are in Him.** May you rest in knowing that our God is over all and will complete this good work that He has started in you and your children.

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

# CONTENTS

HELPING YOU HAVE A SUCCESSFUL  
FAMILY NIGHT IN YOUR HOME.



MAY  
*Knowing*

**8**  
FAMILY TIME VERSE  
Deuteronomy 7:9

**9**  
BLESSING

**10**  
GOD'S WORD

**12**  
FAMILY TIME RECIPES

**14**  
CREATE  
The Father Knows You

**15**  
GAME TIME  
Pass It On

**16**  
WORSHIP RESPONSE  
A God Day

**17**  
SERVE  
Words of Life

JUNE  
*Identity*

**18**  
FAMILY TIME VERSE  
Galatians 2:20

**19**  
BLESSING

**20**  
GOD'S WORD

**22**  
FAMILY TIME RECIPES

**24**  
CREATE  
The Character Tree  
(or Family Tree)

**25**  
GAME TIME  
Alphabet Blessing Game

**26**  
WORSHIP RESPONSE  
You Are Your Father's  
Child

**27**  
SERVE  
Living Our Identity



14

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

**29**  
CARPOOL CONVERSATIONS

---

**30**  
KEEPING UP WITH YOUR KIDS

---

**31**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
Focus on the Moments

---

**32**  
ELEMENTARY  
The Practice of Making God Central

---

**33**  
STUDENTS  
Something New in YOU:  
A Devotion for Students

---

**34**  
TRADITIONS  
The Rhythm of Family Traditions

---

**35**  
NLC FAMILY

---

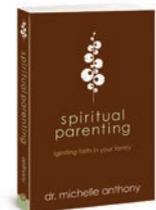
VISIT [NLCFAM.ORG](http://NLCFAM.ORG) OR  
[HOMEFRONTMAG.COM](http://HOMEFRONTMAG.COM)  
FOR MORE

- Spiritual Grandparenting
  - Mom Blog
  - Dad Blog
  - Marriage Blog
- 



## DID you KNOW

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



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

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY  
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# 10 ENVIRONMENTS

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

# 2

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

## IDENTITY

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

# 1

## STORYTELLING

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

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

# 3

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

## FAITH COMMUNITY

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

# 4

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

## SERVING

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

# 5

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

## OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

# 6

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

## RESPONSIBILITY

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

# 7

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

## COURSE CORRECTION

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

# 8

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

## LOVE & RESPECT

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

# 9

*“God knows me, and I can know Him.”*

## KNOWING

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

# 10

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

## MODELING

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

# 28



Know **therefore**  
that the LORD your God  
**is God;** he is the faithful  
**God,**

keeping his covenant of



**to a**  
thousand generations of  
**those who love him**  
and keep his commands.

Deuteronomy 7:9

## Bless with Your Words

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

### *Week One*

#### **GOODNESS OF GOD (READ JAMES 1:17)**

**(Child's name)**, may you remember that God gives you good gifts. His heart toward you is kindness, goodness, love, and grace. May you see the countless ways He has been good to you in your life. His love for you is everlasting and unconditional.

### *Week Two*

#### **MOTHER'S DAY (READ PSALM 139:13-14)**

**(Child's name)**, may you find joy this week knowing God created you exactly how He wanted you to be. He grew you inside of your mother and cares so deeply about you. May you remember that you are fearfully and wonderfully made by your heavenly Father.

### *Week Three*

#### **FAITH (READ HEBREWS 11:1)**

**(Child's name)**, may your faith be strong this week. May you remember that faith is having confidence in things we can't see. So, even if you can't see how things will get better, may you remember that God is in control, can be trusted with your future, and will be glorified by your faith in Him.

### *Week Four*

#### **COURAGE (READ ISAIAH 41:10)**

**(Child's name)**, may you grow in courage as you trust in the Lord. He will always be with you, and He promises to give you strength when you feel sad, weak, or broken. He is powerful and kind, able to do more than you can imagine.

# GOD'S WORD

## Week One

### GOD STATEMENT:

God Is All-Knowing

### SCRIPTURE:

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-16

**We are relational beings.** From the moment we are born to the moment we leave this world, our lives are full of different kinds of relationships—from our parents, siblings, and extended family to friends, co-workers, and the barista at our favorite coffee shop. Relationships with friends and family can be wonderful and life-giving. However, they cannot bring us ultimate fulfillment. Friends will disappoint us. Family will misunderstand us. There is only one who will not: God.

Through the words of King David, we see that God knows each one of us intimately. He knows our thoughts, our actions, and our words. He knows us like this because He formed us in our mother's womb. Nothing about us is hidden from Him. He knows us and understands us like no one else can. We are known by the One True God and He wants us to know Him. That is good news.

Our friends and family can never know us the way that God can. Only He can fulfill the desire to be completely known and understood. This should compel us to know Him more. **We do this by opening the Bible and discovering more of who He is and how we can follow Him.** We read the words back to Him as prayers and declarations of His goodness.

## DISCUSSION

**How does it feel to know that the God who created the entire world knows you and wants you to know Him?**

Take time to rest in this fact and thank Him for doing what only He can do.



by Kendra Baker, PreK/K Discipleship Coordinator Family Ministries, New Life North

## Week Two

### GOD STATEMENT:

God Is Present

### SCRIPTURE:

Deuteronomy 7:9; Isaiah 43:10; Ephesians 1:17

**Relationships take work, even our relationship with God.** We learned last week that God knows us intimately and that He desires us to know Him too. One way we do this, as we discussed, is by reading His Word.

The Lord instructs His people, the Israelites, in Deuteronomy 7:9 saying, "Know therefore that the LORD your God, is God ..." The Hebrew word for "know" is *yāda*. In Hebrew word means to know, learn to know, perceive, or to know by experience. Not only can we get to know God by reading His Word, but also by learning from those wiser than us, reading books and by experience.

How do we learn by experience? We start by asking Him to show us how He is with us every day. He is not a God who is far away, but a God who is near and who wants to be a part of our everyday lives. When we ask Him to reveal Himself in this way, He is faithful to do so. We must open our eyes to what He is doing. We will begin to experience who He is in new ways. We will see His faithfulness in big and small ways. His provision will become noticeable where we did not see it before. He will become more real to us as we experience who He is each day.

## DISCUSSION

**Pray together as a family. As you pray, ask the Lord to open your eyes to who He is each day.** Pray individually for each person by name. "Lord, would you reveal yourself to (insert name of child) in each day..." Ask Him to show each of you the ways He is working in your lives. Perhaps there are things you may have missed before or attributed to luck or something else. Thank Him for being present with you each day and ask Him for more understanding of who He is.

This week, send each person into their day with the reminder to look for God in new ways. Each night at dinner, discuss how they saw God at work. Then ask if there was something new that they learned about God.

# GOD'S WORD

## Week Three

### GOD STATEMENT:

God Is the One and Only God

### SCRIPTURE:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

**On the 40-year journey to the Promised Land from Egypt, Moses experienced the harsh reality of leading people whose hearts were prone to follow the false gods of other nations.** The worship of these false gods instead of the One and Only God always had calamitous and deadly consequences.

In this passage from Deuteronomy, Moses instructed the next generation of Israelites before entering the Promised Land, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and strength. This generation would only find true life and flourishing by loving, listening, and responding to the One True God. This generation had the potential to be a compelling living story to the other nations of what it meant to follow the One and Only God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is known as the Shema. Passed down through the generations, the Shema became a very important daily prayer for the Israelites. Jesus also prayed the Shema. Jesus quoted the Shema when asked by the Pharisees which commandment was the greatest. (Mark 12:29-31)

The Bible tells us that we can know who God is—God is the One and Only God. We can choose to listen and respond to God by loving Him with all that we are. Following His ways leads to life for us and those around us.

## DISCUSSION

**Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 together as a family.**

**Ask, how important is it do God that we know Him?**

What does this passage tell us to do? Discuss together. How will putting these things into practice help us know who God is? What action words in these verses stand out to you? How does listening and responding show love? In what ways does this prayer empower you to put God on display?

## Week Four

### GOD STATEMENT:

The Holy Spirit Is Wisdom

### SCRIPTURE:

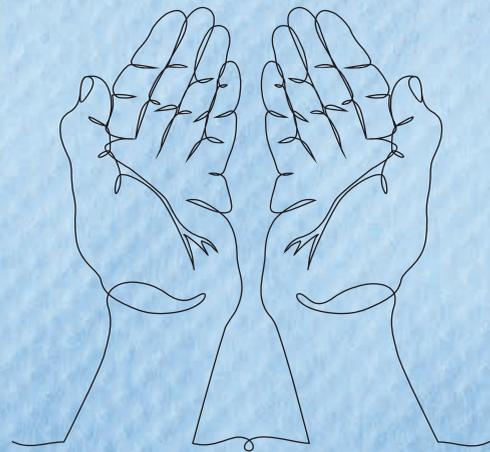
Ephesians 1:17-18

**Paul was in Ephesus as a missionary.** After being imprisoned by the Romans he wrote the letter of Ephesians. Paul prays in Ephesians 1:17, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." Paul wanted followers of Jesus to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. Since our own broken human thinking can cloud the truth about God, we need the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation to help us know God better. Human wisdom is bent on elevating me, myself, and I as the center of all things. The Spirit of wisdom and revelation elevates God as the center of truth—He is the center of all things. When we know who God is, by the Spirit we give the rightful place to our Creator.

Paul continues, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people." Paul knows that we need a supernatural awakening to truly know the gift that God has given us—the hope through Jesus that we have been made His sons and daughters. We can be certain as believers that we are heirs of God's Kingdom through Jesus.

## DISCUSSION

**As a family discuss the following questions: How does Ephesians 1:17-18 frame your thinking about who God is?** How do you think praying for yourself and others helps you know God better? Take time to pray this week's passage over you and those around you.



## FAMILY TIME RECIPES



### Philly Cheesesteak Quesadillas

**Hey kids!** Mother's Day is this month. Treat your mom to a great lunch! SHHH. Don't tell her. These cheesesteak quesadillas are sure to be a favorite for the entire family.

#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 pound beef sirloin steak, cut into thin strips
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 medium onion
- 6 ounces mushrooms
- 8 slices provolone
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons mayo
- 8 flour tortillas

#### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Set up a vegetable chopping station at the kitchen table. Place child safe plastic knives at the chopping station. Invite the kids to join you at the table. Have them chop the vegetables with your supervision. The size and shape of the chopped veggies does not need to be perfect.
2. Heat 2 teaspoons olive oil in a skillet on medium heat and add the sliced meat. Season with salt and pepper. Once fully cooked, remove from skillet.
3. Add vegetables to skillet and cook until tender.
4. Mix beef in skillet with vegetables and add garlic.
5. Cook together until meat is reheated.
6. Have kids spread mayonnaise on the tortillas.
7. Divide meat and vegetable mix to half the tortilla, top with provolone cheese and close the tortilla.
8. Place tortilla in heated pan and sauté until cheese is melted and the outside is golden brown, flipping once.
9. Slice into quarters and serve.

## Family Friendly Piña Colada

Let this drink transport you to the beautiful Puerto Rican beaches. It will only take five minutes to prepare a tropical piña colada that the entire family will enjoy!



#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 cups coconut cream
- 1 cup condensed milk or condensed coconut milk
- 2 cups pineapple juice
- 2 cups frozen pineapple chunks,
- Reserve a few chunks to decorate
- 4 cups ice
- drink umbrellas
- Maraschino cherries (optional)

#### WHAT YOU'LL DO <<<

1. Place frozen pineapple chunks, pineapple juice, coconut cream, ice, and condensed milk in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Pour into glasses and garnish with fresh pineapple wedges, an umbrella, and optional Maraschino cherries.
4. Servings: approximately 4.

## BLT Pasta Salad

This BLT pasta salad is delicious and easy to make. It's one of those side dishes you can bring to any barbecue or potluck.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 pound pasta
- 4 pieces bacon, fried and cut into small pieces
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 head of iceberg lettuce, chopped
- 1/2 red onion, diced
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing
- 1/2 cup Italian dressing
- salt and pepper to taste

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Make your pasta according to the package instructions, drain and rinse in cold water.
2. Cook the bacon while the pasta is boiling.
3. Cut up the lettuce, tomato, onion, and the cooked bacon.
4. Mix the Italian and ranch dressings together.
5. In a large bowl, mix the pasta and bacon.
6. Pour the dressings over the pasta and mix well.
7. Add the veggies just before serving to keep them from wilting.
8. Add the salt and pepper as needed.
9. Serve or chill right away.



## Shortcut Fruit Pizza

Tired of the same after school snacks every week? Try something new with this simple shortcut fruit pizza. This is a great recipe to make with the kids. They can make the entire pizza with some supervision.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 sleeve graham crackers
- 1/2 cup cream cheese
- 3 tablespoons honey
- fruit of your choice

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Mix honey and cream cheese together until smooth.
2. Spread mixture on graham crackers.
3. Cut fruit into bite-size pieces and place on top graham crackers.

# THE FATHER KNOWS YOU

## PSALM 139:1-6

*“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”*

## PSALM 139:13-18

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.”*

**It is amazing that the God of all creation knows us so intimately—every detail of who we are is not hidden from Him. Scripture tells us that He knows the number of hairs on our heads (Luke 12:7).** Can you count the hairs on your head? God knows more about us than just our hair. He knows what makes us happy, sad, and frustrated. He knows when we are joyful and when we are lonely. Our God cares about us. He is not far off observing us from a remote location, He is close. We are known by God and we can know Him.

## PRAYER

**Father God, thank you for knowing us.** Thank you for creating us and knowing us completely. May we know your great love for us. May we remember that you know us and are always close. We give you each day and every part of our lives.



## WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- clay or playdough

## WHAT YOU’LL DO

1. **Read the above verses in Psalm 139 together. Discuss as a family what it means to be known by each other.** How do you feel when someone knows what you like, or how you feel? How do you feel when someone doesn’t seem to care how you feel? Allow each person to communicate how they feel knowing that God, our Creator, knows us so intimately.
2. Give each person in the family clay or playdough. Ask them to think about one thing they know really well. Use the playdough to make that item.
3. Then allow each person to share why they chose the item, and why it is important to them. Discuss as a family how God knows everything about each one of us. He knows the things we like and think are funny. And He knows the things deep inside us—our thoughts and feelings. Allow family members to respond.
4. Take some time to thank God for knowing each of us and inviting each of us to know Him.

by Jeni Mason, Pastor of Family Care, New Life North



## BUILDING TIP

Create memories by making your own playdough. Find recipes online!



## GAME TIME

# PASS IT ON

**“Pass It On” is a mix between Pictionary and Telephone.** In both Pictionary and Telephone, only the originator knows the truth. As the game progresses it gets further from the originator and the truth begins to change based on what the next person sees or hears. As Christ followers it is important for us to stay close to God’s Word. When we know His Word, we can know the truth of who God is.

### WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- notepads for each person
- pen or pencil for each person
- 25 index cards

### WHAT YOU’LL PREPARE

**Use the index cards to create a stack of 25 game cards.** Each card must have an object, action, or saying written on it. Have fun and be sure to have a good mix of all the cards.

Ideas to get you started: broken arm, unibrow, basketball, nightlight, dirty diaper, “when pigs fly”, Captain Underpants, flying, playing soccer, “easy peasy, lemon squeezy”

### WHAT YOU’LL DO

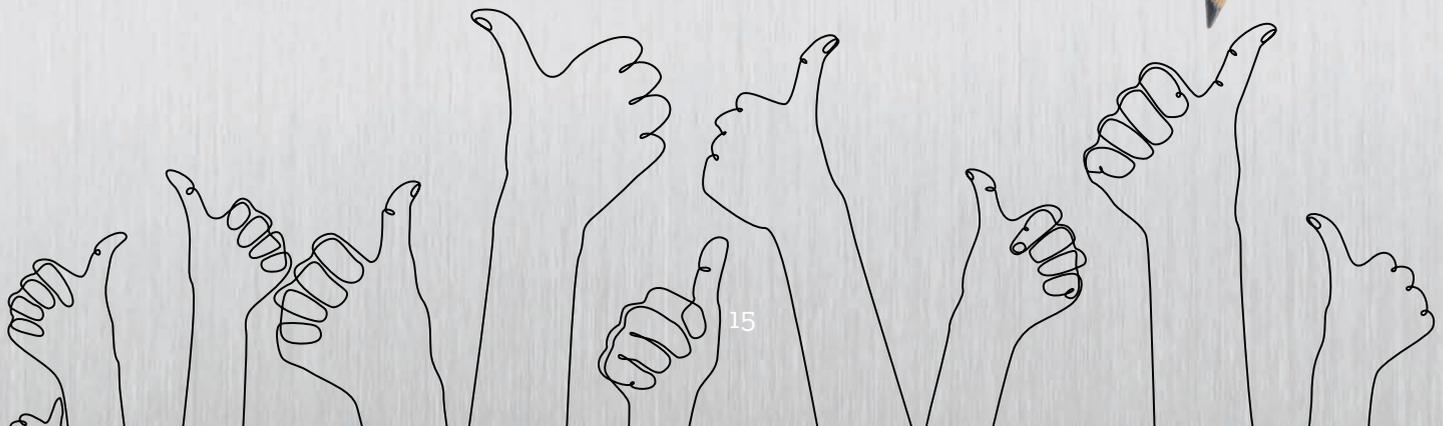
1. Give each person a notepad and pencil.
2. Have each person choose a game card.
3. On the first page of your notepad, write a word that describes what you saw on the card you drew.
4. Pass your notepad to the next player.
5. Have the player look at the word, turn the page, and draw the word.
6. Pass the drawing onto the next player.
7. Have player turn the page and write the word he or she thinks is drawn.
8. Continue until you have your original notepad back.
9. Have each player takes turns telling the story in his or her notepad.

### POST-GAME QUESTIONS

**What happened each time the notepad was passed around?** Did you get your notepad back with all the pages being the same as the first page? It changed a bit, didn’t it? Why? Discuss. What is the best way for us to get to know the truth about someone? Talk as a family. Discuss the great gifts we have been given in having the Bible and prayer as ways to get to know God and spend time with Him.

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*by Shannon Baer, Director of Operations for Family Ministries, New Life North*



# A GOD DAY

**All around us creation sings and plays with its Creator. We hear the songs of the birds each morning, the worship of the trees in the wind, and the dance between the sun and moon in the sky. When we know God, we learn how to hear and see Him all around us.** When we lose our connection to our Creator, His voice becomes quieted by all the chaos around us. Work, family, hobbies, distractions, and financial and relational stressors all scream for our attention, yet the voice of God whispers softly, “abide in me...”

This month, as a way to get to know your Creator, take some time with your family to play in His creation as His creation. Maybe you’ve heard of a family “Yes Day” where anything goes. Instead of a “Yes Day,” plan a family “God Day” where every activity and meal is an opportunity to look for and hear from God. **Before leaving the house, read Psalm 139 together as a family.** Talk about the unique ways He made each of you, and celebrate a few characteristics you love about one another. As you leave for your “God Day,” have a list of ways you’d like to see Him through animals, a conversation with a stranger, volunteering at a shelter, or hiking through the mountains or picking up rocks along a creek bed.

When you get home, sit around the dinner table and discuss these questions:

1. Where did I hear God’s voice?
2. What makes me want to obey God’s voice?
3. Why is it sometimes difficult to obey?

Then celebrate a day of getting to know our God who knows us and make every day a “God Day.”

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*by Natalie Runion, Pastor of Women and Family Ministry Creative Pastor, New Life North*



# WORDS OF LIFE

**As people, we like to create labels.** We create them for things and people. It helps us to fit things into categories and helps us to get a sense of the world. Unfortunately, when we put ourselves or others into a categorical box, it can be harmful. When we are labeled by others, we may hold onto the label and can accept it as truth. Is this label the truth? Who has given us this label? There are many voices we hear in the world today; some are good, and some are bad. Knowing what is true is important. When we know what is true, we can then discern truth from lies. When we know the truth, we can more easily decide which labels stay and which to let go. We also can know the voices we should listen to and those that are just speaking foolish words.

When we know God, we can find our identity in Him. The truest things about us are the things that God says are true. The Bible is from God and is the truth. When we read the His Word, we get to know who He is. We are filling our lives with truth. God may also use people to help reaffirm and speak truth to us. Think of a time when someone has spoken something over you and it encouraged you, or it answered a prayer you had prayed. God uses people for this plan and purpose in our lives. Just as God uses people to speak into our lives, God can use us to speak truth into the lives of others. We know from the book of James that words have power, the power of life and death (James 3:9-12). May we seek to know God more and more each day. In knowing Him, may we speak words of life, truth, hope and peace to those we meet.

## CHALLENGE

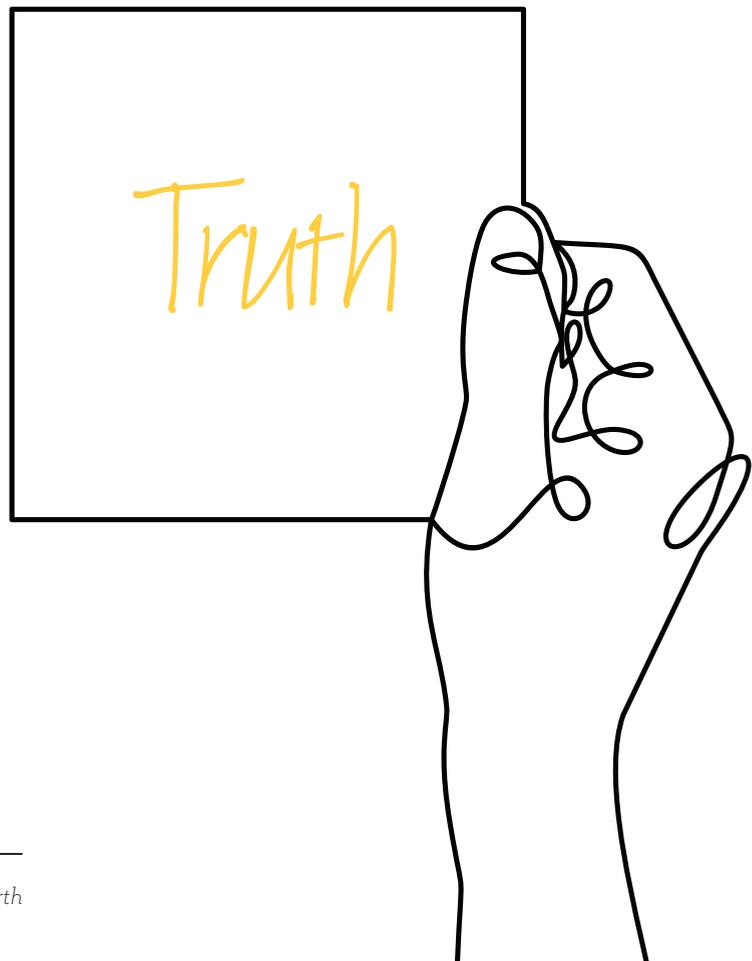
As a family, practice speaking truth and life over one another.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- blank note cards or index cards
- pens
- markers
- Bibles

## WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Set aside a time to read and discuss the article above.
2. Share with your family the opportunity to serve one another by writing notes to each person to speak truth over them.
3. You may decide to write about something that reminds you of them or how you see God in them.
4. Consider writing a note with a passage of Scripture that can remind them of who they are and how God sees them.
5. Prepare for this time by asking God to lead and guide your thoughts and words.
6. Do this for every member of your family.




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by RuthAnn Massey, Student Ministries Admin New Life North

*I have*  
been crucified  
*with Christ* and I no  
longer  
live, but  
*Christ* lives in me.

The life I now live in the  
body, I live by *faith*  
in the Son of God,  
who loved me and gave  
*himself* for me."

Galatians 2:20

# Bless with Your Words

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

## WEEK 1

### IMAGO DEI (GENESIS 1:27) FOR THE PARENTS

May you believe that the value you have was given to you at birth. May you see yourself the way Christ sees you: spotless, unique, loved. May you remember that your identity isn't based on what you have done or haven't done, but it is rooted in the truth that you were made in the image of our loving Father.

### FOR THE KIDS

May you learn to see yourself through the eyes of Jesus. May you see how precious, wonderful, and special you are. No matter what anyone says or does to you, may you rest secure in the truth that God created you exactly the way you are. He created you with a purpose that would glorify Him and bless others.

## WEEK 2

### NEW CREATION (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17) FOR THE PARENTS

May you see the newness in your life. May all of the old, dead, broken spots be refreshed and restored in Christ Jesus. May you learn to trust that God can heal and redeem any and all things that have caused pain in your past. May this newness of life be a blessing to you and your family.

### FOR THE KIDS

May you believe that God is making all things new. His hands are open and He is willing to take all the pain you experience and make good come from it. May you learn to trust that He is a good Father who will never leave you. May your desire to grow in knowledge of Him increase in every season.

## WEEK 3

### FATHER'S DAY (1 JOHN 3:1) FOR THE PARENTS

May you remember the love that your heavenly Father has lavished upon you. May this love transform your heart and draw you close to Him. May you find rest and healing in the gentle arms of the Father who loves you deeply and calls you His child.

### FOR THE KIDS

May you grow in understanding of the depth of God's love for you. May this love cause you to have joy, peace, and hope. Your heavenly Father loves you more than you can ever know, and He is a trustworthy Father. May you rest in His love daily.

## WEEK 4

### ABIDE IN CHRIST (JOHN 15:4-5) FOR THE PARENTS

May you find peace in abiding in Christ, knowing that your identity and value are not in anything you do. Christ has given His life for you to have life with Him abundantly. May your spirit find strength from the Father, who is the vine of true life and satisfaction.

### FOR THE KIDS

May you remember that Jesus is the source of all life and goodness. May you rest well knowing His vine is where you will find everything you need. May you invite others to taste and see the goodness of your heavenly Father who loves you like no one ever will.

# GOD'S WORD



Week  
One

**GOD STATEMENT:  
GOD CHOOSES US!**

**SCRIPTURE:  
EPHESIANS 1:3-6**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6 ESV)*

**Isn't this verse awesome?** I love that it reminds us that God has blessed us, chosen us, and adopted us. God wanted you to be His child before you were even born! And, not only that, He has graciously blessed us with spiritual blessings. God has chosen us, adopted us, and blessed us.

Take a look at this again, "[Jesus] has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." This passage tells us that God blesses us with things that we do not deserve. And not only that, but he blesses us with every spiritual blessing He has to offer! You are continually and mercifully blessed by God!

Another beautiful aspect of this verse is, "In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (vv. 4-5). Several years ago, our family wanted to adopt a baby who needed a home. We chose my little sister, and now she is a part of our family! This is what happens between us and God. God specifically chooses us and adopts us according to his perfect will. God wants you to be in his family! I am so grateful that you and I can find our identity in Christ as God's chosen and adopted children!

## DISCUSSION

**What is one thing you can think of that God has blessed you with?** Who is someone you can choose to love to just like God chooses to love you?

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by Trey Merrill, Family Ministries Volunteer and Drummer, New Life North



Week  
Two

**GOD STATEMENT:  
GOD CALLS US BELOVED**

**SCRIPTURE:  
EPHESIANS 1:7-10**

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:7-10)*

**Can you think of a time when you felt like you were an utter failure?** When you messed up so badly, you didn't want anyone to know about it? I know I have. Yet, I know that God Himself sees me, knows my failures, and knows my sins. Still, He chose to redeem me by Jesus' blood.

These verses mean that God, through Jesus, set forth His plan to unite us with Him. As He forgives all of our sins through Jesus, no matter how terrible, He calls us His own.

I don't have to be afraid! He loves me. God also loves everyone around us. That means that even when I don't feel like loving someone, I can. If someone is saying unkind things about me, I can know that God forgives and loves them like He loves me.

If you ever come to a place where you feel like you are defined by the fact that you have fallen short, remember the King's grace. He forgives us and gives to us what we don't deserve: His love. That love will never change.

May you know that the God who made you, the world, and everything in it chooses you. And, through Jesus, casts all of the wrong things we've done as far as the east is from the west. May you remember, whenever you feel alone or unworthy, that God's faithful love stays forever. He is with you, and you are precious to Him.

## DISCUSSION

**What do you think it means that God forgives our sins?** What does *grace* mean? How does God unite us to Him? What are some things you know are true about you because of who God is?

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by Teddy Chesebro, Student Ministries Volunteer, New Life North

# GOD'S WORD



Week  
Three

**GOD STATEMENT:**  
JESUS IS FREEDOM  
**SCRIPTURE:**  
EPHESIANS 1:11-14

*We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory. You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised. The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all his people completely free. All these things will bring praise to his glory. (Ephesians 1:11-14 NIrV)*

Dr. Michelle Anthony shares in *Spiritual Parenting*: "If we truly began to believe any of it, we would stand a little taller, with our heads a little higher—if we really believed it! Think about the provisions that God has made for us, said about us now and in our future, and valued to do in us because of His great love. I think it would impact the way we lived if we thought those things were true."<sup>1</sup>

Read the verses a second time. As you read them again, have family members pay attention to the things that stick out to them. Is it a word or phrase? Let the words soak in. Let them take residency in your hearts.

## DISCUSSION

**Share your observations and the things that stood out the most to each of you.** What does this passage say about you? What does it say about God? When we choose to trust and follow Him, what does He give to us? What has God promised us? Close this time together by praying as a family.

Dear Parents, may you know that God has chosen you to be the first people to usher this truth into your child's heart. He has entrusted you with the unique privilege of helping your children discover their identity. May you rest in knowing you have everything you need through the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

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by Cristi Thomas, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, New Life North

1. Anthony, Michelle, *Spiritual Parenting* (Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2010, p. 66).



Week  
Four

**GOD STATEMENT:**  
JESUS IS OVER ALL  
**SCRIPTURE:**  
EPHESIANS 1:15-23

*Take some time and read Ephesians 1:15-23 together as a family.*

**We live in a world filled with a fast, ever flowing stream of information.** Some good and some false. In the face of global pandemics, political strife, and war, we (humanity) are seeking truthful information and hope. God is good. He has not left us alone. The Holy Spirit of God is with us. He leads, guides, comforts, counsels, and reminds us of the hope we have in Christ.

In this passage from Ephesians, the apostle Paul encourages the church with affirmation of their faith, and his continued prayers for them. We cannot miss his emphasis on prayer for the church to receive wisdom and understanding from the Lord. He reminds us that Jesus is over all things. There is nothing that doesn't fall under His authority. "He is above every name that is appealed to in this world and the world to come" (v. 21). This knowledge brings with it peace, hope, and strength. We do not need to fear. We know who we are and Whose we are. He has called us to stand strong in our knowledge of Who He is and the identity we have in Him. Through His people, the world can see the love of God, and hear and experience the good news through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## DISCUSSION

**What stands out to you from this passage?** What do we know about God? What do we know about Jesus from this passage? How do you feel when you read this passage?

Take some time to pray together as a family. Pray for the leaders of our country and global leaders. Pray for people you know who may not know Jesus. How may God want to use you to share the hope He offers to them?

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by Cristi Thomas, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, New Life North



## FAMILY TIME RECIPES

June is the time of year when we celebrate Father's Day and the start of summer. Consider having a family night with your extended family and friends. Once all the food is prepped, place all of the delicious recipes on the grill while you enjoy some cold lemonade and discuss the "God's Word" questions, play the June Game, or participate in the Create activity.



### Bruschetta

**My oldest is at an age where she loves to cook when people come over.** Her favorite appetizer is Bruschetta. With minimal prep any age can help make this delicious appetizer.

#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 French baguette
- olive oil
- 3-4 Roma tomatoes
- 7 fresh basil leaves
- 2 cloves garlic

#### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Heat oven to 350° F.
2. Cut French baguette into 1/4 inch slices.
3. Put bread slices in a baking dish and place in the oven until golden brown, about 5 minutes.
4. While the bread is toasting, cut the tomatoes into cubes.
5. Crush one garlic clove.
6. Cut basil into small slices.
7. Combine tomatoes, crushed garlic, and basil into a bowl.
8. When the bread is done toasting, cut one clove of garlic in half and rub on each piece of bread.
9. Lightly brush each piece of bread with olive oil.
10. Scoop a spoonful of tomato mixture onto each piece of toasted bread.

### Homemade Lemonade

**Nothing is better than homemade lemonade in the summer.** This is an easy recipe with just 3 ingredients that are generally always on hand. Invite the kids to help make the lemonade



#### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 6 medium-size lemons
- sliced strawberries, lemons, or whole blueberries to garnish (optional)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 cups water

#### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Cut lemons in half and juice them using a handheld juicer.
2. In a pitcher, add freshly squeezed lemon juice and sugar together.
3. Add water to taste until you reach your desired sweetness.

# Grilled Chicken Kabobs

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 small zucchini, cut into 1-inch slices
- 1 red onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley

## WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Place the olive oil, soy sauce, honey, garlic and salt and pepper in a large bowl. Whisk to combine.
2. Add the chicken, bell peppers, zucchini and red onion to the bowl. Toss to coat in the marinade.
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or up to 8 hours.
4. Soak wooden skewers in cold water for at least 30 minutes. Preheat grill or grill pan to medium high heat.
5. Thread the chicken and vegetables onto the skewers.
6. Cook for 5-7 minutes on each side or until chicken is cooked through.
7. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.



**Don't have a grill at home? You can bake your chicken kabobs instead! They're equally delicious.**

1. After marinating the chicken and veggies for at least 1 hour, preheat oven to 450° F.
2. Thread the chicken and vegetables onto the skewers.
3. Place on two baking sheets lined with aluminum foil.
4. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes, flipping the skewers about halfway through. Check to make sure the chicken is cooked all the way through. You may need to cook for an additional 5-10 minutes depending on the size of your chicken chunks.

## FAMILY TIME RECIPES



# Broccoli & Chive Stuffed Mini Peppers

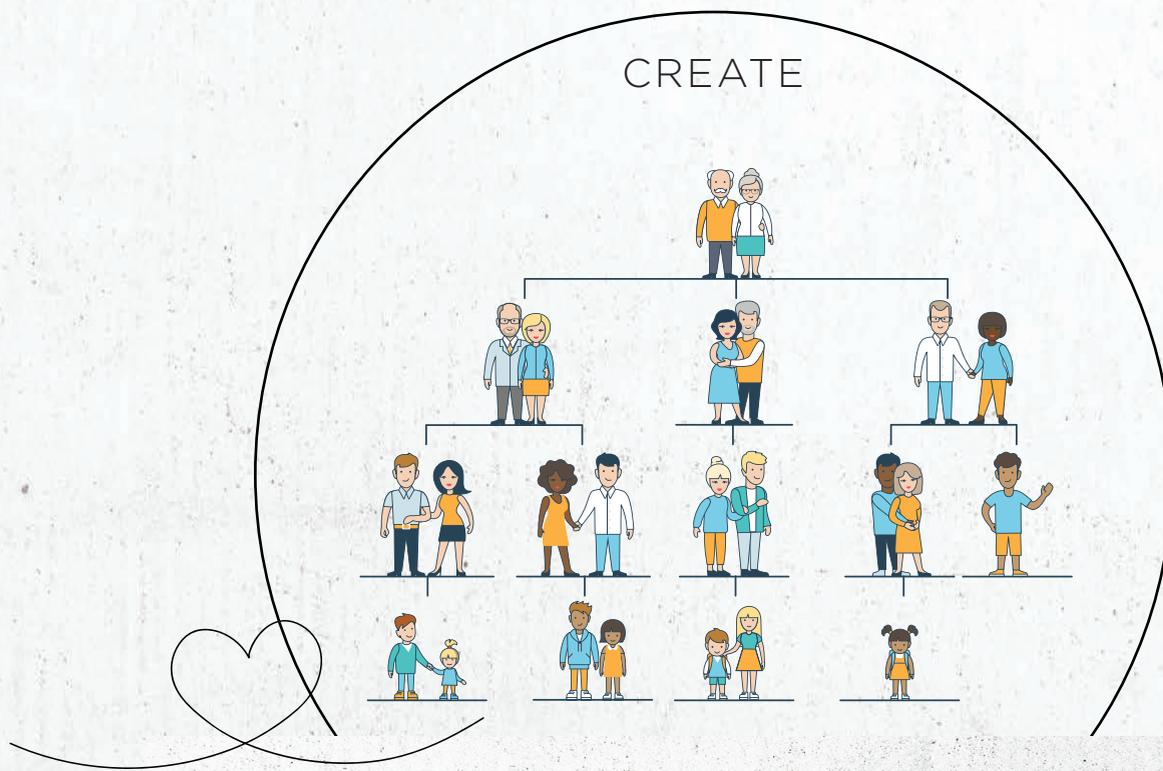
**Vegetarian, gluten-free, and keto these party appetizers are creamy and delicious.** The fresh chives help them stand out.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 12 miniature sweet peppers
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cup fresh broccoli, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup fresh chives, minced
- 2/3 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

## WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F.
2. Cut peppers in half lengthwise; remove seeds.
3. In a bowl, mix cream cheese, chives, salt and pepper; stir in broccoli.
4. Spoon into pepper halves. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet; bake until heated through, 9-11 minutes.
5. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Bake until cheese is melted, 3-4 minutes longer.
6. Cool slightly before serving.



# THE CHARACTER TREE

## (OR FAMILY TREE)

**Have you ever created a family tree?** It's an organized way to see all the people in any given family. A family tree shows each generation and the relationships associated with each person. Over time, you can see the different tree branches and each family member attached to them. This diagram can be a blueprint of our lives, the foundation in which our lineage comes from. Sometimes, these are called "genealogies." We often see these in Scripture! Today, you have the chance to build your family tree!

These tree diagrams are more than just names. Each person in your family has (or had) a specific personality and identity. So, what if you took your family tree to the next level? Instead of simply writing out all your family members and mapping who is related to whom, include personality traits or qualities you know to be true about these people. As a family, think about each member of your family and the good traits that each of them portrays (or portrayed). As you build the tree, write these qualities under the names. **Remember, our identity comes from Christ. So, when you are thinking about the qualities you see in others, think of how you see Jesus in them.**

As you think through your family, include God at the roots of your tree. He is the Author and Creator of our lives; He is the one who gives us life. He is always at the center of our lives and our families. Now, gather your family, and create a family tree together!

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- large blank paper
- markers
- finger paint (optional)
- pictures of family members (optional)
- qualities related to each individual person  
\* You can add whatever you want to your family tree; these are just some ideas to get you started.

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Write a list of all your family members.
- Draw a tree on the paper (you can outline your hand/arm as a template).
- Starting at the trunk, place the oldest person at the bottom and then as you continue growing the family outward, place the next generation on the branches and so on.
- Write out the qualities you see in these people under their names.
- Decorate the family tree however you choose. Have fun!

by Catherine Andersen, High School Student Ministries  
Director, New Life North



# ALPHABET BLESSING GAME

**Words are impactful.** When used properly, they can create life, shape identity, and build faith in others. The Bible tells us that “gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24).

When was the last time you remembered to tell your family that they are *amazing* or that they are a blessing to you? **Does your spouse know that you view them as a companion? Do your kids know that you think of them as delightfully energetic and fun?** In this game, you and the entire family will have the opportunity to bless each other while trying to remember not just what you think of each other but what everyone else in the family thinks also!

## WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- family

## HOW TO PLAY

**Gather the family around in a circle.** Pick a person you want to describe first, like Mom or Dad. The person who answers first will try to think of something positive about the person that starts with the letter A and begins the sentence.

**Example: Dad, you are Awesome!**

Then, the next person in the circle will repeat the sentence but add something that starts with the letter B.

**Example: Dad, you are Awesome and Brave!**

Going around the circle repeatedly, every person in the circle continues to do this—or tries to, at least, until the entire alphabet is used up or, more likely, until no one remembers the whole sentence. When that round is complete, move on to blessing the next person. To make it more challenging, encourage strings of multiple letters!

**Example: Dad, you are Awesome, Brave, Courteous, and Delightfully Encouraging!**

For highly competitive families, you can eliminate players in that round as they forget parts of the sentence or hesitate for longer than a few seconds. You can also challenge yourselves even more by randomizing the letters. If you have Scrabble letters, place them face down, mix them around, and let each person pick their following letter as they go. Another way to make your own “deck” of letters with pieces of paper is to mark a letter on one side and leave the other side blank. The family can even decorate or use different colors before you place them all down face down like a deck of playing cards.

Guaranteed that by the end, you will have laughed lots and been blessed.

Once each family member has been blessed, do a round together and have the recipient of your words be God.

**Example: God, you are Amazing, Beautiful, and Compassionate.**

As you close the game, pray together as a family praying words of thanksgiving for each person beginning with the Lord, then each person in the family.

by Gabe McDaniel, Family Ministries Support Staff, New Life North

## WORSHIP RESPONSE

# YOU ARE YOUR FATHER'S CHILD

**Our earthly fathers have a powerful impact on how we view our heavenly Father.** How they act, what they say, and how they treat us, often shape our perceptions of God. Fathers are meant to point us to the abundant love of our Father in heaven. This is a heavy mantle of responsibility. All people fall short. But here is the good news, because of Jesus, we have been adopted by a perfect heavenly Father who adores us and will faithfully lead us, guide us and make us more and more like His Son.

While we may still have our earthly father's hair color, eyes, or sense of humor, our identity goes far deeper and cannot be changed. Our identity is based solely on what God says about us as His children:

• You are loved. You are valuable. You are enough. You mean the world to Him. He looks at you and says, "It doesn't get any better than this."

**When we grasp that we have the same Father and the same heritage as the Savior of the world, we can then pass these truths onto our children.** Knowing their true identity will give them the solid foundation they need to stand when the storms of life come. They can stand firm, knowing they are unconditionally loved and that they too belong to a perfect, unwavering Father. And while we wait to receive a beautiful reward in heaven as our eternal inheritance, we can also enjoy our inheritance now by acknowledging the new identity He's established in us.

### SCRIPTURE

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves" (Ephesians 1:4-6 NLT).



#### WEEK 1

**What have you been believing about your identity that doesn't line up with Scripture?** Write it down and draw a line through it. Then, based on Scripture, write a sentence that speaks the truth into what you have been believing.

#### WEEK 2

**How do you view your heavenly Father?** Is He kind? Loving? Forgiving? Does He scold you when you make a mistake? How do these ideas line up with God's true character?

#### WEEK 3

**How can you teach your children about their true identity?**

#### WEEK 4

**Parents, write a blessing to speak over your children each night.** Kids, write a blessing to speak over your parents each night. Fill this blessing with the truth of how God sees them and the goodness of His character.

SERVE

# LIVING OUR IDENTITY

**Has someone ever done something so kind that it made your day? How did you feel? Maybe joyful, encouraged, or grateful?**

Can you remember a time when someone was unkind? How did you feel? Maybe hurt, embarrassed, regretful?

Matthew 5:13 says, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet" (ESV).

What does it mean to be the salt of the earth? Salt has many different purposes. It is used to preserve food. Salt also brings out lots of flavor. The "flavor" that Christians bring is the love of Jesus!

**This Scripture reminds us that our actions have a lot of power and can shape the way we see ourselves and the world around us.** As the body of Christ, we are called to build others up with our actions, not tear them down. What's even better is that not only have we been blessed by God, we have also been called to go out and bless others.

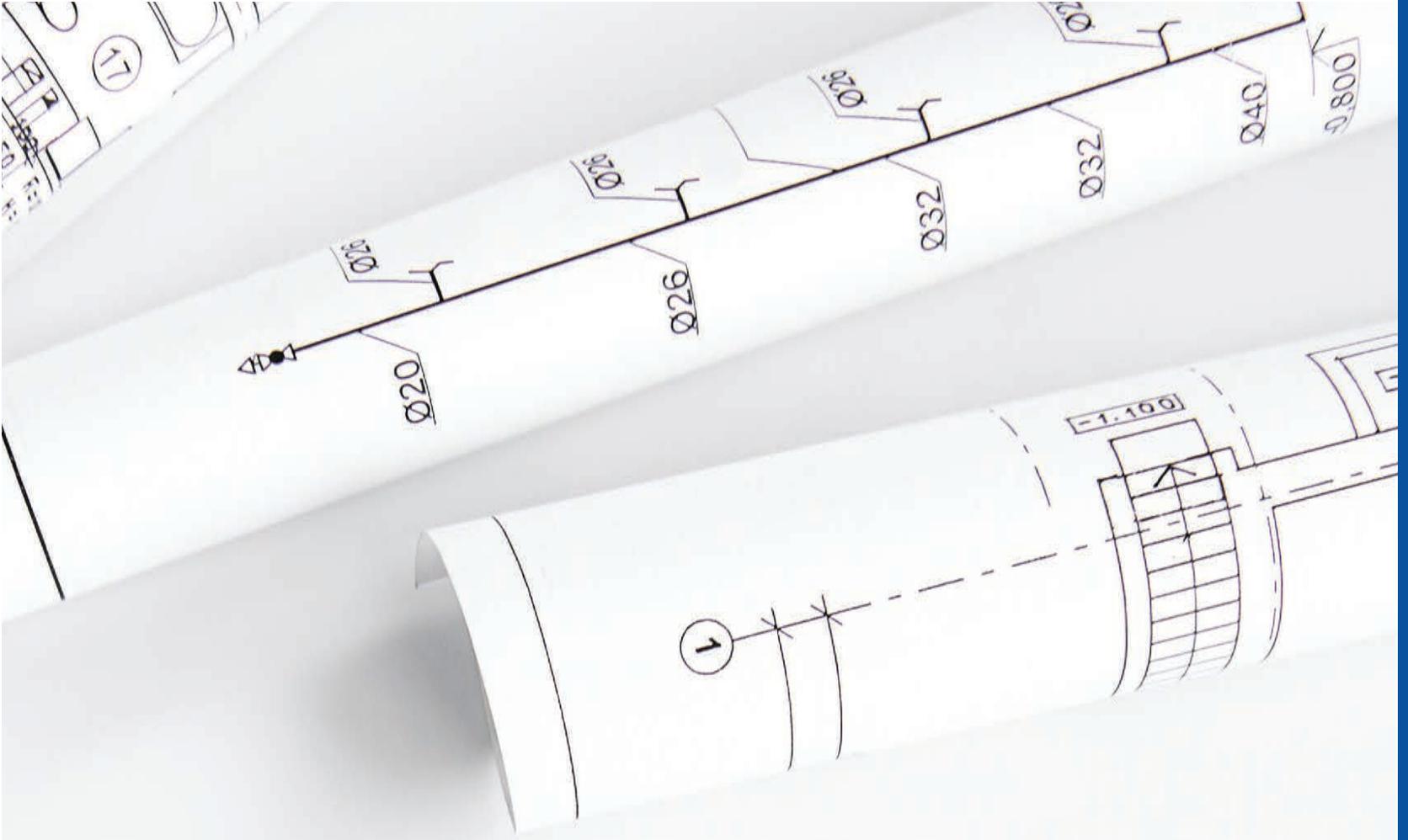
**Building others up in love takes time and intentionality.** A simple act of kindness is a fantastic way to bless those around you! As a family, take time each week this month and think of one person or family in your life who needs encouragement. Perform little acts of kindness to bless them. Below are a few examples:

1. Make a meal for your neighbors or for a family who can't leave the house often.
2. Create Care Kits for the homeless to keep in your car. Include items like socks, gloves, water bottles, bandages, wet wipes, toothbrush/toothpaste, nail clippers, and single serving snacks.
3. Help take out someone's trash, move their garbage can, mow their lawn, help wash the dishes, or clean their house!

Dear Family, may you know the deep love of the Father. Each day He is forming you into the likeness of His Son. May you take be a blessing to others as you have been blessed.

*by Lauren Sayers, Family Ministries Operations & Event Coordinator, New Life North*





# RESOURCES & SUPPORT





# CARPOOL CONVERSATIONS

Many times, we (parents) use the drive time in the car to sit quietly so our minds can drift off into a dream-like state while slightly tuning out the noises coming from the backseat. Instead, I would like to encourage you to use these spare minutes to dive into the thoughts and processes of your child or children. Asking a few simple questions surrounding the topic of faith can be a great way to see how they are processing spiritual concepts they might be hearing at home, school, church, or from others. Use the following questions to start your discussions.

- What do you think God looks like?
- What is your favorite story in the Bible?
- Do you think miracles still happen today? What miracles have you seen or heard about recently?
- If I am a Christian, does that automatically make you a Christian?
- What is something you are praying about right now?

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by Holly Newman

*Holly is a mother of four crazy, fun kids and a wife to her high school sweetheart of 21 years. When Holly isn't playing practical jokes on her kids, she is enjoying the outdoors having adventures or reading a good book in the sunshine.*

"You are priceless to me."

"I have loved you with an everlasting love ..."



## KEEPING UP WITH YOUR KIDS

We live in a world that is subconsciously speaking false identity statements over our children—and our kids are believing them. In order to help our children know how to stand firm against the destructive counter identities the world will offer, we must speak God's identity over them frequently and lovingly. Use the following statements from Scripture to speak over your child daily and encourage your child to speak the statements loudly and with conviction.

- **You are/I am valuable.** "You are priceless to me. I love you and honor you" (Isaiah 43:4a NIrV).
- **You are/I am loved.** "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness" (Jeremiah 31:3).
- **You are/I am chosen.** "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:4-5).
- **You are/I am a child of the King.** "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession" (1 Peter 2:9).

by Holly Newman

## FOCUS ON THE MOMENTS

**In the 1960s, talk-show pioneer, Art Linkletter hosted a popular television show that featured him asking kids simple questions.** Their unrehearsed answers were usually hilarious. The set was far from fancy, but the kids were the spotlight, and their ad-lib responses were priceless. Although media and programming have advanced well beyond the simplistic black and white, grainy screens of yesteryear, one thing remains clear: a young child can still bring a sense of wonder and fresh perspective into the daily routines of life.

The saying “to see the world through the eyes of a child” can be eye-opening for adults. Our vision can be easily obscured with the details and distractions that contend for our attention. We can reset our focus by observing a few things through the lens of a child. Sometimes all that’s needed is to look at ourselves or others in a different light. The light that shines from the heart of a child can illuminate the better and greater things that God wants us to experience.

**So why not create your own Q&A for this Mother’s Day or Father’s Day?** It’s a sweet gift that can be recorded on video or handwritten on a card that includes your child’s handprint for a special touch.

The only special effects needed will be pajamas as the attire and a favorite treat or stuffy for some added fun. It is highly recommended that questions be prepared in advance because we all know that the attention span of a three-to-five-year-olds can be fleeting. Keep in mind that answers may be given randomly, so have a pen close at hand. Remember, children don’t have planned agendas or deadlines to meet. These little ones are a work in progress, and you can’t rush a masterpiece.

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*by Christy Thomas, Nursery Coordinator, New Life North*

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT ELEMENTARY



# THE PRACTICE OF *Making God Central*

**I am continually awestruck that God, who is holy, mighty, and awesome, has chosen to reveal Himself to us.** The environments of IDENTITY and KNOWING blend perfectly as we discover who God is and who we are created to be. Genesis 1:27 is clear that “God created mankind in his own image.” **When we know the character of God, we can know our true identity.**

Reading the Bible together, blessing your children, or praying is a fantastic way to know more about who God is. When God is the center of each story, His character and nature are on display. We often read a story in the Bible, take Noah for example, and focus on Noah’s obedience to God. While showing obedience to God is an essential part of following Christ, it doesn’t reveal who God is. Instead, we can focus on the character of God revealed in that passage of Scripture. Asking the question, “What do we know about God from this part of the Bible?” encourages us to go beyond the people in the narrative and focus on God as the center of the narrative. Answers may be “God is kind, caring, or merciful.” From here, you can create a statement about God from the passage you just read, for example, “God is merciful.” This puts the character of God on display and shows us that He is central in the story.

**As a family, take some time to practice placing God in the center of the story through God Statements.**

Doing so increases our understanding of who God is and shows us our identity as children of God.

What attributes of God’s character are revealed in the three verses below?

**“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female, he created them”** (Genesis 1:27).

**“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”** (Psalm 139:13-14).

**“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”** (Ephesians 2:10).

**These verses show us that God is the Creator of everything.** He knows the intimate details of our lives and cares about us. God calls us wonderful and acceptable in His sight. These verses reveal that God is worthy of our praise and admiration. He has created us “to do good works.”

God Statements increase our understanding of God while also revealing who we are. First, Genesis says we are created in “His own image.” Next, Psalm 139:14 poetically states that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Finally, Ephesians 2:10 reveals that we are created to do the “good works, which God prepared beforehand.” This practice of reading Scripture with God’s character in the forefront builds our understanding of our identity in Christ.

As a family, take some time at dinner each night or before bed to read a few verses and discuss what God reveals about Himself. Asking the question, “What did we learn about God?” is a beautiful way to engage young minds and help them lean into the Holy Spirit’s teaching and guidance. Then, continue the discussion by asking, “How can this change the way we live?” to encourage conversations on God’s character and our identity and purpose. Here are a few verses to get you started:

- God is a wonderful Creator. (Psalm 139:13-14; Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 2:10)
- God is our Father. (Romans 8:15; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Corinthians 2:18).
- God speaks. (Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 30:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- God forgives. (Psalm 23:5; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 3:13)

**This summer, set a family goal to sit down weekly and reflect on who God is and His character.** This provides space for your family to experience who He is. Then, remember and celebrate all that the Holy Spirit revealed in those sacred family times at the end of the summer. Knowledge and understanding of His Word can help us grow in our relationship with God.

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*by Bekah Shirin, Director of Elementary, New Life North*

# Something New in YOU: A Devotion for Students

## Have you ever had a moment in your life where you cared so much about what others thought about you?

My junior high and high school years were filled so much anxiety that was rooted in my perception of what others thought about me. I was constantly concerned about my clothes, my hair, what I wore, and what I said. My identity was connected to always looking for opportunities to prove myself and show myself capable. I relished the opportunities in PE classes or other extracurricular activities to display my competency and talent. My mind was constantly racing and considering what was going through the minds of others. I wanted to know what they thought of me. I wanted them to think highly of me. My identity drove my need to perform, the need to always prove myself. Anyone who has ever lived this way knows that this is an extremely exhausting way to live.

If many of us are honest, this is how we often function in our relationship with our heavenly Father. **We question our identity, we wrestle with our own thoughts, and we wonder what our heavenly Father thinks of us.** We spend our lives trying to prove ourselves to Him. We spend our lives hoping that He will accept us, love us, and delight in us. To make it worse, we often attempt to impose our own anxiety with how we feel towards God onto others in order to make ourselves feel better. This is what we see Martha doing with Mary in Luke chapter 10. Luke writes:

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

Martha was convinced that the best thing for herself and Mary to be doing was serving the Savior, but Jesus flips the script. Jesus makes clear that Him taking care of Mary is far better (for Mary) than Mary taking care of Him. That's why Jesus said, "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). Jesus was not interested in Martha imposing her anxiety on Mary. Instead, Jesus was far more concerned about what He had to offer Mary than what Mary had to offer Him.

This is what makes the Christian so precious. Instead of wrapping up our identity in the things that we do, Jesus anchors our identity in what He has done for us! When our heavenly Father looks at us, He sees the life, death, and resurrection of His son. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote to the church in Corinth "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV). This truth gifts us two things. First, it liberates us from the need to perform for God's love and second, it assures us what our heavenly Father thinks about us. Jesus' finished work means that God's thoughts towards us become one with His thoughts towards Jesus.

## STUDENT CHALLENGE

If you resonate with this struggle of constantly wondering or wrestling with what God thinks of you, here is my challenge to you: **Sit down with a piece of paper and a pen. Quiet your heart. Write down all the thoughts that you believe God thinks about His perfect son, Jesus.** Then read those thoughts out loud and receive them for yourself. Always remember that this is what the cross has purchased for you. Then, thank your heavenly Father for all that He has done for you in Christ!

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*by Tim Shepard, Student Ministry Pastor, New Life North*

## RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

### TRADITIONS

# THE RHYTHM OF FAMILY TRADITIONS

**Sometimes just making it to the end of the day is a win. And then someone comes talking about intentionally establishing family traditions and you just want to scream.** Who in the world has the time and energy to establish family traditions?! It takes everything you have just to make it to bedtime.

But then you recall something your family used to do. Some silly little game you played, a ritual you observed regularly, or a place you used to visit often. Suddenly, you remember what it is like to be a child in a family, part of something larger than yourself, finding meaning in belonging to the group. You desperately want this for your children; you want them to know they matter, are loved, and they belong. But where to begin? The schedule is already overpacked. How are you going to work in new traditions and rhythms?

Traditions take many shapes; some are performed daily, some yearly. Sometimes they form intentionally, sometimes not. They can last a season or persist through generations. The most important thing to keep in mind is that **to be truly meaningful** for your family, **it needs to fit your family**. If your kids hate board games, don't try to establish board game night (no matter how much you enjoyed it as a kid!). Traditions need to be for the whole family if they are to be successful in establishing a family-wide bond. When my wife and I discovered we had conflicting traditions around opening Christmas presents, we had to come up with something that worked for our new family.

When children grow up in a home with traditions, it connects them to something larger than themselves. Childhood traditions can give a person signposts that help her narrate her life story, and that is the basis of Christian identity formation. Our God is a storytelling God, and we are storytellers too. If you want to know someone, you ask for his story. Identity-forming pillars like family traditions often end up becoming permanent fixtures in the story we tell about our lives and the work God has done.

Our family has integrated a **nightly tradition** of blessing into our family life. This happens at the same time every night, and my kids understand that when dad

blesses them, bedtime is next. It didn't take long before my children started saying the blessing with me, even at a very young age. It reinforces that God loves them, their parents love them, and they are safe in their home. It hasn't been easy to implement; in fact, it can be costly. It may mean leaving a social event early or stepping away when company is over, but it is worth it. Here is my blessing; feel free to use it for yourself or come up with your own: "May the Lord bless you and keep you, may He cause His face to shine on you, and may you have a blessed night of sleep and fall more in love with Jesus every day. Amen."

Sunday night is pizza night in our house. This **weekly rhythm** extends back into my parents' childhoods, and with how much my daughter loves it, I'm convinced it will live on for at least another generation. Every Sunday night, we get pizza. It's that simple. There's no spiritual lesson, just pepperoni and cheese. I discovered my grandparents (on both sides) instituted this tradition because (1) eating out was incredibly rare, so this was a treat, and (2) they each had five kids; pizza was cheap, and everyone liked it. Those are not the reasons my parents or I have kept it up. It doesn't matter anymore; it connects my children to something their dad, grandparents, and great-grandparents used to do. It's a big story, and they are part of it.

**Every year when we set up our nativity, we read the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2.** As we come to the different characters in the story, we pause and place the appropriate nativity pieces where they go. This can be done with everyone, including young children, and helps us slow down and reflect on a familiar story.

**Are there any traditions you had when you were younger that you could incorporate into your family life?** Is there something you all like to do together? Pray about a tradition you could start with your family this month, and then commit to it! Starting a tradition may not be easy, but it will be worth it.

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*by Ryan Popineau, Leader, New Life North*



# NLC FAMILY

## UPCOMING 2022 EVENTS



Nlcfam.org



Nlcfamilies



NLC Family Min

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b> Small Groups	Every Tuesday	4-5:30 p.m.	Meet @ NL North in the Tent. High School Small Groups will end 5/24 for the summer.
<b>JR. HIGH</b> Small Groups	Every Sunday	11 a.m.	NL North Tent
<b>STUDENT MINISTRY</b> Service	Every Wednesday	7-8:30 p.m.	NL North Theater
<b>CHILD DEDICATION</b> Class	May 1 <sup>st</sup>	11 a.m.	NL North room 246. Register online @ newlifecyclechurch.org
<b>FIRST WEDNESDAY</b>	May 4 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 p.m.	Living Room of NL North
<b>MOTHER'S DAY</b> <b>CHILD DEDICATION</b>	May 8 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. & 11 a.m.	NL North; Register online @ newlifecyclechurch.org
<b>PARENT</b> <b>ORIENTATION</b>	May 15 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. & 11 a.m.	NL North room 246
<b>FIRST WEDNESDAY</b>	June 1 <sup>st</sup>	6:30 p.m.	Living Room of NL North
<b>STUDENT CAMP</b>	June 14 <sup>th</sup> - 17 <sup>th</sup>		Visit newlifecyclechurch.org for registration and updates
<b>FATHER'S DAY</b> <b>CHILD DEDICATION</b>	June 19 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. & 11 a.m.	NL North; Register online @newlifecyclechurch.org
<b>KIDS CAMP</b>	June 21 <sup>th</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	NL North; Register online @newlifecyclechurch.org

OUR GOD IS

# OVER ALL

JULY 12-14, 2022 • NEW LIFE CHURCH  
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Desperation conference exists to call students to treasure, glorify, and follow Jesus above all else. We aim to partner with the local church in fostering an environment where students can encounter the presence of God, be saturated in the truth of His word, and be commissioned in the call of His gospel.



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