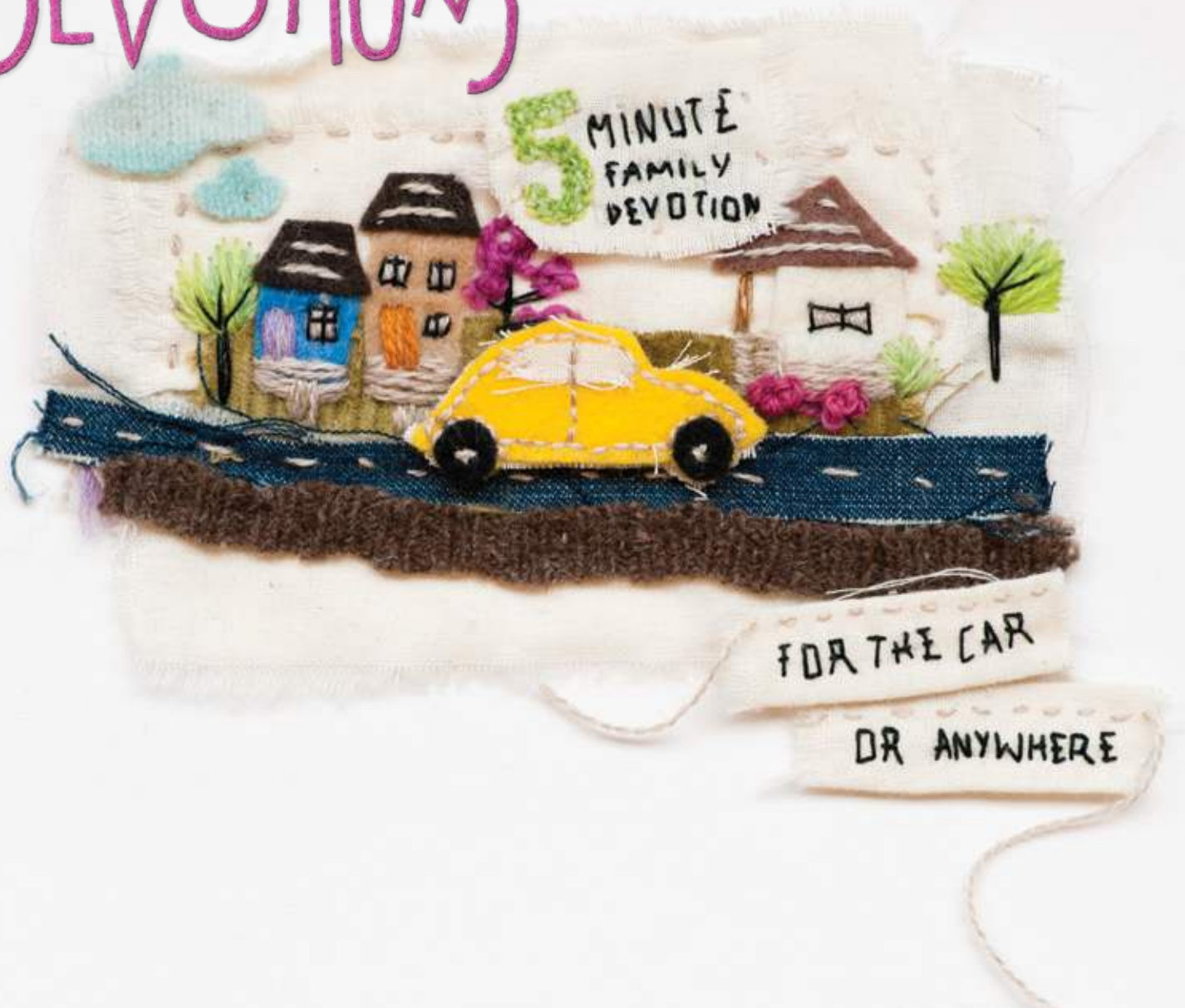


ON-THE-GO DEVOTIONS



5 MINUTE
FAMILY
DEVOTION

FOR THE CAR

OR ANYWHERE

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These devotions can be used while you're driving in the car (if you read them in advance or if an older child reads them) or waiting anywhere. Of course, you can use them at home, too

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on-the-go devotions

ARMOR OF GOD

Belt of Truth

Play: Play a game of True or False by making simple statements and asking your children to identify them as true or false. “Jesus died on the Cross, true or false?” “God only loves people who live in the United States, true or false?” (Be sure to give the correct answers to the false statements.)

Talk: The answers to all these questions can be found in God’s Word. The Bible shows us the truth. In [Ephesians 6:14](#), the apostle Paul said that we should put on God’s truth like a belt. In Bible days, soldiers wore a special belt to keep their weapons organized and their loose clothing from slowing down their movements. Like a belt, God’s truth can keep us from being tripped up by lies and can help us stay prepared to do God’s work. How does knowing God’s truth prepare us to do His work?

Pray: Ask God to help you recognize the truth.

—Naomi Cassata

Breastplate of Righteousness

Play: Take turns naming creatures whose bodies help protect them from danger (turtles, lobsters, snails), and tell how their bodies protect them.

Talk: Turtles, lobsters and snails defend themselves from their enemies with their hard shells. We don’t have shells, but [Ephesians 6:14](#) tells us that God has offered us an important piece of armor—the breastplate of righteousness. A breastplate protects a soldier’s heart, and to be righteous means to be right with God through faith in Jesus. If you trust in Jesus, His righteousness will help guard your heart so that it will remain good and pleasing to God. What kind of heart is pleasing to God (a generous heart, a forgiving heart, etc.)?

Pray: Pray that Jesus’ righteousness would shield your heart.

—Courtney Black

Feet Fitted With Readiness

Play: See who can tie his or her shoes the fastest.

Talk: Shoelaces help keep our shoes on our feet. We lace our shoes so that we can be ready at all times to go where we need to go and do what we need to do. In a similar way, God’s Word tells us to be ready to share the Gospel with others ([Ephesians 6:15](#)). How can we be ready to tell friends about Jesus?

Pray: Ask God to help you be ready at all times to share the Gospel with others.

—Jill Waltz

Helmet of Salvation

Play: Take turns thinking of jobs or activities that require a helmet (firefighting, football, construction, biking) and discuss why a helmet is necessary for that job or activity.

Talk: Sometimes we need helmets to protect our heads. A helmet can prevent an injury during a fall or protect us if something drops on us. In [Ephesians 6:17](#), the Bible tells us that God gives us something that’s like a helmet. The Bible calls it the “helmet of salvation.” Salvation protects the most important part of us—our souls. Does knowing that your soul is safe with God make you feel more secure? How does that security affect how you live?

Pray: Pray that you will be secure in the knowledge of your salvation.

—Crystal Brothers

Shield of Faith

Play: Each time you say a word that represents something your kids should avoid (lying, stealing, hating), have them cross their arms in the air in front of them (as if to protect themselves).

Talk: Before David faced Goliath, he was given a coat of armor to protect himself against the giant. But David chose to face the giant without physical armor—or a shield. Instead, his trust was in God. God became David’s shield that day and protected him from danger. [Ephesians 6:16](#) encourages us to use our faith in God as a shield against temptation. How can our faith in God protect us as we face temptations?

Pray: Thank God for being your shield as you put your trust in Him.

—Naomi Cassata

Sword of the Spirit

Play: See who can name the most methods and weapons that people might use to defend themselves in a war.

Talk: Soldiers use many different ways to defend themselves in a battle. The Bible talks about a weapon, the “Sword of the Spirit,” that God wants all of us to use as we defend truth ([Ephesians 6:17](#)) and fight the Enemy (Satan). That weapon is the Bible. To use it as God intends, we study and memorize it. Just like a sword is useful for defense, so is God’s Word. He wants us to use the Sword of the Spirit (God’s Word) to destroy lies—the Enemy’s greatest weapons—such as “God doesn’t love me” or “God can’t forgive me.” How can knowing what the Bible says help us use the truth to defend ourselves?

Pray: Thank God for giving us the Bible to help us defend truth.

—Jill Waltz

on-the-go devotions

BODY OF CHRIST

The Church as Christ’s Disciples

Play: Put your arms around your child and say, “You are trapped. The only way to get free is to follow my instructions.” Let the child squirm until she is ready to follow your instructions. Your instructions should be something creative, such as tug on her earlobes twice, stomp her foot and sing “Jesus Loves Me.” Then release the child.

Talk: When you are stuck, directions can help you—but only if you follow them. Jesus told His followers that they were truly His disciples if they continued to obey His instructions ([John 8:31-32](#)). If they did, they would know the truth, and it would set them free. Following Jesus and His directions, which are found in the Bible, brings freedom. This was true for those who believed in Jesus when He was on earth, and it’s also true for us today. We need to obey Jesus and His instructions. What are some of the instructions Jesus has given us?

Pray: Ask God to help you obey His Word and learn more about Him every day.

—Christine St. Jacques

The Church as the Body of Christ

Play: Have family members extend their arms straight out to the sides. Start a timer. See how long everyone can hold this position. When one person’s arms drop, the timer stops. Repeat to try and set a family record. As you do this a second or third time, encourage each other as you grow tired of holding up your arms, so you can set a new family record.

Talk: Sometimes encouragement from others can help us do things we couldn’t do alone. As followers of Christ and members of His body, we are told to encourage one another ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)). This is especially important when life gets tough. We need to take time to encourage our friends and family by sharing God’s Word with them. We can remind them that whatever happens, Jesus will help them keep going. Whom can you encourage today?

Pray: Ask God to help you become more aware of those who need encouragement.

—Christine St. Jacques

The Church as Branches on the Vine of Jesus Christ

Play: Have each person write or draw as many different types of fruit as he can in one minute. When done, cross off any fruit that is common (more than one person has it). See who came up with the most fruit that no one else mentioned. Then do the same for the parts of trees and finally for types of vines.

Talk: God made every part of a tree for a purpose. The trunk brings food from the roots to the rest of the tree and supports the branches and fruit. Without the trunk, branches have no food and they die. Grape vines are similar to trunks. In [John 15:5](#), Jesus says that He is the Vine and we who believe in Him are the branches. We can't do anything without Him. Just like branches on trees, when we stay attached to Jesus, we have what we need to live, grow and bear fruit. This doesn't mean we'll grow peaches on our arms. It means when we follow Jesus, our lives develop good attitudes and actions. What kind of fruit have you shown with your words and actions this week?

Pray: Ask God to help you stay attached to Jesus, the Vine, and bear fruit that will last.

—Christine St. Jacques



The Church as Sheep of the Good Shepherd

Play: Have one child face away from everyone else. Then have everyone else shout, “Baa! Baa!” while a parent quietly instructs the child to do something or to move to a particular spot. (With only one child, have loud music replace the baaing.)

Talk: In order to follow the instructions, the child had to listen for the parent's voice and block out the other sounds. We have to do the same thing with Jesus. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us that His followers are like His sheep. Jesus' followers know Him, and they hear His voice ([John 10:14,27](#)), even when there are a lot of noises around trying to get their attention. When we hear His voice, we are better able to follow Him. How do you listen for Jesus' voice so you can follow Him?

Pray: Ask God to help you and your family hear His voice daily.

—Lindsey Bell

The Church Rescued by Christ

Play: Ask each family member to choose a made-up superhero name and explain what superhero powers he has. Have others suggest a crisis and let each superhero demonstrate how his superhero powers can solve the crisis.

Talk: For thousands of years, all of humankind was in crisis, and we needed a superhero. We were trapped by our own sins. Even when we wanted to do good, we often chose to sin instead. We became slaves to sin. That's why Jesus came down from heaven and rescued His church. He set us free from our sins ([John 8:35-36](#)). Those He has saved, His church, are free to love and serve God and others. What makes Jesus the superhero over all superheroes?

Pray: Thank Jesus for giving himself up for you. Ask Him to cleanse you from sin and set you free to love and serve Him.

—Kristen Joy Wilks

The Church as the Light of the World

Play: Have children shout, “Light” or “Dark,” to tell you which things are usually found in the light or in the darkness. Use this list of ideas: colors, shadows, shapes that look different from what they are, socks, homework, fireworks, ice-cream sundaes and imaginary monsters.

Talk: Things sometimes look different at night than they do during the day. Once our eyes get used to the dark, we can see the fuzzy outlines of things, but not full colors or the same shapes of things we can see during the day. We need light to see things accurately. Believers in Jesus are the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14-16](#)). The light doesn't belong to us; but we can become the light of the world so others can see God's truth more accurately. Otherwise, all they see is a dim shadow of the truth. How can you shine God's light before others?

Pray: Ask God to help you shine His light today so that others can see His truth clearly.

—Christine St. Jacques



on-the-go devotions

CHRIST IS LORD

Christ Is Lord

Play: Take turns pretending to drive a car. The person “driving” tells a fantastic story about where he’s driving (through a rain forest, to the moon, across the desert). Who can tell the most creative story?

Talk: Whoever is driving the car has control over its speed and where it goes. Jesus wants to be the driver in our lives, so He waits for us to scoot into the passenger’s seat and let Him take control. We need to ask Him to “drive.” [Philippians 2:10-11](#) says, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” The word Lord simply means “ruler” or “boss”—someone who’s in control. And the great news is that we can trust Him to know the right direction for us to go and how long it will take to get there. What are some ways we can let Jesus be in control of our lives?

Pray: Ask for God’s help to allow Jesus to be in control of your life.

—Debbie McDaniel

Christ Is Lord of My Actions

Play: Name some things that you can control with a remote (a toy, TV, garage door). Take turns pretending that one of you is the remote controller and the others are being controlled by the remote.

Talk: If He wanted to, God could control our every action, just like someone using a remote. But He doesn’t. He loves us so much that He allows us to choose to love and obey Him. [Colossians 3:17](#) says, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” What is one thing you can choose to do today to show that Jesus is Lord over your actions?

Pray: Ask God to help you make good choices as you follow Him.

—Debbie McDaniel

Christ Is Lord of My Resources

Play: Name several resources needed to live (food, clothing, shelter). Ask your children to point out various businesses that supply these resources (grocery stores, retail stores, home improvement stores).

Talk: Many resources help us survive, but God tells us not to worry about them ([Philippians 4:19](#)). He is Lord over our resources. This means He is in charge and we can trust Him to take care of us. God even looks after small creatures. We often see birds, squirrels and insects collecting food. They each have a place of shelter, which protects them from the cold and rain. God provides exactly what they need.

Sometimes, God blesses us with resources beyond our basic needs, and He expects us to use those resources wisely. We should use all the things that God has trusted us with to honor Him. How can we honor God with our resources?

Pray: Thank God that we don’t have to worry about anything because He supplies all our needs.

—Naomi Cassata

Christ Is Lord of My Thoughts

Play: Take turns playing a game of “20 questions.” One player thinks of an object. The other players can ask up to 20 yes-or-no questions to try to guess what it is. Let everyone have a turn thinking of an object.

Talk: God doesn’t have to ask us questions to understand what we’re thinking. He knows us inside and out, from our favorite colors to our greatest fears. That means Jesus knows our good thoughts and our sinful thoughts, too. If we allow Him to, Jesus can help us have good attitudes and think kind thoughts about others. [Psalm 139:23-24](#) says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” Is there something on your mind that you need to turn over to Jesus?

Pray: Ask that Jesus would lead you to think good thoughts.

—Courtney Black

Christ Is Lord of My Words

Play: Have a tongue twister contest. See who can say “She sells seashells by the seashore” fastest without making a mistake. If that’s too easy, try “The sixth sick sheik’s sixth sheep’s sick.”

Talk: Sometimes, we really need to think about what we’re saying. That’s particularly true of tongue twisters—but also in situations when we’re angry or annoyed with someone. [Ephesians 4:29](#) says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up.”

Unwholesome talk can be unkind, greedy or proud words, and it can hurt those around us, but kind and gentle words can encourage others. Jesus wants to help us build others up, so He offers to be Lord of all we say. He doesn’t take over and speak for us as if we’re puppets, but He will give us wisdom so we know the right things to say. How can you encourage someone with your words today?

Pray: Ask God to help you use your words for the good of others.

—Debbie McDaniel

Christ is Lord of My Relationships

Play: Take turns creating an outrageous scenario about choices, using “What if” questions: *What if elephants chose to live in the ocean? What if all dogs decided to start walking backward?* Have fun answering what might happen in each situation. To finish the game, ask your kids, “What if all your friends started wearing green shirts with purple stripes? Do you think you’d want to wear shirts like that, too?”

Talk: Most of us like to fit in with our friends. When we spend time with people, they can influence what we do or who we become because we often start to talk and behave like them—whether we want to or not. The Bible says, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’” ([1 Corinthians 15:33](#)). We should choose friends who will encourage us to become more like Jesus. How can we know whether someone is a good or bad influence on us?

Pray: Ask that God would give you the wisdom to know how to choose good friends.

—Jill Waltz

on-the-go devotions COMFORT

God Comforts Us by Erasing Sin

Play: Take turns making a mean face at another person. Then have the second person “erase” the other person’s meanness with an imaginary eraser as the mean face turns into a smile.

Talk: When we hurt a person we love, we often wish we hadn’t done it. We mourn or feel awful about what we did. Then we say we’re sorry and ask that person’s forgiveness. When the person forgives us, it is like he or she is “erasing” our mean action. Just like we sometimes hurt the people we love, we also hurt God when we sin. But when we confess our sins to God, He forgives us through Jesus ([1 John 1:9](#)). We mourn our sin and then find comfort in Jesus as He “erases” the sin from His memory ([Hebrews 8:12](#)). Do you need to ask God to forgive you for something today? He has a big eraser!

Pray: Ask God to help you remember to seek His forgiveness whenever you sin.

—Chris Brack

God Comforts Us by Taking Away Guilt

Play: Take turns pretending you are a monkey trying to pull a banana from a jar. A parent’s hands can form the “jar” around your wrist. As long as you keep your hand in a fist and hang on to the imaginary banana, you are captured. If you let go of the banana, your hand will slide right out.

Talk: Sometimes when we do something bad, we have a hard time forgiving ourselves, and we can’t let go of the horrible feeling about what we’ve done. That feeling is called guilt. The Bible tells us that when we confess our sins to God, He takes away the guilt, too ([Psalm 32:5](#)). But just as the monkey has to let go of the banana in the jar to go free, we have to let go of our guilt to be free. We have to trust that God has truly forgiven us. Do you remember a time when God took away your feelings of guilt?

Pray: Ask God to help you trust in His forgiveness when you mess up.

—Chris Brack

God Comforts Us When We Mourn

Play: Have your children write things they need to remember (homework, chores, saying thank you, etc.) on sticky notes, then stick the notes on each other. Ask them each to write one final reminder:—God cares about you—and place it over their own heart.

Talk: [Matthew 5:4](#) tells us that God is with us and cares about how we feel. We mourn when a person or pet we love dies. We hurt inside because we would like our loved one to be with us. In our grief, sometimes our friends and family can cheer us up a bit. But only God can fully help us when the sadness refuses to go away. Only He knows our thoughts and sees our secret tears. When you're sad, how can you remind yourself that God cares about you?"

Pray: Thank God for always being there to comfort you and give you hope.

—Alice H. Mayer

God Helps Us Comfort Others

Play: Say an injury (cut finger, etc.) while tapping your knees twice. The next person says a way to make the injured person feel better (get a Band-Aid) while clapping hands twice. Then that person begins with a different injury. Keep it up until someone breaks the rhythm.

Talk: Everybody gets hurt from time to time. When we scrape a knee or cut a finger, a bandage and a hug can help comfort us. But sometimes it's our heart that hurts, not our body. Maybe a friend was unkind or the school day was rough. When that happens, we can talk to God about our troubles, and He will comfort us and help our hearts heal. Then when others have sad times, God helps us comfort them with the same comfort He has given us ([2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#)). How can you help your friends when their hearts are hurting?

Pray: Ask God to help you comfort others when their hearts are hurting in the same way He has comforted you.

—Christine St. Jacques

on-the-go devotions CREATION

God Created Day and Night

Play: Ask your kids to close their eyes really tight, putting their hands over their face. Count to 10, then point out how dark it is. Now, say, "Light" and ask your kids to open their eyes. Talk about how bright the light is after the darkness!

Talk: In the beginning, before God made our world, it was very, very dark—just like when you closed your eyes and covered your face. In [Genesis 1:3-5](#), we read that God spoke into the darkness and said, "Let there be light," and there was light! God called the darkness "night" and the light "day." God spoke, and light was created. What are some activities that would be difficult to do without light?

Pray: Thank God for making the light and the day so we can play and learn; thank Him for the dark night so we can rest.

—Danika Cooley

God Created Fish and Birds

Play: Challenge your children to name as many types of sea creatures as they can in 30 seconds. Then for round two, have them shout out every kind of bird they can think of in 30 seconds.

Talk: God created the birds of the sky and the creatures of the sea ([Genesis 1:20-23](#)). God's creativity is unmistakable! He has filled the water and the sky with all kinds of animals, from tiny goldfish to gigantic whales, from colorful toucans to soaring eagles. After creating this assortment of creatures, God saw that they were good and blessed them. How can we show God that we are thankful for the birds and fish He has created?

Pray: Thank God for His creativity in forming all the different creatures that fill the earth's sky and water.

—Courtney Black

God Created Land Animals

Play: Play a game of 20 questions. Ask your child to think of a land animal. Other family members then ask yes-or-no questions in order to figure out what the animal is. (Does it live in Africa? Is it big?) The game ends with a correct guess or after 20 questions have been asked. Repeat so each family member gets a turn to choose an animal.

Talk: God created all the animals on earth. [Genesis 1:24-25](#) says God made livestock such as cows and chickens, creatures that move along the ground like snakes and lizards, and wild animals like zebras and lions. When God was done making the land animals, He saw that His creation was good. Of all the animals God created, which is your favorite?

Pray: Thank God for all of the animals He created.

—Juliet K. Kennedy

God Created Our World

Play: Describe a number of living things that God has created, and ask your child to tell you whether they belong in the sky, water or land.

Talk: The sky, water and land are full of living things, but this was not always so. Before the earth was ready to support life, God had a lot of preparation to do. This included separating the sky, water and land and placing them in exactly in the right spots ([Genesis 1:6-10](#)). God wants us to enjoy and respect the beautiful world He has created. What are some ways that we can care for the earth?

Pray: Thank God for creating the sky, water and land.

—Naomi Cassata

God Created Plants

Play: In the car or on a walk, have your kids count how many trees you pass in one minute. Do it again, and see if you count more or less this time.

Talk: Plants make oxygen for us to breathe, provide food for us to eat and add beauty to the world. Trees provide shade and lumber to build our homes. God created trees and many other kinds of plants in order to provide for our needs—and the needs of other living creatures ([Genesis 1:11-13; 29-30](#)). Name some of the ways you have used plants today.

Pray: Thank God for creating the many different kinds of plants we use every day.

—Donna Brennan

God Created Us

Play: Using a bottle of bubble solution, blow bubbles into the air. See who can “catch” a bubble without making it pop. Ask what is inside the bubbles. Is it just air? No, breath.

Talk: Just as we can fill a bubble with our breath, God filled man with His breath when He created us and gave us life ([Genesis 2:7](#)). Since it’s easy for a bubble to pop or burst, it must be treated with care. In the same way, human life is fragile and must be protected because it’s so valuable. Of all He created, God only shared His breath with humans, which makes us His most special creation. What other things make humans different from animals?

Pray: Thank God for creating you in a special way.

—D’Arcy Maher



Share Your Faith

Play: Think of your favorite animal, food and school subject. Then, give your children clues so they can guess each favorite thing, one at a time. Repeat until each person's favorites have been revealed.

Talk: If someone asked you why these things are your favorites, you'd probably be able to give them several reasons. Maybe gym class is your favorite because you love to play games, or perhaps pizza is your favorite food because you love all the cheese and toppings. The Bible says we should be ready to give reasons for our faith in God (1 Peter 3:15)—just as we can explain why we love our favorite things. Why do you have hope in Jesus?

Pray: Ask God to help you to share your hope in Christ with others.

—Crystal Brothers

You Can Bless Others

Play: Using the letters of each person's name, give compliments that begin with each letter. For example: Sam could be s-weet, a-wesome, m-arvelous.

Talk: Compliments are one way to bless others. Ephesians 4:29 says our words should build up others. When we are mad at someone, we sometimes say unkind things, but the Bible teaches us to bless people—even those who hurt us (Luke 6:28). Just as we thought of kind words to describe members of our family, we can find ways to build others up and bless them. Who would you like to bless through kind words?

Pray: Ask God to help you use your words to bless others by encouraging them.

—Jeannie Vogel

God Wants to Use You Now

Play: Play a game of “I spy” focused on small items that do big or powerful things. For example, in a car someone may “spy” keys, the radio knob or a power window button.

Talk: The things you spied are small, but they cause big things to happen. Small things can have a big impact. Jesus was only 12 years old when He astonished the religious leaders with His knowledge. David was a young man when he defended God's people and defeated Goliath. When we depend on God, neither size nor age matters because He is at work in us (1 Timothy 4:12). What are some big things you can do or have done by God's power?

Pray: Thank God for using you to do great things because He is powerful.

—Naomi Cassata

God's Glory Can Shine Through You

Play: On a sunny day, hand each of your children a piece of white paper, folded in half, with a loving message drawn or written on one half inside. Without unfolding the paper, have them hold it up to the window to allow the sun to shine through it. Ask them to describe the message they see.

Talk: Just like the sunlight illuminates the message, allowing it to be seen, God's love lights up our lives and allows others to read a message about His love. God wants others to see the good things we do and recognize His influence in our lives (Matthew 5:16). How can we let others see His love when we're at the park, at school, in our neighborhood?

Pray: Ask God to let others see His message of love shining through your words and actions.

—Shari Pope Joy

The Great Commission Starts at Home

Play: Play a game of telephone: Whisper a sentence about Jesus, and let the last person proclaim it loudly. Play the game a few times using different messages and taking turns “proclaiming” the Good News.

Talk: The message of Jesus’ love and forgiveness is the most important message of all. Jesus wants the whole world to know it. In [Matthew 28:19](#), He told His disciples to share the Good News with everyone. That’s called the Great Commission. How can we share God’s message of love and forgiveness with others?

Pray: Ask God to help you proclaim boldly what He has taught you in His Word.

—Naomi Cassata

You Can Work as a Family to Serve Others

Play: In one minute, name as many parts of a car, and what they do, as you can (headlights give light so we can see where we’re going, wheels hold up the car and help it move forward, etc.).

Talk: The Bible says that the body of Christ—the people who serve God—is made of many parts ([1 Corinthians 12](#)). Each part is designed by God with a particular purpose. Just like different parts of our car work together to help it run, we can combine our unique talents and abilities to serve others as a family. In [1 Peter 4:10](#), the Bible says, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.” How can our family work together to serve others in our church and community?

Pray: Ask God to help you see the needs around you and respond as a family who serves others well.

—Christi Lynn

on-the-go devotions

FAITH VS. WORKS

God’s Masterpiece

Play: Take turns pretending to be an artist creating a masterpiece. Paint or draw a picture either on paper or in the air. Have others try to guess what the “artist” is painting.

Talk: Every picture you draw is unique—there is not another one like it. An artist’s best paintings are sometimes called “masterpieces.” Masterpieces may be put on display in museums for others to see. The Bible says we are God’s masterpieces ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). He created us to do good works that He already planned for us. When people watch us obey God and do good things for others, they can see God’s creative work—His masterpiece—and learn of His love. What good works does God have for you to do today?

Pray: Ask God to help you do the good works He planned for you, and thank Him for making you His masterpiece!

—Christine St. Jacques

Easy and Hard Commandments

Play: Each person names three activities: one easy, one hard and one impossible (e.g., smile, read a story while hopping, touch the moon).

Talk: God asks us to do easy things, such as reading the Scriptures, praying and helping others. He also commands hard things, such as forgiving and praying for those who hurt us ([Matthew 5:44](#)). When we obey even the hard commands, we show our faith in God. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, and Abraham proved his faith in God when he obeyed ([James 2:21-23](#)). God knew He would provide another sacrifice to save Isaac’s life, but He was testing Abraham. God tests us, too. What hard things does God ask you to do?

Pray: Ask God to give you the faith to obey Him even in the hardest things.

—Jennifer Garrett

Love Like Jesus

Play: Have one of your kids eat something while the others say, “I’m hungry.” The child with the food taps each speaker on the head, saying, “Bless you,” and then keeps eating.

Talk: Saying “Bless you” to people who are hungry doesn’t really help them. In the Bible, Jesus fed hungry people. If our faith in God is real, we will do as Jesus did. When we see or hear about people who do not have enough food or clothes, we will show our faith and love for God by helping them ([James 2:14-16](#)). How can you help someone who is in need today?

Pray: Ask God to help you pay attention when people are in need and to show you how to help them.

—Christine St. Jacques

on-the-go devotions FOLLOWING GOD

Moth, Rust, Thieves

Play: Play Moth, Rust, Thieves: One child names something she sees, and the others classify as to whether moths, rust or thieves could destroy or steal it. If the child names something that can’t be stolen or ruined (like a smile, kindness, love or family), give her a coin to demonstrate she has chosen a valuable treasure.

Talk: [Matthew 6:19-21](#) talks about treasures that God wants us to value. While shiny and pretty new things may seem valuable, God says those things can wither away or lose their shine. When we behave in ways that honor God, we learn what real treasure is. We can’t put a price on true treasure, and it can’t be destroyed or stolen. What are some ways you can find true treasures?

Pray: Pray for God to help you recognize true treasures that can’t be stolen or destroyed.

—Shari Popejoy

Protected By Angels

Play: Ask your child to point out things around her that are there for her safety. In the car this might be seat belts, brakes and stop signs. At home she may spot locks on doors or a fire extinguisher.

Talk: We pointed out a number of things that protect us from danger, but these aren’t the only things that keep us safe each day. In [Psalm 91:11](#), we read that God commands His angels to guard us carefully. Even though we can’t see them, His angels are watching over us. God cares for His children and wants us to stay protected. Tell me about a time when you were scared and it would have been comforting to know that God’s angels were with you.

Pray: Thank God for sending His angels to watch over you.

—Naomi Cassata

Things We Can’t See

Play: Before you get in the car to go somewhere, tell your kids to list familiar landmarks (grocery store, park, school) that you’ll see as you drive. Then, as you’re driving, ask them to point out each thing when they see it. Who sees each landmark first?

Talk: It’s easy to believe something is there when we see it. Some things we can’t see, but they’re just as real. Jesus talked about things we can’t see now, such as heaven and God. The Bible says that faith is being sure that something exists even when we can’t see it ([Hebrews 11:1](#)). How can we help our faith grow?

Pray: Ask God for more faith even though you can’t always see what He’s promised.

—Naomi Cassata



The Company You Keep

Play: Take turns creating an outrageous scenario about choices, using “What if” questions: What if elephants chose to live in the ocean? What if all dogs decided to start walking backward? Have fun answering what might happen in each situation. To finish the game, ask your kids, “What if all your friends started wearing green shirts with purple stripes? Do you think you’d want to wear shirts like that, too?”

Talk: Most of us like to fit in with our friends. When we spend time with people, they can influence what we do or who we become because we often start to talk and behave like them—whether we want to or not. The Bible says, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’” (1 Corinthians 15:33). We should choose friends who will encourage us to become more like Jesus. How can we know whether someone is a good or bad influence on us?

Pray: Ask that God would give you the wisdom to know how to choose good friends.

—Jill Waltz

What’s Inside Shows on the Outside

Play: As you pass various businesses, guess the goods or services they offer customers, based solely on the outside structure. Point out the types of businesses that younger children would recognize.

Talk: Figuring out what kinds of things each store sells can be easy from the outside. Restaurant windows may have posters showing the food they serve; clothing stores probably display clothes in the windows; sometimes you can even see people with their pets walking into pet stores. Humans are sort of like that. What’s inside of us will eventually show on the outside. **Luke 6:43-45** says that what we have stored in our hearts shows in our words and actions. What kinds of thoughts and beliefs do you think God wants us to store in our hearts?

Pray: Pray that God will help you to store “good things” in your heart.

—Naomi Cassata

Working for God

Play: When you’re on the go, look for people who are working. Maybe you’ll spot a mail carrier, a construction worker, a gardener, a trash collector. Who can spot the most people working?

Talk: **Colossians 3:23-24** says that we should do our work as if we’re working for God. So whether we’re doing chores, homework or a paid job, we should work at it with all our hearts. Our pastors and children’s ministry leaders all serve God with their work, and they give us a good example to follow. How can we show our appreciation for their hard work?

Pray: Pray that you would remember to do your work for God.

—Sarah Rowe Hostetter

Jesus Gives Us Rest

Play: Have two people lie down, then ask your kids which one looks more restful. After they choose, explain that maybe one was relaxing and the other was thinking through all the things she had to do—which isn’t really resting.

Talk: Rest is not just about getting enough sleep or relaxation for our bodies. We also need rest for our minds and our souls. When we are worried or feel bad about doing something wrong, we can feel worn out. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (**Matthew 11:28**). By asking Him to take care of our worries and forgive our sins, we can have peace knowing that He loves us and will help us. What are some things you could talk to Jesus about so you can rest in Him?

Pray: Pray for the worries or sins that you just mentioned.

—Tahisha Richards

Make Time to Pray

Play: Take turns looking around and turning something you see into a one-sentence prayer or praise. Trees? Thank God for His creation. Ambulance? Pray for the patient’s healing. Puddles of rain? Thank God for watering the earth. A school? Pray for teachers and students.

Talk: The Bible tells us to “pray without ceasing” (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). This doesn’t mean we must talk to God nonstop. But we should keep in mind our need for Him and talk to Him often. We can use things around us as reminders to thank God for our blessings and tell Him our needs. What other things might you see today that could remind you to pray?

Pray: Ask God to show you blessings to be thankful for and people who need prayer.

—Julie Lavender

The Bible Came From God

Play: Ask where three or four of your possessions originally came from. Track them in a series of steps. For example, “Where did your shoes come from?” (From Mom, the shoe store, a factory.) Where did the milk for your cereal come from?” (From the fridge, grocery store, a farm, a cow.) Who can name the longest series?

Talk: Even though you might have received your Bible as a gift or bought it at a store, the Bible comes from God. He told people what to write, and He is the original source of the words. The people wrote the Scriptures as God inspired them. The Bible says, “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). Since the Bible comes from God, how should we respond to what it says?

Pray: Thank God for speaking to us through the Bible.

—Donna Brennan

The Bible Is History

Play: Take turns thinking of Bible characters whose names begin with each letter in the alphabet. (You might need to skip some letters.) Tell one thing you remember about each person you name.

Talk: The Bible tells the stories of each character you named and many more. The Scriptures are about real events that happened long ago, including God’s creation of the earth and the life of Jesus. **Proverbs 30:5** says, “Every word of God is flawless.” Who is your favorite character in the Bible, and why do you like that person?

Pray: Ask God to show you what He wants you to learn from the real stories in the Bible.

—Juliet K. Kennedy



The Bible is Our Guide

Play: Challenge your children to spot as many street signs as they can in one minute. Then ask if they can explain the meaning of the signs.

Talk: When we travel, we can use a map and look for signs that point us in the right direction. Thankfully, God has also given us a guide for our journey through life—His Word. In **Psalm 32:8**, God says, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.” The Bible provides us the instruction we need to deal with problems in life. What sort of problems are you facing right now?

Pray: Thank God for providing all the direction you need.

—Courtney Black

The Bible Is Truth

Play: Tell your kids one of their favorite fictional stories, but leave out key parts or muddle several pieces. Let your children correct you along the way.

Talk: Some parts of the story were mixed up or left out, but the Bible is different. Everything written in the Bible is truth, and there are no mistakes. The Bible is God’s way of communicating and teaching us to do right (2 Timothy 3:16-17). With His Word, we can better understand all the wonderful things He has done for us and what He expects from us. How does knowing the Bible is true help us follow what it says?

Pray: Ask God to help you obey His Word.

—Naomi Cassata

The Bible Teaches Us About the Nature of God

Play: Ask your kids to pretend that you're handing them a ball. As you describe the ball, they should imagine how it looks and what it might feel like, and then guess what kind of ball it is. For example, what kind of ball is small, fuzzy and bounces well?

(A tennis ball)

Talk: You can recognize different types of balls because you've seen them before, know how they feel and what they do. We can learn what God is like by reading about things He has done. For example we read in the Bible that Hannah ([1 Samuel 1:1-19](#)) and King Hezekiah ([2 Kings 19:9-20](#)) both cried out to God, and He heard them. Those stories teach us that God hears us when we pray. And when the Israelites doubted God after they left Egypt, God forgave them ([Numbers 14:1-20](#)). This story teaches us that God is forgiving. What other Bible stories can you think of that show us about God's nature?

Pray: As you read the Bible, ask God to help you see what He is like.

—Carole Jensen

Not By Bread Alone

Play: Take turns thinking up the yummiest bread and the craziest fixings for a super sandwich. Consider interesting sandwich combinations such as banana bread, whipped cream and chocolate chips.

Talk: We all like eating special foods to keep our bodies healthy. But that alone won't help us grow and become the people God wants us to be. [Matthew 4:4](#) says that we also need the spiritual food of God's Word, the Bible. It nourishes and strengthens our spirits, helping us to become mature followers of Christ. What has the Bible taught you that has helped you understand God better?

Pray: Ask God to help you search His Word often and rely on it for your daily growth.

—Jan May

Remember God's Word

Play: Say, "I'm going to the store to buy apples." The next person says the same but adds something that starts with the letter b. Each person repeats the entire list, adding one more item in alphabetical order.

Talk: Remembering things can be difficult. One way the game helped us remember the added items was that each person repeated the list. When we say things lots of times, that helps us remember. [Joshua 1:8](#) tells us God wants us to remember His Word, too. Thinking about the Bible, talking about what it says and singing about the Scriptures help us to remember. What is your favorite Bible verse? What does it say about God or how to live our lives?

Pray: Thank God for His Word, and ask Him to help you remember what He has said.

—Carol Hatcher

on-the-go devotions GOOD CHARACTER

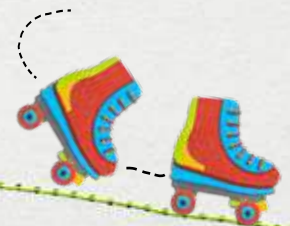
Think About Thankfulness

Play: Tell your kids to sing, clap their hands or draw pictures in the air with their hands to show God how much they love Him. When you say "freeze," have your kids to stop all motion and talking. To start motion again, say "thaw."

Talk: [Colossians 3:17](#) tells us that in everything we say and do, we should thank God. Of course we should be thankful for food, homes and families, but we should also thank God that we can move our arms, talk, sing, see and walk. We can do these things because God blesses us with those abilities. What are some other things for which we often forgot to thank God?

Pray: Tell God about all the things you're thankful for.

—Amanda B. Smith



A Good Name

Play: Ask, “Who in our family is the most patient?” The most patient person receives a few coins. Continue guessing character qualities and people until you have distributed several coins.

Talk: [Proverbs 22:1](#) says, “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.” A good name isn’t just a nice-sounding name, like John or Kaley; it comes when people associate your name with good things about you. Esteemed means that people think highly of you because of your character. What God thinks about you is what matters most, however. And He gives you the best name of all—“child of God.” Based on this name, what do you suppose God thinks about you?

Pray: Pray together that your family would desire a good name and godly character more than money or things.

—Marcy Lytle

Laughter Is Good for You

Play: Have one person try to keep a straight face while the other family members each spend 30 seconds trying to make the person laugh by telling jokes, making funny faces or singing silly songs. Play several rounds, taking turns as the “straight-faced person.”

Talk: Laughter is good for your well-being. It relieves stress and anxiety and can even make your body healthier. [Proverbs 17:22](#) says that a cheerful heart is “good medicine.” And you can share this medicine with the people around you. Since God wants us to spread joy to others, who can we cheer up today with a smile, a visit or a card?

Pray: Ask God for a cheerful attitude that brings joy to others.

—Sandra Hendricks

Focused on God

Play: Ask your kids to use facial expressions and hand gestures to show you what “stressed out” looks like. Have them take turns acting out a few other emotions as others guess what is being acted out. Then ask them to show you “perfect peace.”

Talk: There are many things that can cause us to worry, but God doesn’t want us to be anxious about anything! [Isaiah 26:3](#) says that when we keep our minds focused on God, we can have perfect peace no matter what else may be going on. What events are going on in your life that would be less stressful if you placed your focus on God?

Pray: Thank God for the peace He provides even in the most difficult times. Ask Him to help you keep your mind focused on Him.

—Courtney Roberts

Living in Unity

Play: Take a moment to have everyone think of a song. On the count of three, sing your songs at the same time. Next, choose a song for everyone to sing together. Which sounds better—singing different songs or singing the same song?

Talk: Living in peace with each other is more enjoyable than not getting along. [Psalm 133:1](#) says, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” Just as singing different songs at the same time sounds chaotic, fighting with each other creates disunity. God desires for us to live together in harmony. It blesses Him, encourages others and shows the world that we have His love within us. How can you live in unity with your family today?

Pray: Ask God to forgive you for any quarreling words or actions. Pray for His help to live together in unity.

—Debbie McDaniel

Peace From Jesus

Play: Encourage your child to play photographer by pretending to snap pictures of the passing scenery. Tell him to choose to take “photos” of peaceful scenery or things that make him think of peace.

Talk: God gave us many earthly things to see and enjoy that are peaceful, like falling snowflakes, soaring birds and colorful sunsets. But sometimes we hear the siren of a police car or an ambulance or hear a story of fighting on the news, and it reminds us that our world isn’t always a peaceful place. If we have Jesus in our lives, though, we can be filled with the peace that only He can give ([John 14:27](#)). We can experience His peace, no matter what’s happening around us. In what situations do you need more of His peace?

Pray: Pray for the peace that can only come from God so that you will not be troubled or afraid when bad things happen.

—Amy Cobb

Good Stewardship of All Living Things

Play: Have each person choose an unusual pet (lion, koala, giraffe, flamingo, whale, etc.) and draw it. Then tell a story about caring for it. Where will it sleep? What will it eat? How will you give it a bath?

Talk: After God created everything, He made Adam and Eve stewards over His creation. That means they needed to take care of all the living things that God created ([Genesis 1:28](#)). Today, God still wants us to be responsible for the plants and animals that are in our care. If we have a pet, we are to take care of its needs. If we raise animals for food, we are not to squander what we've been given. If we garden or farm, we are to do our best to grow specific plants. How do you care for other living things?

Pray: Ask the Creator to help you take good care of His creation.

—Christine St. Jacques

Good Stewardship of Our Money and Possessions

Play: Ask family members to list or draw 10 items they would want if they were going to be stranded with a handful of people on a deserted island. Five of the items must be shared with the other castaways. Compare and discuss your lists.

Talk: A person's basic physical needs are food, clothing and shelter. Often God gives us more than we need. Yet no matter how much or how little we have, we should remember that everything belongs to God ([Colossians 1:16](#)). He entrusts us with money and possessions to use in ways that honor Him. For example, we can share our toys with those who come to our house to play or give money to places that take care of the poor. How can you bless God through at least one of your possessions?

Pray: Thank God for meeting all your needs.

—Sandra Hendricks

Good Stewardship of Our Time

Play: Consider an event or holiday, such as a birthday, vacation, Easter or Christmas. Work together to calculate the number of days until that date arrives. Repeat with another event or holiday, but let kids compete to see who can come up with the number first.

Talk: We often look forward to special occasions and holidays. Celebrating with friends and family and going to new places are fun things to do. Sometimes we get so excited about events in the future that we forget the importance of today. But [Psalm 90:12](#) says we should consider each day important, knowing that we only have a limited number of days on this earth. Each day is a gift from God, so we need to cherish it and use it wisely. What are some good ways you can use your time today?

Pray: Ask God to show you how He wants you to spend your time.

—Sandra Hendricks

Good Stewardship of Our Witness for Jesus Christ

Play: Choose one leader. Have the leader do different actions and expressions. Whoever the leader looks at should try to imitate the leader as quickly as possible, as if the person was the leader's mirror image. The leader can look back and forth between family members so the mirror image constantly changes. Take turns being the leader.

Talk: When we follow a leader, those around us can see that we are imitating that leader. When we follow Jesus, our actions reflect Him and help others see what He is like. [Colossians 4:5-6](#) says that we need to be careful how we speak and act around nonbelievers and that we should take every opportunity to be gracious to them. In this way, we tell others about Jesus through our words, actions and expressions. What can you do today to show others that Jesus loves them?

Pray: Pray that God will help you to faithfully show His love through your words and actions.

—Christine St. Jacques

Good Stewardship of Our Bodies

Play: Have each person play a round of “If I were king” by describing what his or her castle or mansion would look like. After everyone has had a turn, vote on whose castle or mansion seems to be the most extravagant, the most fun or the prettiest.

Talk: The Bible tells us that Jesus is the King of Kings. He deserves the best castle or mansion we could imagine. But His Holy Spirit chooses to live in us when we believe in Jesus. That’s why [Romans 12:1-2](#) tells us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. We offer ourselves completely to Him and keep our bodies holy so that He can use His “castles” for His good purpose. How can you honor God with your body?

Pray: Thank God for His Holy Spirit, who lives inside you.

—Crystal Brothers

on-the-go devotions How GOD LOVES YOU

God Cares About You

Play: Play Simon Says, with a twist—use sounds instead of actions. For example: “Simon says, ‘Bark like a dog.’”

Talk: It’s important to listen to God and follow His instructions for our lives. God loves us and knows what’s best for us, so we can trust what He tells us to do ([John 10:27-28](#)). But we need to listen carefully to make sure that it is truly God’s voice that we are hearing. How can we listen to God’s voice?

Pray: Ask God to help you hear His voice and follow His instructions.

—Titus O’Bryant

God Has a Plan For Your Life

Play: Count the number of left turns and right turns from one place to another. Each person can choose to count left turns or right turns.

Talk: Did you turn left or right more often? If you gave someone directions and changed the numbers around, would he end up in the right place? God has a purpose and plan for your life. When you follow where God leads, you arrive where He wants you to go. The Bible tells us to stay on the right path, not veering to “the right or the left” ([Proverbs 4:27](#)). God’s plan offers direction for our lives. So, what should we do if we lose our way or go down the wrong path?

Pray: Ask for God’s guidance as you try to choose the right path.

—Shari Pope Joy

God Wants to Direct Your Life

Play: Count the number of mirrors on and inside your car—even the ones that may be hidden from view. (Hint: visors.)

Talk: Car mirrors have a purpose, giving the driver information to help him drive safely. Just as the mirrors are designed to help guide the driver as he operates the car, the Bible guides our lives by showing us how to live. But, if we listen to the Word and don’t obey it, it’s like looking in a mirror and ignoring what we see ([James 1:23-24](#)). What would happen if the driver ignored what he saw in one of the mirrors? What may happen in your life if you ignore God’s Word?

Pray: Ask God for the strength to obey His direction for your life.

—Marcy Lytle

How God Directs Your Life

Play: Encourage your kids to keep their eyes open for stop signs or stoplights. When it's time to slow down, they can pull back on imaginary reins and say, "Whoa!" When it's time to move again, they can say, "Go!"

Talk: Ask your kids, "When playing the game, what was your job? Did you worry about which way to turn or where to go?"

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us we can trust God completely to lead us on the right path. We don't have to worry about being in control. As passengers trust their driver, we can trust God—and He never gets lost! In what ways can you trust God more? How may putting your trust in Him help you stay on the right path?

Pray: Ask God to help us trust Him with all our heart, relying on Him instead of our own understanding.

—Stephanie Shott

Let God Direct Your Life

Play: As you're driving, ask your kids to identify which side of the road you're on (left or right). When you turn, does it change? Imagine what could happen if you drove on the opposite side of the road.

Talk: Just like there's only one way to drive on each side of the street, Jesus is the one and only way to eternal life. In **John 10:10**, Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, He directs your life and leads you into a relationship with the heavenly Father. Why is it important to let God direct your life?

Pray: Thank God for sending Jesus to forgive our sins so we can have life forever with Him.

—Christi Lynn

Gifts from God for Your Life

Play: Play "Who Am I?" Give clues about a family member's talents and skills while others guess who you're describing.

Talk: God wants people to recognize us as Christ followers. We each possess unique qualities. When the Holy Spirit works, He produces nine characteristics in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (**Galatians 5:22-23**). By them, God identifies us as part of His family. Discuss characteristics you see of God working in your life. Talk about examples of how someone can be identified as a Christ follower.

Pray: Ask God to develop one characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit in you.

—Angie Reedy

on-the-go devotions

IDENTITY

You Are Made Unique: Spiritual Gifts

Play: Giving only one-word clues, take turns describing your best-ever birthday gifts. As each clue is given, guess the gift. "Soft," "furry," and "animal" might be clues for a favorite teddy bear.

Talk: Birthday presents can remind us of spiritual gifts. Discuss what those gifts might be, such as hospitality or teaching. God gives people a variety of special gifts. We each have different gifts (**Romans 12:6**). God intends us to use our spiritual gifts to help others. Which spiritual gifts has God given you? Talk about possible ways of using gifts to help other people.

Pray: Thank God for His special gifts to us.

—Marti Pieper

You Are Made Unique: Personality and Abilities

Play: Observe the color and type of your vehicle (blue SUV, red van, yellow car). When you see similar vehicles on the road, call out “eureka!” (“I found it!”)

Talk: Talk about the differences (age, wear, dents) among vehicles. Each has characteristics that make it unique. Like vehicles, no two people are exactly alike. [Psalm 139:14](#) says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” Discuss some of the differences between people, emphasizing God’s unique design. Identify two unique personality traits or abilities for each family member.

Pray: Thank God for the ways He has made your family members unique.

—Marti Pieper

God Planned Us

Play: Take turns thinking of different machines—such as a computer or a hair dryer. Then give firstperson clues about the object while others guess what it is: “I help you do homework. I sit on your lap or a desk.”

Talk: Computers, hair driers and other machines are complex and require careful design and construction. Your body is also complex and full of systems with interconnecting parts. Your body shows God’s careful planning. The Bible says that before you were born, God formed your inward parts and knit you together ([Psalm 139:13](#)). What are some of the amazing ways that different parts of a body work together?

Pray: Praise God for His miraculous work that’s shown in each person.

—Terri Foster

In His Image

Play: Ask each of your kids to look in a mirror and tell you what they see: eye and hair color, freckles, glasses, a missing tooth—everything!

Talk: When we look in a mirror, we see our own images. God created us in His image ([Genesis 1:27](#)), but that doesn’t mean that we all look alike or look like God. It means that we are like God in some ways. We don’t just have bodies and minds; we have spirits and emotions, just as God does. He created many wonderful things, such as oceans, trees and animals, but only people are created in God’s image. In what ways are we like God, and in what ways are we different from Him?

Pray: Thank God for loving us and for creating us in His image.

—Amy Cobb

on-the-go devotions

LOVE

Love Always Hopes

Play: Teach your children a new trick such as whistling, snapping their fingers, blowing a bubble with gum or saying a difficult tongue twister.

Talk: Learning something new can be hard. You may even feel like giving up; but if you believe you will learn and keep trying, eventually you’ll get it! When someone doesn’t treat us nicely, we may feel like giving up on that relationship and or no longer loving that person. But [1 Corinthians 13:7](#) teaches us that loving someone means never losing hope that things will change for the better. God loves us this way. Even when we do wrong, He loves us and never gives up on us. What are some ways that you can show hopeful love to others?

Pray: Thank God for always having hope in you, and ask Him to help you hope for the best for others.

—Naomi Cassata

Love Is Kind

Play: Ask your kids to bring their favorite toy to the sofa or along in the car. Instruct the children to share their toy with another family member, allowing him or her to hold it and play with it for five minutes. Ask if sharing their favorite toy was hard or easy.

Talk: Sometimes it's hard for us to share what we own. However, God was so kind that He shared His only Son with us. It was as if He said to us, "Jesus is more precious to Me than anything in all the world—but I'm giving Him to you!" That's true kindness. When we are kind to others, we are showing them godly love (1 [Corinthians 13:4](#)). What other ways have you seen the kindness of God in your life?

Pray: Give thanks for God's kindness to you, and ask Him to increase your kindness toward others.

—*Marcy Lytle*

Love Is Not Self-Seeking

Play: Divide a snack into enough portions for you and each of your children, but vary the size of the portions. Ask who wants the largest share, and don't hand out the snack until everyone agrees on who gets which portion. Then, give your share to the child who accepts the smallest portion.

Talk: When dividing a treat or doing something fun with a friend or sibling, we often want to give ourselves the biggest portion or be the first to play in a game. Putting others first can be hard. God asks us to love the people in our lives. We do this best when we stop to think about their needs instead of only our own. As 1 [Corinthians 13:5](#) tells us, love is not self-seeking because it seeks to meet other people's needs, too. What things can you do to put a friend or family member's needs before your own?

Pray: Ask God to help you not think only about yourself but about others, too.

—*Naomi Cassata*

Love Is Patient

Play: Play "the quiet game" and see who can go the longest without speaking or making a sound.

Talk: It takes a lot of patience to sit quietly and wait when you really want to talk or play. In 1 [Corinthians 13:4](#), the Bible tells us that real love, godly love, is patient. Sometimes that might mean that we give others the benefit of the doubt if they hurt us. Other times it might mean that we keep quiet instead of arguing when we disagree with someone. How else can you show patient love to others?

Pray: Pray that God will help you to love others patiently.

—*Crystal Brothers*

Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

Play: Take turns pretending to score points in a ballgame: throw a touchdown pass, kick a field goal, hit a home run, make a lay-up.

Talk: There are many situations where we keep score. In sports, we keep score to see who will be the winner. In school, we record grades to track students' progress. Sometimes, it can be tempting to "keep score" in relationships, as well. We want to remember the times when a friend or sibling hurt us. But 1 [Corinthians 13:5](#) tells us that godly love keeps no record of wrongs—no score. When we truly love someone, we don't keep score but instead forgive. How can you wipe out the score for someone in your life?

Pray: Pray that God will help you forgive others who hurt you, rather than keeping a record of wrongs.

—*Crystal Brothers*

Love Protects

Play: Show your children something fragile, like a porcelain teacup or glass knickknack, and ask them how they could protect the item from getting broken (don't play near it, don't pick it up and throw it, and so on).

Talk: Just as glass or porcelain can be easily damaged, our feelings can be easily hurt, too. A friend's careless words or actions can make us sad or angry. Other people's feelings are just as fragile as our own, and in 1 [Corinthians 13:7](#), we learn that to love others, we should try to protect their feelings. What are some ways that you can protect the feelings of others?

Pray: Ask God to help you protect the feelings of those around you.

—*Marcy Lytle*

God Loves Everyone

Play: Take turns with your kids thinking of an animal that begins with each letter of the alphabet. As you name each creature, also identify if it's "snuggly" or "scary."

Talk: Some animals seem safe and cuddly. Others seem dangerous, and we are careful not to get too close to them. Our relationships with people are sort of like that. It's easy to love the people who love us, but loving people who are unkind to us can be scary or difficult. With God, however, it's different: He loves each of us with all His heart, even when we do things that hurt Him. [Romans 5:8](#) says that God showed us His love by sending His Son to die for us. Since God loves us so much, what could we do to show His love to others?

Pray: Pray that you would love others like God loves you.

—*Jaime Schreiner*

Bear One Another's Burdens

Play: Let's pretend we're going on a hiking trip. What would you pack in your backpack? Go through the alphabet, with each person adding a new hiking- or camping-related item to the pack. Play continues until all letters of the alphabet have been used.

Talk: If we really packed everything mentioned in the game, that would be a very heavy pack! Sometimes in life, we have heavy things to carry. The Bible calls them burdens. Sometimes our burdens are physical, and sometimes they are emotional, such as sadness and anger. God wants us to help one another bear our burdens. By doing so, we fulfill the law of Christ ([Galatians 6:2](#)). What are some ways we can help carry someone else's burdens?

Pray: Pray that God will give you compassion for those carrying burdens and provide a way for you to share their load.

—*Crystal Brothers*

on-the-go devotions OBEDIENCE

Follow Jesus' Patterns

Play: Look around and find as many patterns as you can. At home you may see patterns on your floors or sofa cushions. While driving or walking, you may spot patterns on buildings or roads.

Talk: Patterns are not found only in things we see. Our behavior can also reflect patterns. When we often repeat a behavior, whether good or bad, it becomes a pattern. If we refuse to forgive those who mistreat us, for example, then we are forming a bad pattern. The Bible teaches us not to follow the bad patterns of this world ([Romans 12:2](#)). Instead we should try to follow Jesus' pattern. He taught us how to act so that others would see that we're trying to love like Jesus. What behaviors help others see Jesus in you?

Pray: Ask God to help you change bad patterns in your behavior to be more like Jesus.

—*Naomi Cassata*

Obey God

Play: Instruct your kids to shut their eyes. Then ask them to open their mouths to taste something you will give them. Notice whether your children readily follow your instructions or ask questions first.

Talk: Sometimes it can be hard to follow commands, but the Bible says those who live by faith don't shrink back ([Hebrews 10:38-39](#)). That means when God asks us to do something, we should listen to what He is asking us to do and try our best to obey. What could you do when you find it hard to obey?

Pray: Ask God to give you a faithful, obedient heart.

—*Marcy Lytle*

Bear Good Fruit

Play: Play “I’m Thinking of a Fruit Tree.” Describe different kinds of fruit trees based on the type of fruit they produce. For example, “I’m thinking of a tree that grows sour, yellow fruit,” or “I’m thinking of a tree that grows round, red fruit that is crunchy and sweet.” Have your kids guess what tree you’re describing.

Talk: Many trees look similar, but the type of fruit they produce sets them apart. Just as fruit trees can be recognized by the fruit that grows on them, our lives produce a kind of “fruit” that allows others to recognize us as followers of Jesus. These fruit aren’t foods, but actions—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—called the “fruit of the Spirit” ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)). What are some ways the fruit of the Spirit can be seen in your life?

Pray: Ask God to help you show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control to those around you.

—Nicole Brouwer

on-the-go devotions

POOR IN SPIRIT

Rich Beyond Your Wealth

Play: Describe what your day would be like as a famous person, such as a movie star, athlete or political figure. Let each child take a turn and talk about how money, fame and power might change how she lived.

Talk: We sometimes think that blessed people are those with a lot of material possessions. In [1 Timothy 6:17](#), the wealthy are told not to put their faith in what they own, but in God, who gives us what we need. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went as far as saying that people who are “poor in spirit” are blessed. So regardless of their circumstances—money, fame or power—if they treat others better than themselves and live in humility before God, they are considered wealthy or blessed in the kingdom of heaven. How might a humble attitude make you a blessed person?

Pray: Ask God for humility and the ability to know how great He is.

—Cortney Whiting

Recognize Your Helplessness

Play: Hide a dollar or new toy somewhere in your house or your car. Ask your children to cross their arms, sit cross-legged, close their eyes (and remain in their seatbelts, if in the car). Tell them that if they spot the treasure without saying a word or changing their position, they can keep it.

Talk: You probably felt frustrated. You were given a task, but you couldn’t use your arms, legs or voice. You were helpless to complete it. Realizing your helplessness might make you feel sad. But helplessness can be a good thing if it means you’re admitting to Jesus that you are unable to reach God on your own. Our sin separates us from God, and we’re helpless to remove our sin. That’s why Jesus, who lived a life without sin, died on the Cross to make us pure ([Romans 5:6](#)). His sacrifice washes away our sin and allows us to be drawn near to God. Once we realize that we are spiritually helpless, we can stop trying to reach God on our own and ask Jesus to help us. How do our sins remind us of our need for Jesus?

Pray: Ask God to remind you of your spiritual helplessness so you will always know your need for Jesus.

—Amy Simon



The Kingdom of Heaven

Play: Have one family member describe the perfect bedroom. When done, have each person finish this sentence: “If I were helping make your bedroom perfect, I would . . .” Ask each person to consider what the other family member has said and imagine putting something in the bedroom that the sibling or parent would like. Once enough special things are added, move on to the next person’s perfect bedroom description. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

Talk: When Jesus talked about heaven, He said, “In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:2). He is preparing a home, which we call “heaven,” for those who trust in Him. This new home will be located on a new earth (2 Peter 3:13), and if Jesus is preparing this place for us, it is going to be amazing. What might Jesus include in your heavenly home to help you understand how much He loves you?

Pray: Ask God to give you an excitement for the place He is preparing for you.

—Chris Brack

Ask for Help

Play: Make pairs. One person in the pair can use his voice, but can’t move. The other can move, but only if asked, and can’t say anything. Ask each pair to complete a task, such as having one person raise a hand and recite a Bible verse. (The person with the voice will have to ask the other person to move his own hand in the air and hold it while he recites the verse.) Other tasks might be to laugh and clap or sing and stand on one leg.

Talk: Whenever you have to do something you can’t do yourself, you should ask for help. Telling God you need His help is part of being “poor in spirit.” He wants us to tell Him our needs (Matthew 6:11). The Bible says we will be blessed if we display a spirit that humbly looks to God for answers (Matthew 5:3). Being poor in spirit makes us rich in God’s eyes. What are some ways that you can ask God for help each day—not just when you are in trouble?

Pray: Talk to God about what you need right now, and ask Him to help you trust Him.

—Julie Campbell

on-the-go devotions SALVATION

God Takes Our Guilt If We Ask Him

Play: Recite this poem together while family members sit cross-legged with their arms under their legs up to their elbows. They can straighten out on the third line.

My body’s like a pretzel; I know
it sounds odd,

But that’s how my heart feels
until I talk to God.

I’m now relaxed and happy, and
feeling good again.

I admitted I was wrong, and God
forgave my sin.

Talk: When we do something wrong, we often feel bad, twisted inside like a pretzel.

Psalm 32:3-5 reminds us that if we don’t admit our sin to God, our guilt can make us physically sick. If we talk to God and ask Him to forgive us, we can relax and feel good again. Only God can make our hearts pure, cheerful and healthy. Have you ever felt better after talking to Him? If so, what happened?

Pray: Ask God to help you confess your sins to Him so you won’t have to carry the heavy burden of guilt.

—Kelly J. Stigliano

God Wants to Know You

Play: Play a game of “I spy” focused on small items that do big or powerful things. For example, in a car someone may “spy” keys, the radio knob or a power window button.

Talk: The things you spied are small, but they cause big things to happen. Small things can have a big impact. Jesus was only 12 years old when He astonished the religious leaders with His knowledge. David was a young man when he defended God’s people and defeated Goliath. When we depend on God, neither size nor age matters because He is at work in us (1 Timothy 4:12). What are some big things you can do or have done by God’s power?

Pray: Thank God for using you to do great things because He is powerful.

—Naomi Cassata

God Gives Us Grace

Play: Play a few rounds of Simon Says. After a couple of rounds, allow one of the eliminated players to remain in the game. Say, “Though you deserve to be out because you didn’t follow Simon’s commands, I’m going to pretend it never happened.” Play again, allowing that person to continue in the game.

Talk: Each time we sin against God, we are not deserving of His forgiveness, yet He freely gives it to us. That’s called grace. [Ephesians 6:24](#) tells us that God’s grace is available to all who love Him. Because of God’s grace, we receive forgiveness and many other blessings. What are some ways that God has shown His grace to you?

Pray: Thank God that He freely gives grace to you. Pray that you would be able to share His grace with others.

—Rev. Jill Waltz

Hear and Believe

Play: Give each of your kids an unexpected small gift, such as a coin, treat or new crayons.

Talk: Jesus gives gifts, but not the same kind that parents or friends give us. In [John 5:24](#), He said that He would give an extra-special gift to those who listen to what He says and believe in God. The special gift Jesus promised us is forgiveness and life with Him. Because Jesus gives us the gift of forgiveness, how can we share that gift with others?

Pray: Thank God for the wonderful gift of life forever with Him.

—Marti Pieper

God’s Requirements

Play: Try to remember the good deeds that people you know have done in the last week. Take turns listing as many of these good deeds as you can in one minute.

Talk: God gives us the power to do good things. In [Micah 6:8](#), God says that He wants us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with Him. To “act justly” means to treat others in ways that follow God’s rules—telling the truth, not cheating or stealing. To “love mercy” means to show others kindness and grace. And to “walk humbly with your God” is to follow God obediently, allowing Him to be in control. What are some good things we could do today, and which category does each fit into?

Pray: Thank God for giving you the power to do what His Word says is good.

—Marti Pieper

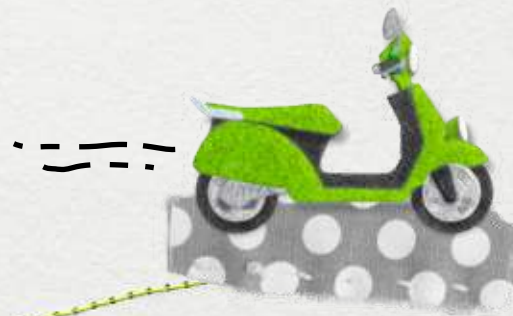
Becoming Children of God

Play: On a routine trip to school or church, have the kids close their eyes after they buckle up. With their eyes still closed, ask them to guess where they are on the route. After they guess, tell them the correct answer and have them open their eyes.

Talk: Did your kids believe your answer? Specifically ask if they believed you, in part, because you are their parent. God wants us to believe Him, too. He wants us to believe that He brought Jesus back to life, that Jesus is God and that we can completely trust Him. [John 1:12](#) says that when we believe God, we are His children. What are some ways we show that we believe what God says?

Pray: Thank God for accepting you into His family.

—Kim Banta



on-the-go devotions

SCIENCE & FAITH

Changing Matter

Play: Partially fill a clear glass jar with very hot or boiling water. Place a bowl or plate over the top of the jar. After a few seconds, fill the bowl or plate with ice. Watch for several minutes to see what happens inside the jar.

Talk: Trees, rivers and the air we breathe are all made out of matter. Matter is the stuff all around us. It appears in three forms: solid, liquid and gas. Some of these forms can change into other forms. In our experiment, we saw water in all three states. Steam (gas) formed from the hot water (liquid). Then the ice (solid) above it cooled the steam and caused it to rain (liquid) inside the jar. In nature, water turns to gas that forms clouds, and then the clouds water the earth. The Bible tells us that God puts the clouds in the sky and sends the rain, snow and frost ([Psalm 147:8,16](#)). Without this process, plants would not get the water they need to live. It demonstrates not only God's loving provision, but also His purposeful design. How does God lovingly provide for you? Where do you see His purposeful design around you?

Pray: Thank God for sending rain and caring for His creation.

—R.J. Griffith

God's Perfect Design

Play: Observe a bird in flight and discuss what makes it able to fly so well. The wings. The feathers. The bird's shape. Make paper airplanes of different shapes to see which ones fly best.

Talk: God perfectly designed birds for flight. We can see God's flawless design in other parts of His creation, too. God has placed the Earth at just the right distance from the sun so humans can live. If our planet shifted too close to the sun, we would burn up, and if it shifted away from the sun, we would freeze. God created our moon the perfect size and distance from our planet. If the moon were smaller, it would not pull on the oceans and cause the tides. If the moon were larger, it would bring such enormous tides that no one could live near any ocean. [Colossians 1:17](#) says that in God all things hold together. What has God created in your world that has worked perfectly?

Pray: Thank God for holding everything together and planning a world that was just right for our existence.

—Jolene Ceravalo and
Kristen Joy Wilks

God's Handiwork

Play: Go for a walk. Find the differences between the tree trunks you pass. If the trees have leaves on them, collect several. Make leaf or trunk rubbings by placing a blank sheet of paper on the trunk or the vein side of the leaf. Rub the side of a crayon over the paper.

Talk: God intricately designed large and small things, such as tree trunks and leaves. [Psalm 104](#) lists many of the wonderful things He made—clouds, mountains and valleys. He provided rivers and waters so animals can drink. He formed trees where birds can build nests. He filled seas with magnificent creatures from the smallest plankton to the largest whale. When we see the workings of His amazing creation around us, we realize that God cares about His handiwork. In what ways does God's creation show Him as an artist? How does it show Him as an engineer?

Pray: Thank God for His creation and ask Him to help you see the beauty and design of what He has made.

—Julie Reece-DeMarco

Invisible Things Give Evidence of God

Play: God can use things we can't see to change things we can see. Demonstrate this concept with this experiment:

1. Fill a clear plastic bottle with one inch of warm water.
2. Add a packet of yeast to the water and swirl it.
3. Add a teaspoon of sugar and swirl it.
4. Blow up a balloon to stretch it out, and then place the deflated balloon over the neck of the bottle.
5. Let the bottle sit in a warm place for about 20 minutes.

Talk: How did the balloon fill up with air? God created tiny living organisms called yeast. As the water dissolved the yeast, it became active. When yeast ate the sugar, it released carbon dioxide, a gas. This gas inflated the balloon. Even though we couldn't see all that was taking place, God designed the yeast, sugar and water to work in this way. [Colossians 1:16](#) states that Christ created all things, even things that are invisible. What has God done for you that you couldn't see until later?

Pray: Thank God for creating all things, even the things we can't see.

—Cortney Whiting

on-the-go devotions SERVANT'S HEART

A Servant's Heart Is Compassionate

Play: Take turns showing an emotion on your face. Let other family members mimic the facial expression and guess the emotion.

Talk: Understanding how people feel helps us recognize what they need and helps us respond to their needs with compassion. That's what Jesus did. He responded to the needs of those around Him by showing compassion. He healed the sick and fed the hungry. God wants us to do the same—to look at the people around us, see what they need and then serve them. When we see the needs of others (empathy) and then help them (compassion), we are serving God ([Matthew 25:35-36](#)). What is a need that one of our friends or relatives has, and what can we do to show him or her compassion?

Pray: Ask God for His love for others so you are able to show them His compassion.

—Rev. Jill Waltz

A Servant's Heart Is Grateful

Play: Have a gratitude contest. Take turns sharing about a nice thing that someone has done for you. Continue taking turns until someone can't think of anything to say.

Talk: When someone does something nice and unexpected, it makes us feel grateful. We appreciate what that person did because we know it took time, energy and resources. After people do something nice for us, sometimes we want to do something nice for them. The Bible says that we love because God first loved us ([1 John 4:19](#)). This means that because we experienced God's love first, we can love God and show His love to others. We do this out of gratitude for what He's done for us. What is one thing God has done for you that makes you want to do something nice for others?

Pray: Ask God to help you be grateful for what He's done for you so you can serve others in the same way.

—Cortney Whiting



A Servant's Heart Is Humble

Play: Stand in a line, one behind the other. Decide on where to go, such as to a specific tree or location in your house. The first person in line moves to the end of the line, so her back is facing in the direction of the destination. Then the next “leader” does the same, so you are one person closer to the goal. Those moving to the end steer the line’s direction. In this way, the line slowly moves in the opposite direction that you are facing, toward your goal, one person at a time.

Talk: Everyone wants to be first, but in God’s kingdom, the first will be last. Sometimes that idea is confusing. It doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t try to win at games or do well at school; rather, it means that God works through those who are humble and who serve others ([Mark 9:35](#)). We need a humble heart that puts others first. And it starts by our finding out what others need and not just giving people our leftovers. How do you put others first when you do what they need vs. what you think they need?

Pray: Thank God for showing us, through Jesus, how to live humbly.

—Naomi Cassata

A Servant's Heart Is Joyful

Play: Play the “ha” game. The first person starts out saying “ha.” The next person says “ha ha.” Play continues with each person adding one more “ha” than the last. (The game often ends with laughter.)

Talk: Saying ha isn’t laughter, but saying ha enough times often leads to the real thing. In the same way, serving others isn’t naturally fun, but when done with the right attitude, it is often rewarding and leads to real joy. Whether we are helping someone who needs help or doing chores at home, we can do these things with a servant’s heart, modeling how Jesus served us ([Philippians 2:4-7](#)). What is the difference between serving with a good attitude and a bad attitude?

Pray: Ask God to help you serve others with a glad heart.

—Naomi Cassata & Crystal Brothers

A Servant Shows Kindness to Others

Play: Ask your children to pick one person and write a coupon for that person. The coupon should help your kids show kindness to someone that week. For example, a coupon might say, “This coupon is good for one use to help you clean your room this week.”

Talk: It feels good when someone says or does something kind for us. [Ephesians 4:32](#) says, “Be kind to one another.” God shows kindness to us, and He wants us to be kind to others. When we are kind to other people, we show them God’s kindness and love, too. What is one way that you can be kind to someone?

Pray: Thank God for His kindness to you, and ask Him to help you show kindness to other people.

—Alice Zvacek

A Servant's Heart Is Trustworthy

Play: At the beginning of the day, give your children something of little value, such as a full sheet of paper or an egg, to take care of for the day. During your devotional time, ask your children how they cared for it. Let them show its condition.

Talk: Sometimes we are asked to do things that don’t seem important to us. However, completing the tasks we’re given is important to God. We should not look at how big, fun or popular a task is. Instead, we should think about how each thing we do, no matter how small, is a chance to serve God. When we wholeheartedly do what God has asked us to do, such as be kind to and help others, He is pleased with our faithfulness ([Matthew 25:23](#)). What are some little ways that you can serve God today?

Pray: Thank God for giving you opportunities to work for Him.

—Cortney Whiting



God Gives Me Strength

Play: Start a rhyming game of true statements beginning with I can . . . “I can tie my shoe.” The next person might say, “I can sing louder than you.” Have each person offer a statement using a new rhyming word.

Talk: [Philippians 4:13](#) says, “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” God gives us the ability to tie our shoes, sing and ride bikes. He even helps us do harder things, such as forgiving someone who’s hurt us or admitting when we’re wrong. God gives us a helper who strengthens us to do these things—the Holy Spirit. What are some things you need help with now?

Pray: Pray [Philippians 4:13](#), substituting each family member’s name in place of the I. “Carol can do everything through him who gives her strength . . . “

—Carol Hatcher

Strength in Weakness

Play: Choose a partner and thumb wrestle to see who is the strongest.

Talk: God gives us strength and wants us to recognize that it comes from Him. He also wants us to know that when we’re weak, we can ask for His help ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)). When we admit to God that we need Him, He will help us in our weaknesses. God wants us to rely on Him in everything we do, and our weaknesses can be a good reminder of our need for Him. What weaknesses can God help you with?

Pray: Pray that you would learn to rely on God every day, and give thanks for your weaknesses because they allow you to experience His strength.

—Susie Klein

Strong on the Inside

Play: Look for things that are strong, like buildings, bridges or bulldozers. Don’t forget people! Take turns flexing your muscles.

Talk: When we trust God, He makes us strong, kind of like a tall skyscraper or a big truck. He doesn’t always make us physically strong, but He does give us strong minds and strong hearts. When something bad or scary happens, we have the strength to face it because we trust God to be there with us ([Isaiah 40:31](#)). When have you felt God’s presence and strength in a difficult situation?

Pray: Ask God to help you remember that He gives us strong bodies, minds and hearts.

—Amy Cobb



on-the-go devotions

WHAT DOES GOD DO?

God Helps the Poor and Needy

Play: Take off your shoes and walk on a variety of surfaces. Have every family member describe how each surface feels.

Talk: Have you ever wondered what life would be like without shoes? Hot pavement would burn your feet. Icy surfaces would numb them. Sharp things would cut and scrape them. It would be hard to walk in a lot of places without shoes. Did you know that not everyone has a pair of shoes? Many people need shoes and other things, such as food, clean water and warm clothing. God says in [Psalm 72:13](#) that He is concerned for the needy. He takes care of even their smallest needs—ones we can and can't see. When we notice someone who is in need, we can join with God in helping that person. We can show His love by giving a hug, some food, clothes or a pair of shoes. How can you help someone in need today?

Pray: Pray that God will help you notice people in need and do what you can to help them.

—Christine St. Jacques

God Saves

Play: Have children take turns throwing an object either at a target or into a container. Make sure they are too far away or at the wrong angle to succeed. You should be between them and the target or container. After they have failed, have them hand the object to you. Then you can hit the target perfectly.

Talk: In our game, it was impossible for you to reach the target. But when you depended on me, I reached it for you. In life, we fall short of the life God wants for us. We are all guilty of sin ([Romans 3:23](#)), and sin keeps us from God. Only Jesus, God the Son, can make it possible for us to reach God. That is why Jesus died and rose again. He paid for our sins to free us from guilt and give us new life. This gift is called salvation. It is God's gift to all who believe that Jesus' death paid for their sin. This is great news everyone should hear! How can God use you to help others learn the truth?

Pray: Ask God to help you tell others about His gift of salvation.

—Donna K. Stearns

God Forgives and Wants Us to Forgive

Play: Have your children straighten their arms and hold something relatively heavy (rock, brick, backpack, purse, large book) until their arms grow weak.

Talk: God forgives us, and He commands us to forgive others, too ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). Did your arms feel weak holding that object? When it comes to forgiving someone who has hurt us, we're all weak. In fact, we probably can't truly forgive without God's help. If we ask Him, He will give us His strength to forgive others. Then we'll feel free, just as you probably felt when you let go of what you had in your arms. Is there someone you need to forgive today?

Pray: Ask God to help you understand the power of His forgiveness and the importance of forgiving others.

—Amy Lanham

God Comforts

Play: Make a verbal acrostic for the word comfort. Use one or more words beginning with each letter, c-o-m-f-o-r-t, to explain what the word means. For example: For "c," you could use Christ or caring; for "o," offer help.

Talk: In ([2 Corinthians 1:3](#)), the Bible calls God "the God of all comfort." His comfort brings us joy instead of sadness, courage instead of fear and hope instead of hopelessness. It helps us to trust Him no matter what happens. Through the comfort God gives, He wants us to comfort others. How can you bring comfort to someone this week?

Pray: Thank God for the comfort He gives you. Ask Him to help you comfort others.

—Donna K. Stearns

God Is Slow to Anger

Play: Ask your children if 30 seconds is fast or slow. Have everyone stand on one leg for 30 seconds. See how high you can count or how many letters you can say in 30 seconds. Watch a clock's second hand tick for 30 seconds. Try many different activities in the same time frame.

Talk: When things don't go your way, do you get angry? Anger usually happens fast, but [Psalm 86:15](#) reminds us that God is full of love and slow to anger. We need to be more like Him. If you feel yourself getting angry, wait for 30 seconds. Stop and think about what is happening. Repeat [Psalm 86:15](#). By waiting 30 seconds, we can slow down our anger. Then we will be better able to follow [Ephesians 4:26](#), which warns us not to let our anger lead to sin. How has your anger led to sin? How could you have shown God's love instead?

Pray: Ask God to help you to slow down when you are angry and remember to love others instead of responding in anger.

—Amy Fritsche and Sarah Kohrs

God Guides

Play: Give and follow each other's instructions, such as "Count by 2's up to 10," or "Show me three fingers, then blink twice" or "Tell me your favorite vegetable."

Talk: In order to follow instructions, we have to listen carefully. The most important instructions are in the Bible, God's message to us. Since He made us, He knows better than anyone what is best for us. If we listen carefully and follow God's instructions, He will show us how to live each day. [Psalm 73:24](#) tells us that God guides us in life, and that we may one day enjoy His glory in heaven. What can you do today to follow God's instructions?

Pray: Ask God to help you pay attention and obey His instructions in the Bible, knowing that He wants to share more of himself with you.

—Amy Fritsche

on-the-go devotions

WHO IS GOD?

A Father to the Fatherless

Play: Challenge your kids to list as many baby needs as they can in 30 seconds. Then see if your kids can beat their "score" by listing even more needs that older kids have.

Talk: Children of all ages need lots of things to have healthy lives. Some children, however, do not have families to help meet their needs. That's why [Psalm 68:5](#) says that God is a Father to the fatherless and will defend and protect them. Sometimes children are adopted by loving families who are able to provide for them. How can our family help those in need?

Pray: Thank God that you can come to Him in prayer. Ask God to help you remember those who have no one to care for them.

—Courtney Roberts

God Answers

Play: Try to create different bird sounds. Can you sound like a songbird? A duck? A crow? A parrot?

Talk: Birds often use their songs to call out to one another or warn others of danger. Sometimes, if you sound enough like their "friends," birds will call back to you! When we're in need, we can call out to God. And His response to us is so much more than just bird chatter; He knows our need and answers us. That's what [Psalm 17:6](#) says. While God doesn't always answer our prayers the way we want, His purposes are greater than ours. What are some ways God can answer prayers?

Pray: Thank God that when you call out to Him, He will always hear and answer.

—Tori R. Haverkamp

God Is Our Protector

Play: Test your child's knowledge. Name a full-grown animal and have your child tell you the baby name for it (e.g., cat/kitten, dog/puppy, chicken/chick).

Talk: A baby chick will hide under its mother's wings, where it feels safe. Kittens and puppies stay close to their parents for protection. [Proverbs 30:5](#) says that God is our protection. When we are afraid or worried, we can come to Him. But even while God protects us, He doesn't always prevent bad things from happening. Do you think there's a reason He wants us to experience those difficult times?

Pray: Thank the Lord that He offers protection and safety to those who seek refuge in Him.

—Naomi Cassata

God Is Our Provider

Play: Start telling a story and invite everyone to contribute. Begin with "Once upon a time ..." and let imaginations take it away. Each person directs the story to lead the main character to a problem. Just when the problem seems impossible, the next person provides a way out.

Talk: The Bible says that God will meet all of our needs through Jesus ([Philippians 4:19](#)). We might not see a solution to our problems, but God is always able to provide exactly what we need. Sometimes what He provides is the strength to endure our problems. Although we don't know exactly what will help us get through a tough situation, God knows and generously gives us what He knows we need. What are some ways we have seen God provide?

Pray: Pray that your family would trust God's promise to provide all your needs.

—Angie Reedy

Nothing Is Impossible for God

Play: Have your children sit. Ask them to touch things that are out of reach, without getting up. Next, whisper a question to them so they can barely hear it. Repeat these activities a few times.

Talk: In our game, it was difficult to touch beyond our reach or clearly hear the whispered messages. Our abilities are limited. But there is someone who can do anything. [Isaiah 59:1](#) says, "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear." Nothing is impossible for God, and we can pray when we need help. What kinds of things could you ask God to help you with?

Pray: Ask God to help you remember that He is bigger than any problem you may face.

—Naomi Cassata

on-the-go devotions

WISDOM

Heavenly Wisdom

Play: Ask your kids questions that test their wisdom: If you had three cookies and could share them with a friend or eat them all yourself without anyone knowing, what would you do? If you receive \$10 as a gift, would you save it, spend it, give it away or combine these options? Who can name a godly choice and a worldly choice in each scenario?

Talk: Throughout our lives, we need to make decisions. We have the choice to follow two kinds of wisdom. When we put our own needs and desires before the needs of others, we are choosing earthly wisdom ([James 3:14-15](#)). This kind of wisdom is not from God. When we are loving toward others and obedient to God's Word, we are choosing heavenly wisdom ([James 3:17](#)). When we choose heavenly wisdom, it shows in the way we behave. What are some choices you've seen other people make that show heavenly wisdom?

Pray: Ask God to help you choose the wisdom that comes from heaven.

—Naomi Cassata

Respect for God

Play: Have your children name a fictional character they consider wise (Gandalf from *The Hobbit*, Owl from *Winnie-the-Pooh*). Who can think of the longest list of characteristics that make this character wise?

Talk: Wisdom is not simply being smart and knowing things. And it's not "being old." According to [Job 28:28](#), wisdom is the fear of the Lord. This means that someone who is wise respects God and His commands. A wise person looks to God as the boss and makes decisions based on whether that choice will please God. On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the wisest, how wise are you?

Pray: Thank God for giving us the ability to be wise.

—Cortney Whiting

The Source of Wisdom

Play: Have your children tell you as many "wise" sayings as they can think of in two minutes. One example might be, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

Talk: Not all of these sayings are true or really wise. The way we measure what is wise is by deciding if it agrees with what is in the Bible. The Bible is the ultimate source of wisdom ([Psalm 119:105](#)). By studying Scripture, we grow in wisdom. What wisdom have you learned from your favorite Bible story or verse?

Pray: Thank God for the wisdom the Bible gives you, and ask Him to help you apply what you learn.

—Cortney Whiting

Wise Decisions

Play: See who can answer the most questions correctly: What's two plus eight? What two colors are mixed to create purple? Who built the ark? Where is our nation's capital? How many sides does an octagon have?

Talk: Answering those questions didn't take wisdom. Those answers are things you learned or memorized. Wisdom is different from knowledge. Knowledge requires studying, but true wisdom is knowing the right thing to do in a difficult situation. The Bible tells us that wisdom comes from heaven. God is happy to grant us wisdom. [James 1:5](#) says we only have to ask, and God will give us the wisdom we need. What decisions can you ask God to help you make today?

Pray: Pray about any decisions you need to make.

—Candice W. Allison

Decisions, Decisions

Play: As you drive or walk, determine where you want to go, but flip a coin to make decisions about how you're going to get there. "Heads, we turn right. Tails, we turn left." At each intersection, flip the coin to choose a direction. After four or five turns, evaluate how close you are to your destination, then finish your walk or drive without the coin.

Talk: Flipping a coin to decide how to get where we're going doesn't make sense and might even take us farther away from our destination. Fortunately, there's a better way to make decisions. The Bible says that God gives us wisdom through Jesus ([Colossians 1:9-10](#)). When we need to make an important decision, we can rely on Jesus to guide us in the right direction. How do you know whether you've made a good decision?

Pray: Ask God to help you make wise choices.

—Lisa Bartelt

Eternal Treasures

Play: Look for gold or silver alphabet letters on storefront signs. The first person to find his initials is the winner. (If you're in a rural area, see who can be the first to spot a shiny silver roof.)

Talk: Shiny, glittery things attract our attention and sometimes remind us of riches. [Proverbs 16:16](#) says that wisdom (knowing how God wants us to act) is better than riches. Gold and silver are not the treasures that make life good. How is wisdom better than money, fancy cars or diamonds?

Pray: Pray for wisdom to do what's right.

—Kathleen Grimm Welty

Thinking Good Thoughts

Play: Have kids close their eyes and imagine various destinations that you call out, such as a beach, a snow-covered hill, a campfire beneath the stars. Have them describe what's in their minds—what they smell, feel, taste, hear. Join the imaginary mental journey by adding additional sensory details.

Talk: Directing our thoughts to what's pleasant can positively affect our feelings and actions. How we think about something often affects what we say or do. That's why our thoughts are so important—they can cause us to make either good or bad choices. The Bible tells us to focus on ideas and images that are true, pure and lovely ([Philippians 4:8](#)). What are some thoughts that would help us make God-pleasing choices?

Pray: Ask God to help you think good thoughts that lead to positive action.

—Terri Foster

It's a Toss-up

Play: As you drive or walk, determine where you want to go, but flip a coin to make decisions about how you're going to get there. "Heads, we turn right. Tails, we turn left." At each intersection, flip the coin to choose a direction. After four or five turns, evaluate how close you are to your destination, then finish your walk or drive without the coin.

Talk: Flipping a coin to decide how to get where we're going doesn't make sense and might even take us farther away from our destination. Fortunately, there's a better way to make choices. The Bible says that God gives us wisdom through Jesus ([Colossians 1:9-10](#)). When we need to make an important decision, we can rely on Jesus to guide us in the right direction. How do you know whether you've made a good choice?

Pray: Ask God to help you make wise choices.

—Lisa Bartelt

on-the-go devotions WORSHIP

Our Awesome God

Play: Look up at the night sky and take in its wonder. Then guess how many stars are shining. Point out the North Star or any groups of stars or constellations you know, such as the Big Dipper, Orion or the Northern Cross. See if you find new patterns or designs.

Talk: Without a telescope, people can see up to a few hundred stars in a city and around 5,000 in a rural or nature-only area. With a telescope, we can see millions of stars, but not even astronomers can count all the stars in the universe. These lights in the night sky, though, are a constant reminder of God's greatness. In [Isaiah 40:26](#), we learn that God created the stars and calls each one by name. Just think, God is powerful enough to have created the heavens but tender enough to know the stars individually. In the same way, God is not only our Creator but also our Father, and He knows each one of us by name, too. What other things in creation help you understand God's power? What things show His tenderness?

Pray: Thank God for His ability to create more stars than we can see, while still knowing about each one.

—Nicole Brouwer

Crown of Splendor

Play: Try to spot gray or silver cars. See who can find the most.

Talk: The Bible talks about the color gray. [Proverbs 16:31](#) says that "gray hair is the crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life." This verse reminds us that we should respect our elders because they have lived a long time and learned what it means to be holy. What are ways you can show respect to the elderly people you know?

Pray: Spend a few moments praying for grandparents and elderly friends and neighbors.

—Lindsey Bell

Praise God, All the Earth

Play: Form a creation band! What would a creek sound like praising God? How about an ocean? Wind? Frogs? Elephants? Choose a part of creation to “sing” praises to the Lord, making nature sounds to the tune of your favorite worship song.

Talk: Singing praise to God is a fun way to worship Him. We can sing songs we know or make up our own tunes. We can play musical instruments or shout for joy to show God that we love Him and we’re grateful for His blessings. In [Psalm 148](#), we read that all of creation joins us in praising God. What are some of your favorite ways to worship the Lord?

Pray: Praise God and tell Him how much you love Him.

—Jan May

on-the-go devotions 1 JOHN 1

A Personal Testimony About Jesus

Play: Have your children “testify” about another family member. Ask them to list as many facts as they can about the family member in two minutes. At the end, ask them to explain why they know so much about that person.

Talk: We are able to describe people we know because we have spent time with them. Jesus’ disciples actually saw Him perform miracles, heard Him teach and touched Him after He rose from the grave ([1 John 1:1-2](#)). In fact, they lived alongside Jesus for about three years, which made them the perfect people to spread the Good News about Him. Because of these men’s testimonies, we have a record of who Jesus was and what He did when He was on earth. What are some things the disciples learned about Jesus by being able to see, hear and touch him?

Pray: Thank God for giving us the Gospels to show us a clear picture of who Jesus is.

—Cortney Whiting

No Beginning, No Ending

Play: Take turns making up short stories. Before each person’s turn, have family members name a person, place or thing to be included in the story. When a person has included that element, the person may touch someone else’s hand to tag out. Then the tagged person must end the story before the next person can start a new story.

Talk: The stories you created have a beginning and an ending, just as our life on earth has a beginning and ending. The Bible tells us that everything was created through Jesus, the Word ([John 1:1-4](#)). He is life and the giver of life ([1 John 1:1-4](#)). Although we had a beginning, Jesus did not. He was born as a human, but He has always been and always will be God. When He died on the Cross, death could not hold Him ([Acts 2:24](#)). He was too powerful. How does knowing that Jesus has no end make you feel safer?

Pray: Ask God to help you understand that Jesus is God. He was, is and always will be.

—Donna K. Stearns

Light or Darkness?

Play: Have one person name various actions, such as baking a cake for a friend or stealing lunch money. The others should shout, “In the light,” meaning it’s OK for others to see what they’re doing, or “In the dark,” meaning people prefer to not have others see their actions.

Talk: When your family did this activity, you were able to connect sinful activities, things you didn’t want others to see, to darkness and other activities, things that were OK for others to see, to the light. The Bible tells us in [1 John 1:5](#) that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all. The darkness mentioned here is a picture of sin. When we follow God, we choose to act in godly ways that keep us in His light. When we ignore God’s way, we choose darkness instead of God’s light. Can you name some actions that show God’s light and some that show the world’s darkness?

Pray: Ask God to help you continue to walk in His light and not in the darkness of the world.

—Heather Greer and Alice Zvacek

Cleaning Up

Play: Ask your kids what each would do to see who could get his or her clothes the dirtiest. Rate the ideas as: most original, dirtiest, slimiest, most fun, hardest to clean, etc.

Talk: When we really know Jesus, we realize that He is perfect and we are a mess. It is like comparing a perfectly clean, white shirt with one smeared with pizza, chocolate and sticky mud. Our sin makes our hearts disgustingly dirty. The Bible promises that God will cleanse our hearts through the blood of Jesus if we admit our sin and ask His forgiveness (1 John 1:7,9). Why is it so hard to admit that we aren't perfect?

Pray: Ask God to help you recognize and admit your sin so that He can cleanse your heart.

—Jeanne Dennis and Christine St. Jacques

Lying About Sin

Play: Play a game of "Totuto's Excuses." Have one person tell about something bad that Totuto might do, such as cheating on a test. Then have everyone make up an excuse as if to justify the behavior. Silly, ridiculous excuses make the activity more fun, such as the reason why Totuto cheated on the test was because the invisible, man-eating lion next to him in the classroom wanted the right answer to question seven, and Totuto knew he didn't have it. Once the excuses are done, have the first person tell what Totuto should do to make up for the bad behavior, regardless of whether he was caught.

Talk: Even though silly excuses can make us laugh, they do not justify wrong behavior. Most excuses are an attempt to justify actions. Many are lies. We invent excuses to make ourselves look good, but the reality is that our wrong behaviors make us sinners. God says all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23). If we say we never sin, we are actually lying to ourselves (1 John 1:8). God wants us to admit our wrong behavior, instead of trying to make excuses. Once we admit we're sinners, we will know we need a Savior. How do you know you are a sinner?

Pray: Thank God that we can come to Him for forgiveness when we sin.

—Jolene Ceravalo

on-the-go devotions

1 JOHN 2

Don't Be Deceived

Play: Think of a family memory. As the family retells the story together, add a few things that aren't true. See if anyone stops and corrects you.

Talk: People usually retell stories in a way that makes them sound even better than what really happened. Sometimes they include things that aren't true, either because of a faulty memory or a desire to make a story sound better. When it comes to telling people about God, some may try to deceive us on purpose, and others who are confused about the truth may try to get us to believe as they do. They might want to convince us that Jesus was only a man and not God. When this happens, we need to reject what they say and believe what God's Word says. The Bible says that whoever denies Jesus as the Son of God doesn't have the Father, but whoever believes in Jesus has the Father also (1 John 2:23). This means that Jesus and the Father are one (John 10:30). Without Jesus, we can't know God. What are some ways that we can keep from being deceived about who Jesus is?

Pray: Pray that the Lord will reveal His truth to you and help you stay firm in your belief in Jesus.

—Crystal Brothers



Be a Copycat

Play: Make a list of people, such as relatives, celebrities or other individuals, that everyone in your family would know. Have the whole family imitate one person on the list. Decide who did the best impersonation. Continue in this way for each person on your list.

Talk: We often recognize people by their mannerisms and the way they act because what they say and do are familiar to us. To become more familiar with what Jesus said and did while on earth, we can read the Bible and go to church. But if we really want to know Jesus, we must also spend time with Him in prayer so that we understand His heart. In [1 John 2:3-6](#), the Bible tells us that if we really know Jesus, we will obey His commands and live our lives as He did. What are some ways that you can imitate Jesus?

Pray: Pray that you would know Jesus more, follow His example and obey Him.

—Sandra Hendricks

Eyes on the Light

Play: Choose one person to hold a flashlight. In a darkened room, have other family members close their eyes. The flashlight holder should point the flashlight toward one person and then another, slowly. With eyes closed, everyone should turn toward the light and try to keep their faces in the direction of the light as it moves.

Talk: The Bible tells us that anyone who hates others is in darkness, but those who love are in the light ([1 John 2:9-11](#)). Jesus commanded us to love one another, so we disobey Him when we hate others. Hate is like a blindfold that makes it hard for us to follow God's light and do His will. If we take off the blindfold by choosing to love others, no matter what they have done, then we can see clearly how to obey God and serve others. How would the relationships around you change if you asked God to remove your hate and put on His love?

Pray: Ask God to help you love everyone and follow His light.

—Naomi Bivins

Stay Connected to Jesus

Play: Have your children take turns grabbing hold of your waist from behind. Tell them, "Keep holding onto me. If you stay connected to me, you'll get a reward." Do various movements—some easy, some challenging. If they get disconnected from you, let them try again. After your children have followed for a few minutes, give them each a reward.

Talk: Even when we don't do things right every time, life is better when we stay connected to Jesus. We stay connected, or "abide," by praying, reading His Word daily and trying to live the way He lived. When we do this, we will get to know Jesus better. He will mean more to us than anything or anyone else, and we will obey Him out of ([2 Corinthians 1:3](#)) love. Then when He comes back for us, we will be excited to see Him and have confidence in His love for us ([1 John 2:28](#)). How can you stay connected to God?

Pray: Pray that God will help you know, love and obey Him more every day.

—Christine St. Jacques

What Do You Love?

Play: Take turns being the announcer of a commercial for a product or service, trying to convince other family members to buy it. Then talk about how each commercial made you desire the item, appealed to your senses, made you feel good or bad about yourself, or convinced you that others would think better of you.

Talk: Sometimes we think we need something just because it looks, feels or tastes good, or makes us feel good about ourselves. The Bible teaches that we should love the Father more than the things of this world. According to [1 John 2:15-17](#), worldly things that look, feel and taste good will not last forever. Even our accomplishments will not satisfy us for long. God deserves to be first in our lives and hearts. He wants us to love Him more than earthly things. Only He can give us joy that lasts forever. What are three ways you can show your love for God?

Pray: Ask God to help you love Him more than the things of this world.

—Rhett H. Wilson, Sr., Ph.D.

Bridging the Gap

Play: Have two family members stand apart and figure out how to form a bridge between them for a stuffed animal to cross, using only their bodies. (They can try extending arms or legs, bending at the waist, etc.) Then have them back up one step and make the bridge again. Continue taking steps back and making bridges until they are too far apart to reach. Have another family member step in to help form the bridge. Continue in this way until the whole family is part of the bridge and it covers the longest area possible.

Talk: Bridges reach across an expanse to connect things. They help us get from one place to another. Jesus, God's Son, is the bridge between us and God, our go-between or "advocate," as the apostle John puts it ([1 John 2:1-2](#)). Sin separated us from God ([Isaiah 59:2](#)), but Jesus made a way for us to reconnect with God. If we cross the bridge by believing in Jesus, He removes our sin and makes peace between God and us. Give an example of when someone has helped make peace between you and another person.

Pray: Thank God for sending Jesus to bridge the gap between Him and us.

—Donna Stearns

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Keeps No Record of Wrongs; Love Like Jesus; Love Protects; Make Time to Pray; Nothing Is Impossible for God; Obey God; Praise God, All the Earth; Protected By Angels; Recognize Your Helplessness; Respect for God; Rich Beyond Your Wealth; A Servant Shows Kindness to Others; A Servant's Heart Is Compassionate; A Servant's Heart Is Grateful; A Servant's Heart Is Humble; A Servant's Heart Is Joyful; A Servant's Heart Is Trustworthy; Share Your Faith; Shield of Faith; The Source of Wisdom; Sword of the Spirit; Wise Decisions

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