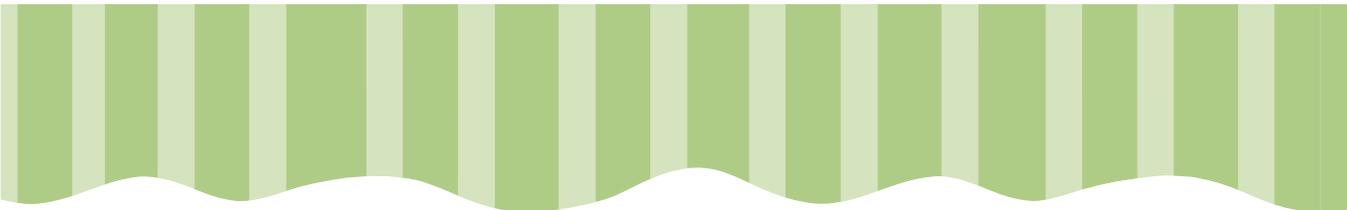


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- *The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. Galatians 5:22-23*

Chat about ways to encourage the fruit of the Spirit to grow in the lives of your family members.

- *In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit. But a bad tree bears bad fruit. Matthew 7:17*

Discuss fruitful trees and how we can be fruitful.

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add art to celebrate being the apple of God's eye:

- Do an apple print on the page.
- Draw a tree with apples. On the apples write deeds you can do to show good fruit.

Frontline Tips

- Find out about groups who help the hungry in your community. Thank them for their work.
- Volunteer to help if you can. Be sure you are healthy when you volunteer.

Prayer

Almighty God, thanks for keeping each of us in the apple of your eye and cherishing us. Help us to cherish you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Wrap-Up

Discuss activities tried and what everyone enjoys about apples and how apples can remind us that God cherishes us.

Week 10

Support Network

Family Beatitude: Happy is the family that accepts help gratefully, for they will be supported.

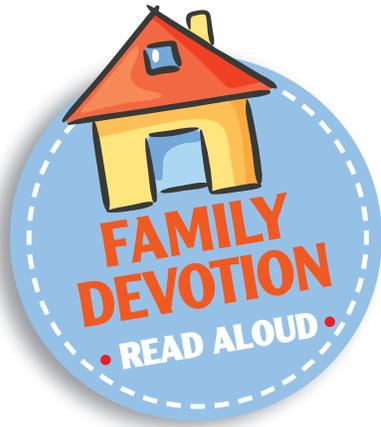
Focus: Accepting outside support

Weekly Bible Verse: *If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples.* John 13:35

Activity Options

- Look at a support beam in your home and chat about how it provides strength to keep your home secure. Supporting people is also important. Offer support to others when a family member has to be away from home. Consider babysitting, helping with yard work, or fixing them a meal.
- Post a list of contacts to call for assistance when a parent or guardian is away. It's good for the departing parent or guardian to ask neighbors or friends to lend additional support to their family.
- Thank supporters. Make a snack, invite them over for a gratitude party, and/or send thank-you cards.





Yard Cleanup 2 minutes

A noise outside startled everyone. Darlene looked out and said, “Hey, Hank is here with a bunch of people. They’re mowing the lawn.”

Sure enough, a group of youth and one leader had started mowing, trimming edges, and even weeding the garden. Darlene and her mother walked outside.

Hank walked over and said, “I told your husband I’d help out if you needed anything. I noticed the lawn needed cutting and rounded up some helpers.”

Darlene’s dad had asked people at Bible study if anyone was willing to be called if his family needed help after he deployed. Hank and others agreed. But they went a little further. They drove by the house to see if they could do extra things without being asked. Their wives also called to see what the family needed. They wanted to be supportive.

Darlene’s mom smiled. The surprise made her day. She offered drinks and snacks to the volunteers and her family enjoyed the company.

Hank hugged Darlene and her brother before he left. Darlene said, “I love this kind of surprise. I miss Daddy, but I’m happy we have helpful friends.”

Bible Story Connection 3–4 minutes

Read about gleaning in Ruth 2. God told the Israelites to let poor people collect the leftovers from the harvest. It’s called *gleaning*. It provided a way for poor people to work for food and not need to beg.



Chat Prompts

- *In everything I did, I showed you that we must work hard and help the weak. We must remember the words of the Lord Jesus. He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35*

We need help with different tasks. How can your family support others who have an absent parent?
How do you feel when you help another family?

- *None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others. Philippians 2:4*

It's easy to whine and want things. It's harder to think about how someone else feels or what the person may need. Chat about your church family and other groups.

How do they provide support? How do they look out for you? What do you do to look out for other people, including family members? How can even kind and encouraging words help?

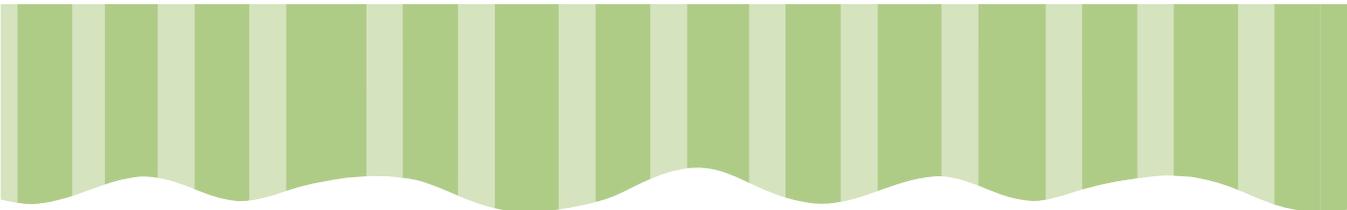
- *Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. Hebrews 10:24*

Talk about making cookies with a recipe. You stir the ingredients together to blend them and to make something that tastes better than just eating the flour, eggs, and sugar separately. Blending and working together is like that. It creates loving actions.

How can your family members support one another?

Can your family start or help a church ministry to support families of first responders and the military?

MORE TIME?



Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add notes and art to show support received.

- Draw a hand. Write in names of anyone who supports your family, especially during deployments.
- Draw a support beam and write a prayer on it, thanking God for his support.
- Draw a church and write how people at church help your family and how you help them.

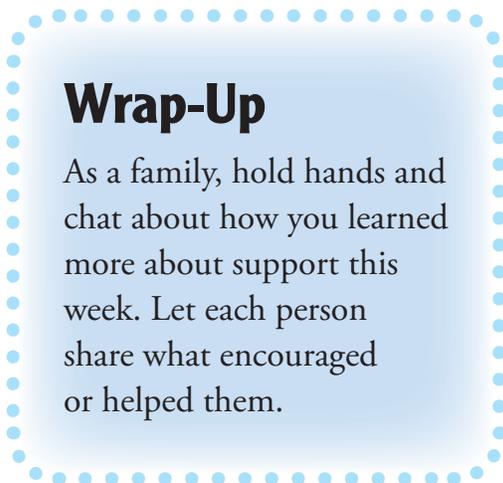


Frontline Tips

- If you know military families or other families where a parent or guardian needs to travel for extended times, offer to be part of their support team.
- Do more than asked for. Drive or stop by to find out how a family in need is really doing. Notice what you can do and then offer to do it.

Prayer

Lord, thanks for giving us strength and support when we are separated. Help us be grateful for all support we receive. In Jesus' name, amen.



Wrap-Up

As a family, hold hands and chat about how you learned more about support this week. Let each person share what encouraged or helped them.

Teamwork

Family Beatitude: Happy is the family that overcomes problems together, for they will form a strong team.

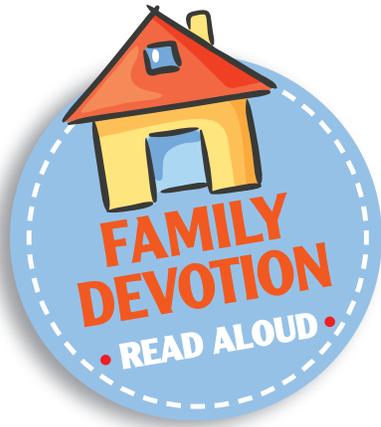
Focus: Working together, especially during hard times

Weekly Bible Verse: *[Jesus] got up and ordered the wind to stop. He said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm. Mark 4:39*

Activity Options

- Make a volcano with baking soda and vinegar. Add food coloring. Watch it bubble over and make a mess. It's a chemical reaction that reflects the power of nature. Problems can seem to explode and be overwhelming at times, but storms end and so can problems.
- Make a home emergency kit. The contents may vary depending on the type of problems that occur where you live. Most will have first aid items, flashlight and batteries, radio and batteries, water, and canned foods with easy-to-open lids.
- Plan a family project that takes teamwork, like painting a room or planning a picnic. Discuss how everyone can help. Take photos.





Troubled Winds 2 minutes

The news grew worse. A major hurricane was headed their way. The girls started baking bread and filling every container with water. The boys started hauling in bikes, toys, and furniture from outside.

Karen thought, *Once again, my husband's away on military orders when trouble strikes.* Karen grabbed two-year-old Daniel and headed for the store to buy provisions. Once home, she spoke with her husband, Jim, by phone. He gave some advice and prayed with her, but he knew he couldn't return to Florida before the hurricane hit.

The people in their zip code received word to remain home and keep the highways available for people leaving more endangered areas. They lost power before the hurricane turned directly into their town. By ten o'clock that night, Karen watched huge gumbo-limbo trees behind the house bend in half.

Fifteen-year-old Rebecca helped her finish tying doors closed and then rushed downstairs. They joined the other children sleeping on mattresses in the basement. Crashing sounds and howling wind continued all night.

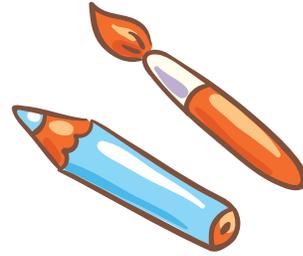
During the times of waking, Karen read from the Bible and prayed. At about five or six o'clock the next morning, she read about Jesus walking on water. She prayed for Jesus to stop the storm. Everything quieted.

After two minutes of silence, Michael piped up, "Mom, you should have read that one first." Everyone laughed before checking the damage and cleaning the debris.



Bible Story Connection 3–4 minutes

Read Mark 4:35–41 about Jesus calming the storm. Discuss the disciples' fear and how storms and other things are dangerous. Talk about how Jesus can help us be calm.



Chat Prompts

- *The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.* 1 Corinthians 12:7

Talk about the strengths of each family member. How can they use their strengths to cooperate in family life?

- *I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But be encouraged! I have won the battle over the world.* John 16:33

Life can be tough. Jesus mentioned that we will have problems, but he told us to have hope and not let the problems discourage us. He knows the end result will be great.

After a problem is resolved, chat about it and find the lighter side of lessons learned. Discuss what brought hope and helped you continue to work through the problem.

- *You must allow this strength to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need.* James 1:4

Some deployments are longer than others. Talk about how to keep going while waiting for the parent's return. Chat about how everyone grew stronger in getting through a long separation or a hard time.

MORE TIME?

Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add art about the hard times.

- Draw a whirlwind or gray cloud. Add words about problems you or your family faced.
- Write out and decorate the verse that is most helpful to you in hard times.
- Draw arm muscles with hearts and write ways you are stronger because of problems you overcame.

Frontline Tips

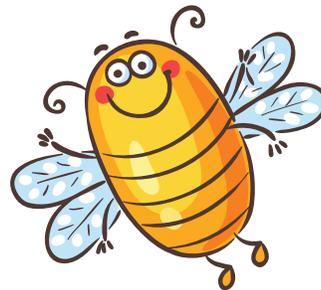
- Hold an emergency drill.
- Post numbers to call in case of emergencies.

Prayer

Dear Lord, you can calm any storm or heart. Help us to be calm during difficulties and to work together to solve problems. In Jesus' name, amen.

Wrap-Up

Talk about how you might face the next big problem better because of what you learned this week.



Shared Laughter

Family Beatitude: Happy is the family that laughs together, for they will know joy.

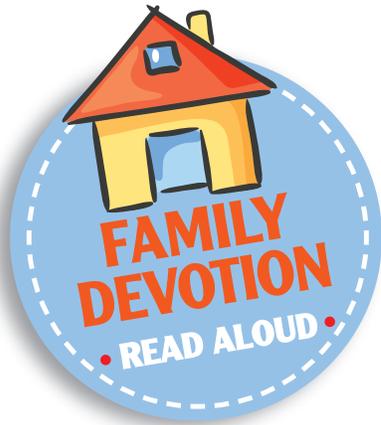
Focus: Uniting through shared laughter

Weekly Bible Verse: *There is a time to weep. And there's a time to laugh. There is a time to be sad. And there's a time to dance.* Ecclesiastes 3:4

Activity Options

- Check out library books with jokes or humor or purchase a few at your local bookstore.
- Tell stories from your childhood that will amuse your children. Start a laugh journal to remember what made your family members laugh. Record funny incidents that happen and humorous phrases people in your family say.
- Make faces and see who laughs first. What else do you do to encourage laughter?





Doused 2 minutes

Jim waltzed in three days after a major hurricane and jokingly asked, “Anything unusual happen while I was gone?”

“Well,” I replied, “Daniel learned three new words, ‘Hur’cain did it!’”

By then Jim had crossed the room, pulled me into his arms, and said, “I’m so sorry I wasn’t here. I thought I’d never get a flight home.” He held up his suitcase and continued, “My treasure chest is full of cash, batteries, and emergency supplies.”

He praised the children’s hard work including bailing out the living room and removing soaked carpeting. He laughed with them as they shared crazy things like a tiny picture that was left on the wall when everything else in the room had crashed down! We all joked that our missing paper plates must have flown out like flying saucers when the doors blew open.

It took months for the \$99,000 in repairs to be completed. For the first few weeks, every time Jim reached for a glass, he doused himself with water. He’d forget that our daughters had filled every container with water, including every glass and bowl. Everyone else slid the glasses out carefully, remembering they might hold water. The children chorused, “Gotcha again! You should’ve been here. Then, you’d remember the water.”

Bible Story Connection 3–4 minutes

Read Matthew 17:24–27 and discover how Jesus solved a problem with an answer that might seem silly and could make you laugh.



Chat Prompts



- *He will fill your mouth with laughter. Shouts of joy will come from your lips. Job 8:21*

Job had a really hard time. All his children died. He lost all his animals on his farm and all his crops. It all happened in one day. But, his friend Bildad spoke and said that God would fill his mouth with laughter. That's faith!

How does it help in hard times to know God will give you a better future? Chat about what makes each person laugh.

MORE TIME?

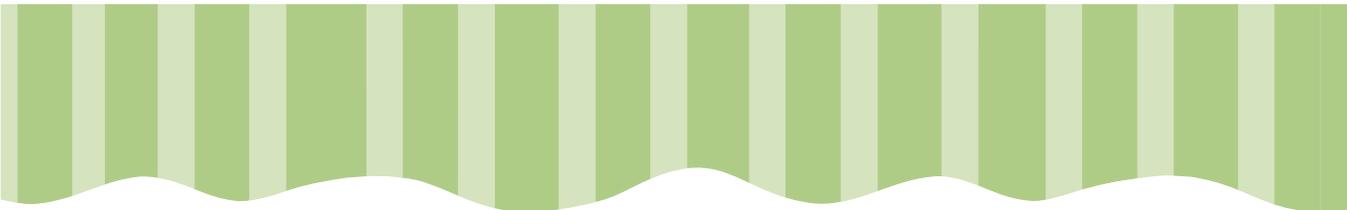
- *Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. Joshua 1:9*

God spoke to Joshua before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. God didn't promise an easy time. They would face struggles. Even so, God wanted them to remember that he would be with them. Does it help to see how God helped his people? When has God helped your family?

- *Then young women will dance and be glad. And so will the men, young and old alike. I will turn their mourning into gladness. I will comfort them. And I will give them joy instead of sorrow. Jeremiah 31:13*

Jeremiah is sometimes called the weeping prophet. He preached about hard times ahead. The people persecuted Jeremiah because they didn't like the messages God sent. God also gave Jeremiah some good news about the future to give the people hope.

Problems can turn into something good. When has a hard time become a blessing?



Scrapbook/Prayer Journal Options

Add art and notes about laughter.

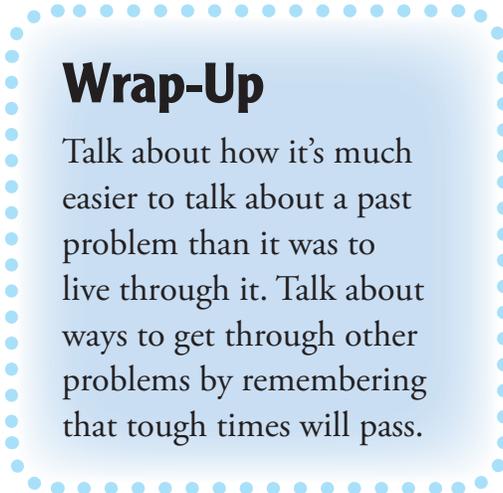
- Add smiles and jokes that made someone laugh.
- Draw a cartoon of something that is funnier now that it was when it happened.
- Add funny faces and happy thoughts.

Frontline Tips

- Life serving others can be tough, so we need laughter. Find and bookmark good joke sites online.
- Record memories that make everyone laugh.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thanks for helping us get through hard times. Help us find the lighter side of past troubles. In Jesus' name, amen.



Wrap-Up

Talk about how it's much easier to talk about a past problem than it was to live through it. Talk about ways to get through other problems by remembering that tough times will pass.

