



Welcome to Faith Together at Home!

The following pages contain thirty at-home devotions and activities you can send to the families in your church. Split them into individual files and send one per week, or send the whole batch for families to browse through on their own. The activities are split into five different categories: Explore the Bible, Follow Jesus, Be the Church, Learn about God, and Share Your Faith. Each activity page includes a ritual, reading and talking about a Bible story or verse, an activity, a service idea, and a prayer.

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Faith Together at Home

God Finds Us

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around a candle in the coziest spot in your home to read the Parable of the Lost Sheep from Matthew 18:12-14 or from your favorite children's Bible. Share highs and lows from the day, then tell stories about times you have been lost—in a store, on a trip to an unfamiliar place, in the woods, etc. You may also have stories of feeling lost because you don't know what to do—taking a test, being hurt by a friend, losing a job, etc. Talk about what it felt like to be lost, and what it felt like when you were finally found. Remember that even when we are lost, God finds us.

Discover Together

Reading the Bible helps us know more about God and God's love. Ask everyone to search the house to find all the Bibles you have. Gather them together and compare them. Grown-ups, do you like a Bible with extra features for study and journaling? Kids, which one do you like best—pictures or no pictures? Find the Old and New Testaments and count all the books in each (39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament books). Are there any books of the Bible you haven't heard of? What book of the Bible are you most familiar with?

If you have a family Bible, explore what is inside—family tree, birth dates, baptism dates, marriage dates, death dates? Where does your family keep this kind of information? If you do not have a family Bible with these dates, consider starting one.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- When did you receive your first Bible? Who gave it to you? Do you still have it?
- When is your favorite time to read the Bible: morning, middle of the day, or evening?
- Share a story about a time when a Bible story or verse helped when you felt lost.

Play Together

Play a game of Hide and Seek. For extra fun, play it in the dark. When you are done, celebrate that everyone was found and enjoy a snack of popcorn and your favorite drink.

Serve Together

We learn more about God's love by reading the Bible. As a family, plan to donate a Bible to your church's library or a Sunday school class or buy a children's Bible and gift it to a new baby.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Thank you, God, for finding us when we are lost. Thank you for our Bibles. Thank you for our family. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Jesus the I AM

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible and share highs and lows from the day. Talk about things that make you feel good and things that make you feel sad or down. Read Jesus' words from John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Have each person share a descriptive statement that tells something about who they are ("I am . . . good at basketball; artistic; kind.").

Discover Together

Grab a Bible and ask someone to read aloud Exodus 3:14. In the New Testament, Jesus expands on God's name, adding descriptions that help us better understand what God is like. Turn to the Gospel of John. Take turns finding and reading the seven "I AM" statements Jesus makes in John 6:35, 8:12, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, and 15:1.

Now go on a scavenger hunt around your home, looking for objects that symbolize these statements. For example, a slice of bread could go with John 6:35 ("I am the bread of life") and a flashlight could go with John 8:12 ("I am the light of the world"). Be creative and have fun with the search! Gather together again and share what you found.

Jesus guides us and nourishes us. Jesus loves us and wants us to be in relationship with him. He even died for us, so that we can live in his love forever!

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other.

- How do the "I AM" statements help you know more about God?
- Which "I AM" statement do you think would be most helpful if: someone was feeling lost? Wanted to know more about God? Was feeling nervous about an upcoming event in their life?

Play Together

Celebrate Jesus, the light of the world! Gather outside at night, or in a darkened room, for a game of Flashlight Tag. Afterward, light a candle (or a lamp) and enjoy a snack together. Talk about favorite movies or books that have themes of light and darkness. Sing a song about light, such as "This Little Light of Mine."

Serve Together

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life . . . I am the light of the world." Consider ways your family can share life and light with others in your neighborhood. Bake or buy a loaf of bread and deliver it to a neighbor or someone in need. Add a note that reads: Jesus said, "I am the bread of life . . . I am the light of the world" (John 6:35, 8:12).

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **God of Life, thank you for your love. Thank you for the gift of Jesus who lights the way to you. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

God Calls Us by Name

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible. Share highs and lows from the day. When someone shares a high, give them a high five. When someone shares a low, comfort them with a gentle hug. Read aloud Isaiah 43:2, explaining that God makes and keeps promises. God loves us very much and is with us in good times and hard times.

Discover Together

Gather in a circle and invite the youngest family member to begin by thinking of a Bible person whose name begins with the letter A. The next oldest family member names a Bible person whose name begins with a B, and so on until everyone has had at least one turn. Have a Bible and story Bible nearby for reference.

Each of the Bible people named played a role in God's story and was loved by God. Each of us is also loved by God and part of God's story. Ask someone to read aloud Isaiah 43:1b. Repeat together, "I have called you by name, you are mine." Invite everyone to close their eyes and imagine God gently and lovingly saying these words to them.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Who chose your name for you? If you know what your name means, share it.
- As followers of Jesus, we all share a common name: Christian. Do you know what this name means? (Follower of Christ)
- As Christians, what promises and blessings are ours?
- What responsibilities come with being a Christian?
- When is it easy to be a Christian? When is it more challenging?

Eat Together

Buy refrigerated breadstick dough and give some to each person. Have them form their initials with the dough. Follow package directions for baking the breadsticks. Say a quick prayer and then eat them as a reminder that God calls us by name.

Serve Together

In baptism, God welcomes us into God's family, calling us by name. Who has been baptized in your church lately? Ask your church office for this information. Then make and mail a "Welcome to the Family" card that includes these words from Isaiah 43:1b: "I have called you by name, you are mine."

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Loving God, we are so thankful that you have welcomed us into your family. We are grateful that you know each of us by name. Help us share your love in all we say and do. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Many Books, One Bible

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible. Share highs and lows from the day. Take turns reading aloud from Hebrews 4:14-16. Jesus also experienced highs and lows—he understands what we’re going through and he’s there to help us in every situation. Give praise and thanks to Jesus for the highs and pray for wisdom, direction, comfort, and strength for the lows.

Discover Together

Gather several different kinds of books from around your home (poetry, picture books, novels, songbooks, schoolbooks, etc.). Ask each person to choose a book, browse through it, and say what kind of book it is.

Pass around one or more Bibles. Explain that the word Bible comes from the Greek word *biblia*, which means “books.” The Bible is not one book, but a collection of many different books. Look at the table of contents and study notes in each Bible to learn a little bit about the different kinds of books and sections, such as historical books, poetry, and letters. Together, answer the following questions about the Bible:

- What are the first and last books of the Bible? (Genesis and Revelation)
- How many Psalms are in the Book of Psalms? (150)
- Which book has the shortest name? (Job)
- Which books are named for women? (Ruth and Esther)

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Name your favorite novel or storybook. What do you like about it?
- Name your favorite Bible story. What do you like about it?
- How does the Bible help us have a closer relationship with Jesus?

Eat Together

Put together a snack of Bible time foods, such as pita bread, honey, cheese, grapes, and milk. While you eat, look up what foods are mentioned in these passages: Genesis 18:6-8; 1 Samuel 17:17-18, Isaiah 5:1-2, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 3:4, Matthew 26:26, and John 6:8. Thank God for the food you share and for the spiritual food God provides in the Bible.

Serve Together

Books are a wonderful treasure. Consider ways your family can support a library in your church, school, or community. Donate books, or set up a Little Free Library in your front yard. To uplift the importance of books in a virtual way, record your family reading a favorite children’s book together and share the video with family and friends.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **God, thank you for the Bible—the best book of all. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

God's Word Is Our Treasure

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Place a lighted flashlight and an open Bible in a cozy gathering place in your home. Invite everyone to search for the light. When it is found, turn off the flashlight and light a candle. Gather around it and share highs and lows from the day. Remind your family that the Bible helps us see the path God is leading us on each day.

Discover Together

Work together to solve this riddle.

*My first is in book, but not in cook
My second is in singular, but not in plural
To find out my third, at my first take a look
My fourth is found at the end of mural
My fifth is in seen and tasted and heard
There's treasure untold to be found in this word!
(Answer: BIBLE)*

Read Psalm 119:105. Together, create hand/body actions to go with each of the following words from the verse: *word, lamp, feet, light, and path*. Repeat the verse and actions until everyone can say it by heart. Psalm 119:105 compares God's word to light. Psalm 119:162 compares it to treasure. What other images describe what the Bible is like?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What is your greatest treasure, and why is it precious to you?
- Have your treasures changed over the years? In what ways?
- In what ways is the Bible a precious and valuable treasure?

Play Together

Wrap some favorite bite-size treats in aluminum foil. Write Bible verses on slips of paper and attach one to each "treasure." Make at least one for each family member. Hide the treasure around your home and then invite everyone to search for their share. When all the treasure is found, gather together to enjoy the treats and the Bible verses. (Suggested verses: Exodus 19:5; Matthew 6:21; Matthew 13:44; Mark 10:21; 2 Corinthians 4:7)

Serve Together

Organize a Treasure Hunt for your friends and neighbors. Create clues that lead to the treasure—a Bible! Share with each other why the Bible is important to you and your families. If you need to social distance, make bookmarks with family members' favorite Bible verses and mail them to friends and family.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, you are the light that shows us the way. You are the treasure we search for each day. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible and share highs and lows from the day. Bring out a large sheet of paper, colored pencils, crayons, and markers. Sit together around the paper and read aloud Psalm 23 slowly and with expression. As you read, invite everyone to draw pictures and symbols that express the psalm (shepherd, green grass, stream, table laden with food, etc.). Display your Psalm 23 poster in a prominent place. Encourage everyone to say a brief prayer of thanks to Jesus, our Good Shepherd, each time they see the poster today.

Discover Together

In John 10:11-15, Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd who lays down his life in order to protect and save his sheep. Read the passage together and then assign parts and act it out. Next, turn to Luke 15:3-6 and read aloud Jesus' Parable of the Lost Sheep. Invite family members to act out the story.

Jesus often told stories called parables to help people understand how much God loves them. Like the shepherd in these stories, Jesus never stops caring for us or looking for us when we are lost.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What is your favorite story about Jesus? Why do you like it best?
- Tell about a time you felt lost. How can faith in Jesus help us through such times?
- How can we help other people when they are feeling lost?

Play Together

Gather your family together for a game. Select one person to be the shepherd. Have this person cover their eyes. Everyone else will be the sheep. Secretly choose one of the sheep to "baa" for the shepherd. Encourage this person to disguise their voice. Let the shepherd guess who the sheep is. If correct, the sheep becomes the shepherd for the next round. If not, the shepherd tries again with a new sheep. Play until everyone has an opportunity to be the shepherd.

Serve Together

Good shepherds lead their sheep to green pastures, making sure they receive adequate nourishment. As a family, help nourish others at a soup kitchen, food shelf, or other organization. Ask your church for a list of organizations it supports through monetary gifts or providing volunteers. Continue to remember the people served by this organization in your prayers throughout the week.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, our Good Shepherd, thank you for leading us each day. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Jammin' with the Psalms

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible and share highs and lows from the day. Rejoice with family members as they share their joys and accomplishments; sympathize with them in their difficulties or sadness. Talk about how songs often express emotions like happiness or sadness. Ask each person to talk about one of their favorite songs. Play a portion of each song on a streaming service or recording. How does the song make you feel? What message do you hear in the words and music?

Discover Together

The Bible contains many books, including a songbook! Ask someone to locate the book of Psalms in a Bible. Point out that some of the psalms include notes or directions to the worship or music leader (See Psalms 4, 5, 84, and 102). The book of Psalms contains a variety of songs to express different emotions, feelings, or requests. Take turns opening to a random psalm. Read a few lines aloud and talk about what the psalm is trying to express (praise, thanksgiving, complaint, confession, anger, sorrow, etc.). Then create your own psalm! Have each person add a line that expresses how they are feeling about God today. Make up a tune and sing your psalm together.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- People have been expressing their feelings through music for thousands of years. Why do you think that is?
- If you could write a song for God right now, what would the main message be?

Play Together

Psalm 100:1-2 tells us to “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.” Make musical instruments to accompany a family sing-along! Round up kitchen utensils (saucepans, lids, whisks and spoons), containers of beads or pebbles, buckets, and sticks. Challenge older kids to fill glasses with various levels of water so that a familiar tune can be played when the glasses are tapped with a spoon. Sing some of your family’s favorite songs as you play along!

Serve Together

Record a musical greeting to encourage, celebrate, or comfort a friend or family member. Sing or play a song and record it using a mobile device. Send the recording to someone who would enjoy the musical message.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing from Psalm 92 at the close of your time: **It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

God's People Pray

Explore
the Bible

Gather Together

Gather around an open Bible and share highs and lows from the day. Remind everyone that not only can we share our highs and lows with one another, we can also share them with God. We can talk to God about anything, from our greatest joys to our deepest fears to our saddest tears. Talking to God is what we call prayer. God is always present, listening to everything we have to say. The Bible teaches us about the importance and power of prayer. Join hands and pray or sing together the Lord's Prayer.

Discover Together

Ask everyone to search the house for books that provide useful information or directions (dictionary, atlas, map, how-to manual, address book, cookbook, and so forth). Talk about the different ways each book is helpful to your family. Then locate a Bible and ask someone to read aloud 2 Timothy 3:14-17. The apostle Paul wrote these words to a young Christian leader named Timothy. According to Paul, what does the Bible do for us? (Instructs us for salvation through faith in Jesus.) Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The Bible instructs and teaches us how we can come to God through Jesus.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other.

- What does the Bible teach us about prayer? (See Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11, Luke 18:1-8)
- Do you know a prayer by heart? Share it with your family.
- When does your family pray together?

Pray Together

Practice praying for each other this week. Write each family member's name on a slip of paper and place them in a hat. Take turns drawing out a name. Keep the name a secret. Throughout the week, pray for your "prayer pal." Leave them written prayers or pictures to find in a lunchbox, briefcase, or shoe! At the end of the week, reveal the names of your prayer pals. Join hands and say a prayer of thanks for each person in your family.

Serve Together

One way to show care and concern for the wider family of God is to pray for people everywhere. Consider starting a prayer chain with other families in your community or congregation. Encourage each family member to recruit one person to join the prayer chain. Plan how to activate the prayer chain, and make sure you let people know about keeping confidentiality.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **God, thank you for the gift of your Holy Word. Thank you for the gift of Jesus who teaches us how to praise and worship you. Help us share your love in all we say and do. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Fishing for Jesus

Follow
Jesus

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Have a younger child bring a Bible, an older child/adult bring a candle, and an adult bring some matches. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, listening for God.

Read aloud Matthew 4:18-22 from a Bible or a children's Bible. Choose parts and act out the story. Let the tallest person be Jesus. Give the middle-height people a blanket for a net and let them be the fishermen. Let the littlest people be the fish!

Discover Together

Jesus called the disciples when they were doing their "day jobs." Some of the disciples were fishermen. They didn't go to school to learn how to be disciples. Jesus taught them what they needed to know. From Jesus they learned to heal people and speak about God. Where would Jesus find you on a typical day? At school? In an office? On a bus? In a boat? Jesus finds us wherever we are and invites us to help people who are in need.

Play a quick game of Listening Hide and Seek. Choose one person to be the Caller. The Caller closes their eyes while everyone hides. The Caller begins calling players one by one, saying, "(Name), follow me!" When a player's name is called, they come out of hiding and join the Caller in searching for more players. After everyone is found, point out that Jesus called the disciples by name, and he calls us by name too.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Who does Jesus call to be his disciples today?
- How can you be a disciple at home? At school? In your neighborhood?
- If someone asked you "Who is Jesus?", how would you answer?

Play Together

Gather up some fishing poles and bait and go fishing as a family! Imagine what it was like for Simon, Andrew, James, and John to meet Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. Or play a game of Go Fish!

Serve Together

As a family, gather around a calendar and talk about twelve ways you can serve others during the next twelve months. Write your ideas on the calendar. Consider these possibilities: Work at a food bank, purchase Christmas gifts for a struggling family, do yard work for a homebound neighbor or church member, gather medical or school supplies for an aid organization. Research volunteer opportunities in your community and be ready to try new things!

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, help us to leave our nets and eagerly do your work. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Look! Here Is Jesus!

**Follow
Jesus**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Have a younger child bring a Bible, an older child/adult bring a candle, and an adult bring some matches. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, listening for God.

Read John 1:35-39 from a Bible or children's Bible. "Where are you staying?" the disciples ask Jesus. "Come and see," Jesus answers. Glance through the international headlines and photos on a news website or in a newspaper. Imagine where Jesus would stay in each of the places you see.

Discover Together

The first disciples were eager to discover more about Jesus. They followed him to where he was staying and remained with him that day. We also can discover more about Jesus. Gather a children's Bible, paints, paper, and modeling clay. Read some of your favorite Bible stories about Jesus and then paint pictures or make sculptures of Jesus based on the stories. Write titles for your pictures/sculptures on slips of paper. Use chairs as easels and boxes as podiums to display your artistic creations. Invite family members and friends to "come and see" Jesus. What do you think the disciples talked about with Jesus when they followed him home? If you could spend a day with Jesus, what would you do together? What would you talk about?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- How do you answer when Jesus asks, "What are you looking for?"
- How can going to church, reading the Bible, and praying together help us follow Jesus?
- John saw Jesus and exclaimed to the others, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" Who has helped you see and know Jesus? Who can you introduce to Jesus?

Explore Together

Learn more about Jesus by driving by or going to places in your community that can represent Jesus' ministry, such as a hospital, school, beach, hill/mountain, vineyard, or farm. When you get to each location, talk about how it reminds you of Jesus and his ministry. When you return home, draw a map of your community and mark all the places you visited with a cross, for Jesus.

Serve Together

John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God." This title reminds us that God sent Jesus into the world to be our Savior. Shop together for a toy lamb and make a card that reads, "Follow Jesus, the Lamb of God." Or use fabric markers to decorate a small T-shirt with a lamb and the phrase. Send the toy or shirt to a child in your congregation. Continue to pray for this child and their life of discipleship.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, we want to follow you. Help us invite others to come and see you too. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Jesus, the Light of the World

Follow
Jesus

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Have a younger child bring a Bible, an older child/adult bring a candle, and an adult bring some matches. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, listening for God.

Talk about times your family has been in a dark place (camping at night, in a cave, in a movie theatre). Ask everyone to watch the flicker of the candle flame while you read aloud John 8:12.

Discover Together

Jesus grew up without electricity or battery-powered lights. At night, millions of stars filled the sky over his home and at times a full moon cast a light almost as bright as day. Today, those same celestial lights continue to brighten our sky. And Jesus continues to be the light of the world. Find an object that glows or lights up. Hide it in a place with no lights. Invite everyone to search for the light. Have the first person who finds it shout, "Jesus is the light of the world!" Let this person hide the object for the next round. Play until everyone has had an opportunity to find the light. Then take turns passing the light around and offering prayers of thanks to Jesus.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- When you are feeling afraid or down, how can the light of Jesus bring you comfort?
- Think about parts of your life you keep hidden. Talk with Jesus about those hidden places.
- What can you do to brighten up someone's day today?

Watch Together

Choose a day when your whole family can spend the morning together. Find out when the sun will rise on that day and make plans to get up early and watch it rise together. As you wait, offer quiet prayers to Jesus. Try listening to soft music or singing a praise song together. Sip juice or warm drinks. Notice whether the light comes all at once or gradually. Use the experience to talk about how Jesus can dawn in each of our lives.

Serve Together

Think of ways to share light with your church and community. Donate candles or oil for your sanctuary altar. Buy flashlights for people living at a homeless shelter. Invite neighborhood children to stargaze in your yard. Donate a book about the sun to your local library.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world. Thank you for sharing your light with us. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

On the Go for Jesus

Follow
Jesus

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Have a younger child bring a Bible, an older child/adult bring a candle, and an adult bring some matches. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, listening for God.

Turn to Matthew 28:19-20 in a Bible and read aloud Jesus' commissioning of the disciples. In this passage, Jesus is appointing the disciples to actively carry out certain jobs after he returns to heaven. Skim through the Bible text again, looking for all the active jobs Jesus gives (go, make, baptize, teach, and remember).

Discover Together

Jesus gave the disciples the job of teaching people all over the world about him. Place a rug or blanket on the floor and ask everyone to hop aboard. Start an imaginary engine and then pretend to zoom away together on a topsy-turvy, bumpy, giggly ride. Take turns deciding when and where your rug will land. Look around at your new surroundings. Are you somewhere in your neighborhood? In another country? On another planet? How can you tell the inhabitants of each place about Jesus? Think of creative and active ways to communicate, including pictures, sounds, and hand motions.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- When and where is it hardest for you to tell others about Jesus' love?
- When was the last time you saw a baptism? Tell what that experience was like.
- What is one thing you remember about Jesus today?

Play Together

Remember your baptism with some wet and watery family activities:

- Visit a swimming pool or beach. Splash around in the water together and celebrate the new life that God offers everyone.
- Use paint brushes and buckets of water to "paint" symbols of God's love on a sidewalk or outdoor wall (cross, heart, dove, fish, smiling face).
- Dream up a new praise song using a watery tune (such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"). For example: "Go, go, go and make, disciples everywhere! Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, teaching them to care."

Serve Together

Help teach others about Jesus by making postcards with fun facts about Jesus and mailing them to family and friends.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, teach us to know you, help us to go out in your name, let our lives show your love. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Givers and Receivers

Follow
Jesus

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Have a younger child bring a Bible, an older child/adult bring a candle, and an adult bring some matches. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, listening for God.

Invite everyone to take off their shoes and socks, then read John 13:1-17 from a Bible or children's Bible. In this passage, Jesus washes his disciples' feet. In Bible times, most people traveled by walking and their feet became hot and very dusty. It was customary for the servant of a house to wash a guest's feet. But in today's Bible story, the disciples are in for a surprise! Jesus, their teacher, washes their feet himself!

Discover Together

Foot washing requires some practical planning, but the power of this shared experience makes it worth gathering a tub, warm water, and towels and finding a place in your home for the activity. A powerful and unfamiliar ritual, such as foot washing, may be resisted by some of your family members (even Peter resisted!). Other family members may experience the giggles. Anticipate such reactions and be patient with your team of disciples. Make sure everyone has a turn being a foot-washer and having their feet washed. Begin and end the activity with prayer.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Why do you think Peter resisted letting Jesus wash his feet? When have you resisted receiving someone's love and attention?
- What does Jesus give us every day?
- Would you rather give a gift or receive a gift? Why?

Study Together

Teach your family the following Hebrew phrase: *shiviti adonai l'neg'di tamid* (pronounced shi-vee-tee ad-oh-nigh la-neg-dee tah-meed). Practice saying the phrase a few times. Translated, this phrase means, "I will walk in his dust." It expresses the Hebrew tradition of becoming like one's teacher. Name your favorite teacher. What qualities do they have that you strive for in your own life?

Serve Together

Honor your family's favorite teacher. Think of a pastor, Sunday school teacher, school teacher, grandparent, or another person who serves others through teaching. Send this person a card or an email or call them to tell them how much you appreciate them.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Loving God, help us to be joyful givers and gracious receivers. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Sing to the Lord!

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross, and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Take turns reading Psalm 100 aloud by passing around the Bible. Talk about why people often sing when they worship God. Pass the Bible around again. This time invite each person to sing a verse from the psalm. Encourage fun musical styles (opera, country, rock, rap, etc.). Prereaders can provide background humming while another family member reads.

Discover Together

When we sing with other members of our faith community, we are echoing the voices of our ancestors from centuries ago. Read Psalm 150 to discover some of the instruments our faith ancestors played as they worshipped God. What instruments do we use today? Gather instruments from around your home (pan lids, wooden spoons, boxes, kazoos, harmonicas) and praise God with some joyful noise! Name some times when you have felt like singing. Were those also times you felt like praying? Why or why not?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What are some of your family's favorite hymns, camp songs, and other faith-based tunes?
- What is your favorite style of worship music?
- Is it important for churches to include different kinds of music during worship? Why or why not?

Sing Together

If you have a church hymnal at home, bring it out. If not, recall some of your favorite hymns or Bible camp songs. Take turns humming the first line of a hymn/camp song while the group tries to guess its title. Then sing it together!

Serve Together

Many people who are confined to home or live in nursing homes and assisted living centers would love to be serenaded with some of their favorite old hymns. Even if your family isn't "musically inclined," practice a few hymns together and then record yourselves singing them from the heart! Send the recording to someone you know in a nursing home or assisted living center.

Family Prayer

Sing a familiar church song, such as "Jesus Loves Me" or "This Little Light of Mine." Offer the following blessing to each family member: **"(Name), may you carry God's song in your heart each day."**



Faith Together at Home

Join the Team!

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-28. Point out the various jobs the Apostle Paul lists. Take turns naming a few of the jobs that must be done in order for things to go smoothly at your home (wash dishes, pick up toys, make beds). Next, name some of the tasks that must be accomplished for your congregation to run smoothly (committee meetings, bulletins printed, worship services planned). God wants everyone to participate in worshipping and serving. There are enough jobs to go around!

Discover Together

Ever since the Apostle Paul began establishing the earliest Christian churches, people have been learning the importance of teamwork when it comes to sharing God's Word with all the world. Talk about what happens when team members don't work together. What would a soccer game be like if the goalie decided to be a forward? What would happen during a concert if the percussionists decided to set their own tempo? What would a worship service sound like if the choir sang during the pastor's sermon? Then talk about how each family member can fulfill at least one of the roles mentioned. How is God calling you to be a team player in your faith community? What new jobs can you take on during worship? Are some jobs more important than others? Share your thoughts.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- How is a faith community like a family?
- How can we thank the leaders of our church?
- What new church leadership role would you like to try?

Work Together

Set a timer for ten minutes and send everyone off to perform some job around the house—quickly! Make a bed, empty the trash, help pick up toys. After the timer sounds, huddle up and thank each person for helping make your home more comfortable for everyone. Give each family member an honorary clean-up title (Danielle the Dusting Dynamo, Commander Squeegee, etc.).

Serve Together

Clean up around your neighborhood together. Give each person gloves and a bag to hold litter and walk around your neighborhood picking up trash that's on the ground. You could even assign one person to pick up recyclables while others pick up trash.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Dear God, help us recognize and use the gifts you give us to help a world in need. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Share the Love

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Read John 13:34-35. What is Jesus' new commandment? (that we love one another) Take a few moments to express your love for one another through kind words, hugs, and high-fives.

Discover Together

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another." Jesus spoke these words to his first disciples long ago, but the message is still clear today: Love one another. These words identify us as Jesus' followers. Ask everyone to take a few minutes to locate three objects that identify who they are. For example, you might find a baseball, piano music, and friendship bracelet to identify yourself as a sports fan, musician, and good friend. After everyone has shared their identifying objects, pass around a small cross (or a picture of a cross). Point out that the cross is an object that can identify us as followers of Jesus. Because of Jesus' love for us, we can love one another. As each person holds the cross, invite them to share one way we can "love one another." (share what we have, be a good friend, invite people in) Use a washable marker to draw a small cross on each person's hand as a reminder to "love one another."

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Do you think it is ever hard for Jesus to love others? Share your thoughts.
- How does your family live out Jesus' new commandment? How does your church?
- Think about the person it is hardest for you to love. How can Jesus help you love that person?

Play Together

Set a timer for five minutes. Challenge everyone to search your home for loose change. When the timer goes off, come back together and count up all the change you found. Have someone write "Love one another" on an envelope. Place the coins in the envelope and give it as an offering to your church.

Serve Together

Take out a variety of art supplies and work together to make cards and pictures for children who are patients in an area hospital. Place the cards in a large envelope and send your gift of love off today! Share your service ideas in your church newsletter or bulletin to inspire other families.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Loving Jesus, thank you for showing us what it means to love one another. Help us share your love every day. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Getting Together with God

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross, and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Have one family member read aloud the Pentecost story from Acts 2:1-21 or a children's Bible. Use paper fans (wind) and flashlights (tongues of fire) to help act out this dramatic story.

Discover Together

Jesus' disciples experienced many dramatic events: following Jesus through his ministry, witnessing his death and resurrection, and experiencing the arrival of the Holy Spirit. On that first Pentecost day, they moved from fearful followers to Spirit-full followers. "Here are some amazing events for you to remember and share," God seems to say. Take turns pretending to be the wind that blows away fear, the flame that burns away grief, and the dove that brings a sense of peace.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other.

- Does anyone in your family know how to say God's name in another language? Do some research together online to discover more ways to say God's name.
- Why do you think the Holy Spirit caused the disciples to speak in many different languages on the day of Pentecost?
- How would you have felt if you had witnessed the events of the first Pentecost?

Pray Together

Invite friends from another denomination to pray with you. If it's possible, gather with them in person. If not, join them through video chat. Talk about what words you use for the Lord's prayer. How do they compare? Then come up with your own words to pray for each other and the world.

Serve Together

Look up what natural disasters, like wildfires, tornados, or hurricanes, your denomination's aid organization is helping people recover from. Find a list of needs that the affected communities have. If you can, send needed supplies or money. Talk about how dramatic events, fire, and wind can be both good and bad, but God is always present in them. Pray for people affected by natural disasters throughout the week.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Blow into our lives, Holy Spirit. Light our path with your spark of love! Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

It's a Kid's Kingdom!

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross, and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Read aloud the story of Jesus welcoming children from Mark 10:13-16. Jesus reminded his disciples that God cares about children and calls us to share God's kingdom with them. Starting with the youngest member of your family, tell or read your favorite Bible stories.

Discover Together

Jesus clearly demonstrated with his words and actions that children receive God's blessing. The disciples thought the children were being a nuisance, but Jesus showed them what was important and who was important. Invite a child to read the Bible passage from Mark again. Invent hand motions to use when the reader says the words touch, come, took, laid, and blessed.

When children are made to feel welcome, they love to participate in worship. Even the youngest children can participate in prayers, singing and learning about God and the church. How does your church care for children? How does it celebrate their presence during worship?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What do you think the children learned when Jesus welcomed them? What do you think the disciples learned?
- What particular gifts do children bring to a faith community?
- How can adults help children grow in faith? How can children help adults grow in faith?

Play Together

Jesus reminds us that children are very important to God. Children can help us grow in our relationship with God and with each other. Play a game of Follow the Leader. Invite a child to begin the game, leading everyone around your home. Make sure everyone has a turn to be the leader. Conclude your game with a fun snack . . . made by the kids!

Serve Together

Volunteer as a family at church and demonstrate your care and respect for children. Record yourselves reading picture books or reenacting Bible stories and send the videos to other families with children in Sunday school. Alternatively, make cards to welcome new babies in your congregation.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Dear Jesus, help us love and respect children at home, at church, in our community, and throughout the world. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

The Church Is Our Home

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross, and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Read the story of Boy Jesus in the Temple from Luke 2:41-52 in your Bible. Use three action figures or dolls to act out the story. Three people go from home to the temple. Two journey toward home while the third stays at the temple. Two return to the temple, looking for the third. Finally, all three return home.

Discover Together

When Jesus was a young boy, he could listen carefully and converse openly about scripture with the older rabbis (teachers). Jesus showed his parents that the temple was his home, his "Father's house." Hold a "press conference" with Jesus in your living room. Have someone play the twelve-year-old Jesus. Let everyone ask them questions (Why did you wander off? Were you afraid? How did you feel when your parents found you again? What did you learn at the temple? What did you talk about on your way back home?).

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Do you think Mary and Joseph were happy with Jesus when they found him again? Unhappy? Both? Share your thoughts.
- What do you think is the main message of today's Bible story?
- Where is "home" for you? Practice some prayers to use when family members are going away and coming back home.

Explore Together

If possible, walk to church, like Jesus and his parents walked to the temple. Bring along a camera and ask someone to take pictures of your family in some of your favorite places in or around the church. Display the pictures in your favorite rooms at home. Let the pictures remind everyone of your church "home" while you eat, wash, and rest in your family home.

Serve Together

Who are the twelve- and thirteen-year-old children from your church? How can your family support these young members? Consider offering prayers for them and sending cards for their birthdays, holidays and other special events in their lives (school activities/accomplishments, Confirmation day, community involvement). Invite other families to join you in supporting the youth of your church.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **We are searching for you, Jesus. Bring us home to you. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Jesus Is for Everyone

**Be the
Church**

Gather Together

Gather together in a comfortable place in your home. Build a little altar together by placing a Bible, cross and candle on a small table or box covered with a cloth. Begin by lighting the candle and asking everyone to sit quietly for a few moments, welcoming God's presence.

Share highs and lows from the day. Find Luke 4:42-44 in your Bible and read the story of Jesus preaching in the synagogues. Spread out a handful of crackers, cereal or chocolate chips on a table. Imagine that each tidbit represents a village or community Jesus visited in Judea. Eat the snack and talk about how many villages Jesus may have visited in his travels. Then estimate how many villages or communities there are in the world today. Millions? Billions? Zillions? Think of creative ways to tell all those communities about Jesus' love.

Discover Together

In today's Bible story we discover that Jesus touched people so powerfully that they didn't want to let him go! But Jesus insisted that he could not belong to a single group of people. Jesus is for everyone. Hop on your bikes or in a car and take a tour of your community, noting all the places of worship you see. What can you share with the people who worship there? Prayers, compassion, music, time, belongings, humor, commitment, questions . . . Continue the list and then add a column of things other faith communities could share with the people from your church.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other.

- How do you think Jesus felt when the crowd found him?
- Why does Jesus want us to share his love?
- How do other churches in your community share Jesus' love?

Play Together

As the church, we are called to help Jesus' love expand and grow. Celebrate this calling by making some small things expand into larger things: Pop a batch of popcorn and watch the kernels expand into a yummy feast! Beat egg whites or heavy cream into fluffy peaks. Use a straw and your breath to transform soapy water into bubbles that rise up and travel on the wind. Talk about ways you can spread Jesus' love far and wide.

Serve Together

Work together to think of one way you can share Jesus with other people each day this week. For example, write "Jesus loves you!" on a sidewalk with chalk, record a message on your voicemail, send an email to a distant relative. At the end of the week, talk about all the ways you shared Jesus with others. Then come up with another set of creative ideas and begin again!

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, you love everyone in the whole world. Help us share this gift of love every day. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

On the Lookout for Jesus

Learn
about God

Gather Together

Gather around a candle or in the coziest room in your home to read to read Luke 19:1-10 or find the story of Zacchaeus in a children's Bible and read it together. Invite each family member to share highs and lows from the day. Talk about the highs and lows Zacchaeus experienced in the Bible story. Talk about surprising places where God meets us. Think about where we can go to experience God when we are feeling small.

Discover Together

Choose parts and act out the story of Zacchaeus. Consider having the shortest member of the family play Zacchaeus, a middle-height person play Jesus, and the tallest person play the tree! Other family members can play the grumblers in the crowd. As the story plays out, notice the details, the words exchanged, and the action that takes place. See with your whole selves where Jesus finds Zacchaeus and what he says to him. If you have time, trade parts and act out the story again. Be on the lookout for new discoveries about who God is as you experience the story from different characters' viewpoints.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Think of a famous person you admire. What would you be willing to do in order to see that person? Climb a tree? Swim a sea?
- How can we welcome Jesus into our home each day?
- Name three things this story teaches you about living with others in community.

Play Together

When was the last time your family spent time with another family in person or virtually? Invite a family to spend time with you either on a video chat or at your home. Work together to plan a fun evening for your guests. Prepare a delicious meal, or suggest snacks you can share together but separately. Greet your guests with smiles and cheerful hellos. Play games that make everyone feel like a winner. Talk about the blessings that come from sharing time together.

Serve Together

Jesus found Zacchaeus in a tree. Does your community offer a program for planting trees? Check out opportunities to care for God's creation in your community through tree-planting, weed removal, or trail maintenance. Look for opportunities to help elderly neighbors prune trees and tend to yard work. As a family, climb up in your minds, like Zacchaeus climbed up in the tree. Look all around and see where Jesus calls you to be!

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Thank you for coming to our home, Jesus. Please keep looking for us and knowing who we are. Help us be on the lookout for you everywhere we go. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Safe with Jesus

Learn
about God

Gather Together

Gather around a candle or in the coziest room in your house to read the story of Jesus Calming the Storm from Matthew 8:23-27 or from your favorite children's Bible. Share highs and lows from the day, then talk about the things that frighten you (storms, family arguments, loss of job, school bullies, taking tests, etc.). Talk about what frightened the disciples in today's Bible story and notice that they shared their fears with Jesus.

Discover Together

Ask a child to retell the story of Jesus calming the storm. Using a large piece of paper and some markers, work together to draw a picture of the story, but place your family in the boat. Draw big waves around the boat and write the things your family members are afraid of in the waves. Sketch Jesus looking at the members of your family. Draw a conversation balloon and write the words that Jesus is saying to your family about your fears. Display the picture in a prominent place in your home, so that everyone can remember Jesus is with us in the scary moments of our lives. The disciples were Jesus' closest companions, and yet even they felt afraid when life got wavy! They noticed that Jesus alone was not afraid, and they asked him for help. In fact, they begged him for help. When does your family share fears and ask Jesus for help? Look at the Bible story again. Besides the storm, what else does Jesus calm?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- When does your life get wavy?
- Why do you think Jesus slept through the storm?
- How do we try to hide our fears?

Play Together

Let an older child cut out a bookmark from cardstock. Let a younger sibling decorate it with lots of stormy scribbles and swirls. Use the bookmark to mark Matthew 8:23-27 in your favorite Bible. Read this passage the next time stormy weather comes around. Gather in a safe location while you ride out the storm. Sit together on a blanket for your "boat." Bring along a flashlight and a snack. Pray together. Cuddle together. Act out the story while you wait in safety. Offer thanks to Jesus when the storm passes through.

Serve Together

Your family is not alone in sometimes feeling frightened and needing Jesus to calm your fears. Think of friends, family, or neighbors who are going through fearful times. Contact these people. Pray with one another as each of you faces life's waves: school exams, job interviews, friendship problems, illness. Think about God's people all over the world. What fears do they face? Pray for these families.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Dear Jesus, we often feel afraid. We need your help. We depend on you to travel with us through choppy waters and calm seas. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home Enough for All

Learn
about God

Gather Together

Gather around a candle or in the coziest room in your house to read the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand from Luke 9:10-17 or from your favorite children's Bible. Share highs and lows from the day and then begin to explore some of the themes of this Bible story. Jesus miraculously fed a huge crowd with very little food. How do you think the disciples felt at the end of that day? On that day, Jesus showed that God can feed everyone.

Discover Together

Gather up all the bread you have in your home. Place it on your kitchen table. Estimate how many people could eat a meal of this bread. Talk about what could help the bread go further to feed more people. The disciples found out that Jesus cared about all the people in the crowd. Jesus turned his caring into action! Often we get stuck because we think the world's problems are too big to tackle. But your home can be the place where family members help each other get "unstuck" by turning to Jesus' example in order to find hope and take action!

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Talk about your family's food resources. If you have extra, how could you share?
- Jesus took a little and made a lot. What do you have a little of? How could you make it something more?
- Share some examples of kids caring about others and making a difference in your home, your community, and the world.

Go Outside Together

Take a walk or ride bikes together and search out the "enough" that God provides for all of us. Enough air, enough beauty, enough people to connect with. Make a list of all the "enough" you discover. Post the list on your refrigerator door. Offer thanks to God for all the items on the list.

Serve Together

Jesus fills us and calls us to share our abundance with others. Gather up one, two, or even twelve empty grocery bags. Write "Jesus calls us to share" on each bag. Offer a prayer that God will continue to show your family ways you can trust and share. Over the course of the next few weeks, challenge each other to fill the bags with non-perishable food items and other household goods (paper products, clothing, books, dishes, toys, and so forth). As each bag fills up, deliver it to an organization that will distribute your "abundance" to people who are in need.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Gracious and generous God, when we have something to share, remind us to give. Show us the ways you spread your abundance to all people. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Keeping Pace with Jesus

Learn
about God

Gather Together

Gather around a candle or in the coziest room in your house to read the story of Jesus' resurrection and the walk to Emmaus from Luke 24:1-35 or from your favorite children's Bible. Take turns reading this long story, stopping at intervals to talk about what you think will happen next. Share highs and lows from the day; then talk about the big highs and lows the people in the Bible story experienced. They lost their Lord and then found him unexpectedly!

Discover Together

This story is full of motion. In order to experience this active story, take a short journey together as you discuss it. Demonstrate how the women moved as they left the empty tomb. Mimic the initial pace of Cleopas and his friend as they walked to Emmaus, discussing the sad news of Jesus' death. Change the pace as they talk with the "stranger" about Jesus of Nazareth. Stop along your journey and close your eyes. Imagine eating a meal together with this stranger. Then suddenly open your eyes and see Jesus offering you food. Make your way "home" again at the same pace the two friends returned to Jerusalem with the news that Jesus had appeared to them!

The disciples longed for Jesus. As they walked along, they searched for answers about his death. Their searching was somehow satisfied by a stranger who listened to them tell stories about their teacher and friend. But the disciples weren't the only ones who were searching that day; Jesus was searching for them too. Where do you look for Jesus today? Where does Jesus find you?

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What would happen if you imagined every person you meet might be Jesus?
- What stories can you tell each other about Jesus?
- What would you say to Jesus if he joined you for a walk?

Play Together

Take turns dressing up in a simple disguise using items you have around the house (scarf, sunglasses, hat, mask). The disguised person pretends to be a familiar Bible character while other players ask yes or no questions to try to reveal the disguised person's identity. If the person's identity hasn't been uncovered after twenty questions, have them remove their disguise and reveal who they are. Play until everyone has a turn to hide their identity.

Serve Together

Contact a local food shelf and ask if they could use volunteers to pack food or serve meals. Find a time that works for your family and volunteer your time to help your neighbors access nutritious food, like the food Cleopas and his companion shared with Jesus.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Dear Jesus, thank you for meeting us on the road, through the Bible, in our hearts, and at the communion table. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Live by the Spirit

Learn
about God

Gather Together

Gather around a candle or in the coziest room in your home to read Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of the Spirit. Share highs and lows from the day. Look again at the fruits of the Spirit and talk about how these qualities were intertwined with the highs and lows each of you experienced today. Tell about a time you saw another family member demonstrate a fruit of the Spirit today.

Discover Together

Make a list of the fruits of the Spirit and take a trip to a farmer's market or the fresh produce aisle at a grocery store. Have fun making comparisons between the fruit of the Spirit and the edible fruits. For example, the fruit of self-control may be compared to a pineapple because you have to have thick skin to practice self-control. The fruit of patience may be like a pomegranate because it takes a long time to get to the seeds. Gentleness may remind you of a banana, which bruises easily. And faithfulness could be compared to an apple which you can carry with you wherever you go. Purchase one or more pieces of fruit for each fruit of the Spirit. Place the fruit in a large bowl at the center of your mealtime table. Let it remind you to live by the Spirit all day long, then eat it together at dinner.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Recall each fruit of the Spirit and name a television show, book, or movie that has the fruit as part of its theme.
- How can belonging to a church community help us be better “fruit-bearers”?
- How do you handle conflict within your home? Outside of your home? Which “fruit” does your family need more of? How can you grow more of it?

Play Together

Write down the names of fruits and fruits of the spirit on separate slips of paper and mix together in a bowl. One person at a time draws out a slip and looks at it without showing it to anyone. The rest of the group asks yes-or-no questions to guess which fruit was on the slip. Prereaders can partner with a reader to help. Play until everyone has a chance to choose a fruit or as long as time allows.

Serve Together

Be fruit-bearers of generosity this week! Find out if your local fire station or homeless shelter could use a donation of whole fruit or fruit salad. Consider using the fruits you picked out in the Discover Together section for this donation.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Holy Spirit, help us be joyful messengers of your love and kindness. Teach us patience and self-control. Let our lives reflect faithfulness in God. Make our words gentle and our actions generous. Give us the strength we need to be peacemakers in the world. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Neighbors Around the World

Share Your
Faith

Gather Together

Gather in a cozy room around a world map or globe. Have someone close their eyes and point to a place on the map or spin the globe and then point to a place on it. Name the country (or closest country) that is pointed to. Offer a prayer for the people who live there. Share highs and lows from the day. Read aloud Luke 10:25-37 from a Bible or a children's Bible while family members act out the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Discover Together

Gather in a circle and grasp hands with other family members. Touch your feet to other people's feet. Now try rubbing shoulders or linking arms at the elbow. How else can your family get connected? We're all connected in lots of ways, even when we feel alone. Jesus shows us how we are connected in the story of the Good Samaritan. Neighbors are people who help others, and people who need help. At different moments in our lives we can offer help, or we may need to ask for help. Practice asking for help and being helpers.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Why do we sometimes hesitate when we see someone who needs our help?
- What are some "first steps" we can take in serving others?
- Do you know someone who is a "good Samaritan"? How does this person inspire you to serve others?

Read Together

Jesus often told stories to teach his followers. Visit a library, go online, or look on your bookshelf and find storybooks about children living in other parts of the world. Snuggle up for a story time and talk about how we can share love with our neighbors all around the world. Then grab some simple costumes and try acting out some of the stories.

Serve Together

Ask your doctor, dentist, or church if they know of programs that help families who cannot afford health care. Pick a program and make a contribution. Work with other families at church to collect old eyeglasses that can be distributed to those in need. Work through an organization that helps with this form of service.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **You are our neighbor, Jesus. Help us serve you! Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Trusting God

Share Your
Faith

Gather Together

Gather in a cozy room around a world map or globe. Have someone close their eyes and point to a place on the map or spin the globe and then point to a place on it. Name the country (or closest country) that is pointed to. Offer a prayer for the people who live there. Share highs and lows from the day. Turn in a Bible or a children's Bible to Luke 21:1-4 (The Widow's Offering). Give a penny to the older kids and adults in your family. Ask them to imagine what they could do today with just one penny.

Discover Together

The widow's offering of "two small copper coins" was probably made up of two bronze coins called *leptons*, which means "the thin ones." The lepton was the smallest and least valuable coin of that time. For Jesus, it was not the size of the gift that mattered, but the amount of love and trust it represented. Search the house for a variety of coins. Count them up and talk about things your family can offer to God (money, talents, prayers). Find a clear container and write "Family Offering" on it. Encourage everyone to drop coins into the container in the coming weeks. When the container is full, choose a charity and make a donation. If change is sparse around your home, talk about what you might be able to give electronically today to an organization of your family's choice.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- How do your family's choices show that you trust God to care for you?
- How can your family make a difference in God's world today?
- When has your family joyfully served others?

Pray Together

As a family, strive to see God's world more clearly today. Use a bar of soap to write words (or draw pictures) on the windows of your home. Choose words/pictures that get in the way of clearly focusing on God's love (jealousy, greed, hatred, selfishness, fear, etc.). Afterward, pray together, asking God to help you see clearly, as the widow did. Use rags and warm water to wash away the words. Let the sparkling windows remind your family to see the world's needs and serve through faith.

Serve Together

Is there an organization in your area that serves children who are living in foster care homes? Contact that organization and ask about ways you can offer help to these children. Donations of clothing, school supplies, and sports equipment may be needed. Talk together as a family about the things you can collect and share. Write caring notes to go along with your gifts.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Holy God, help us trust you. May we give you all that we have. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Breaking Down Walls

Share Your
Faith

Gather Together

Gather in a cozy room around a world map or globe. Have someone close their eyes and point to a place on the map or spin the globe and then point to a place on it. Name the country (or closest country) that is pointed to. Offer a prayer for the people who live there. Share highs and lows from the day. Turn to Ephesians 2:13-14, 19 in a Bible or children's Bible. Read the text aloud and then send one family member out to knock on the door of the room where you are meeting. At first, pretend to ignore their knocks, and then invite them in. Talk about God throwing open the door and welcoming each of us into God's love.

Discover Together

Read verse 14 aloud again. In this dramatic verse, the wall we read about may refer to the wall in the temple that separated those who were allowed to go into the inner court (to get closer to God) from those who were not allowed to do so. Build some pillow walls and take turns knocking them down. God wants the church to be a place where no one is separated. Embracing the world means noticing and knocking down walls that divide people. Quickly put on some simple disguises, such as sunglasses, hats, or scarves. Read Ephesians 2:19 aloud ("So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God"). Throw off your disguises after hearing the verse and greet one another as friends in Christ. Talk about recognizing all people as members of God's household.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- Talk about one thing that divides your family today. How can you break down that wall?
- How does your church welcome new people?
- When have you felt like a stranger? Who helped you feel welcome?

Dance Together

Music can break down the barriers that divide people. Play music of all different genres from different places around the world and dance among your broken-down pillow walls. Celebrate God's Word shared by people throughout the world.

Serve Together

Many organizations support immigrants and refugees in traveling to and arriving in our country. These organizations, along with the people they serve, need our prayers. Research an organization that breaks down walls by helping immigrants and refugees, pray for them, and discover other ways you can support their work.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **God of all places, help us break down the walls that divide people. Bring us together in Christ. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

A Blessed Banquet

Share Your
Faith

Gather Together

Gather in a cozy room around a world map or globe. Have someone close their eyes and point to a place on the map or spin the globe and then point to a place on it. Name the country (or closest country) that is pointed to. Offer a prayer for the people who live there. Share highs and lows from the day. Turn in a Bible or children's Bible to Luke 14:12-14. In this passage, Jesus tells us it is better to invite unlikely guests to a meal.

Discover Together

Jesus helped his disciples understand the importance of generously giving to others. He told them to invite unlikely guests to a banquet—guests who would not be able to return the favor. Jesus also taught his disciples about receiving from others. Read verse 14 again. The act of giving is rewarded with God's blessing. Has your family helped distribute food at a food pantry? Think about what you learned from the people who came to receive the food. Did they seem sad? Grateful? Uncomfortable? Think of how your family might feel in a similar situation.

When you serve others at a food pantry, soup kitchen, or by bringing meals to those who need it, you may feel uncomfortable at first. But Jesus challenges us to step out of our comfort zone and serve unlikely guests. When we step outside of our familiar world we get to experience more of God's world. Consider serving food to others in your community.

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- What can people give if they don't have extra money?
- How can knowing someone who is in need change our impression of all people in need?
- Name people who inspire you to give.

Create Together

Make placemats as a reminder that God welcomes all people to God's table. Cut out pictures from magazines or printed from the internet that show diverse people. Glue the pictures to a sheet of construction paper or cardstock. After the glue dries, cover the placemats with clear self-contact paper or using a laminator. Use the placemats at mealtime, offering prayers for our siblings in Christ around the world.

Serve Together

Contact a local nonprofit organization and ask if they could use volunteers. Find a time that works for your family to volunteer. Talk afterward about how the experience felt for you and how it may have felt for the people receiving support they need.

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Generous God, you feed us with your generous gift of grace. Help us feed others. Amen.**



Faith Together at Home

Give God the Glory!

Share Your
Faith

Gather Together

Gather in a cozy room around a world map or globe. Have someone close their eyes and point to a place on the map or spin the globe and then point to a place on it. Name the country (or closest country) that is pointed to. Offer a prayer for the people who live there. Share highs and lows from the day. Turn in a Bible or children's Bible to Luke 2:8-20 and read the story of the shepherds and angels at Jesus' birth. Have a fun contest to see who can sing the best angels' song based on verse 14 ("Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"). Try fun musical styles (opera, country-western, rock, rap). Award each person an honorary title (Most Enthusiastic, Most Angelic, etc.).

Discover Together

As Christians, we have much to share with the world. The shepherds and angels remind us of something we can all share with others: joy and awe for God's blessings! God entered the world in a surprising way—as a baby, born to poor parents, laid in a manger. Imagine the joy and awe the shepherds experienced that night. Play a game of "find baby Jesus." Take turns hiding a doll in unexpected places (inside a cupboard, behind a chair, under a basket). Send everyone to search for the doll. When someone finds it, shout for joy!

Talk Together

Ask these questions of each other:

- When do you feel like sharing about Jesus? When do you feel like hiding your faith?
- What are some ways you celebrate Jesus with others?
- Why did the angels tell the shepherds not to be afraid?

Celebrate Together

As a family, calculate the number of days until Christmas. Point out that Christmas isn't the only time we can praise God for the birth of Jesus. Like the shepherds, we can glorify and praise God anytime, anywhere! How can your family praise God today? Paint a beautiful picture of Jesus? Or how about dancing to Christmas music, whatever the season?

Serve Together

Make cards to send to members of your congregation who live alone. Remind them of Jesus' presence and love in their lives. Be a sign of Christ's love!

Family Prayer

Say this prayer or blessing at the close of your time: **Jesus, we rejoice in you always! Amen.**