

June 2018

Home Front

a spiritual parenting resource

1246



HOW TO USE

HomeFront

Each issue highlights an environment your family can create in your home. This month looks at MODELING. Each magazine is divided into two sections: Family Time and Inspire, Equip, Support.

Family Time articles
are created to equip you to engage
with your children on a regular basis.

Inspire, Equip, and Support articles
are parenting stories, devotions, and ideas to encourage
you as you spiritually lead your household.

USE THIS GUIDE TO GET FAMILY TIME STARTED.
IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3 ...

- 1** Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening, afternoon, or morning. Just commit to building this time into your family's natural rhythm—perhaps around a meal.
- 2** Look through HomeFront to see what stands out. Choose two or three experiences you would like to incorporate into your family times this month. Don't feel burdened to complete all the activities—just do what fits your family best. This resource provides more than enough experiences to create transforming environments in your home throughout the month.
- 3** Remember to *HAVE FUN!* Strive to make each gathering unique to your own family as you enjoy spending time with God and one another.



Michelle Anthony

Executive Pastor: Family Ministries | New Life Church

Michelle is the Executive Pastor of Family Ministries at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. Michelle has graduate degrees in Christian education, theology, and leadership and more than 25 years of church ministry experience as a children's and family pastor. She loves a good book and a cup of coffee.

Twitter @TruInspiration

“ We believe that the Holy Spirit is God’s chosen teacher. It is He who causes spiritual growth and formation when and as He chooses. As such, we have articulated 10 distinct environments to create in your home. We desire to create spiritual space, which we refer to as an environment, in which God’s Spirit can move freely. ”

Ephesians 5:1 (ESV) says, “Be imitators of God, as beloved children.” We know that children love to imitate, so what do we as parents want them to imitate? As a parent, one of my deepest desires is for my kids to imitate God’s truth. The environment of **MODELING**, then, becomes an expression of that. We become living representatives of what that truth means.

We are people who have experienced God’s love through Christ and God’s forgiveness in the model of Christ. Christ was and is our living example. The environment of **MODELING** serves as a hands-on example of what it means for all of us to put this faith into action.

This month, as you model for your family what it looks like to live out a compelling and authentic faith, our prayer is that your view of God’s truth and love would be on display for others.

PARTNERSHIP

HomeFront magazine is a nonprofit ministry of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. If you are passionate about this resource and the families it equips, please consider making a one-time or monthly donation to allow this ministry to continue to reach thousands of homes.

Please go to pushpay.com/pay/nlcministries and choose “HomeFront” from the Giving Type to make your tax-deductible donation. Thank you for helping *HomeFront* minister to families around the world.

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Things you won’t want to miss:

- Parent blogs to inspire you
- Mobile-friendly format
- Lots of downloadable giveaways
- Marketplace to purchase article bundles and more!

The website is filled with fresh ideas and creative resources to help you spiritually parent your children.

OUR MISSION



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



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



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

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The environment of **MODELING** usually inspires our HomeFront team to focus on the importance of parents modeling to their children. But this issue is different. This issue is filled with stories of kids who are the models—kids who let their lights shine to others and are truly a generation of world changers.

STORYTELLING (page 18) and **GOD'S WORD** (page 28) remind us of Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers." In fact, a 16 year old wrote this month's **TRADITIONS** (page 14), and a 14 year old wrote **STUDENT ID MIDDLE SCHOOL** (page 36). Both of these young people are already making a big impact.

CAPTURING THE SEASON (page 8) gives your family a great way to work together to raise money for your favorite cause, and **CREATE** (page 20) provides a fun way to save and display what you earn! Our **PRAYER** (page 17) challenge this month is to pray together as a family and ask God to show you the who, what, and how to share His love.

We hope these articles will encourage you with the knowledge that the next generation is full of compassionate and hardworking young people who don't see limits to what they can do. The young people highlighted in this issue are inspiring examples not only to their peers but to everyone who hears their stories. Our prayer is that this issue of HomeFront will challenge your children to forge into their futures and allow their lights to shine bright for Jesus!

Debbie Guinn

Debbie Guinn

Editor in Chief | New Life Church
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Debbie is the Editor in Chief of HomeFront magazine. She has more than 25 years of experience working in children's and family ministries. She is passionate about equipping parents to become leaders of God's truth in their own households. She is a recent transplant to Austin, TX, where she co-parents two of her four grandchildren with her son. She spends her free time enjoying her grandchildren and perusing antique stores and flea markets.

FAMILY VERSE

Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God's Spirit in these words who transforms. We come to know God more when we're willing to open our hearts and listen to His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with this verse, and think of creative ways to invite your family to open up to God as they commit the verse to memory.



Consider purchasing an 8" x 10" frame to hold your family memory verse each month!

IN THE SAME WAY,
★ LET YOUR LIGHT



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

CONTENTS

FAMILY TIME



5
FAMILY VERSE
Matthew 5:16

8
CAPTURING THE SEASON
Lemonade Stand

10
WORSHIP
God-Honoring Speech

12
CONVERSATION STARTERS
How We Teach

14
TRADITIONS
The Beginning of a Tradition

16
PRAYER
Ask God to Show You



18
STORYTELLING
Putting Feet on Faith

20
CREATE
Shadow Box Bank

22
GAME TIME
Shining My Light

24
FAMILY TIME RECIPE
Rosemary and Lemon
Roasted Potatoes

26
KIDS IN THE KITCHEN
Lemonade and
Lemon Crinkle Cookies

28
GOD'S WORD
Never Too Young

30
TOT TIME RHYME
When You Get Up

31
BLESSING

32
TAKING ACTION
Kind Lips

34
GLOBAL
Sierra Leone

**INSPIRE
EQUIP
SUPPORT**

36
**STUDENT ID
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
How to Be an Awesome Parent

38
**STUDENT ID
HIGH SCHOOL**
Heart for Hope

40
EVERYDAY MOM BLOG
Raising a World Changer

42
EVERYDAY DAD BLOG
Pay It Forward

44
TOUGH TOPICS
Up and Off the Ground

46
MARRIAGE
The Importance of Modeling
a Healthy Marriage

48
**SPIRITUAL
GRANDPARENTING**
Clean Water Scavenger Hunt

CAPTURING THE SEASON

FAMILY TIME



LEMONADE STAND

Sometimes children see a difficult situation and are moved with compassion but they don't have a way to take action and help. This summer, consider making this easy lemonade stand to help your children earn money for their favorite cause. Encourage them to invite their friends to help as they model what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a simple and tangible way.

This month's Kids in the Kitchen (page 26) has lemonade and lemon crinkle cookie recipes that are sure to make your lemonade stand a worthwhile stop!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 4 wooden crates (can find at Walmart)
- 2 square wooden dowels (ours are 3' x 1/4")
- 4 nails or brads
- hammer
- 3 cans spray paint
- banner or bunting

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Spray paint the crates and dowels.
2. After the paint has dried, arrange the crates: two side by side and two on top.
3. Attach the dowels to the outside rear corners of the top two crates using the nails or brads.
4. Tie the banner or bunting to the dowels.

by Debbie Guinn



GOD-HONORING SPEECH

“No, thank you!” The phrase is a simple dissent, yet the “thank you” makes all the difference. It takes a word that feels rather harsh on my tongue and molds it into something sweet, polite, and quite lovely. And since my two year old is a certified professional in the art of mimicking, I pray each morning for the grace of God to consume me so that I might speak in a way I want him to emulate.

Speaking to others with respect and courtesy, even when it’s most difficult, is something I expect of my children. Because I know that God has trusted me to be an earthly model of this for my boys, when my son makes a poor choice such as spewing water from his mouth so as to transform into a water fountain, I gently correct him by simply saying, “No, thank you!” And it certainly doesn’t always come easily. I oftentimes must battle against the inclinations of my frustrated, fallen flesh toward my little human sprinkler, but the Holy Spirit urges me to recognize the safe, God-honoring space I desire to create for my sons within the walls of our home.

Using my voice toward them in a way that promotes a sense of security is one way I can worship the God who grants me that same unconditional love. When I use respectful words with my oldest, I offer him a model of how to worship in the same way as he relates to his little brother. So when I heard him utter those three magical words (not as gently as I would have loved, but one step at a time, right?) as his little brother began a rather swift army crawl toward the puzzle he was currently solving, I couldn’t help but beam as I finished washing those dishes. And I never even think about smiling when I wash the dishes, so I knew this moment was quite extraordinary.

Because, you see, this little boy of mine had taken a very small but intentional act of worship that I had displayed for him time and time again, and in his own moment of frustration, he had chosen to model God’s kindness toward his brother. That moment gave me every confidence that the multitude of ways in which our family worships God, whether it be attending church, tithing with cheerful hearts, sponsoring a young girl from Ghana, or seeking and praising the Lord in prayer, are taking root. These acts of worship are penetrating his heart and igniting within him an undeniable desire to be the city on a hill that we are called to be.

by Krista Ward

Krista is a former first-grade teacher turned stay-at-home mom to two insanely precious little boys. She is married to her best friend and high school sweetheart, Randy, who is the peanut butter to her chocolate. Krista hopes to be a light and joy to the world, especially to other mamas feeling stuck in the daily grind, through her writing. You can follow Krista’s journey through marriage and motherhood on Instagram and her personal blog.



@kissesfromboys



kissesfromboys.com



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

HOW WE TEACH

I sometimes catch myself wondering, in a fearful way, if I am teaching my five-year-old son the “right” things. I am a former teacher, so it is important to me that we work on counting and writing letters before he starts kindergarten in August. He is in a phase of telling little white lies, so we are working on always telling the truth. His personality is also one that just wants to rush through things to get to the next task, so we are working on always doing our best in everything we do. So much teaching (and let’s be real—preaching) happening in this house and yet I lie awake at night thinking about all the things that I want him to know that we haven’t even touched on—perseverance, selflessness, gentleness, etc.

As we get wiser at this parenting thing, my husband and I are starting to understand that our five year old picks up more of what we do than what we say. While there might not be enough time in each day to have mini lessons about ALL of the things, our children will pick up on whether or not we are putting our faith into action through the way we live our daily lives. Are we modeling kindness to the customer service rep on the other end of the phone? Are we modeling integrity when we take an item back into the store after realizing that the cashier forgot to scan it? Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others—our children—are watching to see if we live what we believe. When we live our lives as the hands and feet of Jesus our children inherently learn to do the same.

Before beginning the conversation with your children, take a second to answer the questions below for yourself. Is the Holy Spirit convicting you in any of these areas? Be transparent with your children, modeling truth and grace, and tackle the challenge of letting your light shine together as a family this month!

GET YOUR FAMILY TALKING

1. Do your friends know that you love Jesus? How do they know?
2. “Others are watching to see if we live what we believe.” What does that mean?
3. How are you letting your light shine? What are some practical ways you can do that this week?
4. When others see you doing good things, do you take the glory or do you point to Jesus and glorify Him?

by *Samantha Fugate*

Samantha is employed by New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. She also manages social media and customer service questions for HomeFront magazine. She and her husband, Joseph, are foster parents and have one biological daughter. She enjoys a good lazy day around the house with her family.



THE BEGINNING OF A TRADITION

Seven years ago, when I was nine years old, I had the idea to start a fundraiser. I'm not really sure where it came from, but I think it had something to do with the Holy Spirit moving through me. I was sitting in my backyard playing with my sisters and I got this idea ...

My dad's men's group volunteered at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) on a regular basis and I often went along with him to pack food. I love this organization! Feed My Starving Children is a nonprofit that provides meals to people all over the world. They serve over 75 countries, relying on volunteers to pack the meals at their permanent sites and their MobilePack events. They have been doing amazing work for the kingdom of God since 1987 when the organization was founded. They have provided over 284 million meals to families and children all over the world. Their mission is to continue to provide and feed the least of these until all are fed.

My idea was to organize a run at my house to help raise money for FMSC. I brought the idea to my parents and they loved it. They said they would pray about it and encouraged me to continue praying as well. A couple weeks later we came back together to discuss what God had shown us. We felt God had said, "Yes!" so we set a date to host the fundraiser at the end of the summer. We planned to have a one-mile run and ask people to invite their friends and family to sponsor them. We would wrap up the time with a barbecue for everyone. Restaurants and other places in our community even donated raffle prizes for the event! I was overjoyed that my vision to help feed kids was coming true.

Our first event was a success! We had over 100 people come to support FMSC, and at the end of the night we were able to raise over \$2,500. Over the following weeks, people told us how much they enjoyed the run and how amazing it was that we were able to raise so much money. Then they began to



ask us if we were going to do it again. This required more prayer, but we decided that we would. And two summers ago we had our fifth annual run. Over the years, we added more to the event, like building a stage to have a band called 4th Point perform, and we added a 5k run. In total we were able to raise over \$14,500. I am so excited that my small idea turned into such a big thing. With the help of God and by relying on Him to move through people, we've been able to make our fundraiser a yearly tradition. I am not the hero of this story or really the one who could do this. The fundraiser is all a work of God's, and through Him we are able to feed so many kids and pour our hearts into FMSC and the amazing work they are doing.

This past February my dad and I got the opportunity to go on a Food in Action Trip with FMSC. I went to the Dominican Republic and I got to experience firsthand what FMSC is all about. The people I met in the Dominican were so beautiful and loving. They rely on volunteers in the U.S. to supply them with food. And even though they may be starving, they are still filled with joy. Visiting the Dominican inspired me to continue to love and support FMSC through volunteering and my

fundraiser. The MannaPacks aren't just about getting food to people; they open a door to the gospel and a relationship with God. FMSC also uses the food to help parents provide an education for their kids because they believe that all children should have that opportunity. I am so happy about the work the Holy Spirit is doing in my life so I can reach others and spread His Word. I can't wait to see what God is going to do through my life and FMSC in the future.

You can learn more about Feed My Starving Children here: www.fmsc.org/about-us

by Bailey Mejdrieh

Bailey is a 16 year old who has a huge heart for serving children. She also loves to play basketball and ride her bike in her free time.





ASK GOD TO SHOW YOU

What do you say when your 10-year-old daughter says she wants to start an outreach for children in need? Where did this come from? How will you facilitate without doing it for her? Where do you begin?

Chloe's parents weren't too surprised. The year before, Chloe had hosted her birthday party at the local food pantry, where she and her friends sorted and packaged food. For years Chloe had been part of a neighborhood group of girls who served as Secret Santas—not to each other but to foster kids. As a group they would raise the funds, purchase the gifts, and wrap and deliver them.

But this was different. Chloe wanted to do this on her own. She wanted to start an outreach for kids in need beyond Christmas. The twinkle in her eye was not from the lights blinking on the tree.

It was January when Chloe's parents sat with her to talk about what God had put on her heart. This would be Chloe's project, with Mom and Dad helping only when needed. During their discussion, the "what" became purchasing clothes for children—not just random clothes, but complete new outfits from hair bows to shoes. Considering logistics, the "who" was narrowed from global to local children. The "how" turned to fundraising.

Using the Internet, Chloe researched nonprofit organizations in her community. She selected several, and her mom emailed the directors to see whether Chloe's project would fit with their vision.

From the replies, Chloe chose the HOPE Center of Edmond, Oklahoma, whose purpose is to meet the basic needs of members of the Edmond community. During a tour with the executive director, Chris Sperry, Chloe saw that the center had a clothing area, but the items were used and mismatched. Ms. Sperry suggested that Chloe put her new outfits in the center's Birthday Closet—a place where kids can pick out a birthday present on their special day.

Chloe then researched the average cost of clothing and accessories and set her goal to purchase 30 outfits. Chloe put her own funds into her outreach wallet. She asked for donations in lieu of birthday gifts from her friends in February. She made and sold slime at school. She gave letters to friends and sent letters to her close out-of-state relatives. By spring break, she had \$500 and was ready to shop.

On April 2, Chloe delivered 14 complete outfits, seven for girls and seven for boys, to the HOPE Center. But she's not done. She is working on new fundraising ideas to complete her goal of 30 outfits. Eventually, she wants to put 100 outfits in the Birthday Closet at the HOPE Center.

Chloe's Birthday Closet project shows that God can and will use our kids to help meet the needs of those around us. What might God be putting on the hearts of the children in your home?

This month, set aside a time to share Chloe's story. Then, talk together with your children and see if they might have any ideas of ways they can serve others. Pray and ask God to show you the who, what, and how to share His love. You might be very surprised to find what God has been stirring in the hearts of your kids.

by Eloise Burges

Eloise is the Kids Operations Manager at Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO. Wife of John Burges, mother of two, and grandmother of five, Eloise is active in both local and global missions at Woodmen. Chloe is her granddaughter.

PUTTING FEET ON FAITH

Mix together a tablespoon of fresh games, a dash of crafts, and a cup of worship music. Pour in a giant jar of kid-enthusiasm, stir it all up with God's love, and warm it all in the Colorado sun. That's the recipe for Summer Day Camp, and it was served to perfection for three weeks in June of 2017 at Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs, CO.

Early each morning, parents woke their sleepy boys and girls, dressed them in matching colored T-shirts, and dropped them off at church. The kids knew they were coming to have a blast and learn about Jesus. But what happened each week was more than just fun and games. For these elementary-aged children, summer camp mornings turned into afternoons of serving.

Woodmen partnered with CURE International, a ministry that helps children who are born with treatable physical disabilities such as clubfoot, bowed legs, and cleft lips. In 30 countries, CURE International steps in to providing life-changing care and healing through their hospitals and programs. CURE ministers to these families physically while also demonstrating the love of Christ and reassuring them of God's love for them.

During summer camp, the kids learned about clubfoot. Every year about 200,000 children worldwide are born with clubfoot—a deformity where the foot is turned inward and downward, making walking nearly impossible. But when treatment is administered early, clubfoot can be repaired. CURE's clubfoot program, which began in Africa, is now a global initiative that treats thousands of kids every year, giving these children the chance to walk.

Woodmen Kids set a goal for Summer Day Camp to help a total of 20 children receive the care needed to repair their clubfoot. CURE's cost for each child is \$400. Woodmen Kids Director Cheryl Howard and other leaders encouraged the kids to do chores around the house and in their neighborhoods to earn



money for CURE. One mom said, "The leaders did a great job explaining the need to the children and making it personal."

Hundreds of kids came home from camp ready to do chores and earn money for CURE. With hearts determined to help children they'd never met, they spent afternoons folding laundry, washing dishes, pulling weeds, walking dogs, and sweeping floors to earn a few dollars to bring back to church.

Seven-year-old Mae Magoon came home from camp that first day passionate about raising money for kids with clubfoot. She proudly announced to her mom that she had set a goal to raise \$70. Her mom, Jewel, quickly reminded her that \$70 might be an unrealistic goal for just three afternoons. But Mae was determined. She did chores at home and chores at her grandmother's house and even asked her mom to call her friends and see if they needed any help.

Mae didn't ask for a specific amount but was simply ready to work and watch God provide. After Mae earned \$16 on the first afternoon, her mom heard her holler, "Booyah! Clubfoot gone!"

On the second afternoon, after Mae pulled weeds, she walked a neighbor's dog. She told the neighbor she was raising money for children with clubfoot. The neighbor teared up as she shared that her granddaughter had been born with the clubfoot defect. The generous neighbor wrote a check for \$100!

On the third and final afternoon, Mae was out of work, but she was not ready to give up. She started calling out-of-state family members and sharing about CURE's mission to help those with clubfoot. Not only did Mae call her relatives and ask for money, she began the calls by offering to work for them the next time she visited in return for advance donations to CURE.



But when the time came to add up her earnings, her mom counted \$311, more than quadruple Mae's goal of \$70. When asked how she raised so much money, Mae responded, "I prayed and it worked!"

During three weeks of Summer Camp, children at Woodmen raised almost \$16,000—enough for 40 children to receive care to heal their clubfeet! This total doubled the camp's initial goal of 20 children.

Mae made a difference. Each child who ran a lemonade stand, folded laundry, or mowed a lawn made a difference.

Our busy world gets in the way, and it's easy to forget there's something bigger than ourselves. If these children can make a difference in a few short days, what can you do? What can I do?

At Summer Day Camp, the children at Woodmen Valley Chapel were reminded of the truth found in Ephesians 3:20—that God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."

And now we are reminded that a kid with a prayer and a dream can change the world.

by Jessica Newland

Jessica is wife to Peter and mom to four amazing kids: Travis, Kaylee, Daniel, and Zachary. She is a coffee-drinking, piano-playing, family-loving Colorado girl who enjoys using social media and the Internet to encourage others who share the special needs journey. You can often find Jessica behind the wheel of her minivan traveling to and from doctor appointments with their special-needs kiddo, Zachary.

 @mama_newland





SHADOW BOX BANK

In this month's issue of HomeFront we share several stories about children who chose to let their lights shine before others. **Many of them raised money to support a cause and make a difference.**

This shadow box bank is a great way to save money together as a family. Choose an organization you want to support and then start gathering your money and donating. With the interchangeable background, you might even consider choosing a different organization each month!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 8" x 10" shadow box picture frame
- printable art for your background
- tape
- drill and small drill bit or Dremel

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Create your own 8" x 10" background specific to the cause you choose to support, or download our Family Time Verse here: bit.ly/juneshadowbox
2. Use the drill and small drill bit or Dremel to create your coin slot.
3. Tape the backdrop to the inside back of the frame.
4. Place the bank in a prominent place in your home and start collecting your donations together.

by Debbie Guinn

SHINING MY LIGHT

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Flashlight (1 or more)

BEFORE YOU START

Find an open, outdoor space such as your backyard or a park that provides some good hiding places. Clear the space of anything children may trip over or hurt themselves on.

This game is best played in the dark, but if you have very young children you may consider playing the game as the sun is setting or have a few outdoor lights turned on.

TIME TO PLAY!

Invite your family to join you outside. Explain to the group that they will be playing a fun version of tag called Flashlight Tag, which incorporates a little bit of Hide and Seek. Assign one person to be "It." If you'd like, the players can draw straws or numbers to determine whom this will be.

The person who is It will be given the flashlight, which must remain turned on at all times. Be sure It knows that he may not cover up the flashlight to hide the light. The light must shine during the whole game.

To start the game, It must cover his eyes and count up to a set number (i.e., 100). Choose an appropriate number for the age of your kids. During the counting, the other players must find places to hide. Once It finishes counting, he may begin to search for the hidden players. If this person spots someone, he must shine the light on that person's body, avoiding her eyes, and shout her name. Once a player has been tagged in this way, she is out of the game. The best way to avoid being tagged is to keep running and hiding behind things so the light cannot touch you.

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

LET'S ADD A TWIST!

Playing with many: If you have a large group, especially a group of older children, play in teams. Instead of assigning one person to be It, split the group in half and assign one of the groups to be It. For this twist, each It player will need her own flashlight. The players will work together to tag players on the other team. When tagged, players are "out." However, in this version of the game, non-It players may tag their teammates back in at the risk of being caught and tagged by someone who is It. Once every member of the non-It team has been tagged and is out, the game is over.

Taking turns: This is a more open-ended version of the game where all players remain in for the duration. In this twist, once the person who is It has tagged another player, the tagged player must take the flashlight and become It. This allows the game to last quite a bit longer and will force everyone to really pay attention to who is It and who is not.

REMEMBER!

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

Heather DePartee

Heather is a newlywed and works as an Instructional Aide for Kindergarten students in Fresno, CA. She spent three-and-a-half years working on the Families team at ROCKHARBOR Church in Costa Mesa, CA as an assistant to the Early Childhood Director, participating in the development of Tru Curriculum, and as an admin to the team.







ROSEMARY AND LEMON ROASTED POTATOES

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT SIDE DISH THIS SUMMER, THESE ROSEMARY AND LEMON ROASTED POTATOES WILL END YOUR SEARCH! THEY ARE FULL OF FLAVOR AND EASY TO MAKE.

PREP: 15 min.

COOK: 60 min.

SERVES: 5 (3-4 potatoes per person)

* For an easy metric conversion chart, search the Internet for "metric kitchen."

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 20 baby potatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
- salt and black pepper
- 6 sprigs fresh rosemary

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Using a sharp knife, make a series of parallel cuts into one side of each potato.
3. Place potatoes in a pot of boiling water and boil for 10 minutes. Drain water.
4. Place potatoes in a roasting dish.
5. Mix melted butter and lemon juice together. Pour over potatoes.
6. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and three rosemary sprigs.
7. Place in oven and roast for one hour.
8. Serve with the remaining three fresh rosemary sprigs on top.

by *Debbie Guinn*

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS

LEMONADE

YIELDS: 15 (8oz.) cups

TOTAL TIME: 15 min.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

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

WHAT YOU'LL DO

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

For a twist, add in mixed berries or mint. You can also replace the water with sparkling water for sparkling lemonade.

Consider making lemonade and lemon crinkle cookies for the lemonade stand in *Capturing the Season* (page 8) as a way to earn some money for your family's favorite cause.

Difficult situations in our lives can make us feel sour and out of sorts. As parents, little eyes constantly monitor our reactions to everything. When bitter situations arise, we have the opportunity to respond with faith knowing that God is with us—like sweetening up the juice of a lemon and making lemonade or these delicious lemon crinkle cookies!

by Debbie Guinn





LEMON CRINKLE COOKIES

YIELDS: 24 cookies

TOTAL TIME: 30 min.

* For an easy metric conversion chart, search the Internet for "metric kitchen."

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest (from about 2 medium lemons)
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 teaspoon lemon extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 drops yellow food coloring
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. In a mixing bowl whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. In the bowl of an electric stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whip together butter, sugar, and lemon zest until pale and fluffy.
4. Mix in egg and egg yolk.
5. Add lemon juice, lemon extract, vanilla extract, and yellow food coloring and mix until combined.
6. With mixer set on low speed, slowly add in dry ingredients and mix just until combined.
7. Pour powdered sugar into a small bowl.
8. Scoop out about 1 1/2 tablespoons dough and shape into a ball, then drop in powdered sugar and roll to evenly coat. Repeat until dough bowl is empty.
9. Transfer dough balls to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Space balls 2 inches apart on baking sheet.
10. Bake in preheated oven 10 to 13 minutes.
11. Cool on baking sheet several minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.

NEVER TOO YOUNG

The warm light of the oil lamp illuminated the letter in the darkness of the single-room, mud house.

As the rest of the family slept, the young man read one line over and over, letting the words of his most beloved friend and mentor seep into his heart and into his soul. As Timothy silently mouthed the phrase again and again, careful not to wake anyone, he slowly relaxed and exhaled. The words calmed him, encouraged him, empowered him.

Timothy was no stranger to the power of words. For as long as he could remember, he had listened to the miraculous, inspiring, and sometimes tragic stories of his people and their relationship with Yahweh, the one true God. His childhood, and now his young-adult memory, was filled with the loving and familiar voices of his mother and grandmother passing along countless stories, poems, and songs of the Creator-God, the Deliverer-God, the Provider-God. Timothy had learned Yahweh's laws, and they were as much a part of his daily life as the dirt under his feet and the lamplight that flickered in the night.

Yet, despite having the knowledge of the ancient stories and the training of his mentor, Timothy still felt inadequate and insufficient. He was called to lead this group of Jesus followers as they lived the Way of the Savior. But he was so young! What did he have to offer these men and women a decade or two (or three!) older than him? He knew that in his culture, respect and authority came from age and life experience. He had little of either.

So, he read and reread this line from the great apostle Paul's recent letter: "Let no one look down on you because of your youth," "Let no one look down on you because of your youth." Timothy was starting to believe. Yes, he was young, but he had something to offer. He had the very Spirit of Christ in him! "Age" and "experience" were nothing compared to the Holy Spirit of the living God! In spite of his doubts and the doubts of others, he began to realize that he could, and would, lead this growing church. He would be like a light to them, helping them shine the love of God into the dark world around them!



HEAR IT

After reading this story (or sharing it in your own words) with your family, read Paul's words to Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:12,14. Also read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:16.

Choose some or all of the following questions to prompt a short conversation.

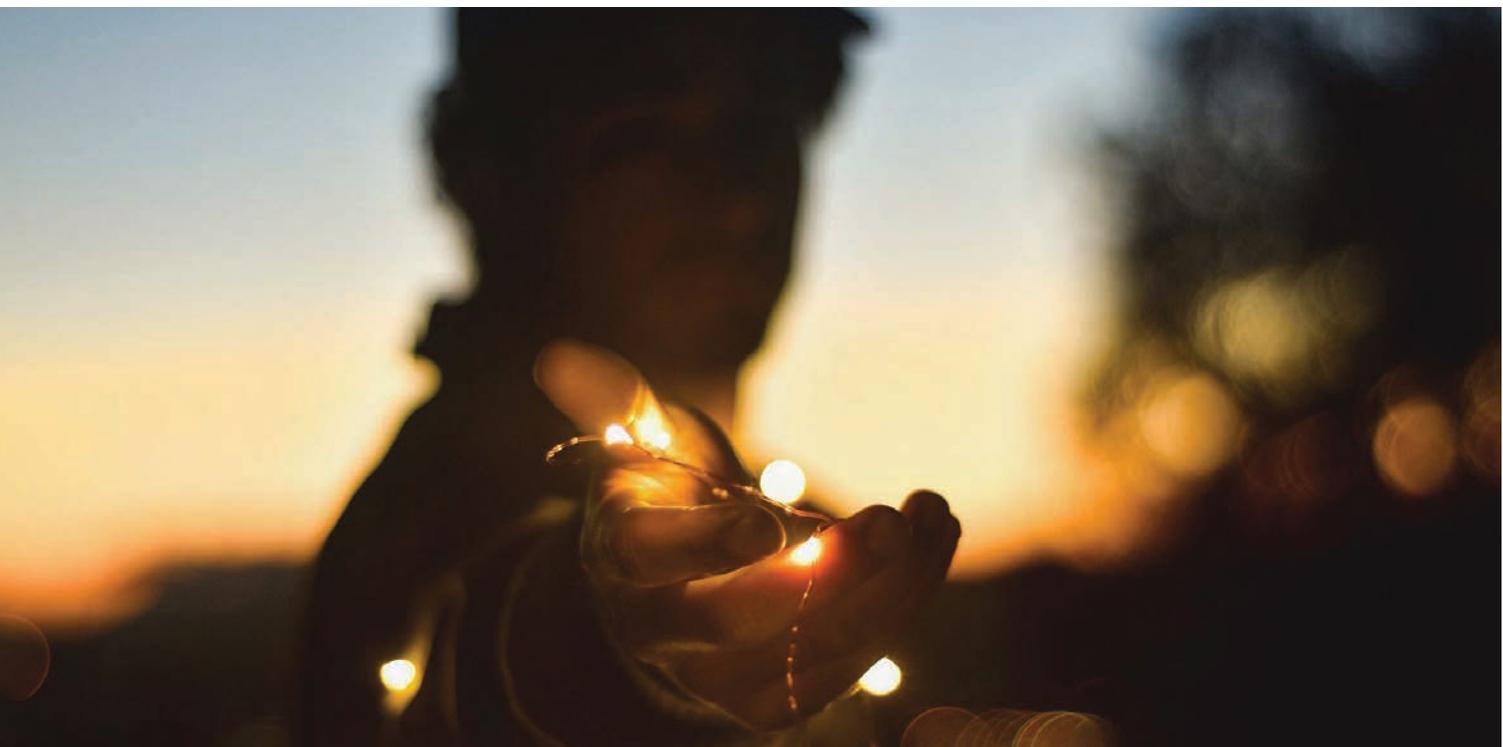
- Why did Timothy feel like he was not good enough to lead the church? Was that true? Why or why not?
- Do you ever feel like Timothy?
- Have you ever felt you will be able to serve God "better" when you are older? (Talk about why they may be able to serve God differently as adults but not "better." Often, the best people to show God's love to children are other children!)
- What are some God-given gifts and abilities you have that God can use to shine His light on your friends?

DO IT

Have your children select a friend on whom they can "shine" the light of God's love. Make a plan for that to happen in the next week. How will they shine God's light? By making artwork? By inviting the friend over for a playdate? By writing an anonymous letter of encouragement and secretly delivering it? Get creative, have fun, and let God's light shine brightly from you!

by Jason Kliewer

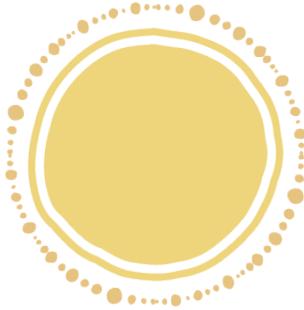
Jason is a teaching pastor at Canopy Church in Orange County, CA. He lives with his wife and two daughters in a 200-square-foot RV camper.



TOT TIME RHYME

FAMILY TIME

WHEN YOU GET UP



These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.

- Talk about them when you **SIT AT HOME**
- and when you walk **ALONG THE ROAD,**
- when you **LIE DOWN**
- and when you **GET UP.**

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Each morning this month as you get up, sing this simple song to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” Let your toddler know that she has the best “show and tell” to share with her friends: a life full of God’s love, His voice, and His joy put on display!

If you know the love of God, show a friend
 If you know the love of God, show a friend
 If you know the love of God
 To a friend you have to show it
 If you know the love of God, show a friend

If you hear the voice of God, tell a friend
 If you hear the voice of God, tell a friend
 If you hear the voice of God
 To a friend you have to tell it
 If you hear the voice of God, tell a friend

If you feel the joy of God, shout aloud
 If you feel the joy of God, shout aloud
 If you feel the joy of God
 To the world you go and shout it
 If you feel the joy of God, shout aloud



Get the audio recording of this song at bit.ly/junetottimerhyme

by Chad Coltman

Chad and his wife, Kelli, have been married seven years, and they have three kids. Besides his family, his most valuable things are his Nespresso and his SodaStream. (I guess you could say he really likes beverages.) He has been on staff at ROCKHARBHOR Church in Costa Mesa, CA, for over 15 years and now serves as the Director of Churchwide Operations.



@chadcoltman

BLESS WITH YOUR WORDS

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

When you watch siblings interact, you'll find proof of many things. One key truth you will discover: a person is never too young to be a model. How many times have you seen a two year old copying every motion his big five-year-old brother is making? Big brother can be running, jumping, spinning, laughing, or falling to the ground and little brother is sure to be in tow, mimicking his older brother's every move. Kids learn not only by watching adults but by watching other kids. This month, take some time to remind your kids that they too are models. As children of God, they are His representatives on earth. They paint a picture to the world—to their neighbors, friends, classmates, teammates, teachers, coaches, and the grocery store clerk—about who God is through their words, actions, and attitudes

READ

Gather your children around you. Ask them to hold out their hands, palms up, and look you in the eyes to receive this blessing.

Open your Bible to Philippians 2:14-15 and read these verses aloud to your children:

Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then you will be pure and without blame. You will be children of God without fault among sinful and evil people. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky. (Philippians 2:14-15 NIV)

BLESS

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

by Emily Schulz

Emily is the Family and Women's Ministries Pastor at New Denver Church in Denver, CO. She has her BA in Christian Ministries from Biola University and her MDiv from Denver Seminary. Emily loves seasonal activities; date nights with her husband, Phil; cooking; playing games; spontaneous song and dance; and creating space for people to be known and loved.



Kind Lips

100% Natural Lip Balm

KINDLIPS.COM

#SAYSOMETHINGKIND

A LITTLE KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY

Josh Neumann launched Kind Lips in 2017, but the story really began when he was just 10 years old. As a young man, Josh's lips were always drying out. His mom gave him Vaseline to help with the constant dryness, and so began Josh's obsession with lip balms. Growing up, Josh scanned supermarket shelves and boutique counters searching for the perfect lip balm. Each tube, tub, and pot led to one disappointment after another. Finally, he decided to do something about it.

In 2016 Josh began researching what others were putting in their balms. After writing down each ingredient he looked at two full pages and began crossing out anything that was not 100 percent natural or organic. Josh delved into the properties and benefits of each ingredient and further dwindled the list to what you now see on the label. Always believing less is more, he set out to create a balm that would hydrate lips, leaving them petal soft.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Originally, Josh had planned to call his lip balm Blessed Lips, for in his personal life journey he had learned the power of words through personal experiences and studies such as Dr. Masaru Emoto's rice experiment. He comes from a faith-filled family—something that continues to be at his core. After discussing the lip balm one evening with his mom, Josh went home feeling confident this was truly what he was supposed to be doing, and he was excited to share it with the world. The next morning, he received a phone call from his mother. She'd had a dream about when Josh was a young child. She reminded him that if he had ever spoken unkind words to his sister growing up, he would have had to sit down with a pencil and paper and write "The Law of Kindness Is on My Lips" 100 times. Josh told his mother on the phone, "I'm supposed to call it Kind Lips." She agreed. From the first day Josh began this journey, he knew that what he was about to create was supposed to serve a higher purpose than just hydrating lips. It is his belief that with this product and branding he will help to create a better world by inspiring kindness.

TAKING ACTION

FAMILY TIME

KIND LIPS IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THESE ANTI-BULLYING ORGANIZATIONS BY DONATING 20 PERCENT OF THEIR PROFITS TO THIS IMPORTANT MISSION.



PACER'S NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION CENTER

Founded in 2006, PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center actively leads social change so that bullying is no longer considered an accepted childhood rite of passage. PACER provides innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others and recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students.

YOUTH FRONTIERS

Joe Cavanaugh met a student who told him about being bullied at school. She said, "There are these kids at school who make fun of me every day. Can you do anything to stop them?" This question was the catalyst that inspired Joe to launch Youth Frontiers.

Youth Frontiers partners with schools to build communities where students thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. They offer one-day retreats on timeless values like kindness, courage, and respect for students in fourth through 12th grades.



SHE OPENS HER MOUTH WITH WISDOM, AND THE TEACHING OF KINDNESS IS ON HER TONGUE.

PROVERBS 31:26

Awakening a compassionate heart and a global mind-set in children for people beyond the boundaries of their own neighborhoods.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS ...

SIERRA LEONE

Situated on the west coast of Africa, Sierra Leone encompasses an area of 27,699 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by Guinea, on the southeast by Liberia, and on the south and west by the Atlantic Ocean, with a total boundary length of 845 miles, of which 250 miles is coastline. In addition to the mainland proper, Sierra Leone also includes the offshore Banana and Turtle islands and Sherbro Island as well as other small islets.

GLOBAL

FAMILY TIME



NOW THAT WE KNOW WHERE IN THE WORLD SIERRA LEONE IS, LET'S MEET AND GREET ITS PEOPLE



There are over 7.5 million people who call Sierra Leone their home.



If you went to religious services in Sierra Leone, you would most likely go to an Islamic mosque.
Religion: Islam 78%, Christianity 21%, indigenous religions 1%



If you lived in Sierra Leone you would speak English.



If you lived in Sierra Leone you would most likely eat something called groundnut stew, which consists of chicken and vegetables flavored with groundnuts such as cashews and peanuts. It is considered the country's national dish. In addition, for almost all Sierra Leoneans, rice is the staple food consumed at virtually every meal.

DID YOU KNOW?

- On February 14, 1972, the country made headlines when the world's third-largest gem-quality diamond called the "Star of Sierra Leone" was discovered.
- Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary was established in 1995 to enforce the law and rehabilitate confiscated, orphaned, and abandoned chimpanzees with the aim to release back them into their natural habitat.
- Only 31 percent of adults can read in Sierra Leone. More men than women know how to read.

Ten years of civil war has set the people of Sierra Leone up against immense challenges. The country is one of the world's poorest, and 58.09 percent of the total population lacks access to an improved water source to drink from. Over 90 percent of people don't have access to toilets. One out of every five kids in Sierra Leone dies before his fifth birthday, many from diarrhea, worms, or other water-related illnesses.

The hope: These diseases are preventable with clean water sources and good hygiene practice. charity: water (mentioned in our Spiritual Grandparenting article on page 48) has been working in Sierra Leone since 2008. They have served 17,258 people and funded 68 projects.

Read more about charity: water and the work they are doing in Sierra Leone and around the world here: charitywater.org.

HOW TO BE AN AWESOME PARENT

When I was in sixth grade, our pastor gave a sermon series that challenged people to set big, heavenly, audacious goals. I had done some work in the past to help kids in foster care, and because I had seen my best friend's family foster kids, I knew my goal had to be about helping kids in that situation. So, I coordinated a run to collect backpacks for kids in foster care. The run raised over \$22,000, enough to make about 440 journey bags. Since then, I have collected 2,000 journey bags for kids in foster care.

A lot of adults helped me to accomplish my goal, especially my parents. They encouraged me, prayed for me, and gave me the resources I needed to complete my goal. From the people who helped me coordinate the run to the people who ran the run and organizations such as CASA and The Forgotten Initiative, who have taken the bags and distributed them, I have been able to see Christ modeled to me, and it has encouraged me to model Him to others.



STUDENT ID MIDDLE SCHOOL

INSPIRE

So, for parents who are reading this and want to encourage their kids to do big things for God, here is my advice:

- **Anything can be done with God's help.** My parents thought maybe I could collect 200 bags for kids in foster care, but when I heard about how many kids there are in care, and knowing God cares about all of them, it seemed like God would want us to collect 2,000 bags! I prayed about it and felt confident God could do it. My parents didn't bat an eye (though on the inside they were feeling doubt—see point five), and they helped me to name what God was doing in the process.
- **Remember, your son or daughter is still just a kid.** There have been a few times my parents have bailed me out of a hard situation. They have helped me write a couple emails, crunch some numbers, and guided me as I looked for donations. I still need to graduate eighth grade, and some days I just want to be a normal eighth grader, so they help me when I am feeling overwhelmed. While it's important to let kids have responsibility and dream big, remember, they are just kids.
- **Help rally a team.** My parents are always looking for ways they can help—more specifically for people who can help me and opportunities for me to share my goal with others. For example, my mom won a wishing well contest that provided a significant number of bags for my goal. My parents have also connected me with people who could take the bags, people who work with kids in the foster care system, and other business and government leaders I can network with to help local kids in the foster care system. God has allowed me to be an example and to challenge the faith of the people I have met, and my own leadership and faith are challenged by seeing the work they do every day for kids in foster care. The goal I had wouldn't have been completed if my mom hadn't helped find these opportunities for me.

- **Make sure they finish what they started.** This is the process we are in right now—my parents are holding me accountable to finishing the job. They remind me that the goal wasn't to just collect 2,000 journey bags but to collect them for kids in foster care. In other words, the goal was to get the bags out to kids in foster care, not for them just to sit there. I like to dream big, and it would be easy for me to just move on to another goal, but that wouldn't show people how God can do anything, and it wouldn't be a good example to the people who worked so hard to help me meet my goal.
- **Keep your poker face.** When you're dying on the inside and don't think your kid can complete a big goal (and forget that anything is possible with God's help), you have to keep your cool. When I said I wanted to collect 2,000 journey bags, it seemed like my mom thought that was a reasonable number, but she admits that on the inside she felt fear, doubt, and joy. Two thousand bags later and here we are. If you don't think your kids can do it, they won't think they can either, and then they won't. My parents never told me no to things related to my big goal; they just helped me think of new ways to do things that might be difficult.

I wasn't sure how God would use me when I felt like He was calling me to do something big for His glory, but I knew that I had to do what the Holy Spirit was asking me to do. As a 12-year-old (now 14-year-old) kid, I needed my parents to help, because they are the ones who have modeled Christ to me. I love to hear them say they see Christ in me, and I hope that reflects to the other people around me. My advice to parents on how to be awesome? Help your kids do awesome things for God!

by Micah Wilson

Micah is a 14 year old who dreams God-sized dreams. Current projects include advocating for kids, training for the 2024 Summer Olympics in track, and dreaming up the businesses she wants to start.

HEART FOR HOPE

Parents: The story below is about a high school student no different than the world changer living in your own home. Take some time this month to talk with your high schooler and discover her godly passions. Then, do all you can to help facilitate action. You may be surprised at the lasting impact just waiting to be uncovered.

Coleman Barnes is a somewhat typical high school student. He is involved in deep friendships, focused on class work, participates in extracurriculars, and is preparing for the future after graduation in 2018. Coleman is not so typical in the fact that, at the young age of 18, he has already begun to leave a legacy of lasting impact: Coleman has made the way for five kids in Jamaica to attend school for the next five years.

Coleman traveled with the youth group from Christ Community Kansas City in partnership with Won by One for two summers to Harmons, Jamaica. While there, he fell in love with the people, the food, and the kids they served. As he spoke with local parents, they shared how inaccessible education was for them. They shared how they had to decide whether to send their kids to school or put food on the table. Coleman could not imagine the cost of such a choice. Food or education? If families picked food on the table, their children's futures were limited; if they chose education, their children might starve. It was a dangerous cycle of poverty that represented heartache.

One morning Coleman was talking with a Jamaican woman named Sandra. She teared up as she told him the news that her little daughter had been sponsored for school. She was overwhelmed with joy that her daughter would have an opportunity she never had: to receive an education so someday she could be able to provide for her family and break this poverty cycle. As Coleman saw how much school sponsorship meant to this family, he knew he wanted to get involved.

Coleman left Jamaica after that week of serving, but the desire to make a difference didn't leave him. Challenged in one of his leadership classes at school to make an impact on behalf of others, Coleman immediately thought of Jamaica and the idea of educational scholarships. As a high school student, he did not have the money to sponsor a child, even at \$40 a month. So he enlisted a couple of friends, Laken and Jack, to help begin dreaming of a way for students at Blue Valley West High School to collectively make a difference in the lives of kids in Jamaica. Heart for Hope was born with the idea to have each class at school raise money to sponsor a child in Jamaica and make it a friendly competition to raise \$5,000.

Coleman, Laken, and Jack had a three-pronged approach to getting five Jamaican students sponsored for two years of school. First, English Language Arts classes at every grade level would introduce, by video, the students to the Jamaican child their class would be sponsoring. These videos would provide a face, a name, and a story to build connection and motivate that class to bring their loose change and dollars to sponsor their child. Second, they sold Heart for Hope T-shirts for \$10 and encouraged everyone attending the basketball game that week to wear them and make a schoolwide statement of hope. They sold over 450 shirts. Third, they put together a silent auction of donated items at that basketball game.

Coleman, Laken, and Jack were blown away as fellow students brought more than loose change to the donation jars. Students gave \$10 and \$20 bills and the money began adding up. The ambitious goal of \$5,000 in two weeks to support five kids for two years of education was completely shattered! Coleman and his peers were able to raise \$12,000 to help five kids— Rahein, Atalia, Aleana, Victor, and Sashante³⁴ for five years each through school, which genuinely changed their lives.



COLEMAN SAYS, “WE WERE TRULY BLOWN AWAY BY THE RESPONSE WE HAD FOR HEART FOR HOPE, AND IT’S BEEN SO COOL FOR ME TO SEE OUR SCHOOL COME TOGETHER AND GET BEHIND KIDS THEY DON’T KNOW AND WILL NEVER MEET.”

Coleman has seen God on display in the hearts of fellow students who said: I want to make a difference, and I want to provide hope to these kids and make a tangible impact on their lives. For Coleman, it’s been unbelievable to see the incredible generosity of his peers and God’s faithfulness through this whole process.

Watch the video that Coleman and his friends put together here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uz-M28qqrVk&feature=youtu.be

by Dawn Heckert

Dawn is the Children’s Pastor at Christ Community Church Leawood Campus in Leawood, KS. She loves Jesus and the opportunity to share His story with all ages. She spends her free time deep in glitter, crafting, creating, and chasing life with her two teenage daughters and husband.





RAISING A WORLD CHANGER



I love getting a new Bible. Reading through its smooth, unmarked pages trains me to read the Bible in fresh ways rather than merely reviewing my notes in the columns to teach myself what I already know (or at one time learned). I started making new notes in a new Bible when I had my son, Foster. I made highlights with him in mind. What verses did I not want him to miss? Which verses could I add some notes to in order to clarify for my boy what he could pull from those sacred pages?

Reading the Bible with my two-year-old son in mind became a new and exciting way to approach Scripture:

- 2 Timothy 1:7—May you know, Foster, that God didn't give you a spirit of fear or timidity, but may you know that God gave you power, love and self-discipline.
- Romans 5:8—Foster, don't miss this! This is the essence of our faith. It's really good news!

Because God knew you wouldn't be perfect. He came to earth to live the perfect life you couldn't. He died the death you deserved and then resurrected, proving: 1) He is God! and 2) He has the power to make dead things live! Foster, my boy, the wages of our sin is death, but because God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus, we can live again ... with God ... forever. Let's have a conversation about this!

- Joshua 1:9—You have nothing to fear but the Lord, Foster. Nothing! God is with you, and because of His presence, you can be strong and courageous.

I hope to remind my boy that God speaks. And on every topic, God has things to say. Journaling reminds me to think about what God might be trying to say to him, which reminds me, as his mom, to pray. I long for God's Word to transform him, so I pray for God's words to break through. Prayers like "Heavenly Father, make Him love others ... just like You do!" One night, after he asked to read *Goodnight Moon* yet again, I wrote in the column, "Heavenly Father, make him hungry for Your Word."

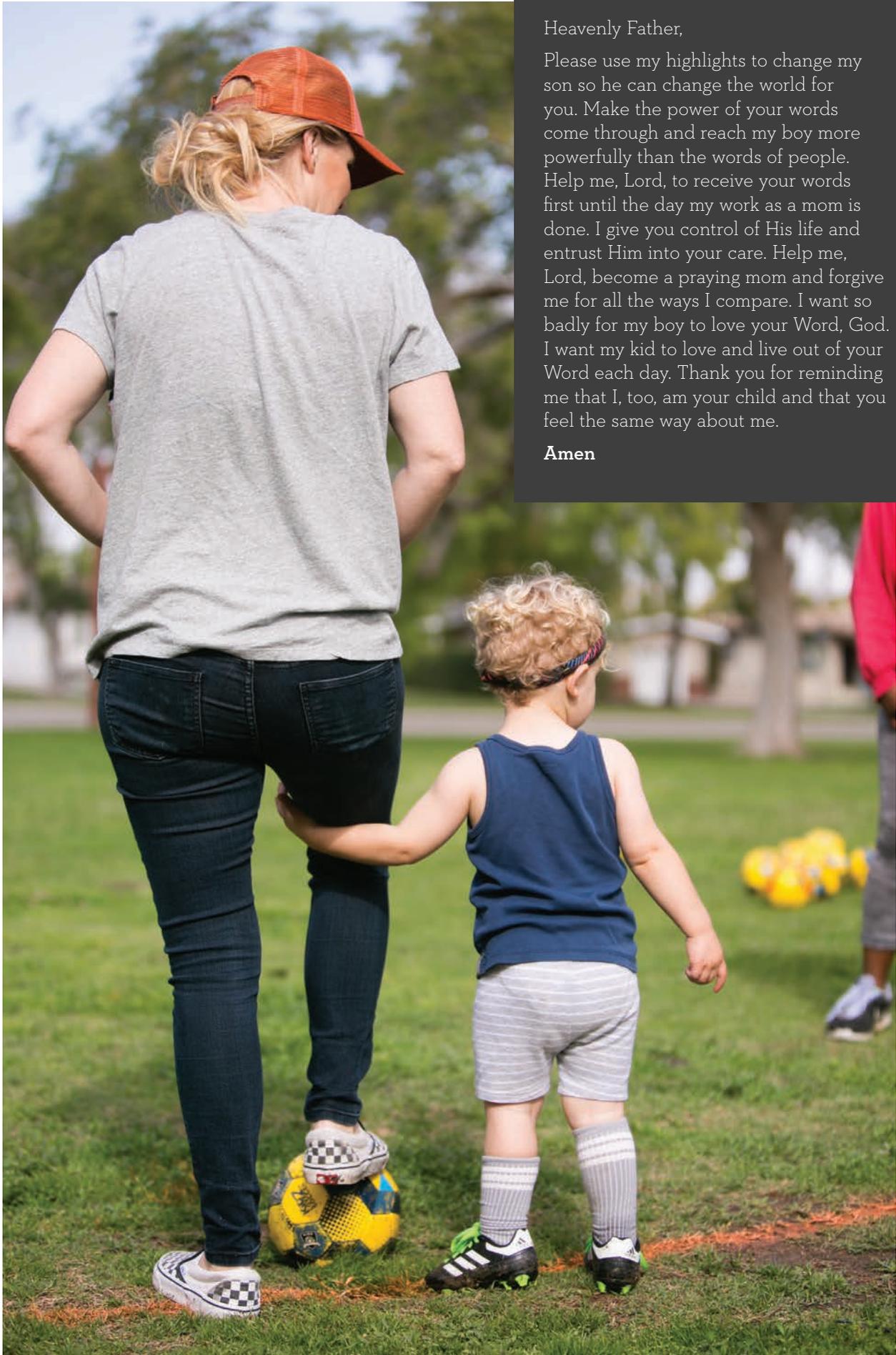
I should rest in God's love for my boy, but it's tough because as a mom I tend to worry. I know I can't transform my son. In fact, God doesn't call me to transform his life. God calls me to love my boy fiercely and entrust God with the transformation.

As I read through the pages of God's Word and pray prayers in the columns, I'm learning to let go of my worry—specifically, I put it in God's hands. For those who put everything in God's hands will see God's hands in everything.

I'm reminded each time I pick up this Bible that God has a plan for my boy. Although he may have to learn these things the hard way, I'd rather see God's hands in the trial rather than keep a closed fist of control. I'm learning to let go ... of my son's future ... and also of my plans ... and every other area of frustration or confusion that has led to a closed fist of control. I bought this journaling Bible for my son; I'm now realizing God intended to use it first for me. If I want my boy to change the world, I first need God to change me.

by Megan Fate Marshman

Megan is the author of SelfLess: Living Your Part in the Big Story of God; leads the Women's Ministry at Hume Lake Christian Camps in Hume, CA; shepherds young adults at Arbor Road Church in Long Beach, CA; and shares Jesus around the world. She is married to Randy, and they live in Long Beach with their son, Foster.



Heavenly Father,

Please use my highlights to change my son so he can change the world for you. Make the power of your words come through and reach my boy more powerfully than the words of people. Help me, Lord, to receive your words first until the day my work as a mom is done. I give you control of His life and entrust Him into your care. Help me, Lord, become a praying mom and forgive me for all the ways I compare. I want so badly for my boy to love your Word, God. I want my kid to love and live out of your Word each day. Thank you for reminding me that I, too, am your child and that you feel the same way about me.

Amen



PAY IT FORWARD

One of my favorite movies is *Pay It Forward*. In this movie a seventh-grade social studies teacher challenges his class to put into action a plan that will change the world for the better. One of his students, Trevor, starts a movement that challenges each person to do three small random acts of kindness. The Pay It Forward movement catches on like wildfire and spreads throughout the United States. Little Trevor indeed changes the world for the better.

What I love about this movie is that it wasn't based on a true story but did spark real people to do real acts of kindness throughout the world (Google "true pay it forward stories" to read more about these). As a father of four kids, I've used this movie to motivate my own kids to dream big. What can THEY do to change the world for the better? It's a bit intimidating to think about changing the whole world, but I point my kids to this quote: "As one person, I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person" Paul Shane Spear.

It's important to teach our kids that they are models. Others are watching them—the good, the bad, and the ugly. One way we can do this is with a Modeling Challenge. I invite you to issue this challenge to your kids—and to yourself as well. This will help teach them that they are models and other kids are watching them. Remind them that they have some control over what others see them do.

Before you begin the challenge, look up and talk about this verse with your kids: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

1. Random Acts of Kindness—The first challenge is to perform one random act of kindness for a stranger, e.g., hold the door open for someone or sit next to the new kid at lunch. Help your child get creative.
2. Compliments—Give a compliment to a stranger. "I like your (hat/coat/shirt/etc.)." Or it could just be a smile.
3. Donate Your Stuff—Have your child go through his closets and find three toys to donate to a resale store. Talk about what happens to the stuff once he donates it.
4. Feed the Birds—Grab a few pieces of bread and head to a park to feed the birds. Talk

about the importance of being kind to all of God's creation. When I've done this with my kids it usually attracts others and it's fun!

5. Write a Letter to Your Pastor—Pastors have a hard job. Your son or daughter can brighten a pastor's day with a simple note: "Thanks for all you do!" "Thinking of you!" "Praying for you!"
6. Buy Flowers—You could give these flowers to a teacher, a neighbor, a friend, or even a stranger.
7. Artwork—Have your child create artwork and then give it to someone.
8. Sidewalk Chalk—Grab some sidewalk chalk and go to the park. Have your kids write positive messages on the sidewalks.
9. Thank You Cards—Buy a 10-pack of thank you notes, write on them, and give them out to your postal worker, garbage collector, grocery store clerk, and/or teachers.
10. User's Choice—Let your child create her own challenge here.

It's important to record these challenges. Write them down and take a lot of pictures and video. See if anyone (especially other kids) notices your kids doing these challenges and letting the love of God shine through them!

Once you're done with the challenges, print off the pictures and talk through them with your kids. Here are a few questions to ask:

11. Remember when we helped ____? How do you think it made him/her feel when we did that?
12. How did doing that make you feel?
13. How do you feel when you see others helping people?
14. Has anyone helped or encouraged you recently?

Let your kids know that we can show God's love to others through what we do and what we say.

by Mike Ruman

Mike is the founder and CEO of Parenting Academy (parentingacademy.com). Parenting Academy is a digital learning community equipping moms and dads to be rockstar parents. Mike also founded the Swipe It app (swipeitapp.com) that helps connect families together through fun table-top questions and challenges.

UP AND OFF THE GROUND

Reagan, a first grader in Ketchum, Idaho, just had to do something.

She had attended a Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Bigwood Church where, as part of the curriculum, she watched a video from Free Wheelchair Mission and learned that an estimated 70 million people in developing nations have a disability that costs them their mobility.

Some of them were born with disabilities caused by malnutrition or inadequate prenatal care. Others lost mobility due to accidents or illnesses that were left untreated because of the expenses involved. Disability places further economic strain on a family when a parent or relative stays home to serve as a full-time caregiver, which prevents that person from pursuing an income.

Without assistance from family or a mobility aid such as a wheelchair, people with disabilities in the developing world are often forced to crawl on the ground. Some remain confined to their beds, tucked away in cramped, darkened rooms. There have even been instances where they are intentionally hidden from public view by their own families because of the stigma that disability still carries in many cultures around the world. For example, in places like Uganda, superstition holds that curses or evil spirits cause disabilities, meaning that the community shuns these people.

Reagan couldn't stop thinking about the need for mobility. It bothered her to think that there are others in the world who cannot do things like go to school, play with friends, or even get a drink of water by themselves. When the church encouraged VBS students to gather loose change to help donate a wheelchair, Reagan set out to do more than that. The budding entrepreneur came up with the idea to make colorful bracelets and sell them to raise

funds for Free Wheelchair Mission. She and her mother did some online research and ordered the components they needed. Then Reagan and her brother started handcrafting the bracelets.

Determined to lift someone off the ground and into a wheelchair, Reagan took her bracelets everywhere, selling them at her father's office, in front of a local music festival, on a neighborhood corner, and even at the bank when she tagged along with her mother while running errands. Her hard work and persistence raised \$80—enough to give a wheelchair to someone like Luana, a four-year-old girl in Peru.

Luana was paralyzed when she developed a high fever as a newborn. Her mother, Sandy, took Luana everywhere in a customized baby carriage, but the family lost everything, including the carriage and their home, when torrential rains devastated Peru with its worst flood in decades. The family was forced to move into a crowded, government-run shelter.



When Sandy learned that a local church would distribute wheelchairs in the area, she moved quickly to fill out an application and prepare the necessary documents in order for Luana to receive one. Volunteers from the church came and fitted Luana with a brand-new wheelchair from Free Wheelchair Mission, a faith-based nonprofit organization based in California that has distributed more than one million wheelchairs in 93 countries since 2001. As Luana sat in her new wheelchair for the first time, her mother expressed deep gratitude to everyone involved and

praised God for what He is doing in their lives.

Children like Reagan remind us that one is never too young to make a difference in the world.

Moved by compassion, she rallied her family and her community to address the global need for mobility, and thanks to her passion, dedication, and hard work, someone like Luana now has a renewed hope for the future.

To learn more about Free Wheelchair Mission, visit freewheelchairmission.org

by Stephen Bay

Stephen hails from Cleveland, OH, and lives in Orange County, CA, with his wife of 14 years and their two boys, ages 8 and 11. A former children's pastor, Stephen currently works at Free Wheelchair Mission where he gets to use his experiences in multimedia production, missions, and church ministry to help tell stories about lives transformed by the compassion of others. When he isn't busy writing for work or a seminary class, Stephen blogs about his own journey of faith at

 ransomedlife.com.





THE IMPORTANCE OF MODELING A HEALTHY MARRIAGE

We often don't realize we are modeling as we live our day-to-day lives. Social scientists have found that children pay more attention to what an adult does than to what an adult says.¹ I preach many things at my children—"Eat your green veggies," "Brush every surface of your teeth," and "Get plenty of sleep." I also preach about "Loving your neighbor," "Laying your life down for your friends," and "Honoring others above yourself." But I have embraced the fact that my husband, Greg, and I have the greatest opportunity to teach our children about these important truths through what we do and the way we treat each other!

My spouse is my closest neighbor, and therefore our children will learn the most about healthy relationships through what we model within the four walls of our own home on a daily basis.

Let me tell you, as a mom of four kids, working inside and outside of the home, running kids here and there, and some days feeling like I'm going to lose my mind—let's just say there are days I model healthier relationship principles than others. But I offer myself grace and know that all days aren't going to be the best display!

Even when things are tough, I like to remember that loving my children's daddy is one of the greatest gifts I can give them for many reasons. Kids learn a lot through what we model in our marriage. They learn about:

- communication
- how to manage conflict
- how to work with others as "teammates"
- forgiveness
- the relationship between family, work, and home
- how to handle stressful times
- what faith looks like in marriage
- how to view marriage

MARRIAGE

SUPPORT

MARRIAGE SHOULD
BE HONORED BY ALL.
HEBREWS 13:4



So, you might be wondering, “How can I best equip my kids to have a healthy marriage someday?” Here are a few thoughts:

1. **Evaluate the state of your own marriage.** It’s a great time to take inventory and ask, “Am I modeling what I want my kids to understand about having a healthy marriage?” If not, no need to judge yourself harshly. I encourage you to take some sort of action to pursue the behavior you do want to model. Maybe it’s seeking counsel from a Christian therapist, or it may be having a loving conversation with your spouse and sharing what you really desire. Or, it may be as simple as beginning to implement what you desire. For example, maybe you will start complimenting and affirming your spouse more frequently in front of the kids, or showing more affection (even though the kids will get grossed out), or enlisting the kids’ help with throwing a welcoming party when dad arrives home from a trip or from a long day at work.
2. **Encourage your child to be a lifelong learner always pursuing individual health and growth.** As I work with clients in private practice, I often help individuals evaluate how well they are caring for themselves. Sometimes, in the chaos of life, we drop to the bottom of our own priority list and end up burned out, worn out, or empty. However, by modeling healthy self-care and boundaries and pursuing overall health (physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually), we influence our children to do the same. Talk with your kids about the importance of being healthy individuals throughout their lifetimes—because two healthy individuals make up a healthy marriage.
3. **Provide opportunities for them to learn empathy.** Teaching your children how to empathize with others is one of the greatest gifts you can impart to them and their future marriage partners. Model empathy in your own marriage and also in your relationship with your children. Give them opportunities to “put themselves in others’ shoes” in order to imagine what experiences feel like or the impact of unkind words. Provide opportunities to go on mission trips and serve the less fortunate. In these ways, you will give your kids the chance to understand a broader range of human emotion and experience.

It’s never too early to instill the biblical truth of honoring marriage in our children. Do this through what you say and through what you do. You have an amazing opportunity to train your kids in healthy relationship principles by displaying the love you have for others—especially for your spouse.

by Erin Smalley

Erin holds a master’s degree in clinical psychology and is a former labor and delivery nurse. She works alongside her husband, Dr. Greg Smalley, at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, CO, and together they speak at marriage enrichment events around the world. She is an author, speaker, and therapist at Mayfield Counseling. She is both a biological mom and an adoptive mom of three daughters and one son.



CLEAN WATER SCAVENGER HUNT

A few months ago, a friend sent me a link to watch the story behind charity: water. I sat at my dining table watching the video and soon realized my 9-year-old granddaughter Grayson was watching with me. Together we were moved to tears as Scott Harrison shared his story of leaving his job as a super successful nightclub promoter to found this amazing organization.

As Grayson heard the stories of children who walked miles to get dirty water, she was not satisfied to sit back and do nothing—she wanted to help, and I knew my job was to support her as she put feet to her compassion.

She decided that this July 2, on her 10th birthday, she will forgo presents and ask friends and family to donate \$10 to help change lives. But, like most almost 10-year-olds, she still wants to gather with her friends. With the help of her older cousin Ruby they came up with the idea to have a “clean water scavenger hunt” around our town and end up back together to celebrate with cupcakes.

The girls feel like this scavenger hunt will also help educate their friends about the 663 million people in the world who live without clean water. That’s nearly 1 in 10 people worldwide, or twice the population of the United States. The majority live in isolated rural areas and spend hours every day walking to collect water for their families. Not only does walking for water keep children out of school

and take up time adults could be using to earn money, but the water often carries diseases that can make everyone sick. Access to clean water means access to education, income, and health—especially for women and children.

Through some fun clues, Ruby and Grayson plan to direct their family and friends to coffee shops, public restrooms, a swimming hole, a fire station, restaurants, a splash pad, and more. The girls hope to awaken their friends to the fact that, for people in developing countries, clean water can change everything—not to mention the fact that the girls’ friends are so fortunate to live where having access to clean water never crosses their minds!

As grandparents, we are modeling all the time. Whether we do it intentionally or just sit and watch a video at our dining tables—when our grandchildren are around, little eyes are always on us. This month, make a choice to expose your little world changers to organizations you are passionate about. Then, when you see a spark of compassion, do what you can to fan it into a flame!

charity: water gives 100% of your donations to bring clean water to people in need. To learn more, visit charitywater.org.

by Debbie Guinn

IT TAKES CLEAN WATER TO



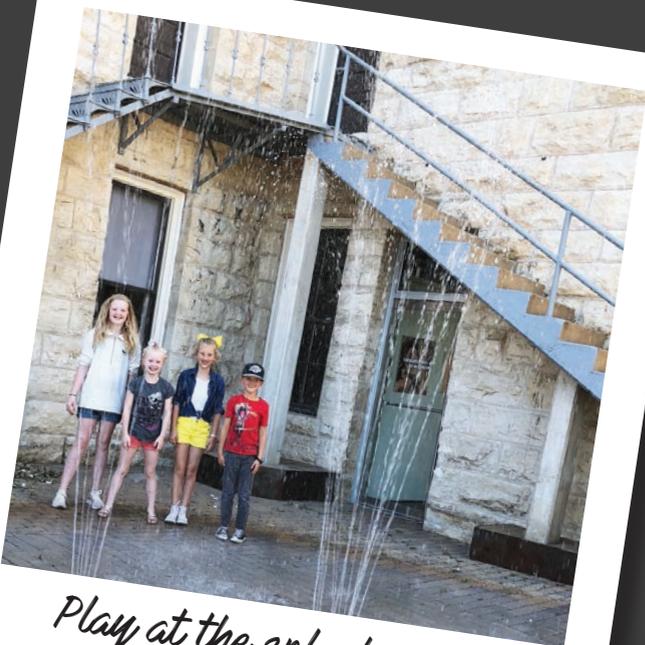
Make popsicles



Make coffee



Drink from a drinking fountain



Play at the splashpad



Use a restroom

10

ENVIRONMENTS

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

2

“God transforms me when I step out in faith.”

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

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

1

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

RESPONSIBILITY

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

3

“Asks the question, ‘What needs to be done?’”

SERVING

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

4

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

LOVE & RESPECT

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

5

“God has a big story, and I can be a part of it!”

STORYTELLING

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

6

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

KNOWING

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

7

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

IDENTITY

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

9

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

FAITH COMMUNITY

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

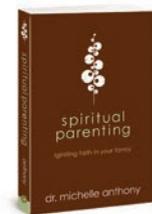
8

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

COURSE CORRECTION

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

IT IS OUR PRAYER THAT HOMES AND CHURCHES WOULD CREATE THESE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN SO THEIR FAITH WILL GROW IN A COMMUNITY OF CONSISTENCY, COMMON LANGUAGE, AND PRACTICE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THESE ENVIRONMENTS CAN IGNITE A TRANSFORMING FAITH IN YOUR FAMILY, WE SUGGEST YOU READ:



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
An Awakening for Today's Families
BY MICHELLE ANTHONY
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10

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

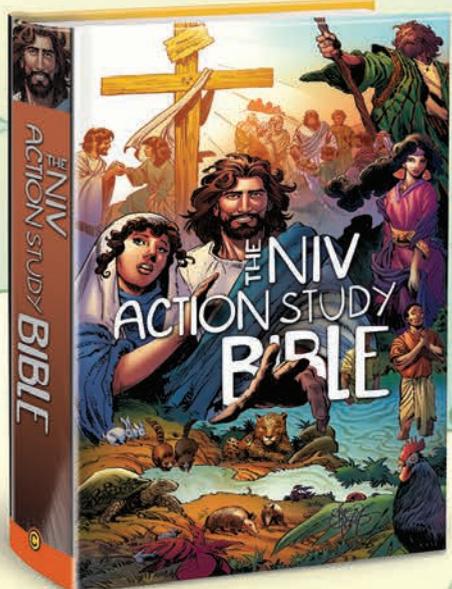
MODELING

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



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