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june 2012



1 Go to a restaurant and buy something inexpensive. As you pay, tell the cashier you'd like to secretly pay for the next person's order. Watch how that person responds to your free gift. Talk about how we respond to God's free gift to us (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2 Your family can take advantage of the summer months to focus on health and fitness together — and win great prizes in the process. For more information, check out the *Clubhouse* fitness challenge at ThrivingFamily.com/extra/clubhouse.

3 Visit ThrivingFamily.com for this week's family devotion about how we can know God's purpose and plan for our lives.

"Summer Calendar Devos"

4 Fill a bucket with water, and churn with one hand. Take turns dipping hands into the resulting whirlpool, noting how it's easier to move "with the flow" than to go the other way. Explain that it's often easier to follow others, but obeying God sometimes means we must go against the flow (Romans 12:2).

5 God asked His people to use stones as reminders of His faithfulness (Joshua 4:1-7). Hunt for and collect interesting rocks. Recall ways God has been faithful to your family. Leave your rocks at your front door as reminders of God's faithfulness.

6 Cut out large paper raindrops. On each one, write something you're thankful for. Hang them in a window so on rainy days you can be reminded of God's showers of blessings (Ezekiel 34:26).

7 Climb a hill, and admire the view. Talk about how God sees our lives from a higher perspective. As you walk to the bottom, explain that God is always with us. We can trust Him to take care of us (Isaiah 55:9).

8 Have a picnic, giving each child a bag filled with one type of food—sandwiches in one, fruit in another, etc. As everyone shares his or her food, talk about how God gives us each different spiritual gifts so we can serve others (1 Peter 4:10).

9 Black Bear Bread? Healthy, do-it-yourself granola bars? For fun recipes that will give you and your child quality time together, visit ClubhouseMagazine.com/create.

10 Visit ThrivingFamily.com for this week's family devotion about how God has uniquely designed each person.

"Summer Calendar Devos"

11 In the warmth of the afternoon sun, have fun washing the car—and soaking each other—with the garden hose. As you enjoy the work, discuss how great it feels to take care of the things God has given you (Matthew 25:14-29).

12 Head to the beach or a sandbox, and ask your children to count the grains in a handful of sand. When they realize they can't, explain that God's thoughts about us number more than all the grains of sand in the world (Psalm 139:17-18).

13 Read product labels on different items found in your home. What countries were they made in? Locate those countries on a map, and look up facts about them. Pray for the people who made the products you're using (1 Timothy 2:1).

14 Using an inkpad, have your kids press their fingertips to the ink, then to paper. With a marker, add details to the imprints to create animals or plants. Talk about how we can see God's fingerprints in nature (Romans 1:20).

15 Make a cake or a batch of cinnamon rolls with your kids. Then spread frosting abundantly over your creation, talking about how our heavenly Father lavishes His love on His children (1 John 3:1). Enjoy the abundance together!

16 Help your kids make a special "blessings shirt" card for their father! This colorful Father's Day card has a pocket where kids can place notes of love and thanks. Find instructions at ThrivingFamily.com.

"Father's Day Card"

17 Visit ThrivingFamily.com for this week's family devotion on the gifts of the Spirit.

"Summer Calendar Devos"

18 Distribute squirt guns, water balloons and buckets for a family "water war." Talk about how good water feels on a hot day. Tell your kids that only Jesus can give us water that quenches our spiritual thirst (John 4:14).

19 Study bugs with a magnifying glass. Talk about all the wonderful ways God has designed each one—giving it large eyes for spotting hungry birds or interesting wings to fly with. Talk about how God provides for us, too (Matthew 6:28-30).

20 Take a walk with your kids through your neighborhood, praying that the Lord will give guidance and wisdom to those who live near you. On the way home, ask God to help your family reflect His love to your neighbors (Luke 10:25-37).

21 After sunset, sit on a blanket outside and admire the night sky with your family. Using dark blue or black paper, white paint and toothpicks for brushes, copy the star-filled sky. Explain that the God who placed the stars in the heavens also cares for our every need (Psalm 8:1-4).

22 Make "initial pancakes" for breakfast, using a slightly thinner batter and a turkey baster to "draw" the letters. As you eat, talk about how our names are only a part of our identity. We are also known as children of God (Romans 9:26).

23 Visit WhitsEndBlog.org/thriving to download "For Trying Out Loud," a free episode of Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey* that will encourage your children to understand the unique abilities that God has given them.

24 Visit ThrivingFamily.com for this week's devotion on the fruit of the Spirit.

"Summer Calendar Devos"

25 Send your kids on a treasure hunt, following clues that lead them from place to place in your yard or home. The treasure? A fun dessert or treat along with instructions to look up Psalm 119:72. God's Word is a treasure!

26 Look up pictures of animals to use as examples of character qualities. Compare the sluggishness of a sloth to the diligence of an ant (Proverbs 6:6-8). Marvel at the boldness of a lion (Proverbs 28:1). Talk about character traits God desires for us.

27 Ask your kids to find an item in your home that reminds them of their grandparents or another close relative. After they've explained the connection, pray together, thanking the Lord for the special people in your family.

28 Paint pictures and messages on the sidewalk using large paintbrushes and water. Notice how quickly the water fades away in the heat. Explain to your kids that God's love will never fade away (Psalm 106:1).

29 Skip the Friday-night pizza this week. Instead, pick an ethnic food from the country of one of your church's missionaries. As you eat, talk about life in that country. Pray for the missionaries and for hearts to be opened to the Gospel (Matthew 24:14).

30 Visit WhitsEndBlog.org/thriving to download "Potential Possibilities," a free episode of Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey* that will encourage your children to put their gifts and talents to good use.



Illustration by JoJo Ensslin



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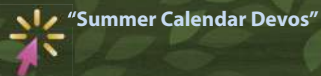
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1 Visit **ThrivingFamily.com** for our family devotion on how God uses people of all ages and abilities to accomplish His plan.



2 Hide a cellphone somewhere in your home and then call its number. Ask your kids to follow the ring to find the phone. Discuss ways God tries to get our attention so that we will follow where He leads (Psalm 85:8).

3 Celebrate America's godly heritage. Show your kids a few coins and paper bills from your wallet or purse. Look for the phrase "IN GOD WE TRUST" on each one. Read Proverbs 3:5-6, and talk about ways we can show that we trust God.

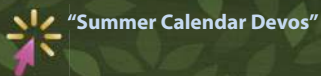
4 Have your kids hold their hands behind their back—and encourage them to try to eat breakfast or get dressed this way. Discuss how it's easy to take our freedom for granted. Pray as a family for those who protect our freedom.

5 Test crayons with fancy names, such as cerulean or burnt sienna. Decide the crayon's common name, such as blue or brown. Explain that some people give fancy names to sin: "white lie," "five-finger discount," "to fudge," but the names do not change that it is still sin (James 4:17).

6 Make "manna" by cutting small pieces of bread and spreading a dab of honey on them. Talk about God's provision for the Israelites in the wilderness and His provision in our own lives (Exodus 16).

7 Enjoy your family's unique voices! Record your kids reading poems, singing or impersonating famous characters. Visit **WhitsEnd.org/GetInTheShow** to learn how your kids could star in an upcoming episode of Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey*!

8 Visit **ThrivingFamily.com** for our family devotion on letting God's glory shine through you.

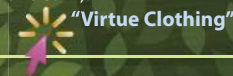


9 Play a game of "horse" using your own basketball hoop or at a local park. Instead of earning the letters *h-o-r-s-e* for each missed shot, players get a word to this verse: "Praise-be-to-the-LORD forever!" (Psalm 89:52).

10 Count the names of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Write them on cards. Then talk with your kids about the meaning of each of these special names.

11 Using a small mirror, help your children reflect light from the sun into darker areas—under a car, into a cluster of trees, etc. Pray together, asking God to help you reflect His light and love to those who do not know Him (John 8:12).

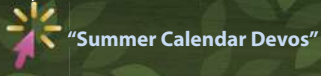
12 Help your children cut small articles of clothing out of paper and label them "compassion," "kindness," "humility," "gentleness" and "patience." Hang the paper clothes on a string in their room to remind them to put on virtue each morning as they dress (Colossians 3:12).



13 Ask your children to help cook supper and set the table. Tell them what you enjoy about preparing meals. Praise your kids for tasks they perform well. Explain that God wants us to serve others so they may see His love through us (Ephesians 6:7).

14 Visit **WhitsEndBlog.org/thriving** to download "Let This Mind Be in You," a free episode of Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey* that will encourage your child to follow Jesus' example in everyday ways.

15 Visit **ThrivingFamily.com** for our family devotion on discovering ways to bless others.



16 Move the cars and bicycles from your driveway and use sidewalk chalk to create a giant family portrait. Explain to your kids that their creativity is one of the ways they reflect the image of God, who crafted all creation (Isaiah 45:11-12).

17 Make paper helicopters, and drop them from a high place. Observe how they move in the breeze. Explain that the wind is a good picture of God's presence. We can't see Him, but He is always present (Psalm 139:7-10).



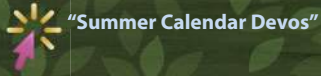
18 As you put your children to bed, observe the shadows in the room. Some may look scary. Turn on the light and the shadows are gone. There's nothing to be afraid of. Pray together, thanking God for His protection while we sleep (Psalm 3:5-6).

19 Plan a talent show. Prepare a stage, and set out simple snacks. After the show, talk about the skills and talents God has given each person. Discuss how our abilities glorify Him (1 Corinthians 12:4-5).

20 Cut up some fruit, like cantaloupe, strawberries and grapes. On white plates, use the pieces to create faces or figures that represent your family. Explain to your children that God wants our lives to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

21 Can you use movies to teach truth? Yes! Head to **PluggedIn.com** to pick out a discussion guide for a family movie night. *Thriving Family's* pick: *Fly Away Home* (kids) or *Remember the Titans* (teens).

22 Visit **ThrivingFamily.com** for our family devotion on working together as a family to serve others.



23 Ask your kids to predict how far they can jump. Then, on soft grass, have them try to reach their goal. Measure results, giving praise for effort and improvement. Explain to your kids that God's abilities are so great they are immeasurable (Ephesians 3:20).

24 List words that describe your family. Talk about the things you value as a family. Design a family crest and use it as a conversation piece that tells others about who you are in Christ (1 Peter 2:9).



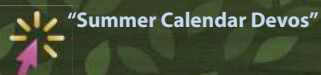
25 Make a prayer collage to help kids remember the people they want to pray for. From photographs of family members to a picture of the president, cut out the images and fill a sheet of paper to hang by your child's bed (Ephesians 1:16).

26 Make a simple, homemade bird feeder. Spread peanut butter on cardboard tubes and roll them in birdseed. Hang your feeder outside. Tell your kids that just as God cares for His creation, so, too, will He meet our needs (Matthew 6:26).

27 Help your kids make biscuits drizzled with warm honey. Talk about the golden color and sweetness of the honey. Explain to your kids that the words of God are even sweeter (Psalm 19:9-11).

28 For a movie night with meaning, head to **PluggedIn.com** to pick out a discussion guide for a family-friendly film. *Thriving Family's* pick: *Searching for Bobby Fischer*.

29 Visit **ThrivingFamily.com** for our family devotion on how the Great Commission starts at home.



30 Have a three-legged race (or a sack race) as a family. As you collapse on the grass at the finish line, notice how your lungs are working to draw in air. Tell your kids that everything that has breath can praise the Lord (Psalm 150:6).

31 Plan an outing to a local park or other fun place. Have your kids draw a map with walking or driving instructions. Discuss how we can recognize God's instructions to know which way to turn in our daily lives (Isaiah 30:21).

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