FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Making intentional time as a family to talk about God's Word is a powerful addition to leaving a legacy of faith for your children. God calls parents to "teach and repeat" God's Word to their children. He placed great importance on this. You can begin now to plan a Family Devotion Night each week.



Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:19

Instructions

Dear Parents:

You have made an excellent choice to begin Family Devotions in your home. Making intentional time as a family to discuss God's Word is a powerful way to leave a legacy of faith for your children to carry on. God calls parents to "teach and repeat" God's Word to their children. He placed great importance on making sure His Word lives on from generation to generation.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon 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."

How Family Devotions works:

Agree on a day and time when your whole family will be available. Make that time sacred and free from distractions, and gather together. This is how you can establish a habit of Family Devotions. Plan to allow 15-30 minutes for your devotion time. (Some will take longer than others.)

The Curriculum:

The monthly **Big Idea** is a phrase that encompasses the overall theme and should be repeated daily or each time you sit down for devotions. Encouraging and helping kids to memorize the Big Idea and the monthly **Memory Verse** is is a great idea.

Each weekly devotion has four sections:

- In the Word A passage of scripture is listed for you to read from your Bible.
- Talk About It A brief teaching time with prompts is provided.
- Apply It Questions, games, or activities to make the reading real and applicable to all.
- **Pray** A family prayer is provided, or you can pray your prayer.

Last, a just-for-fun **Trivia Question** about what they have been studying will encourage older kids to think about or search for an answer. It might be fun to make a contest of the Trivia Question: whoever has the correct answer first gets to choose dinner on another night, or whoever answers correctly first on a set day gets to choose dessert. Make it fun!

The idea is to make time and space for interaction with God, His Word, and each other. This will allow you to intentionally express your most cherished values and beliefs for your children to see and experience. It affirms your faith and your priorities to them, which they will carry through their lives. I encourage you to make a commitment to doing Family Devotions regularly and to make it a priority. Blessings to you as you lead your family in the ways of God.



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MONTHLY BIG IDEA: Following God is the best thing to do.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE: "You are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14a, NIV

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IN THE WORD - Light of the World

Read Matthew 5:14-16

TALK ABOUT IT

Talk about the things in our lives that tend to keep our light from shining for Jesus. (Ignoring needs that we can meet, being uncooperative, having a poor attitude, etc.) In these verses, Jesus was telling us that how we live our lives should be an example for others of how God is. (loving, kind, forgiving, merciful) In that way, people will want to know more about Jesus.

APPLY IT

- 1. Collect these items: candle, match, small bushel basket (or something like a pot to fit over a lighted candle without danger of fire.)
- 2. Turn out the light, an adult lights the candle, and places the basket or pot over it.
- 3. Discuss what happens to the light. (it will either be dimmed or go out)
- 4. Discuss the importance of shining our light through our actions. (So people will be pointed to Jesus and come to know Him. This is showing love for God and others.)

PRAY

Dear Lord, we know that through our actions, we can play an important part in Your big story for all people. Thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be the Savior. Guide and help us to shine our lights openly so that people see Your love and want to know You and praise You. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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IN THE WORD - Love Your Neighbor

• Read Matthew 5:43-46a

TALK ABOUT IT

Let each family member name someone they know who has been unkind to them. Talk about the temptation to want to treat them as they have treated you. Discuss what Jesus did to those who hated Him. (He still loved them and treated them kindly.) These verses remind us to love everyone and treat all people the same just as God does.

APPLY IT

- 1. Read Matthew 7:12 out loud.
- 2. What is the difference between this verse and how we might be tempted to act toward those who are unkind to us? (This verse says to treat others like I want to be treated, not to treat others how they treat me.)
- 3. Is it hard or easy to love those who are unkind to us?
- 4. What reward do you think there is if we love our enemies? (God will be pleased and we will become more like Jesus.)
- 5. Gather paper and crayons. Draw or cut out a large heart for each family member to decorate. Write 'I can love my neighbor' on the heart.

PRAY

Dear Lord, Thank you for this reminder to love others, even those who are unkind to us. We can learn a lesson from Jesus by looking at the way He loved people. Help us to love like Jesus loved. Help us treat others the way we want to be treated. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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IN THE WORD - Treasures in Heaven

• Read Matthew 6:19-21

TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss the things you each treasure, such as special toys, friends, clothing, or money. (Have your child(ren) get one thing they treasure.) Explain that those things can be destroyed by moths, rust, and thieves. They are things we have on earth that can be lost, stolen, or ruined. Treasures in heaven are those things that are forever and have eternal value in God's kingdom, like telling people about Jesus, inviting others to church, or helping someone.

APPLY IT

- 1. Does this mean it's wrong to save money for a rainy day or to take care of things we enjoy?
- 2. How do we store up treasures in heaven? (By changing our focus to be on others, the Lord, and His Word, not on the things we have.)
- 3. What can we do to keep our hearts pure and safe from being caught in the trap of making our things more important than God and others? (Pray, read the Bible, attend church regularly, treat others well, not have so much stuff, etc.)
- 4. Take this opportunity to sort your stuff and donate any excess items.

PRAY

Dear Lord, We know that all good things come from you. Thank you for the good things we have in our lives. Help us, though, to not make them more important than You or others. Help us keep our hearts on heavenly things rather than the things of earth so that we bring you glory. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Trivia Question: If you are forgiving who does the Bible say will forgive you? (The Heavenly Father, (Matt.6:14)

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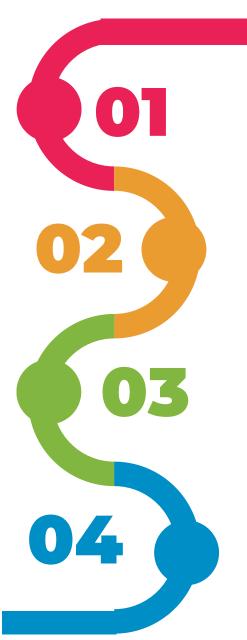
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IN THE WORD - Wise and Foolish Builders

• Read Matthew 7:24-27

TALK ABOUT IT

Name the things in and around your home that are strong and solid. Ask the following questions: What happens when you walk on the sidewalk? What happens when you walk on sand or bark? What happens when a wave hits a beautiful sand castle you have built? This story teaches us the difference between having our foundation on Christ or on the world.

APPLY IT

- 1. Gather a large-ish rock, a piece of copy paper, and a sturdy Bible. Holding the paper in your hand so it is parallel to the table above the table, ask: What will happen if I place this large rock on this piece of paper? Repeat with the Bible and ask: What will happen if I place the rock on the Bible? (Do each experiment.)
- 2. Hold up the rock and say: This rock represents our life.
- 3. From the verse, what do the paper and the Bible represent? (the paper is sand and the Bible is the solid rock of Jesus and His Word)
- 4. Here's what we learn: A life built on Jesus and His Word will hold us up to withstand the storms of life. We need to be like the Wise Builder.

PRAY

Dear God, Thank you for Jesus and for Your Word, the Bible. We want to learn more about You, so that You are the solid rock we build our lives on. Guide us as we study Your Word in order to build a solid foundation in our family so that we can point people to You. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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