

Nurturing Faith Ideas  
2015

Included here are weekly suggestions and activities meant to guide faith development in the family. These are intended for all ages and all family types – with children or grandchildren or families with no children. There is one for each Sunday of the year. Add one to your bulletin each week or put in your monthly newsletter. They could also be sent out via email or added to a Facebook page.

January 4: Christmas is not over until Epiphany. Continue to celebrate and share the promises of Christmas through intentional prayer, acts of kindness to each other, friends and community.

January 11: Light a candle. Tell each other: God loves you; God is with you; God has called you. That is the promise of baptism. Share memories of your baptisms. Pray together, sing a song or draw a picture to share what that means to you.

January 18: “Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord? ... I will go Lord, if You lead me...” How do we hear God’s call to us? How do we respond? List the things you do individually, as a family, as part of a church or community. What are other things you could do?

January 25: Following God’s call is not always easy. Tell or read a version of Jonah. When are we like Jonah? What things are we called to do that are hard or we would rather ignore?

February 1: The first story of Jesus’ public ministry in Mark, after he called his first disciples, is of Jesus healing a man with an unclean spirit. Share with each other a favorite story of Jesus.

February 8: When Peter’s mother-in-law was sick, Jesus took her by the hand, and she was healed. Have there been times when someone has touched you and made you feel better? Share such a time with each other.

February 15: Peter, James and John, had a “mountaintop experience” when they saw Jesus transfigured, or transformed, before their eyes and heard a voice from heaven say, “This is my beloved Son.” Around the table, talk with each other about how the disciples might have felt when they heard the voice. How might we hear God’s voice today? What might God say to you?

February 22: The Gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent always tells the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. We, too, are tempted like Jesus was and have to choose what we are going to do, whether we are going to follow God or follow another. With others around your table, share a decision you have made that you think pleased God.

March 1: Read Mark 8:31-38. As a family, talk about the crosses worn in worship with robes and those worn every day. For some people, wearing articles of clothing or jewelry with crosses on them is one way of saying that they are a Christian. But, simply wearing one doesn’t make a person Christian; it is important to live like Jesus – to love God every day and love other people even when it gets hard.

March 8: Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. Paul's discussion about what is wise and what is foolish can prompt a discussion about what it means to be a wise disciple. Is it wise to share all the M&M's or to keep them all for yourself? Is it foolish to risk being laughed at by the popular kids if you sit with an outcast? What are ways you can be a wise disciple this week?

March 15: Read John 3:16. This may be the most famous verse in the Bible. Jesus died to show God's love for the whole world. Name as many places and people as you can around the world.

March 22: Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. This says God's covenant will be on the hearts of God's people. To have God's law written on our hearts means that we belong to God. What is something you can do this week to show that you belong to God (attend worship, church school, choir practice, help a friend or send a card to someone).

March 29: Read Psalm 118. Stories we hear during Holy Week and Palm Sunday strengthen our understanding of loyalty. Good friends stay your good friends wherever you go and whatever happens. On Palm Sunday we remind ourselves to be good friends to Jesus every day and everywhere we go. How can you be a good friend this week?

April 5: This is the day we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. This is the defining event of our faith. As a family, talk about what part of the Easter story stands out as most significant to you.

April 12: Easter celebration is over. There seems to be a lull now after all the events and celebrations associated with the resurrection. What can you and your family do to keep alive the excitement of Easter?

April 19: The time is coming to start thinking about summer. What can you and your family do this summer that will reflect our call from Jesus to 'care for the least of these'?

April 26: Look over the people in your congregation. Who do you see that really needs you as a family to lift up in prayer this coming week?

May 3: Sometimes we need help in understanding what Scripture says to us. Share some of the people in your life who have helped you know more about God and God's word.

May 10: (Mother's Day) Share with another something you appreciate about your mother or another important woman in your life.

May 17: Before he died, Jesus prayed for his friends, asking God to protect them and make them one. Each day this week, pray for one of your friends. As you pray, take a piece of paper and some markers. Write your friend's name in the middle of the paper and doodle around it as you pray for your friend.

May 24: On Pentecost the church celebrates the outpouring of God's Spirit on Jesus' waiting disciples and the birth of the church. When has God surprised you in an unexpected way; share your experience around the table with your family this week.

May 31: God is the creator of all that is, and God is present all around us. With your family, or a friend, take a walk outside and find four things in God's creation that make you happy. Share your lists with each other; see if the others chose the same things you did.

June 7: Take a walk this week and count how many types or colors of flowers you see. Then name all blessings your family has received from God lately. Are the blessings more numerous than the flowers?

June 14: Cool off from the summer heat – drink something cold, splash in some water, or sit in front of a fan. As you enjoy the cooling, reflect on how God refreshes us.

June 21: (Father's Day) Jesus knew God as "Abba" which means "father." Think and talk together about how God "fathers" us.

June 28: Make a joyful noise. Have a Minute of Laughs when everyone just laughs for 60 seconds for no reason.

July 5: Each day this week look for God at work in your world. Share these "God Sightings" with your family or a friend.

July 12: Look around your congregation today. Pick out someone that you are going to pray for during the coming week. At the end of the week let them know that you have been praying for them.

July 19: Jesus is the good shepherd. Who are some of the other shepherds in your life? Why are they special to you?

July 26: Look through your closet this week and pick out clothes that you don't wear anymore and donate them to a local organization. Many families will be looking for clothing for their children as they go back to school.

August 2: Today Jesus tells us, "I am the bread of life." With your family or a friend, talk about how Jesus feeds your body and your soul. Praise him for the life he's given you today.

August 9: John 6:45 tells us, "They will all be taught by God." What has God taught you this week? Share this with someone. Pray today to be aware of what God is teaching you.

August 16: From Psalm 111, "Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart." How do we praise God with our hearts? What is a way that you might praise God this week with all your heart?

August 23: Read John 6:56-69. Many of Jesus' disciples leave him. Make the commitment to always follow Jesus faithfully. What is something you could do to show your commitment? Go and do it this week.

August 30: Read Mark 7:1-8. Jesus is questioned about his disciples' unclean hands. As you wash your hands today, give thanks to Jesus for cleansing you of your sins. Share with someone what being forgiven means to you.

September 6: God calls each of us to serve God throughout our lives. Sometime this week, share two of the gifts that God has given you that you use to serve God.

September 13: Jesus asked his disciples who people were saying that he was. Then he asked his disciples "who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Now Jesus asks us "who do you say that I am?" Share how you would answer Jesus with someone this week.

September 20: God's desire is that we live in peace with one another and God's creation. This week, share with someone something you will do to work for peace with those around you and/or God's creation.

September 27: The psalmist wrote, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 124:8). This week, share with someone how God has helped you.

October 4: As the leaves are changing, take time to look at the beauty in nature, thanking God for the change in seasons.

October 11: Create a Family Mission Statement. As a family, decide what core values are important. These principles are things the whole family can commit to live out both privately and publically.

October 18: Purchase a few small pumpkins and decorate them using Sharpie markers and take them to a retirement home.

October 25: Encourage your church to sponsor Trunk or Treat one evening this week. Adults park their cars in the parking lot and hand out goodies from their trunk. This is a safe, family friendly alternative to trick or treating.

November 1: Look up the word "saints" in the dictionary. List their characteristics. Name some saints, past and present. What did they do? How are you like them? How would you like to be like them? Give thanks in prayer or song for their lives and examples.

November 8: Read Luke 6:27-28. List some ways people mistreat each other. Name some ways we often respond. Which ways are the best? Are there some better ways?

November 15: Look through magazines or newspapers for pictures of people. Try to imagine what you might do or say to them to share God's love...even just a word or expression.

November 22: "Count your many blessings; count them one by one...see what God has done." List or draw pictures of your blessings, look at albums, take a walk. Share your blessings and give thanks!

November 29: List all the ways you celebrate Christmas. What is the meaning of each? Which things are most important to you? Think of whose birthday it is. How do our celebrations relate to the birth of the Christ child? Is there something you want to do differently this year?

December 6: Use an Advent Wreath in your home this year. It's easy to make. For a simple wreath and suggested readings, visit: <http://www.kencollins.com/answers/question-10.htm>.

December 13: Shop for a gift to contribute to a charity that helps those in need.

December 20: Have each member of the family write notes to each other telling them how special they are and leave the notes in their stockings to be opened on Christmas morning.

December 27: Continue the giving spirit this Christmas season. Bake cookies and deliver them to your local fire station.