

Nurturing Faith Ideas

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

January 5: The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. What are the gifts or talents that we can use to serve Jesus?

January 12: When we are born we are given a name. What does your name mean? Is there a reason you were given that name?

January 19: Sin is something that separates us from God. What is something that is separating you from God? What can you do to overcome that sin?

January 26: Who do you know who is suffering or going through a difficult time? Think of something you can do to encourage that person and let them know that God loves them.

February 2: Reflect with your child on the fact that while millions of people enjoy the Super Bowl, there are also millions who wish simply for a bowl of soup.

February 9: In this month of love spend some time with your child praying for others in need of love on the margins of society.

February 16: Look again at last week's Valentines and reflect with your child on how they can be year-round Valentines of love and care.

February 23: At the end of this shortest month, find ways to joyfully anticipate the arrival of spring in the coming weeks.

March 2: Parents show love in different ways – lots of hugs, high-fives, kind notes; others are more reserved. Tap into your own way of showing your kids you care.

March 9: To help children learn about Lent, watch a movie together. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is jam-packed with teachable moments. Visit this website for ideas on discussing the movie with children: <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/classics-like-narnia-offer-lenten-lessons-for-kids-1384811.html>

March 16: Post Bible verses, especially the words of Jesus, on the refrigerator, bathroom mirrors or wherever a busy family will see them. Talk about them and how they apply to events in our daily lives.

March 23: Help your children decorate a **Mite box**. Select a charity that helps those in need and have everyone contribute their change. On Easter, empty box, count together, and put a check in the mail.

March 30: Bake your own pretzels (find a recipe or buy the frozen ones). Pretzels originated as early Christian Lenten treats, designed in the form of arms crossed in prayer.

April 6: Practice the 3 C's this week. Give 3 compliments a day to your spouse, your child, your parents, or someone else.

April 13 (Palm Sunday): Have an egg hunt only place strips of paper inside plastic eggs that tell one small part of the Easter story. When the eggs have been found, unscramble the story putting it in the correct order.

April 20 (Easter): Visit a nearby hospital or retirement home and greet one of the residents with a fresh Easter lily. You may want to attach a card with some encouraging words about the hope we have in our risen Lord.

April 27: Read the story of Doubting Thomas in John 20:19-31. Think about a time when you didn't believe something someone told you. What made you believe them?

May 4: Have your children make and send graduation cards to the youth in your church.

May 11 (Mother's Day): Ask your children to name some Mother's in the Bible. Have them share what they remember and look them up together.

May 18: Read Leviticus 19:34, what does it mean to welcome a foreigner?

May 25: Memorial Day is a time to say thank you to the people who keep our country safe. Find a veteran in your church and say thank you.

June 1: As the school year ends, remember education doesn't always happen in a classroom. Challenge family members to learn something new this week and share it.

June 8: Sing happy birthday to the Church for Pentecost today! As a family, talk about why being part of a church is important.

June 15 (Father's Day): Jesus knew God as "Abba" which means "father." Think and talk together about how God "fathers" us.

June 22: Summer officially begins today. List every family member's favorite summer activity and plan to do them all this summer if possible.

June 29: Read Matthew 10:40-42 together and plan to either welcome someone into your home this week or share refreshments with someone working outside.

July 6: Take a blanket outside, away from lights, if possible. Lay on it and look up at the sky; share your thoughts with each other.

July 13: Take a walk around the neighborhood. Look for what God has made; see how many things you can see.

July 20: Each evening this week, share with each other where you have seen God during the day.

July 27: Think of a color you would use to describe God. Share that color, and why that color.

August 3: As school begins this month, talk about ways you can model your faith to those who may need to know some love and grace.

August 10: Pray today for all those who work to keep your school working – the maintenance crew, the bus drivers, the secretaries, the cooks and others who staff the school.

August 17: Pray today for the teachers as they come back to school to help and teach and guide and lead their students. Pray for their strength, courage, commitment and safety.

August 24: Think today about where God is guiding you in your life.

August 31: Be aware today of where you can see God working in your life and the lives of people around you.

September 7: Who is someone that has wronged you in some way? With God's help, try to forgive that person.

September 14: What is something good or great that God has done in your life? Find a way to show God your thanks.

September 21: Have you ever received a gift or a word of encouragement for no apparent reason? Offer a gift or a word of encouragement to someone who might not expect it.

September 28: God wants us to keep our promises. Promise God to do something to show God's love to someone. Keep that promise.

October 5: The next time you're in the car with your children, try turning off the radio and asking them what highs and lows they had during the day. Then take a moment to pray for the event that you're headed to next.

October 12: Help your children pray aloud by giving them a sentence to complete, such as: "Lord, I think you for..."; "Lord, help my friend..."; "Lord, give me the courage to...".

October 19: On a grocery shopping trip with your children, pick up a few extra cans and deliver them to the local food pantry.

October 26: Set a routine for Bible time. Read from a children's Bible. Keep the stories short. Try to have it at approximately the same time each day, perhaps after breakfast or before snack.

November 2: On All Saints Day we remember all those who have gone before us in this life. Who is the Saint that has gone to be with our Lord that has impacted your life the most? What about them is so meaningful to you?

November 9: We are called to keep our spiritual lamps burning so that we are always ready to illuminate Christ. In what ways do you connect to God so that your lamp keeps burning?

November 16: Jesus' parable in the Gospel of Matthew informs us that we need to use the gifts God has given us. What is your greatest gift? How do you use your gift to spread the Love of Jesus?

November 23: In the Gospel reading, we are called to care for those who are less fortunate. What are some of the ways you help the less fortunate? What are some of the ways the church helps those in need?

November 30: This week, watch for God in all you do. Keep a list or tell your family at dinner what you saw.

December 1: Make the manger (any size box) soft and warm for the baby Jesus by adding a piece of hay (yarn) for each good thing someone does for you that day.

December 8: Choose an Advent hymn or Christmas card. Read the words. What are the words saying? Draw a picture or make a symbol to represent this.

December 15: Using last year's Christmas cards or an address book, pick a friend, share memories of them and pray for them.

December 22: Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. What are the gifts you can give to Jesus? What gifts has Jesus given to you? Give thanks for them.

December 29: Remember together the events of the past year. Give thanks for all that was good. What would you like to do in the New Year? Pray for God's help and guidance.