

14 Day



Worship Plan

14-Day Family Worship Plan Template

Day 1: Gratitude

- **Scripture Reading:** Psalm 100
- **Singing:** Give Thanks, God is so Good (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The Importance of Gratitude.
- **Story:**

Once upon a time in a small village, a poor unfortunate man lived with his mother, his wife, and his six children in a little one-room hut. Because they were so crowded, the man and his wife often argued. The children were noisy, and they fought. In winter, when the nights were long and the days were cold, life was especially hard. The hut was full of crying and quarreling. One day, when the poor unfortunate man couldn't stand it anymore, he ran to the Rabbi for advice.

"Rabbi," he cried, "things are in a bad way with me, and getting worse. We are so poor that my mother, my wife, my six children, and I all live together in one small hut. We are too crowded, and there's so much noise. Help me, Rabbi. I'll do whatever you say."

The Rabbi thought and pulled on his beard. At last he said, "Tell me, my poor man, do you have any animals, perhaps a chicken or two?"

"Yes," said the man. "I do have a few chickens, also a rooster and a goose."

"Ah, fine," said the Rabbi. "Now go home and take the chickens, the rooster, and the goose into your hut to live with you."

"Yes indeed, Rabbi," said the man, though he was a bit surprised.

The poor unfortunate man hurried home and took the chickens, the rooster, and the goose out of the shed and into his little hut.

When some days or a week had gone by, life in the hut was worse than before. Now with the quarreling and crying there was honking, crowing, and clucking. There were feathers in the soup. The hut stayed just as small and the children grew bigger. When the poor unfortunate man couldn't stand it any longer, he again ran to the Rabbi for help.

"Rabbi," he cried, "see what a misfortune has befallen me. Now with the crying and quarreling, with the honking, clucking, and crowing, there are feathers in the soup. Rabbi, it couldn't be worse. Help me, please."

The Rabbi listened and thought. At last he said, "Tell me, do you happen to have a goat?"

"Oh, yes, I do have an old goat, but he's not worth much."

"Excellent," said the Rabbi. "Now go home and take the old goat into your hut to live with you."

“Ah, no! Do you really mean it, Rabbi?” cried the man.

“Come, come now, my good man, and do as I say at once,” said the Rabbi.

The poor unfortunate man tramped back home with his head hanging down and took the goat into his hut.

When some days or a week had gone by, life in the little hut was much worse. Now, with the crying, quarreling, clucking, honking, and crowing, the goat went wild, pushing and butting everyone with his horns. The hut seemed smaller, the children grew bigger. When the poor unfortunate man couldn't stand it another minute, he again ran to the Rabbi.

“Rabbi, help me!” he screamed. “Now the goat is running wild. My life is a nightmare.”

The Rabbi listened and thought. At last he said, “Tell me, my poor man. Is it possible that you have a cow? Young or old doesn't matter.”

“Yes, Rabbi, it's true I have a cow,” said the poor man fearfully. “Go home then,” said the Rabbi, “and take the cow into your hut.” “Oh, no, surely not, Rabbi!” cried the man.

“Do it at once,” said the Rabbi.

The poor unfortunate man trudged home with a heavy heart and took the cow into his hut. Is the Rabbi crazy? he thought.

When some days or a week had gone by, life in the hut was very much worse than before. Everyone quarreled, even the chickens. The goat ran wild. The cow trampled everything. The poor man could hardly believe his misfortune. At last, when he could stand it no longer, he ran to the Rabbi for help.

“Rabbi,” he shrieked, “help me, save me, the end of the world has come! The cow is trampling everything. There is no room even to breathe. It's worse than a nightmare!”

The Rabbi listened and thought. At last he said, “Go home now, my poor unfortunate man, and let the animals out of your hut.”

“I will, I will, I'll do it right away,” said the man. The poor unfortunate man hurried home and let the cow, the goat, the chickens, the goose, and the rooster out of his little hut.

That night the poor man and all his family slept peacefully. There was no crowing, no clucking, no honking. There was plenty of room to breathe. The very next day the poor man ran back to the Rabbi.

“Rabbi,” he cried, “you have made life sweet for me. With just my family in the hut, it's so quiet, so roomy, so peaceful... What a pleasure!”

- **Activity:** Each family member shares one thing they are thankful for.
- **Prayer Focus:** Thankfulness and praise - Instead of asking God for all our requests today, let's focus our prayer time on only praising Him for what He has done in our lives!

Day 2: God's Creation & Object Lessons

- **Scripture Reading:** Job 12:7-10
- **Singing:** It's a Beautiful Day, Psalm 1:1-3 (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The beauty and spiritual lessons found in God's creation.
- **Story:**

In the Bible, Jesus often used nature to teach important spiritual truths. He spoke of seeds, trees, birds, and flowers to help people understand more about God and His kingdom. Just as Jesus did, we can look around at the world God has created and discover powerful lessons that help us grow in our faith. Today, we're going to explore how God speaks to us through the things we see in nature every day.

Scripture Reading:

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..."

— Romans 1:20

Lesson:

God has placed countless lessons in the natural world around us. Here are a few examples of how we can see His truths reflected in what He has made:

1. The Leaf and the Tree:

- A leaf is green and full of life as long as it is connected to the tree. But once it falls off, it starts to wither and die. This is a reminder that we must stay connected to Jesus, the true source of life. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself, we cannot live a fruitful spiritual life without staying close to Jesus.
- **Biblical Connection:** *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5)

2. The Sunflower and the Sun:

- Sunflowers are known for their ability to follow the sun across the sky. They turn their faces toward the light, seeking it out from sunrise to sunset. In the same way, we should turn our hearts toward Jesus, seeking His light and guidance in our lives.
- **Biblical Connection:** *"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"* (Psalm 27:1)

3. The Rock and the Storm:

- A large rock remains unshaken, even when strong winds and storms rage against it. This teaches us about the strength and stability that comes from trusting in God. No matter what storms we face in life, God is our solid foundation.

- **Biblical Connection:** *“The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”* (Matthew 7:25)

4. **The Butterfly and New Life:**

- A butterfly begins its life as a caterpillar, but through the process of metamorphosis, it becomes a beautiful butterfly. This transformation reminds us of the new life we receive in Christ. Just as the caterpillar is changed into something new and beautiful, so are we transformed by the power of God’s love.
- **Biblical Connection:** *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- **Activity:** Go on a Nature Hunt for Spiritual Lessons

Everyone goes outside for this activity! You can do this in your backyard, a nearby park, or any place where you can easily access nature.

Set a timer for 5 minutes and each family member will search for an object in nature that they can find a spiritual lesson or truth about God in. It could be anything—a flower, a rock, a tree, a leaf, a bird—anything in nature that captures their attention.

Once the timer goes off, gather back together in a circle and one by one, each person will show their object to the group and explain the spiritual lesson they’ve found. For example:

A Leaf: "This leaf reminds me that we need to stay connected to Jesus, like a leaf is connected to the tree, so that we can stay spiritually alive."

A Flower: "This flower is delicate and needs care, just like our faith needs to be nurtured with prayer and the Word of God."

- **Prayer Focus:** Asking God to open our eyes to the lessons He has for us all around.

Day 3: Love One Another

- **Scripture Reading:** John 13:34-35
- **Singing:** Family, 1 John 3:1(from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** What it means to love one another.
- **Story:**

Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch Christian woman, and her family helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. They were eventually caught, and Corrie and her sister Betsie were sent to a concentration camp. In the camp, they endured unimaginable suffering, but they never lost their faith in God. After the war, Corrie traveled the world sharing her story of faith and forgiveness. One day, after speaking at a church in Germany, a man approached her. He had been one of the cruelest guards at the concentration camp where she and Betsie had suffered. The man, now a Christian, asked Corrie for forgiveness.

Corrie stood there, frozen. How could she forgive this man who had caused so much pain? But she knew that Jesus had commanded her to love her enemies and to forgive as He had forgiven her. So, she prayed silently for God's help, and then, with all the strength she could muster, she took the man's hand and said, "I forgive you, brother, with all my heart." In that moment, Corrie felt the love of God fill her heart and flow through her. She later said that it was only through God's power that she was able to forgive and love this man.

Lesson:

In John 13:34-35, Jesus tells us to love one another as He has loved us. This kind of love isn't easy. It's a love that forgives, even when it's hard. Corrie ten Boom's story shows us that with God's help, we can love others, even our enemies, as Jesus commanded. When we do, we demonstrate to the world that we are truly His disciples.

Corrie's story is a powerful reminder that we are called to love and forgive, even when it's hard. This command doesn't just apply to our enemies or those who have hurt us deeply—it also applies to those closest to us. Sometimes, it can be difficult to love and forgive our own family members—our brothers and sisters, our spouses, our parents, and our children. But Jesus calls us to do just that. He asks us to love one another as He has loved us, even when it's not easy. When we choose to love and forgive those in our own families, even in challenging moments, we reflect the love of Christ in the most intimate and powerful way. Just as Jesus forgives us daily, we are to extend that same grace to those we love, showing the world that we are truly His disciples. Listen to Corrie Ten Boom share her experience in this short 7 minute youtube video:

<https://youtu.be/3cfp51vLZb4?si=1SVE7BQdoVkAnrPr>

- **Activity:** Family members go around the circle and say something they love about each other
- **Prayer Focus:** Ask God to develop His kind of love for others in each of your hearts.

Day 4: Faith and Trust in God

- **Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 3:5-6
- **Singing:** Psalm 56:3, My God is so Great (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** Trusting God in all circumstances.
- **Story:**

The Faith of the Tightrope Walker

Imagine standing at the edge of Niagara Falls, the thunderous roar of the water crashing down drowns out every other sound. The mist from the falls rises like a cloud, and you can barely hear your own thoughts over the noise. Now, picture a tightrope stretched across the quarter-mile expanse of the falls, connecting the United States to Canada. The rope is just a few inches thick, suspended 160 feet above the raging waters below.

In the summer of 1859, Charles Blondin, a French tightrope walker, became a household name by daring to cross this very tightrope. Thousands gathered on both sides of the falls, watching in awe as Blondin performed his stunts. He didn't just walk across the rope; he did it in ways no one could have imagined. He crossed once in a sack, another time on stilts, once on a bicycle, and even stopped midway to cook an omelet on a small stove he had brought with him. Each time, the crowd gasped and cheered, amazed at his incredible skill and daring.

On July 15, Blondin decided to take his performance to the next level. After walking backward across the tightrope to Canada, he returned to the United States pushing a wheelbarrow. The crowd watched, mesmerized, as he carefully made his way across the narrow rope with nothing but the wheelbarrow to balance him.

When he reached the other side, the crowd erupted in applause. Blondin then turned to the spectators and asked a simple question: "Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?"

The crowd, still buzzing with excitement, shouted back, "Yes! We believe you can!"

Blondin then posed another question: "Who will get in the wheelbarrow?"

Suddenly, the crowd went silent. Though they had just witnessed Blondin perform incredible feats, though they had cheered and expressed their belief in his abilities, not a single person was willing to climb into the wheelbarrow. Despite their words, when it came time to act, no one trusted Blondin enough to place their life in his hands.

This story is a powerful illustration of the difference between belief and trust. The crowd believed Blondin could walk across the tightrope with the wheelbarrow, but they weren't willing to trust him with their own safety. In the same way, we might say we believe in God's power and goodness, but true faith requires us to step into the wheelbarrow—to trust God with our lives, even when the path ahead seems uncertain or dangerous.

God asks us to trust Him completely, to believe not only in what He can do but to rely on Him fully, knowing that He will carry us safely across the tightropes of our own lives. Just like the crowd at Niagara Falls, we must move beyond mere belief to genuine trust, placing our lives in His capable hands.

- **Activity:** Each family member shares a way or a part of your life that you can trust to God better.
- **Prayer Focus:** In prayer, each surrender that part of your life to Jesus, trusting that He will provide and take care.

Day 5: Forgiveness

- **Scripture Reading:** Ephesians 4:32
- **Singing:** Create in Me a Clean Heart, Jude 24-25 (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The power of forgiveness in our lives
- **Activity:**

The Soap and Pepper Experiment: A Lesson on Jesus' Forgiveness

For this experiment, you'll need a shallow dish, water, ground black pepper, and dish soap. It's a simple yet powerful way to demonstrate how Jesus forgives and removes our sins.

What You'll Need:

- A shallow dish or bowl
- Water
- Ground black pepper
- Dish soap

Instructions:

1. **Fill the Dish with Water:** Start by filling the shallow dish with water. Explain that the water represents our lives, which God created to be pure and clean.
2. **Sprinkle Pepper on the Water:** Next, sprinkle a generous amount of ground black pepper over the surface of the water. The pepper represents sin. As you sprinkle the pepper, talk about how sin enters our lives. It might start with something small—a little lie, an unkind thought—but soon, it spreads and affects everything, just like the pepper covers the entire surface of the water.
3. **Introduce the Dish Soap:** Now, take a drop of dish soap and place it on your child's fingertip. The dish soap represents Jesus and His power to forgive and cleanse us from our sins.
4. **Touch the Surface with Soap:** Have your child gently touch the surface of the water with the soap-covered fingertip. Watch as the pepper quickly scatters to the edges of the dish, leaving the center clean and clear.

Explanation: Just like the pepper in the water, sin covers and taints our lives. No matter how much we try to fix things on our own, the sin remains, separating us from God. But when we invite Jesus into our lives, His love and forgiveness are like the dish soap. He doesn't just push the sin aside—He completely removes it, cleansing us and making us new.

Illustration: This experiment visually shows what happens when Jesus forgives us. The moment we ask Him into our hearts, His forgiveness is immediate and powerful. He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west, and He remembers them no more (read Psalm 103:12). Just as the soap caused the pepper to flee, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross causes our sins to be wiped away, leaving us pure and clean in God's sight.

This simple experiment can be a powerful way to teach about the depth of Jesus' love and the completeness of His forgiveness. Just as the water was cleared of pepper, our lives are cleared of sin when we trust in Jesus. And just like that, we are given a fresh start, free from the burden of sin.

- **Prayer Focus:** Take a special and solemn time to each ask themselves, "Is there anything I need to bring to Jesus for forgiveness?" Then give it to Him right then and immediately assure children that it is forgiven in that very moment.

Day 6: Serving Others

- **Scripture Reading:** Matthew 25:35-40
- **Singing:** Joshua 1:9, I'm Gonna Sing (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** How can we serve others?
- **Story:** Read "The Surprise Package Company" from Uncle Arthur (story included in packet)
- **Activity:** Pick someone around you that needs something, or could use a pick-me-up. Design a special surprise for them but - shhhhh! Keep it a secret! Implement the surprise and try not to get caught! Report back at your next family worship how it went!
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray for a servant's heart, sing together "Make me a Servant" at the end of prayer before you get off your knees.



STORY 1

Wilfred's Secret

"I WISH I COULD be a pirate!" said Wilfred.

"Everything is so dull, and I want to do something exciting."

"Yes," said Gwen, "do let's find something to do."

It was vacationtime. School had been closed for ten days, and the children were getting tired of their playthings. They wanted something new.

"Of course, we can't be pirates," said Gwen, "because we'd soon be arrested."

"Of course," said Wilfred, "but can't we think of some-thing?"

"Let's think."

So they thought and thought. Neither of them spoke for several minutes. Then Wilfred jumped to his feet.

"I've got it!" he cried. "Let's call ourselves the Surprise Package Company. I'll be the president, and you can be the secretary."

"All right, Wilf," said Gwen, willing to do anything her big brother suggested, "but what are we going to do?"

"Do? Why, give people surprises." "What sort?"

11

◀ *Painting by Vernon Nye*
The president and secretary of the Surprise Packet Company make a call on one of their customers.

12 "Oh, good ones, of course," said Wilfred. "We'll find people who need things done for them, and then make them wonder how the things happened. I think we'll get lots of fun out of it."

"So do I," said Gwen. Let's begin soon."

"O.K. I'll make a list of things, and then we can decide which to begin with."

Wilfred found a pencil and paper and made his list.

"Now, see here," he said solemnly, "don't tell anybody what we are planning to do. It's a secret."

"Of course not," said Gwen. "What do you think I am!" That same afternoon when Mother returned from town she put her grocery bags on the kitchen table. Then she dropped into a chair and stared. What a kitchen! After dinner she had had to go out hurriedly, leaving all the dirty dishes in the sink. Now they had disappeared. The kitchen had been tidied up, everything was in its place, the table was all set for supper, and, yes, even the windows had been cleaned!

All was quiet and still. Nobody was in the house. What kind person could have done all this?

Wilfred and Gwen came in from the garden. Mother asked them whether Auntie had called during the after-noon. Wilfred said No, he didn't think so, but it did look as if someone had been busy.

"Well," said Mother, "isn't it just lovely! I have no more work to do today, and I can have a nice quiet rest this evening! I wonder who did it all."

Mother opened a letter she had found on the mat when coming in. It read:

"The Surprise Package Company called this afternoon



on a little matter of business.”

“I wonder what that means,” said Mother.

“I wonder,” said Wilfred.

“Let’s have supper,” said Gwen.

And they did.

The next morning two children might have been seen going down the street leading to the little home of Mrs. O’Higgins, a poor, bedridden old lady for whom nobody seemed to care.

The boy, who was holding something in his right hand, knocked gently on the door. There was no answer. The boy peeped in at the window. Mrs. O’Higgins was fast asleep. Quietly opening the door, the boy walked in, followed by his sister. Tiptoeing across the room, the boy placed the pack-age he was carrying upon the table beside the bed and went out. In her excitement the little girl fell over the doorstep.

“Gwen, do be careful!” said the boy.

The noise had awakened the old lady.

“Who is that?” she called.

But the door was shut, and the two children were scampering away as fast as their legs would carry them.

Mrs. O’Higgins picked up the package. It contained three eggs.

“What a mercy!” she said to herself. “But who sent them?”





Looking at the wrapper, she read, "With love from the Surprise Package Company."

Frank Morley, a school friend of Wilfred's, was ill with mumps. Of course, under doctor's orders he had to stay indoors and was very miserable. From his bed he could look out over only a small patch of garden surrounded by a high brick wall.

One afternoon he was gazing vacantly out of the window when all of a sudden he saw a square box topple over the garden wall and slide down to the ground, held by a stout string.

"Mother, quick!" he called. "Do see what's in the garden."

Mother, all surprised, brought the box in, and Frank opened it. Inside were four smaller packages. One was labeled, "Open Monday"; the second, "Open Wednesday"; the third, "Open Friday"; the fourth, "Open Sunday."

Since it was Monday, Frank opened the first package. It was a box of paints—just what he had been longing for! Frank thought he had seen the box before but did not know where. Inside the box were the words:

"With best wishes from the Surprise Package Company."

"Whatever is that?" asked Frank.

Nobody knew.

On one occasion the Surprise Package Company was caught.

Wilfred and Gwen were paying a second visit to Mrs. O'Higgins.

This time they had taken with them some flowers, as well as eggs. As quiet as mice they crept in, placed their gifts upon the table, and departed.

The children were so eager to get in and out without awakening the old lady that they did not notice a man sitting quietly in the next room. It was the doctor.

No sooner had the door closed behind the children than he went across to the table, picked up the package, and read the note:

"With love from the Surprise Package Company."

"So this explains what the old lady has been talking about!" he said. "And now I can understand what Frank Morley told me yesterday."

And this explains, too, how it came about that a few days later a letter arrived at the home of Wilfred and Gwen addressed to the Surprise Package Company and containing an invitation to lunch at Dr. Brown's.

The children had a wonderful time at the doctor's, and there were two surprise packages that made up for all they had given away.

Of course, the children could not understand how the doctor had come to know about their secret, and he wouldn't say a word. It was all a delightful mystery. Wilfred and Gwen were as happy as children could be. Wilfred said that it was much better than being pirates.



Day 7: The Power of Prayer

- **Scripture Reading:** Philippians 4:6-7
- **Singing:** God Answers Prayer, 1 John 5:14 (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** God answers prayer
- **Story:**

The Miracle of the B-17: The Power of Prayer

During World War II, Elmer Bendiner was a crew member on a B-17 bomber named the Tondalayo. One day, as they flew over enemy territory, their plane came under heavy fire from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. This was not unusual during missions, but what happened next was nothing short of miraculous.

As the plane was bombarded with flak, one of the 20 mm shells pierced the fuel tank of the B-17. Normally, just one shell hitting the fuel tank would cause a catastrophic explosion, sending the plane and its crew plummeting from the sky. On impact each crew member breathed what they believed would be their last prayer before they died. But on this day, that didn't happen. The crew was able to safely return to base, and no one could believe this miracle.

The next morning the pilot, Bohn Fawkes, went to the crew chief to ask for the shell that had hit the fuel tank as a souvenir. The crew chief's response was shocking. He told Bohn that it wasn't just one shell that had struck the fuel tank, but eleven! Any one of those shells could have exploded and destroyed the plane, but somehow, none of them did.

Curious about this extraordinary event, the shells were sent to the armory to be defused. When the armorers opened the shells, they discovered something even more astonishing: all eleven shells were empty. There was no explosive charge in them at all. But in one of the shells, they found something unexpected—a small piece of paper, carefully rolled up.

The note was written in Czechoslovakian. After searching the base, they found someone who could translate it. The note read: "This is *all we can do* for you now."

It turned out that workers in Czechoslovakia, who had been forced to make ammunition for the Nazis, had sabotaged the shells by leaving them empty. Though they couldn't openly fight against their oppressors, they did what they could to save lives. Their courageous act of sabotage saved the entire crew of the Tondalayo and, by extension, countless others who would be impacted by those soldiers' lives.

Lesson:

Just like the Czechoslovakians, some people might say, "*All we can do* is pray," as if prayer is a last resort or a weak effort. But this story shows us that even when it seems like we can do nothing else, prayer is the greatest power in the universe. It's through prayer that we connect with God, the One who controls everything, and who can work miracles even in the most impossible situations.

Just as those empty shells miraculously spared the lives of the crew, God hears our prayers and acts in ways we might never expect. Prayer can change the course of history, protect lives, and bring about miracles. When we pray, we are doing the most powerful thing we can do, because we are inviting God to intervene in our lives and in the world. So, the next time you hear someone say, "All we can do is pray," remember that prayer is not just all we can do—it's the very best we can do.

- **Activity:** Create a family prayer list
- **Prayer Focus:** Bringing our needs and praises to God

Day 8: The Armor of God

- **Scripture Reading:** Ephesians 6:10-18
- **Singing:** We Are Soldiers, 1 Peter 5:7 (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The importance of spiritual protection
- **Activity:** Create a visual representation of the Armor of God:

Choosing Your Armor:

- Encourage each family member to choose any item from around the house to represent a piece of the Armor of God. They can use anything they find—be creative! For example:
 - A belt from a bathrobe could become the Belt of Truth.
 - A baking pan might represent the Shield of Faith.
 - A hat or cap could serve as the Helmet of Salvation.
 - A serving spoon or a toy sword could represent the Sword of the Spirit.
 - A pair of sturdy shoes or slippers could stand in for the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace.
 - A piece of cardboard or a book might be used as the Breastplate of Righteousness.
- Remind everyone that the purpose is to find items that symbolize the spiritual protection God provides, not to make perfect replicas.

Crafting and Decorating:

- Once everyone has chosen their items, take some time to decorate them. Use markers on paper to tape on your object, fabric, or any other materials to personalize each piece.
- As each person works on their armor, discuss what each piece represents and its significance in our spiritual lives:

Armor of God: Biblical Significance and Meaning

- **Belt of Truth:**
 - **Meaning:** The Belt of Truth holds everything together. Just as a belt secures a soldier's armor, truth secures our lives. It represents honesty and integrity, reminding us to live truthfully and stay rooted in God's Word.
- **Breastplate of Righteousness:**
 - **Meaning:** The Breastplate of Righteousness protects our hearts. It represents living in a way that is right and pleasing to God, guarding our hearts from sinful desires.
- **Shoes of the Gospel of Peace:**
 - **Meaning:** The Shoes of Peace represent being ready to share the good news of Jesus and living in peace with others. They help us stand firm and walk in God's ways.
- **Shield of Faith:**

- **Meaning:** The Shield of Faith helps us trust in God, protecting us from doubts, fears, and the lies of the enemy. It's a defense against anything that tries to weaken our faith.
- **Helmet of Salvation:**
 - **Meaning:** The Helmet of Salvation protects our minds. It reminds us that we are saved by Jesus and gives us hope and confidence to face life's challenges.
- **Sword of the Spirit:**
 - **Meaning:** The Sword of the Spirit represents the Word of God, the Bible. It's our weapon to fight against temptation and falsehood, helping us stand firm in truth.

Ask each family member to think about how they can "put on" their armor each day. For example, how can they practice truth, faith, or righteousness in their daily lives?

- **Prayer Focus:** Finish with a family prayer, asking God to help each person put on the full Armor of God every day. Pray for protection, strength, and the ability to stand firm in their faith.

Day 9: God's Plan for Our Lives

- **Scripture Reading:** Jeremiah 29:11
- **Singing:** Micah 6:8, I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** Trusting God's plan for our future
- **Story:**

One foggy night, a battleship was sailing through treacherous waters when the captain spotted a faint light directly ahead. Not wanting to risk a collision, he ordered his signalman to send a message to the other ship:

Captain: "We are on a collision course. Advise you to change your course 20 degrees to the left."

The reply came back quickly:

Unknown Signal: "Advisable for you to change course 20 degrees to the right."

The captain was a bit annoyed. He was in charge of a massive battleship, after all. So, he sent another message:

Captain: "This is Captain John Smith of the United States Navy. Change your course 20 degrees to the left, immediately!"

The reply was just as quick:

Unknown Signal: "This is Seaman First Class Williams. Change your course 20 degrees to the right."

Now the captain was really upset. Who was this low-ranking seaman to tell him what to do? He decided to assert his authority:

Captain: "This is a battleship! We are a large and powerful vessel! Change your course immediately!"

There was a pause, and then the final reply came:

Unknown Signal: "This is a lighthouse. Your call."

The captain realized in that moment that no matter how powerful his ship was, it was the lighthouse that was unmovable and firm. The only choice he had was to change his course—or face disaster.

The Lesson: God as Our Lighthouse

Just like that battleship, we often charge through life thinking we know the best direction to take. We have our plans, our goals, and our ideas about how things should go. And sometimes, we even expect God to adjust His plans to fit ours.

But God is like the lighthouse in this story. He is immovable, constant, and always there to guide us. His plans are perfect, and they are designed to lead us to safety, prosperity, and a future filled with hope. When we try to force God to fit into our plans, we end up in danger of crashing—just like the battleship would have if it hadn't changed course.

God's Plan vs. Our Plans

It's natural to want to be in control of our lives. We might think we know what's best for ourselves or our families, but the truth is, our perspective is limited. God, on the other hand, sees the big picture. He knows what lies ahead, and His guidance is always aimed at leading us away from harm and toward His best for us.

In Jeremiah 29:11, God tells us that He has plans for us—plans that are good, that give us hope and a future. But to experience those plans, we must be willing to trust Him, even when it means changing our course.

- **Activity:** Discussion Questions:
 1. Can you think of a time when you wanted something to go your way, but later realized that God had a better plan?
 2. How can we practice listening to God's guidance in our daily lives?
 3. What does it mean to trust God like we would trust a lighthouse to guide us safely?
- **Prayer Focus:** Seek God's guidance for the future.

Day 10: The Fruit of the Spirit

- **Scripture Reading:** Galatians 5:22-23
- **Discussion Topic:** Developing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, focusing on kindness and gentleness.
- **Activity:** Hide folded papers with one letter on each paper that will spell out kindness and gentleness (two colors to represent the two words) around the worship area for kids to find. Once found, split into the color groups and decode the words. Answer key: Kindness & Goodness
- Discuss Kindness - Kindness means being friendly and generous.
- Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- Discuss Goodness - This goodness is about doing good.
- Psalm 25:7, "Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your **goodness**, O Lord!"
 - God is good. It is a key part of who He is that we have to believe and cling to. We cannot create goodness in ourselves, it comes from God who is good. We see His goodness displayed to us in many ways. What aspect of God's goodness does this verse tell us about? (Forgiveness, forgetting our sins). God does not have to forgive us of the many sins we commit, but in His great love and goodness, He does. He empowers us to do good by forgiving all the "not good" things we have done.

Story:

Marble Story

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?" "Hello, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank you. Just admiring them peas. They sure look good." "They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gettin' stronger all the time." "Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admiring' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?" asked Mr. Miller. "No, Sir. Got nothing to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?" "All I got is my prize marble here." "Is that right? Let me see it," said Miller. "Here 'tis. She's a dandy." "I can see that. Hmmmmm, only thing is

this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked. "Not exactly but almost." "Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble". Mr. Miller told the boy. "Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store."

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later, I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary, we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts, all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes. Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

"Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size they came to pay their debt." "We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho ." With loving gentleness, she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

- **Prayer Focus:** Asking for God to put the fruits of the Spirit in your life.

Day 11: Worship and Praise

- **Scripture Reading:** Psalm 136
- **Singing:** Philippians 4:11, Deep Deep Deep as the Sea (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** Different ways to worship and praise God
- **Activity:** As a family make your own Psalm 13

Read Psalm 136 and point out how David is relaying the miracles he has experienced and is giving the praise to God for every one of them.

Write out 26 things God has done for you just like David did. 15 can be more generic (food, clothes, family, etc.) while 11 need to be specific to you (He created elephants my favorite animal, He gave me a beautiful baby sister, etc.)

Your poem could look something like this:

1. He gives me a loving family who is always there for me, for His mercy endures forever.
2. He gives me food so I never go hungry, for His mercy endures forever.
3. He loves me even when I fall, for His mercy endures forever.
4. He created persimmons, my favorite fruit, for His mercy endures forever.
5. Etc.

- **Prayer Focus:** Pray together in a family circle one at a time, and challenge everyone to only praise God during their prayer.

Day 12: Sharing the Gospel

- **Scripture Reading:** Matthew 28:19-20
- Singing: Matthew 28:19-20, In My Life Lord (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The Great Commission and our role in it
- **Story:**

One morning, after a big storm, a man was walking along the shore. The beach was littered with starfish that had been washed ashore by the strong waves. As he walked, he noticed a little boy in the distance, bending down, picking up starfish one by one, and throwing them back into the ocean.

Curious, the man approached the boy and asked, “What are you doing?”

The boy looked up and said, “I’m throwing the starfish back into the ocean. If they don’t get back into the water, they’ll die.”

The man looked around at the countless starfish scattered across the beach and said, “But there are thousands of starfish here. You can’t possibly make a difference.”

The boy listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish, and tossed it into the waves. As it disappeared into the water, he turned to the man and said, “I made a difference to that one.”

The Lesson: Saving Souls, One Life at a Time

This simple story carries a powerful message, especially for us as followers of Christ. Just like that little boy, we’re surrounded by countless opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others. When we think about the great commission—to go and make disciples of all nations—it can sometimes feel overwhelming. We might wonder, “How can I, just one person, possibly make a difference?”

But the truth is, every single person matters to God. When Jesus talked about the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, He was emphasizing the value of each individual soul. Just as the little boy couldn’t save every starfish on the beach, we might not be able to reach every person in the world. But we can reach one. And to that one person, our efforts can mean everything.

Sharing the Gospel: One Step at a Time

Sharing the gospel doesn’t always mean preaching to crowds or traveling to far-off lands. It can be as simple as being kind to a neighbor, encouraging a friend, or praying with someone who’s struggling. When we share the love of Jesus in these small ways, we are, in essence, throwing a starfish back into the ocean. We’re making an eternal difference in someone’s life.

And just as the boy knew that he couldn’t save every starfish but still kept going, we too should be faithful in sharing the gospel wherever we can. Because to each person who finds hope,

love, and salvation in Jesus through our efforts, it matters. It matters to them, it matters to God, and it matters to the kingdom of heaven.

- **Activity:** Each family member passes out 2-3 GLOW tracks throughout the day and reports back to the family this evening with the story of what happened! Even the little ones can be a part of sharing God's truth!
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray for opportunities that day to share your GLOW tracts with the right people.

Day 13: God's Promises (*maybe change it & create a worship to put on YouTube for them to watch?)

- **Scripture Reading:** 2 Peter 1:4
- **Singing:** Psalm 56:3, Humble Thyself (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** The transforming power of God's promises.
- **Story:**

Martin Luther and the Power of Scripture

Martin Luther, the great reformer, was no stranger to spiritual battles. As he challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church and sought to bring the truth of Scripture to the common people, he faced intense opposition—not just from religious leaders but also from the forces of darkness. Luther often spoke of the devil's attempts to tempt him, to fill him with doubt and despair, and to lead him away from his mission.

One night, Luther was alone in his study. The weight of his work, the threats against his life, and the spiritual warfare he constantly endured were pressing heavily on him. The room was dimly lit by a flickering candle, and outside, the wind howled through the trees. As Luther sat there, he felt an overwhelming sense of darkness closing in on him, a presence he believed to be the devil himself.

The devil began to whisper accusations into Luther's mind, reminding him of his sins, his unworthiness, and the enormity of the task before him. The voice taunted him, telling him that he was a failure, that God could never love someone as flawed as he was, and that all his efforts were in vain. The accusations grew louder and more insistent, threatening to drown out all hope.

But Luther was not one to give in easily. He knew that in his own strength, he could not stand against such attacks, but he also knew that God had given him a powerful weapon: the Word of God. Reaching for his Bible, Luther began to speak aloud the promises of Scripture, determined to silence the devil's lies.

One of the verses he clung to in that moment was Romans 8:31, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*" He repeated it, reminding himself that God was on his side, that no enemy could stand against him when the Almighty was his defender. The accusations continued, but Luther pressed on, quoting verse 33, "*Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*"

As he spoke these words, the darkness began to lift. The accusations lost their power, and Luther felt the presence of God surrounding him, reassuring him of His love and protection. The devil fled, defeated by the power of God's Word.

Luther's experience that night was a profound reminder that the promises of Scripture are not just words on a page—they are living and active, able to pierce through the darkness and bring

victory in the face of temptation. When we find ourselves under attack, whether from external pressures or internal doubts, we can follow Luther's example and claim the promises of God. Just as those promises gave Luther the strength to resist, they can give us the power to stand firm in our faith.

The ultimate example of claiming God's promises to resist temptation is found in the life of Jesus. In Matthew 4, Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. For forty days and nights, He fasted and grew hungry. The devil came to Him, tempting Him to turn stones into bread, to throw Himself down from the temple, and to worship the devil in exchange for the kingdoms of the world.

In each instance, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture. He didn't rely on His own strength, but on the Word of God. When tempted to turn stones into bread, Jesus said, *"It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"* (Matthew 4:4). When tempted to test God by throwing Himself down, He responded, *"It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* (Matthew 4:7). And when offered the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship, Jesus declared, *"Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"* (Matthew 4:10).

Jesus' victory in the wilderness shows us that the Word of God is our greatest weapon against temptation. By claiming the promises and truths found in Scripture, we can stand firm against the enemy's schemes. When faced with temptation, let us follow Jesus' example and speak the Word of God over our lives, trusting in His promises to deliver us.

- **Activity:** Go to scripturesinger.com or download the Scripture Singer app and learn Psalm 139:23-24 (also in the Family First Songbook). Get this scripture song stuck in your head so that any time today you are tempted you can claim this Bible verse!
- **Prayer Focus:** Claim God's promise that He can keep you from Satan's temptations.

Day 14: Accepting Jesus' Sacrifice

- **Scripture Reading:** Psalm 103
- **Singing:** John 3:16, All in All (from the Family Ministries Songbook)
- **Discussion Topic:** Reflecting on and accepting Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for us.
- **Story:**

Some years ago a small steamer ran into a terrific storm in the South Atlantic Ocean. For three days the ship was tossed and buffeted by the mighty waves. One mast was carried away, and the steering gear was damaged.

Toward the close of the third day the storm increased in severity. The sky became blacker than ever, and the poor sailors realized that worse times were ahead. Suddenly, amid the crash of thunder, the cry was raised that the ship had sprung a leak.

In a moment the pumps were manned, but soon it was discovered that the water was rising in the hold faster than the men could pump it out. They worked desperately for another hour, but all in vain. Seeing that the task was hopeless and that the ship was doomed, the captain ordered that the boats be lowered.

To the dismay of all, it was found that there was but one of the boats that remained undamaged by the waves - the rest were so battered that they would never stay afloat in such a sea. There was nothing to do but cram the entire crew into the one boat.

Quickly the men climbed in, filling the boat to its utmost capacity. There was just room enough to squeeze in the captain, who had bravely remained behind till the last.

He was about to step over the side of the ship to climb down to the boat, when, hearing a cry, he looked around. There, running toward him across the deck, was a strange young lad, dirty-faced and clothed in rags. He was a stow-away.

Where the lad had hidden himself or how he had kept alive since the ship left port, the captain did not know, and there was no time to ask.

"Quick, lad!" he shouted, stepping back onto the ship. "Down the rope!"

The lad needed no second invitation. In a moment he was over the side and climbing down the rope into the boat - filling the last available space.

"Come on!" shouted the men to the captain, willing to overload the boat rather than leave him behind to perish.

"Push off!" yelled the captain, above the howling of the storm. He knew full well that one more in the boat would certainly capsize it and perhaps cause the death of all.

So the men pushed off, and not a moment too soon. Hardly were they at a safe distance from the ship when it turned on its side and plunged into the sea, bearing the noble captain to his ocean grave.

After many days of hardship the men in the boat were picked up by a passing vessel and finally reached home again. Never did the stowaway forget the captain's self-sacrifice. The memory of that heroic deed changed his life. He felt he must be worthy of so priceless a gift. In his pocket he carried the captain's photograph, to which he would point as he told and retold the thrilling story, saying, "He gave his life for me."

This story helps us to understand what Jesus has done for each one of us. He is the Captain; we are the stowaways. We do not in the least deserve to be saved and have a place in His beautiful home. But Jesus died to make this possible; and although it was many years ago that He made His wonderful sacrifice for us, it is available for every boy and girl today. As the stowaway afterward talked about the captain, so we, too, should be glad to tell others of all that Jesus has done for us. We, too, can say, "He died for me."

-Story by Arthur Maxwell

So here's the question: Will you accept Jesus' sacrifice for you? Will you give Him your heart and let Him be the captain of your life? He died to give you a place in His eternal home. All you have to do is accept His love, believe in His sacrifice, and live a life that reflects His love to others. Will you make that choice today?

- **Activity:** Use this YouTube video and a regular piece of copy paper to make an origami boat. When finished, write on the side of the boat, "Jesus is the Captain of my life." Decorate with markers and crayons to make it personal!
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khuVGbCE0PY>
- **Prayer Focus:** Everyone has silent prayer time where they can give their hearts to Jesus.

Congratulations! You have completed our Family Ministries worship challenge! Email us at family@misda.org sharing your favorite worship of the challenge and you'll be entered in the drawing for the Nathan Greene painting! You must email us stating you have completed the challenge to be entered into the drawing.