

T-I-M-E Spells Love

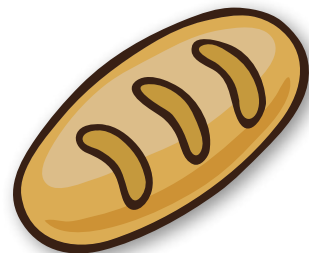
Family Beatitude: Happy is the family who invests time in one another, for they will feel accepted.

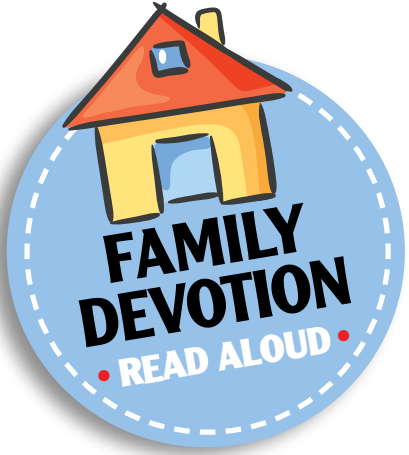
Focus: Investing time in each other

Weekly Bible Verse: *“Make the most of every opportunity. The days are evil.”* – Ephesians 5:16

Activity Options for Spending Time Together

- Plan family mealtimes as a “no electronic zone.” Focus on listening and looking at one another. Discuss the day and add in other topics, perhaps using the Chat Prompts: Options from this book. Include Jesus by having a bread plate for bread or crackers. Jesus is the Bread of Life and is always present with you.
- Make a bread plate. Buy a solid-colored plastic plate and use permanent markers to draw bread or symbols for Jesus. Add a Bible verse if you’d like.
- Plan a family game night, or movie night, or family sharing memories night.





Look at Me! 2 minutes

George came to Daniel's home for dinner. The phone rang, but no one jumped up to get it. George looked around puzzled.

Daniel said, "It's our family mealtime, so we don't answer the phone. This is our time to be together."

Daniel's mom smiled. "The machine will take the message. We'll return the call later."

Daniel's family filled the mealtime with talk about the day and upcoming plans. They looked at one another, laughed, and shared. After the meal, everyone helped clear the table and do dishes.

It's good to spend time together and pay attention to each other—with electronics and phones turned off. In today's world, too often technology becomes more important than being present with real people. Have you noticed when walking in a park that it's not unusual to hear children yelling to their parents, "Look at me"? Unfortunately, the parents often are staring at their phones and clicking the keys to message someone. They're ignoring their little ones. As children grow up, they get phones too. They tend to copy their parents by spending their time online.



Online it's easy to find photos and comic strips of families together or visiting grandparents, except everyone is staring at an electronic gadget and no one is looking or speaking to each other. Instead, get refreshed with live conversations. Choose to turn off gadgets and phones for meaningful family time.

Bible Story Connection 2 minutes

Discover how Jesus took time away from crowds to focus on his friends. Read Mark 6:30-31. Lead your children in a short parade to a quiet spot indoors or outside where you can be together. Talk about focusing on each other and supporting each other.

Chat Prompts: Options

- *“Teach us to realize how short our lives are. Then our hearts will become wise.”* – Psalm 90:12

Chat about ways people waste time. How can you use time more wisely? How can you better schedule family time? What would be useful family time? Why is it good to have time to play and relax together?

MORE TIME?



- *“Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from him.”* – Psalm 127:3

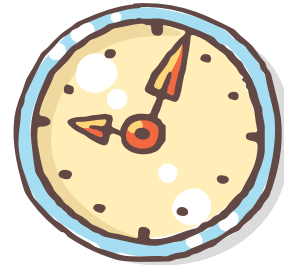
Do you hide favorite gifts and never use them? That’s not likely. Children are gifts from God. He wants parents to be excited about spending time with their children. Chat about the joy you felt when each child became a member of your family. Talk about the delight of spending time with each individual. Make plans to do more one-on-one activities.

- *“Make sure your children learn [God’s commands]. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up.”* – Deuteronomy 6:7
- God is part of your family, and he wants you to spend family time with him. Chat about some of the commands and blessings from God. When should you share about God? Always! Also talk about what each person likes about family devotions.

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add art to this book to remember the time you spent together this week.

- Draw a clock and write the times of day you spent together this week.
- Draw your dinner table, and add food you enjoy eating together.
- Draw or add a photo of a fun family time.



Prayer

Father, help us spend time together as a family and include you. Help us talk about you every day.

Wrap Up

Schedule a time for another family activity. Chat about how God is part of your everyday lives and discuss how you can remember to talk to Him.



Listen!

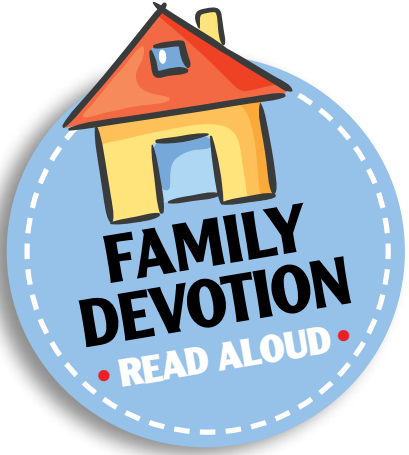
Family Beatitude: Happy is the family who learns to listen, for they will have open hearts.

Focus: Really listening to each other

Weekly Bible Verse: *“My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say. Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry.”* – James 1:19

Activity Options on Listening

- Cram a tube with socks and then talk through it to someone. Now take out the socks and talk through the tube. The socks blocked much of the sound. How can we keep from blocking out what people are saying? Do we cram too much into our minds and let stuff distract us from what is important?
- Make a “talking stick.” Decorate a stick and tie on ribbon streamers. Use it when you have a family meeting or when there’s an argument. The person holding the stick is the only one who gets to speak. When a person is done speaking, the stick is passed to the next person. This helps everyone stop, listen, and have a turn to speak.
- Practice listening skills, such as facing the speaker, looking into the speaker’s eyes, clearing your mind of other thoughts, and rephrasing the message to be sure the speaker is understood.
- Read a story aloud and then ask questions about it or ask a child to retell the story in his or her own words.



An Apple 1 minute

“I’m so full I can’t eat another bite,” Mom said. A few seconds later she added, “But what I really want is an apple.”

Michael stood up, strolled to the large bowl of apples on a counter, grabbed the biggest and reddest one, and handed it to his mother.

His mom stared at the apple for a few minutes.

Finally Michael’s dad said, “Honey, you said what you really wanted was an apple.”

Mom laughed. “I was looking at that bowl of apples, but what I meant to say was that I wanted a napkin. My mind picked up on the apples instead of my thought about a napkin. I didn’t even listen to my own words!”

Everyone laughed while Michael got a few napkins for his mother.

Michael’s mom admitted, “Sometimes I don’t listen to what people say either. And sometimes I don’t listen to God. I’d better clean out my ears and start paying more attention.”

From then on, when Michael’s mom didn’t seem to be paying attention, instead of getting upset, someone would ask, “So, Mom, what you really want is an apple?”

She’d laugh and then turn to look at the person speaking. She’d really listen and pay attention with her eyes, her ears, and her heart.



Bible Story Connection 2 minutes

Read the parable of the soils in Luke 8:5-15. Point out that the disciples listened to Jesus and then asked him a question. Pass out seeds to the children. Ask if they can identify the plant from the seed. Let them know we don't always have all the answers, and neither did the friends of Jesus. Chat about how sometimes we may hear something and not understand it. Then we can ask questions like the disciples asked Jesus to get understanding.

Chat Prompts: Options

- *“My sons, listen to me. Don't turn away from what I say.”*

– Proverbs 5:7

These words are a reminder to listen to our parents. Chat about a time a child didn't listen and obey. What happened? Why is it important to listen to wise words from a parent or authority figure, such as a teacher? Share when words from your parents helped you.

MORE TIME?



- *“The hearts of these people have become stubborn. They can barely hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes. They might hear with their ears. They might understand with their hearts. They might turn to the Lord, and then he would heal them.”*

– Matthew 13:15

Jesus spoke these words based on Isaiah 6:9-10 to his close followers after he'd told a parable to a large crowd. He spoke about how people don't really pay attention or listen so they fail to understand. What can you do to listen better?

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add art to illustrate good listening skills.

- Draw eyes and ears to remember to look and listen when someone speaks.
- Draw a stop sign to remember to stop and listen. Draw a yield sign to remember to give others a chance to talk.
- Draw a talking stick to remember that conversation includes talking *and* listening.



Prayer

Lord, help us really listen to one another and to you. Help us understand what we hear and to respond well. We want to know you and your Word so we'll have your wisdom.

Wrap Up

Chat about what you learned about listening better this week. How will you listen more attentively from now on?



Adventures in Learning

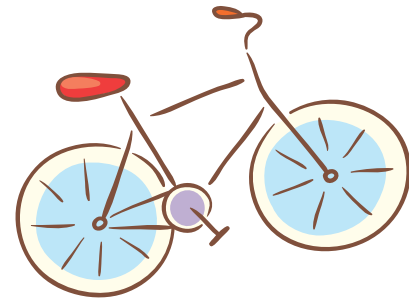
Family Beatitude: Happy is the family who likes learning, for they will become wise.

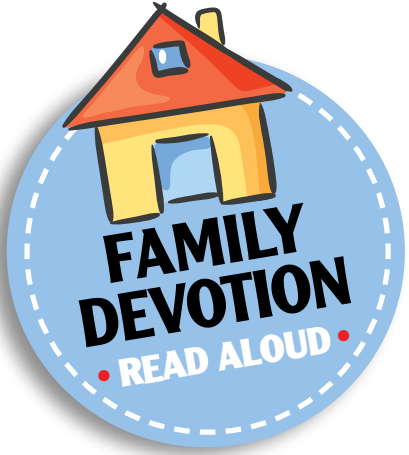
Focus: Learning new skills

Weekly Bible Verse: *“The Lord has filled him with the Spirit of God. He has filled him with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skill.”* – Exodus 35:31

Activity Options on Learning New Skills

- Try a new skill. Learn to make or do something, such as cooking or riding a bicycle. Take photos as each person tries a new activity. Add the photos to the scrapbook.
- Teach a household skill to children, such as doing the laundry, cooking, or pulling weeds. Show them how to do it, and then do the task alongside them. Take photos or record them as they work.
- Music skills are great to learn. Work on rhythm using sticks and pot lids. Encourage practice. For children who show interest and a willingness to practice, consider music lessons.
- Reward hard work. Celebrate practicing and improving by creating certificates or letting them choose an outing or reward.





Something New 2 minutes

Joseph opened his new building set and started following directions to put the model together. His brother, Thomas, wanted to help, so Joseph showed him how to look at the diagram and find the needed pieces to hand to him. Joseph said, “Thomas, this will help you learn about building and how to match the pieces to the pictures.”

Meanwhile, their sisters Elizabeth and Lydia spent time with their mom learning how to sew. They had bought fabric for Elizabeth to make a curtain for her lower berth of the bunk bed. She only needed to sew straight lines. They needed to measure, fold the edges, and pin them to create hems. Elizabeth got tired of pinning, so her mother let her read while Lydia finished.

Then their mother showed them how to gently push the fabric under the pressure foot on the sewing machine to feed it through. She showed them how to tap the foot pedal to make the needle go up and down to form stitches. They practiced with paper and no thread in the needle first. Elizabeth, the oldest, worked the machine first while her mother worked the pedal. After a while, Elizabeth tried pressing the pedal. She worked at making the lines of stitches straight. Then Lydia took a turn. Soon they finished making the curtain and hung it up.

At the end of the day, the children showed the new building model and the new curtain to their dad. They smiled when he said, “Great job! You all learned new skills.”

Long ago, God asked his people to build a special container called “the Ark of the Covenant” to hold the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:10-22). God gave people the talent to work with wood, carve, shape metal, engrave, and more—every ability needed to make it. Remember, skills learned now can be used throughout life to share about God and his kingdom.

Bible Story Connection 2 minutes

In Exodus 31, read about the tent of meeting and other items God wanted his people to build. These were to be used as signs and reminders to follow God. God uses our skills to do the things he needs done on the earth. Talk about each of your skills. How can you use that talent for God.

Chat Prompts: Options

- *“The Lord has filled Bezalel and Oholiab with skill to do all kinds of work. They can carve things and make patterns. They can sew skillfully with blue, purple and bright red yarn and on fine linen. They use thread to make beautiful cloth. Both of them have the skill to work in all kinds of crafts.”* – Exodus 35:35

Natural talents to work with your hands, sing, and run fast come from God. List talents you’ve noticed in each person, and discuss good ways to use them. Let each person state one skill he or she wants to learn and set goals to help accomplish it.

MORE TIME?



- *“For the entrance to the tent the workers made a curtain. They made it out of blue, purple and bright red yarn and finely twisted linen. A person who sewed skillfully made it.”*
– Exodus 36:37

Becoming skilled at something takes practice. Ask each child what gifts they each have and how they can you get better at it.

- *“Stay excited about your faith as you serve the Lord.”*
– Romans 12:11

This verse encourages enthusiasm about God. How can you stay excited about your faith? How does being excited about your faith make it easier to talk about God?

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

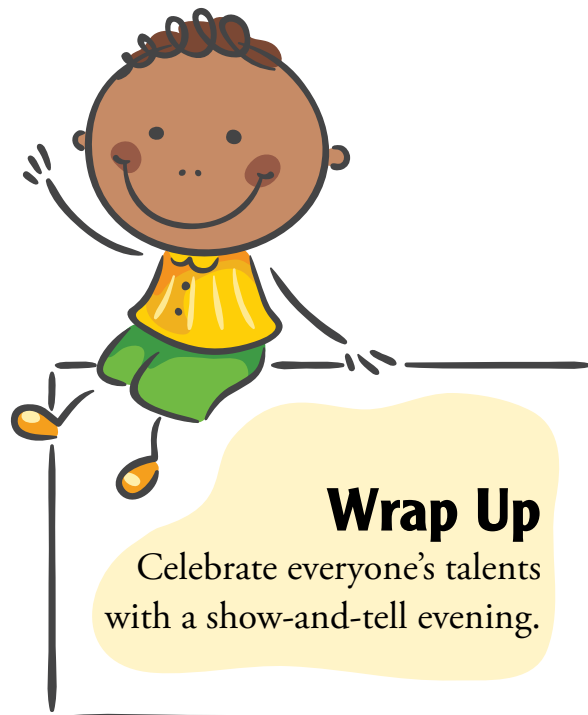
Add art that reflects the talents of each family member.

- Draw symbols for people's talents, such as needle and thread for sewing, tools or Lego blocks for building, and musical notes for singing.
- Draw or trace someone's hand and write notes of that person's talents on it.
- Draw smiles for enthusiasm and appreciating the talents of others.



Prayer

*Creator God, thanks for
giving each of us talents.
Help us use them to serve you
and the people around us.*



Treasuring Easter

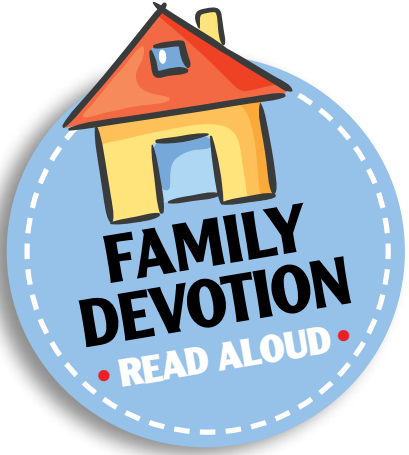
Family Beatitude: Happy is the family who believes in Jesus, for they will know love.

Focus: Understanding why Jesus died and the joy of Easter

Weekly Bible Verse: *“Gather for yourselves riches in heaven. There, moths and rats do not destroy them. There, thieves do not break in and steal them.”* – Matthew 6:20

Activity Options for Celebrating Jesus

- Enjoy a treasure hunt like in this week’s story or a traditional Easter egg hunt. Hide plastic eggs with Scriptures and treats inside. Here are a few verses to consider using: Proverbs 22:1; Ephesians 1:7; 3:8.
- Have communion as a family and chat about what we now call “the Last Supper.” Wash one another’s feet, praise Jesus, and break bread together. The Last Supper is described in four of the gospels (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; John 13:1-17).
- Make or use store-bought cookie dough. Completely surround marshmallows with the dough and bake as directed. While the cookies cool, read about the empty tomb in John 1:1-18. When the children eat the cookies, they’ll be amazed to find they’re empty too.



Treasure Hunting 1-2 minutes

After church on Easter, everyone in the family sat down and waited for the treasure hunt to begin. Each person received a paper with his or her first clue.

Mom said, “The choice is up to you. You can forget the clue and not look for a treasure or you can accept the challenge and follow the clues. That’s like the offer of eternal life

from Jesus. You can choose to follow Jesus or you can choose not to follow Him.”

The children chorused, “*Wahoo!* We’ll follow Jesus. We’ll follow the clues too.” They took off, finding and unscrambling more codes, looking up Scripture verses, and figuring out the location of the little treasures that would lead to the big one. Younger children had easy jigsaw puzzles to put together that showed where to look.

Everyone met back in the family room and displayed their treasures.

Mom said, “It looks like everyone is happy today. Do you know there are greater reasons to rejoice than finding presents?”

The children nodded. One said, “Jesus died for us, and then he rose from the dead. He came back to life.”

“Yes!” Mom said. “He loves each one of us. When we break a rule, we have to make things right. When people sinned, it caused a break with God. When Jesus died, he made things right again. Because Jesus died for us, God forgives our sins when we tell him we are sorry.”

One of the children said, “I’m happy that he came back to life. That’s an awesome reason to celebrate!”



Bible Story Connection 2-3 minutes

Read Luke 23:33-46. Tell your children what this means to you. How did you come to know Jesus? How did you feel when you realized he had died for you?

Chat Prompts: Options

- *“Jesus is not here! He has risen! Remember how he told you he would rise. It was while he was still with you in Galilee. He said, ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people. He must be nailed to a cross. On the third day he will rise from the dead.’”⁸ Then the women remembered Jesus’ words.”* – Luke 24:6-8

Have each person write out or dictate a thank you letter/prayer to Jesus for dying on the cross for us. Add it to your scrapbook/prayer journal.

MORE TIME?



- *“Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.”* – Luke 2:19

Chat about how we need to do more than memorize scripture and read it. We need to think about it. What scriptures do you think about again and again?

- *“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die.’”* – John 11:25

Jesus said these words *before* he died. He knew he would be crucified, and he also knew he would come back to life. Jesus knew he would die for you. He loved you that much. How does that make you feel?

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add symbols of Jesus and his resurrection to your book to illustrate your faith in him and eternal life.

- Add a cross or nails and write about how much Jesus loves you.
- Add an empty tomb and flowers and write about the joy of Jesus's resurrection.
- Draw a treasure chest and write about real treasure that lasts.



Prayer

Lord, thank you for dying for us. We are happy you rose and opened the gates of heaven. We are thankful we will live with you always.



Wrap Up

Discuss what you know about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Chat about what is really valuable.