

October 2019

HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

Knowing
"God knows me, and
I can know Him"

homefrontmag.com

“ We believe that the Holy Spirit is God’s chosen teacher. It is He who causes spiritual growth and formation when and as He chooses. As such, we have articulated 10 distinct environments to create in your home. We desire to create spiritual space, which we refer to as an environment, in which God’s Spirit can move freely. ”

OUR MISSION

INSPIRE parents with ideas to create fun, spiritually forming times in the normal rhythm of everyday life.

EQUIP parents to become the spiritual leaders of God’s truth in their own households.

SUPPORT families to engage their communities and change the culture around them.

HOMEFRONTMAG.COM

Things you won’t want to miss:

- Parent blogs to inspire you
- Mobile-friendly format
- Lots of downloadable giveaways
- Marketplace to purchase article bundles and more!

The website is filled with fresh ideas and creative resources to help you spiritually parent your children.

PARTNERSHIP

HomeFront magazine is a nonprofit ministry of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. If you are passionate about this resource and the families it equips, please consider making a one-time or monthly donation to allow this ministry to continue to reach thousands of homes.

Please go to:

pushpay.com/pay/nlcministries and choose “HomeFront” from the Giving Type to make your tax-deductible donation. Thank you for helping HomeFront minister to families around the world.

HOMEFRONT SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE

An individual issue of *HomeFront* can be delivered directly to your doorstep for as little as \$4.16 each month. Need multiple copies per month? Order a bulk print subscription and save 20% to 35% off of the individual issue price. Simply choose your quantity—price includes shipping.

We also offer individual and bulk digital subscriptions. The bulk digital subscription is perfect for printing your own copies of *HomeFront* to hand out at your church or organization.

Consider gifting *HomeFront* to friends and family as a way to equip parents and grandparents to create fun, spiritually forming times in their homes!

Go to homefrontmag.com/store to check out all of our subscription options.

A NOTE FROM MICHELLE



Nothing is more important in our spiritual lives than knowing and being known by God. **We live in a world that denies absolute truth, and yet God's Word offers just that.** As we create an environment that upholds and displays God's truth, we give children a foundation of knowing God, studying His Word, and cultivating a relationship with Him through Christ.

Just as the environment of KNOWING describes, we live in a world that denies and dismisses the existence of absolute truth. What a tragedy! We face an urgency to pass on the truth of God and His Word to the next generation. **As we learn God's truth, we open up to knowing God Himself and entering into relationship with Him.** As we create space that allows our families to study God's Word, we'll develop a hunger and thirst to know Him more.

Dr. Michelle Anthony

Michelle is the Executive Pastor of Family Ministries at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. Michelle has graduate degrees in Christian education, theology, and leadership and more than 25 years of church ministry experience as a children's and family pastor. She loves a good book and a cup of coffee.

 @TruInspiration

HOW TO USE

HomeFront

Each issue highlights an environment your family can create in your home. This month looks at KNOWING. Each magazine is divided into two sections: Family Time and Inspire, Equip, Support.

Family Time articles are created to equip you to engage with your children on a regular basis.

Inspire, Equip, and Support articles are parenting stories, devotions, and ideas to encourage you as you spiritually lead your household.

USE THIS GUIDE TO GET FAMILY TIME STARTED. IT'S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3 ...

- 1** Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening, afternoon, or morning. Just commit to building this time into your family's natural rhythm—perhaps around a meal.
- 2** Look through HomeFront to see what stands out. Choose two or three experiences you would like to incorporate into your family times this month. Don't feel burdened to complete all the activities—just do what fits your family best. This resource provides more than enough experiences to create transforming environments in your home throughout the month.
- 3** Remember to **HAVE FUN!** Strive to make each gathering unique to your own family as you enjoy spending time with God and one another.



“If you know, you know!” Have you seen this statement on social media? Friends and family members post a picture with this caption and it feels like a secret message to those in the “insider’s club” of the post. If you are anything like me, this sends you scrambling to search out what you don’t know that you should! Thankfully, being “in the know” about God is not something only “insiders” have the scoop on. Everyone can know God simply by looking at the life of Jesus. Jesus tells us in John 14:9, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

This month, in **GOD’S WORD** (page 28), we take a close look at studying the life of Jesus as a way of knowing God and discovering more about His character. Our **WORSHIP** article (page 12) details how deeply God knows and loves us and desires for us to be in relationship with Him. **STUDENT ID MIDDLE SCHOOL** (page 36) shares the story of a middle schooler who discovered joy in the realization that God “knit her together.”

SPIRITUAL GRANDPARENTING (page 48) reminds us that in this day and age, our grandchildren are openly taught that truth is subjective; each person decides for himself what his own “truth” is, and then no other person should question it. However, Jesus told us He is “the way and the truth and the life” in John 14:6.

We can know God—we are not outsiders! Jesus tells us in our **FAMILY TIME VERSE** (page 5), “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9). Because of this we can boldly say, “If you know, you know, and you can know too!”

Debbie Guinn

Debbie Guinn

Debbie is the Editor in Chief of HomeFront magazine. She has more than 30 years of experience working in children’s and family ministries. She is passionate about equipping parents to become leaders of God’s truth in their own households. She is a recent transplant to Austin, TX, where she spends her free time enjoying her five grandchildren and perusing antique stores and flea markets.

debbie@homefrontmag.com

LET’S BE SOCIAL

 homefrontsp	 homefrontmagsp
 homefrontsp	 homefrontsp

Share your photos using the hashtag #homefrontmag

FAMILY VERSE

Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God’s Spirit in these words who transforms. We come to know God more when we’re willing to open our hearts and listen to His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with this verse, and think of creative ways to invite your family to open up to God as they commit the verse to memory. **Go to homefrontmag.com for a free downloadable copy of the family verse.**

Layout and Design Erin Comer | Copy Editor Leigh Davidson | Proofreader Jennifer Shepherd
Customer Service Zach Newberg | Printing PressOn! Print Production, Inc. pressonprintproduction.com

FAMILY VERSE

So I say to you:

Ask and
it *will*

be given

to you;

seek and you
will find;

knock

and the door

will be

opened

to you.

Luke 11:9

CONTENTS



8



16



24



36

FAMILY TIME

5
FAMILY VERSE
Luke 11:9

8
CAPTURING THE SEASON
"Hey There, Pumpkin" Doormat

10
CONVERSATION STARTERS
If You Know, You Know

12
WORSHIP
Known By Messiah

14
TRADITIONS
Being Known

16
PRAYER
Prayer Place

18
STORYTELLING
Knowing God's
Boundless Love

20
CREATE
Bandana Pumpkins

22
GAME TIME
Counting My Candy Corn

24
FAMILY TIME RECIPE
Autumn Wild Rice Soup

26
KIDS IN THE KITCHEN
Pumpkin Roll

28
GOD'S WORD
Knowing God

30
TOT TIME RHYME
Get Up

31
BLESSING
Bless with Your Words

32
TAKING ACTION
Dwell

34
GLOBAL
Nauru

**INSPIRE
EQUIP
SUPPORT**

36
**STUDENT ID
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
You Are Known

38
**STUDENT ID
HIGH SCHOOL**
Knowing God's Voice

39
KEEPING UP WITH YOUR KIDS
Know What Your Kids Are Talking About

40
EVERYDAY MOM BLOG
Ask, Seek, and Knock

42
EVERYDAY DAD BLOG
"I Want to Do That Again!"

44
TOUGH TOPICS
Trusting Abba Father

46
MARRIAGE
Speak What You Know

48
**SPIRITUAL
GRANDPARENTING**
Teach and Model the Truth

CAPTURING THE SEASON

“HEY THERE, PUMPKIN”

DOORMAT

Do you love to have guests drop by? If the answer is yes, then let your friends and family know! These doormats will be a fun way to welcome guests this fall and dress up your doorstep at the same time. Choose any saying you like and maybe even make several mats to change out for each holiday!

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- coir mat, 18" x 24" available for less than \$10 at many big-box stores
- outdoor acrylic paint
- “pumpkin” script letters found at bit.ly/HFPumpkin
- 8.5" x 11" paper
- large poster board
- permanent marker
- craft knife
- sponge stencil brush
- small watercolor paintbrush
- block letter stencils

WHAT YOU’LL DO

1. Print the “pumpkin” script letters onto 2 sheets of 8.5" x 11" paper and cut them out.
2. Place cut letters onto the large poster board and trace around the type with a marker.
3. Using your craft knife, cut around the marker outlines. This poster board becomes your stencil for the word “pumpkin.”
4. Lay your stencil on top of the coir doormat. Hold it firmly in the area you’re painting.
5. Dip your sponge stencil brush in the acrylic paint and dab the paint in a straight up-down motion (not sweeping) to cover the area within your stencil.
6. Keep painting until you’ve fully covered your stencil design with paint.
7. Remove the stencil from the mat and use the small watercolor paintbrush to fill in any areas of the design that didn’t get fully covered with paint.

“These doormats will be a fun way to welcome guests this fall.”



If You Know, You Know



GET THE FAMILY TALKING

This fun game will be a great way to open dialogue with your children this fall and get to know them a little better. When applicable, have them expound on their answers, digging a little deeper into why they feel that way. The following prompts are just simple suggestions; encourage your family to come up with some of their own questions to get to know each other better! Remind your children that God knows every single detail about us—He knows our likes and our dislikes, and He loves us dearly!

“GOD KNOWS EVERY SINGLE
DETAIL ABOUT US—HE KNOWS
OUR LIKES AND OUR DISLIKES,
AND HE LOVES US DEARLY!”

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- small pieces of paper, the same color and cut to the same size
- pens or pencils (all must be the same)
- bowl

WHAT YOU’LL DO

1. Place the bowl in the center of the table.
2. Give each person several small pieces of paper.
3. Pass out the pens or pencils. Each person needs to have the same writing utensil (all black/blue pens or all pencils so you can’t tell the difference when everyone writes).
4. Using the If You Know, You Know prompts, read the questions one at a time and direct family members to write their answers. No one should see each other’s answers.
5. Have them fold their papers and put them in the bowl.
6. After all answers are in the bowl, direct one person to read all the answers out loud.
7. Start with the youngest and allow him to guess who gave each answer. Encourage family members not to give their answers away.
8. If the “guesser” did not get them all correct, pass the papers on to the next person and see if she can get all the answers correct.
9. Keep playing until someone finally guesses all the correct answers, and then move on to the next question.

by Debbie Guinn

IF YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW

PROMPTS

My favorite movie is:

My least favorite movie is:

My favorite song is:

My least favorite song is:

My favorite food is:

My least favorite food is:

My favorite flavor of ice cream is:

My least favorite flavor of ice cream is:

My favorite color is:

My least favorite color is:

My favorite sport is:

My least favorite sport is:

My favorite candy is:

My least favorite candy is:

My favorite animal is:

My least favorite animal is:

My favorite drink is:

My least favorite drink is:

My favorite holiday is:

My least favorite holiday is:

My favorite book is:

My least favorite book is:

My favorite weekend activity is:

My least favorite weekend activity is:

My favorite smell is:

My least favorite smell is:

My favorite thing about myself is:

My least favorite thing about myself is:

My favorite television show is:

My least favorite television show is:

WORSHIP

Known By MESSIAH

I wonder how many steps it was for her? Had she counted them each day as she made her way in the blazing Samaria sun to the place where she would draw water each time? Did her thoughts weigh as heavily on her mind as the jug she balanced on top of her head? Twelve more steps, nine more, only four to go ... finally, she could lay down her water jug and wipe the sweat dripping down her face. This wouldn't be so bad if only she could join the other women in the cool journey of the morning to draw water, but they didn't associate with her type. I wonder if she ever wanted to just tell them—"You don't know me!"

I wonder if that day was just like any other? Maybe she had a routine down pat. Did she hope to interact with anyone, or did she look forward to her time alone at the well? Regardless, she did have a visitor that day and small talk wasn't on the agenda. At first glance she had already labeled him ill prepared for obtaining water, stuck-up, and a Jew (which is important because Jews too did not associate with her type: Samaritan). But Jesus wasn't any of those things.

You see, anytime Jesus interrupts your rhythm in life, it is worth paying attention to. Check out John 4:1-15 for the interaction, but verse 16 is where we see the woman's secret(s) unfold.

He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." (John 4:16-18)

At this point water was no longer the need, but she didn't run away for she knew she was having a

conversation with someone who knew her. She knew all the skeletons in her closet meant those around her would never truly understand her, but this man was different. **He had love in His eyes and a tone of compassion in His voice.** He didn't air her dirty laundry for the world to judge, yet He confirmed that her secret was true and offered her a way out of sin by showing her where the true source of living water is found:

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he." ... Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (John 4:25-26, 28)

I wonder how long it had been since one of the men in her life had taken the time to sit and talk with her? Verse 29 tells us what her heart thought about the conversation with Jesus: "He knows me!" I'm not sure, but if her heart is anything like mine it probably burst at the second realization of "and He didn't shame me!"

Jesus saw the depth of this woman's heart and He loved her. He does the same for you and me. In a world where you can be in a crowd and still feel alone, He sees you; He knows you. He knows your heart and the buried secrets within. He tenderly calls each of us to reach down and bring those secrets to light so the light of the gospel can transform the dirtiest of secrets into new life for His glory.

Jesus knows you completely—and loves you. Leave your jug at the well and run to Him today.



READ TOGETHER JOHN 4:1-30.

Ask: How do you think the woman traveling to the well felt about having to go by herself everyday?

Possible answers: lonely, sad, afraid

Ask: When she arrived at the well, who does the Bible say was there sitting beside it?

Answer: Jesus

Say: The Bible tells us that Jesus cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Isn't it great that Jesus cared enough to talk to the Samaritan woman when she was lonely?

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Bible
- white paper or cardstock
- watercolor paints (and glass of water for rinsing)
- paintbrushes
- white crayon

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Use the white crayon to draw or write something on a white piece of paper. Make sure to press down hard enough to leave wax on the paper. Then begin to paint strokes over the piece of paper with your watercolors. This will reveal your hidden message or drawing.

THEN, READ PSALM 139 TOGETHER.

Say: God knows everything about us! Even what is hidden in the depths of our hearts! Just like He told the woman at the well everything about her life, He knows yours too! Nothing is hidden from Him. He wants to reveal the things inside us that make us feel shame or sadness or loneliness so He can set us free. He wants to wash you with His living water and make a beautiful picture of your life.

Ask: Is there anything hidden in your life—something you've done or maybe something that's happened to you—that makes God sad? Remember, He wants the best for you! (Psalm 38:18; 1 John 1:9).

Pray together, asking God to give you courage to reveal the hidden things in your lives. Thank Him for knowing you inside and out and loving you with an everlasting love!

by Larah Roberts

Larah (said like Sarah with an L) is a Louisiana native living in North Carolina. She is married to her college sweetheart and is raising three fun arrows at home. Larah enjoys jewelry making, reading, a good cup of coffee with a friend, and being a seven on the Enneagram.



TRADITIONS



“IT MAY JUST BE 24 HOURS AWAY FROM HOME, BUT DURING THIS TIME WITH GRANDMA AND GRANDPA THEY ARE KNOWN. THEIR UNIQUE PERSONALITIES, QUIRKS, INTERESTS, AND STRENGTHS ARE CELEBRATED.”

BEING KNOWN

Words like “peaceful,” “calm,” “serene,” “tranquil,” and “quiet” don’t come to mind when describing our family of four boys. I am raising an army of testosterone; these boys love to wrestle and compete, and seem to only know one volume—loud! However, as their momma, I know each boy has many layers and is so much more than the stereotypical “all boy” label people put on him.

My oldest is creative and can spend hours quietly working on a Lego creation with attention to the smallest details. My eight year old seems to be constantly throwing, catching, kicking, or hitting a ball, but he also craves his mom’s hugs every night before bed and every morning before starting his day. My seven year old gets pegged as a “bull in a china shop” but has the most tender heart and observant eye. Then there is my baby who can easily get overlooked in the chaos of the day-to-day with school, sports, and extracurricular activities.

I am so thankful for my sons’ grandparents who have created a tradition that, during each school break (summer, fall, Christmas, etc.), each boy gets to have a sleepover all by himself at Grandma and Grandpa’s house. For four boys who spend every waking moment with each other, these sleepovers are a tradition they look forward to and talk about for months after. It may just be 24 hours away from home, but during this time with Grandma and Grandpa they are known. Their unique personalities, quirks, interests, and strengths are celebrated. The kid who loves Legos gets to have Grandma work on rebuilding his favorite 1,000-piece set. It’s amazing what can happen in the two hours of sorting, finding, and building a Lego set.

These are moments of conversation, passing down family history, bonding, and an opportunity for a boy to share his heart, his ideas, and thoughts without any fear or interruptions. In a world where we cram every

“In a world where we cram every waking moment with activities, these retreats from everyday life are a gift for our kids. Kids need people in their lives who will invest in their interests so they know they are loved, valued, and cherished.”



waking moment with activities, these retreats from everyday life are a gift for our kids. Kids need people in their lives who will invest in their interests so they know they are loved, valued, and cherished.

The world tells our boys that they are loud, messy, and wild, but they are so much more. That's why this tradition is sacred to us. It's an opportunity to spotlight their many talents and qualities that seem to get overlooked when they are all together. These are opportunities for each child to be known as an individual and not just one in the pack. I know 20 years from now when my boys are all grown, they will have the fondest memories of these moments with their grandparents. I know this to be true because my husband still talks about the fond memories of visits with his grandparents—they invested in his life and helped shape him into who he is today. May we all live as intentionally as these grandparents and find ways to let those around us know they are known.

by Erin Lorton

Erin lives in Kansas City with her husband and four sons. As a family they love spending time traveling, being outdoors, and finding ways they can be used by God.

 @elorton

PRAYER

Prayer PLACE

Environments matter. Every space we enter communicates something, whether we're aware of it or not. The right environment can encourage us to act or think a certain way. For example, when I worked in children's ministry, I wanted the rooms to communicate welcome and safety. I want my home to communicate warmth and retreat. I don't think I'm alone in my desire to create environments where people can thrive. In fact, Jesus models this very practice for us in the Bible.

In Luke 5 we read that the word about Jesus was spreading. People were coming from all over to seek Him out for healing and teaching. Then Luke 5:16 tells us, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Jesus cared about His prayer environment. He withdrew for prayer to a place where He could be alone and truly pour His heart out to His Father. We see the same thing in Matthew 14, where Jesus feeds the 5,000. After this incredible miracle, He sends everyone away, and we read in Matthew 14:23a that "after he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray." Here, Jesus uses a mountainside—a natural high place—as an environment where He can be alone. Jesus chose His environment carefully to create His own Prayer Place.

How about you? Do you have a place where you like to pray? Maybe it's a cozy chair facing a window or a seat at the kitchen table (not too comfortable so you aren't tempted to doze off!?) Maybe it's not a seat but a room—a space in your home that communicates warmth, safety, or connection to God.

This month decide as a family on a family Prayer Place. Walk around your home together and decide where would be a good place for people to "get away" to pray just like Jesus. Once you've picked the place, set out a journal or some paper in that spot. Throughout the month, encourage family members to get away to that spot to pray. They can grab the journal and jot down some of the things they want to talk to God about. Then, after each prayer, leave the journal there. When someone else feels the urge to get away, he can go to the spot and pray through the prayers that are already written or add his own to the journal.

Getting away to pray was important to Jesus, and He was deeply connected to God. We can adopt Jesus' practice, and it can help us know God better as well.

by Krista Heinen

Krista is wife to Greg and mom to Jackson. After more than five years of working in family ministry roles, she now has the privilege of staying home with her son. Krista continues to minister through momming, writing, speaking, and encouraging others in their faith journeys.

“JESUS CARED ABOUT HIS PRAYER ENVIRONMENT. HE WITHDREW FOR PRAYER TO A PLACE WHERE HE COULD BE ALONE AND TRULY POUR HIS HEART OUT TO HIS FATHER.”



ACTION

Throughout the month, encourage family members to get away to your Prayer Place to pray. They can grab the journal and jot down some of the things they want to talk to God about.

STORYTELLING

Knowing God's Boundless Love

"I may be biased, but I am fairly certain that few bunnies in the world are known and loved as well as Fuzz Maple."



So how do I get to know God better?

Have you ever wanted something so badly you couldn't think or talk about anything else? My daughter Shelby felt that way about getting a pet rabbit. She already had two cute little dwarf hamsters but wanted a dwarf Holland Lop bunny more than anything in the world!

To convince her mom and me that she was ready for this new responsibility, Shelby, who was eight years old, set out to become the resident Holland-Lop-bunny expert. She checked out a mountain of books from the library about bunny training, feeding, breeding, and everything in between. She intently studied videos of how to trust-train your bunny, how to clip its toenails, and how to calm your bunny if it is scared. She spent months learning about Holland Lops while saving her money for everything needed to provide a home for her pet.

Finally, my wife and I were convinced she was ready for the challenge, and in no time, we welcomed a tiny, floppy-eared, black baby bunny into our family. We instantly fell in love with little eight-week-old Fuzz Maple Kliever. Shelby, predictably, was smitten with Fuzz. She spent hours with him, gaining his trust, grooming him, learning what vegetables were his favorite, and even decorating the inside of his bunny home with custom artwork. She learned to sense when Fuzz was scared and when he was in a happy, playful mood. It's now three years later, and they are still the best of friends! I may be biased, but I am fairly certain that few bunnies in the world are known and loved as well as Fuzz Maple.

Recently I was reflecting on Shelby's passion to learn about, and get to know, little Fuzz. Her dedication was inspiring! I realized, though, that the dedication I have shown toward getting to know God pales in comparison to that which Shelby has shown toward Fuzz. Now, I must admit, it is easier for me to feel a connection with a soft, button-nosed Holland Lop than a mysterious, invisible God. But, considering this invisible God actually created our

fuzzy, furry little friends, it seems like it would be worth getting to know someone like that!

So how do I get to know God better? How does our family grow closer to God?

One way we connect with God is to regularly get into creation, into nature. We marvel at the hibiscus blooming in our garden; we stare in wonder at the hummingbird collecting nectar; we observe the moon waxing and waning and debate if it is really made of cheese (hint: it isn't ... or is it?).

Another part of our rhythm is to read and talk about the stories of Jesus. The Bible itself tells us that if we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus. And in these Jesus-stories, we see Him loving those who were hurting and showing compassion on the men, women, and children who had nowhere else to turn for help. We see Jesus healing and giving hope!

We also listen for God so we can learn His voice. We listen for Him to speak to us in silence and in prayer. We try to pay attention in case He speaks to us through those around us.

There are countless creative ways to get to know God more deeply. Our imaginations will never come up with enough ways to explore the boundless love of our Creator! And as we get to know God, we discover that God loves each of us, even more than Shelby loves Fuzz Maple—which is saying a lot!

May your family discover God in beautiful ways and know Him more deeply today!

**“CONSIDERING THIS
INVISIBLE GOD
ACTUALLY CREATED
OUR FUZZY, FURRY
LITTLE FRIENDS, IT
SEEMS LIKE IT WOULD
BE WORTH GETTING
TO KNOW SOMEONE
LIKE THAT!”**

by Jason Kliever

Jason is a teaching pastor at Canopy Church in Orange County, CA. He lives with his wife and two daughters in a 200-square-foot RV camper. Jason loves to hear from readers, so feel free to send any comments or questions to:

 jasonmkliever@gmail.com

CREATE

BANDANA PUMPKINS

These adorable pumpkins are an easy family activity and will look great around your house this fall. After you make one of these pumpkins, ask your kids, “What is this?” They might look at you quizzically but stick with it. “It’s a pumpkin!” Then, remind them that even though the pumpkin is covered in fabric we KNOW what it is—if you know you know! Share with them that when we know God, we can recognize Him even when we don’t see or hear Him clearly. We can know God and recognize His character because we know Jesus.

WHAT YOU NEED

- small foam pumpkins
- bandanas or fabric
- brown craft paint
- Mod Podge
- foam brush
- scissors

WHAT YOU’LL DO

1. Paint the stems of the pumpkins brown and let dry.
2. Cut bandanas or fabric into 1 1/2" x 9" lengths. You can also rip the fabric pieces to give

the edges a rougher look. You will need approximately 14 fabric pieces to cover each foam pumpkin (depending on the size of the pumpkin).

3. Apply a thick layer of Mod Podge on the pumpkin with the foam brush.
4. Place fabric strips over Mod Podge, slightly overlapping each piece of fabric so the pumpkin doesn’t show through. Tip: As you place the fabric on the pumpkin, pull it tight. This will keep it from bubbling up.
5. Cut off any ends of fabric that are too long.
6. Continuing adding strips around the entire pumpkin by overlapping each piece of fabric until the pumpkin is completely covered.
7. Allow to dry and display in your home.

by Carrie Rowe

Carrie has more than 19 years experience in kids ministry. She grew up in Southern California and became a Montana girl for 10 years serving as the Kids Ministry Director at Fresh Life Church. She currently lives in Waco, TX, working at Magnolia Market and loves all things crafty and creative.





COUNTING

My Candy Corn

A Fun Family Game for All Ages

COUNTING

My Candy Corn



REMEMBER!

This game requires a little bit of math. Now, some of us may be great at math, but some of us might struggle. Everyone has different strengths and things we know better than others. What I love so much about our God is that He knows us completely ALL. THE. TIME., but we can always seek to know Him more. God invites us to expand our knowledge of who He is simply by asking. He desires relationship with us, and so of course this is something He wants us to do! Does that mean everything is going to become perfectly clear to us? No, but that's okay! It's okay because we have such a big and amazing God we can spend our whole lives learning more about Him and He will never run out of ways to connect with us and reveal Himself to us. This month remind your kids that God invites all of us to know Him, and that is something to celebrate!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- number cards (1 per player) found at bit.ly/HFCountingCorn
- pair of dice
- candy corn
- bowl or jar

BEFORE YOU START

Pour the candy corn into a bowl or jar and place it, along with the dice, in the center of your game space. Set out a number card for each player.

TIME TO PLAY!

Invite your family over to the game space. Instruct each player to sit in front of a game card. Choose the oldest member of the group to go first.

This player will roll the dice in the center space (for example, she rolls a 3 and a 5) and add the two numbers together (for a solution of 8). She then must find the solution numbers (8s) on her game card and cover each with a candy corn. This player will then pass her dice to the person on her left who will take his turn. The first person to create a complete straight line (horizontal, vertical, diagonal) wins! You can even play to blackout, which is when the card is completely full. This is a fun game to play over and over—as long as the candy corn hasn't all been eaten!

by Heather DePartee

Heather worked in children's ministry for seven years and recently earned her degree in early childhood development. She is now working on her Multiple Subject Teaching Credential and MA in teaching at Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, CA. She is in love with her husband, Adam, and all of their adorable houseplants!

FAMILY TIME RECIPE

Autumn Wild Rice Soup

PREP: 15 min.

COOK: 45 mins. (stovetop), or 4-8 hrs. (slow cooker)

YIELDS: 8 servings

* For an easy metric conversion chart, search the Internet for "metric kitchen."

As the evenings begin to cool, we all know nothing comforts like warm soup. Serve this hearty Autumn Wild Rice Soup with a loaf of your favorite crusty bread and a side salad for a delicious fall meal!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 6 cups vegetable stock (or chicken stock)
- 1 cup uncooked wild rice
- 8 ounces baby bella mushrooms, sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 large (about 1 pound) sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 small white onion, peeled and diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning (or another seafood/poultry seasoning)
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 2 large handfuls of kale, roughly chopped with thick stems removed
- kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper





WHAT YOU'LL DO

Slow Cooker Method

1. Combine vegetable stock, wild rice, mushrooms, garlic, carrots, celery, sweet potato, onion, bay leaf, and Old Bay seasoning in the bowl of a large slow cooker. Stir briefly to combine.
2. Cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 8 hours until the rice is cooked and tender.
3. During the final 10 minutes of slow cooking, prepare cream sauce on the stove. In a medium saucepan, cook the butter over medium-high heat until melted. Whisk in the flour until combined and cook for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the milk. Continue cooking, stirring frequently, until the mixture nearly comes to a simmer and has thickened. (It should be very thick.)
4. Add the cream sauce and kale to the soup and stir gently until combined. Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed.
5. Serve warm or transfer to sealed container and refrigerate for up to 4 days.

Stovetop Method

1. Heat (an extra) 1 tablespoon of butter in a large stockpot over medium-high heat.
2. Add onion and sauté for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until soft and translucent. Stir in the garlic and cook for an additional 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the vegetable stock, wild rice, mushrooms, carrots, celery, sweet potato, bay leaf, and Old Bay seasoning. Stir to combine.
4. Continue cooking until the soup reaches a simmer. Then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes or until rice is tender, stirring occasionally.
5. During the final 10 minutes, prepare your cream sauce in a separate saucepan on the stove. Melt the butter over medium-high heat until melted. Whisk in the flour until combined and cook for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the milk. Continue cooking, stirring frequently, until the mixture nearly comes to a simmer and has thickened. (It should be very thick.)
6. Add the cream sauce and kale to the soup and stir gently until combined. Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed.
7. Serve warm or transfer to sealed container and refrigerate for up to 4 days.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

PUMPKIN ROLL

PREP: 30 min.	COOK: 15 min.	YIELDS: 8-10 servings
----------------------	----------------------	------------------------------

* For an easy metric conversion chart, search the Internet for "metric kitchen."

THIS WILL BE A FUN RECIPE TO MAKE WITH YOUR KIDDOS! THE GREAT FLAVORS OF PUMPKIN AND CREAM CHEESE ROLL UP INTO ONE DELICIOUS FALL TREAT!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Cake

- ¾ cup all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting baking sheet
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ⅔ cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
- ¼ cup powdered sugar (to sprinkle on the towel)

Filling

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- powdered sugar for garnish

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Cake

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Spray a 15" x 10" baking sheet (jelly roll pan) with nonstick cooking spray. Line with a fitted piece of parchment paper and spray the parchment. Generously dust the baking sheet with flour and tap out the excess.
3. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and salt.
4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the eggs and granulated sugar and beat on medium until thick. Pour in the pumpkin puree and blend on medium until combined.
5. Add the flour mixture and continue to blend on low until well combined.
6. Using a spatula, spread the pumpkin mixture evenly onto the prepared jelly roll pan.
7. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes or until the top of the cake springs back when gently pressed with a finger.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Filling

1. While the cake is baking, make the cream cheese filling. In a large mixing bowl combine the cream cheese, remaining powdered sugar, butter, and vanilla.
2. Use an electric handheld mixer to beat the ingredients until they are creamy and smooth.

Assembly

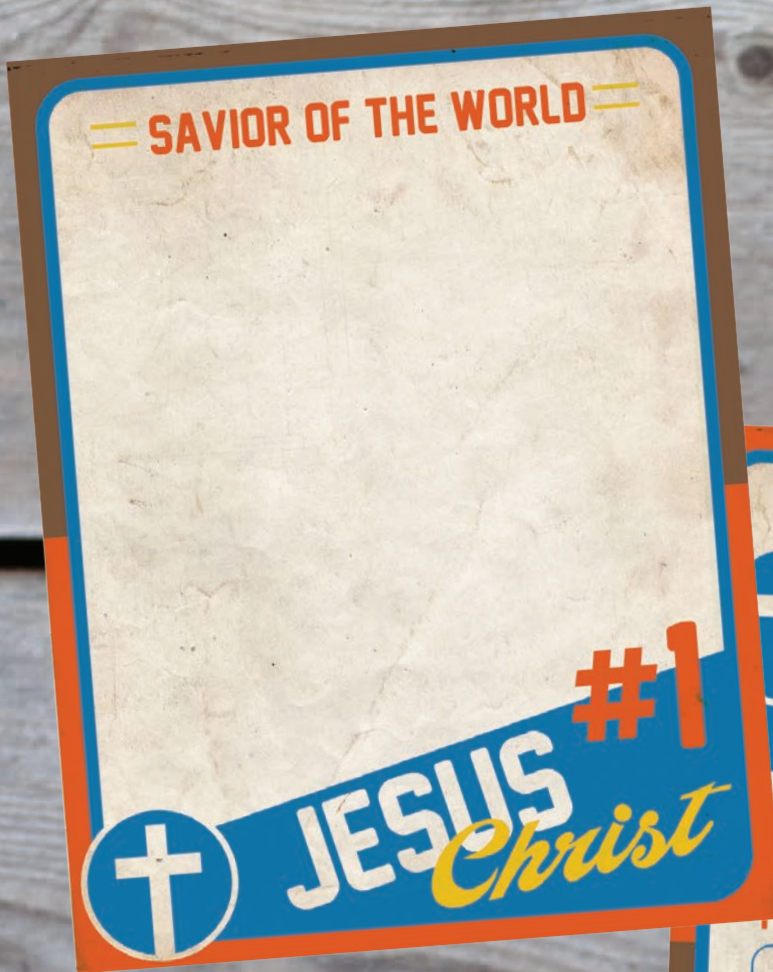
1. Lay a thin kitchen towel flat on a clean surface. Sprinkle the towel with powdered sugar.
2. Immediately loosen the cake from the baking sheet and turn it out onto the prepared kitchen towel.
3. Carefully peel the paper from the cake. Carefully roll up the cake and towel together, starting with narrow end. Cool the cake on a wire rack.
4. Carefully unroll cake, keeping the towel underneath the cake.
5. Allow your children to evenly spread the cream cheese filling over the cake all the way to the edges.
6. Gently roll the cake, taking care to not press the filling out of the ends.
7. Wrap the cake in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
8. Sprinkle the cake with additional powdered sugar before serving, if desired.
9. Slice and serve.



GOD'S WORD

ACTION

Make your own card using our free template at bit.ly/HFknowcards



Knowing God

As 21st century Christians, we can easily take for granted the idea that to know Jesus is to know God.

Of course, Jesus is God. If we want to know what God is like, we can just look at Jesus. This is almost commonplace to us.

However, in Jesus' day, this idea would have been absolutely crazy, and even blasphemous! To a good first-century Jew, there was only one God. Believing in and following the one true God, Yahweh, is what set Jews apart from the pagan cultures around them that worshipped lots of different deities. So when Jesus came on the scene and started making claims like "If you really know Me, you will know My Father as well" and "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father," He would've angered a lot of people!

It was bad enough that Jesus was calling Yahweh His father. Yahweh was seen generally as the father of the nation of Israel, but individual Jews did not consider Yahweh their father—that was much too intimate and personal. But Jesus was not only calling God His Father; He was actually equating Himself *with* God.

It's only in light of Jesus' death and resurrection that we can see His claims about Himself as indeed valid. Through His resurrection, Jesus proved that He wasn't just blowing smoke. He really is God. And now, through studying all of Jesus' words and actions recorded in Scripture, we really can know exactly what God is like.

HEAR IT

Read John 14:1-10 as a family in a translation that's easy to understand. Focus especially on verses 7-10. Then, discuss the following questions.

1. What does Jesus mean when He says if someone has seen Him, they've seen the Father?
2. What are some things we can know about God's character by looking at Jesus' life? Give specific examples. (For instance, God must be

both powerful and compassionate. We can know this because Jesus healed a lot of people from diseases, showing that He had compassion for people who were hurting and also had the power to heal them.)

DO IT

Using our template found at bit.ly/HFKnowCard, create a short bio (kind of like you might see on a baseball card) of some of the things you know about Jesus.

First, draw a picture of what Jesus might have looked like. (Remember, He would've been a typical first-century Jewish man, which means He almost certainly had dark skin, short, brown curly hair, brown eyes and a scruffy beard and was probably around five feet tall! Oh, and because of the limited dental care available at the time, He was very likely missing some teeth!)

Then, fill in the following stats (looking up the verses below if you need help). Feel free to add your own categories as well (hobbies, character traits, miracles, famous quotes, etc.).

- Hometown (Matthew 2:23; 21:11)
- Family members (Matthew 1:16; Mark 6:3)
- Occupation (Mark 6:3)
- Best friends (Matthew 17:1)

Keep your cards and refer to them when you want to remember or share with others what we know to be true about God from looking at the life of Jesus!

by Emily Schulz

Emily is wife to Phil and mom to baby Eva. She serves as the Family Ministries, Women's Ministry, and Discipleship Pastor at New Denver Church in Denver, CO. Emily has her MDiv from Denver Seminary and her BA in Christian Ministries from Biola University. Her current hobbies are the same as Eva's: all she wants is for someone to feed her and let her sleep!

TOT TIME RHYME


TOT TIME RHYME

THESE COMMANDMENTS THAT I GIVE YOU TODAY ARE TO BE ON YOUR HEARTS. IMPRESS THEM ON YOUR CHILDREN. TALK ABOUT THEM WHEN YOU SIT AT HOME AND WHEN YOU WALK ALONG THE ROAD, WHEN YOU LIE DOWN AND WHEN YOU GET UP. (DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7)



*God is holy
Mighty and awesome
God really knows me
And I can know Him too*





Wake your little one to this sweet rhyme sung to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” As you do, talk with him and remind him that God created us and knows us, and He wants us to know Him too!

 Get the audio recording of this song at bit.ly/octtottimerhyme2019



by Izzi Ray

Izzi was born in Southern California but raised in northwest Montana. She began playing guitar and writing songs at the age of 11. Her songwriting philosophy has always been “Be nothing but honest and real.” She has released three full-length albums to date (her self-titled debut in 2012, Make Much of You in 2014, and Liminality in 2017). Izzi currently resides in Southern California with her husband, dog, and cat.

-  @izziray
-  @izziray
-  @izziray
-  izziray.com

BLESS WITH YOUR WORDS

A BLESSING CAN BE A PRAYER OF COMMISSION, A BIBLE PASSAGE, OR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. BLESSINGS CAN BE SPOKEN OVER A CHILD FOR THE PURPOSE OF DECLARING GOD'S PROTECTION, JOY, AND WISDOM OVER HIM.

"God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!" I heard this phrase often while growing up and, honestly, I really struggled with it. If God is good, why do we see so much evil in the world and experience such heartache? This can be one of the hardest things to explain to our kids, especially when we may not feel confident in the answer ourselves. It's almost as if those who say this "God is good" phrase are in on some big secret while the rest of us sit on the outside, desperate to be let in.

But what if I could know God? Not just a bunch of facts about Him but truly know Him on a deep, personal level. It is that type of knowing Luke 11:9 invites me into. But how do I go about it? Scripture tells me to ask, to seek Him, to open my heart to His redemptive love and listen for His voice. I have learned to say, "Come, Holy Spirit" and to invite Him into every aspect of my life. As I spend time with Him and in His Word, the more I learn about His character, and, in turn, the more I come to know who He is.

Over and over again in the Old Testament, we see how faithful God is to the Israelites even though they weren't faithful to Him in return. We see Him redeem the lives of people the rest of the world overlooked—giving them new names and fighting on their behalf. We see Him take things that were meant for evil and use them to proclaim His glory! He chooses to make Himself known to us through His character because He wants to be in a personal relationship with each of His children.

This isn't just limited to events in the Bible; we can also see His character on display in our own lives as well. How has He redeemed your life? How has He given you hope in a season of hopelessness

or been your strength when you had none? We can know God through His character, and we can know His character by seeking Him and being in a close relationship with Him. Just as God knows us personally, we can know Him!

PARENTS,

Read the following verse over your child.

"So I say to you, (child's name): Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9).

BELOVED CHILD,

May you know that your heavenly Father sees you, He loves you, and He knows you. May you know that you have been personally invited to know Him in return. He longs to make Himself known to you! May you seek Him with your whole heart and trust that He is who He says He is. May you be confident in knowing that His character and His love for you will never change. He loves you as a son/daughter and He wants nothing more than to be in a close, personal relationship with you!

by Amanda Visser

Amanda is the Executive Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator for Family Ministries at New Life Church in Colorado Springs, CO. She enjoys running, painting, and a strong cup of coffee.

TAKING ACTION

dwell

A fresh new way to memorize
God's Word on your wrist and in your heart

DWELL: WHY?

Dwelling on the problem. Dwelling in the past. Dwelling on "it."

We wake up first thing in the morning and our minds are already dwelling on "it." Whether "it" is our crazy schedules, fear of messing up our kids, anxiety about what is going on in our country, worry about our health, hating our jobs, tough periods in our marriages, sadness over loss, feeling helpless in a world full of suffering, unforgiveness toward a person, comparison, greed, discontentment ... the list goes on and on. And sometimes it seems impossible to do anything but dwell on "it." For this very reason I created Dwell.

Because we can dwell differently.

Jesus promises life, and life to the fullest ... but how?

DWELL: HOW?

I personally have been there ... dwelling on "it." Exhausted, anxious, and stuck. My pastor suggested I start to memorize the Word ... he told me to dwell on the truths, promises, and goodness of God and to just see what might happen. And so I began to write Scripture in black Sharpie on my wrist. A friend of mine taught me to write the first letter of every word of the verse to encourage and challenge me to recall the Scripture. And it worked! Every day I was writing the Word of God on my heart and in my mind. Slowly I began to dwell differently. I began to think about God—what was true, what was lovely, who He made me to be, and what He had for my life. I began to perceive something new springing up in my life. Hope, joy, and peace.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT: dwelldifferently.com

product



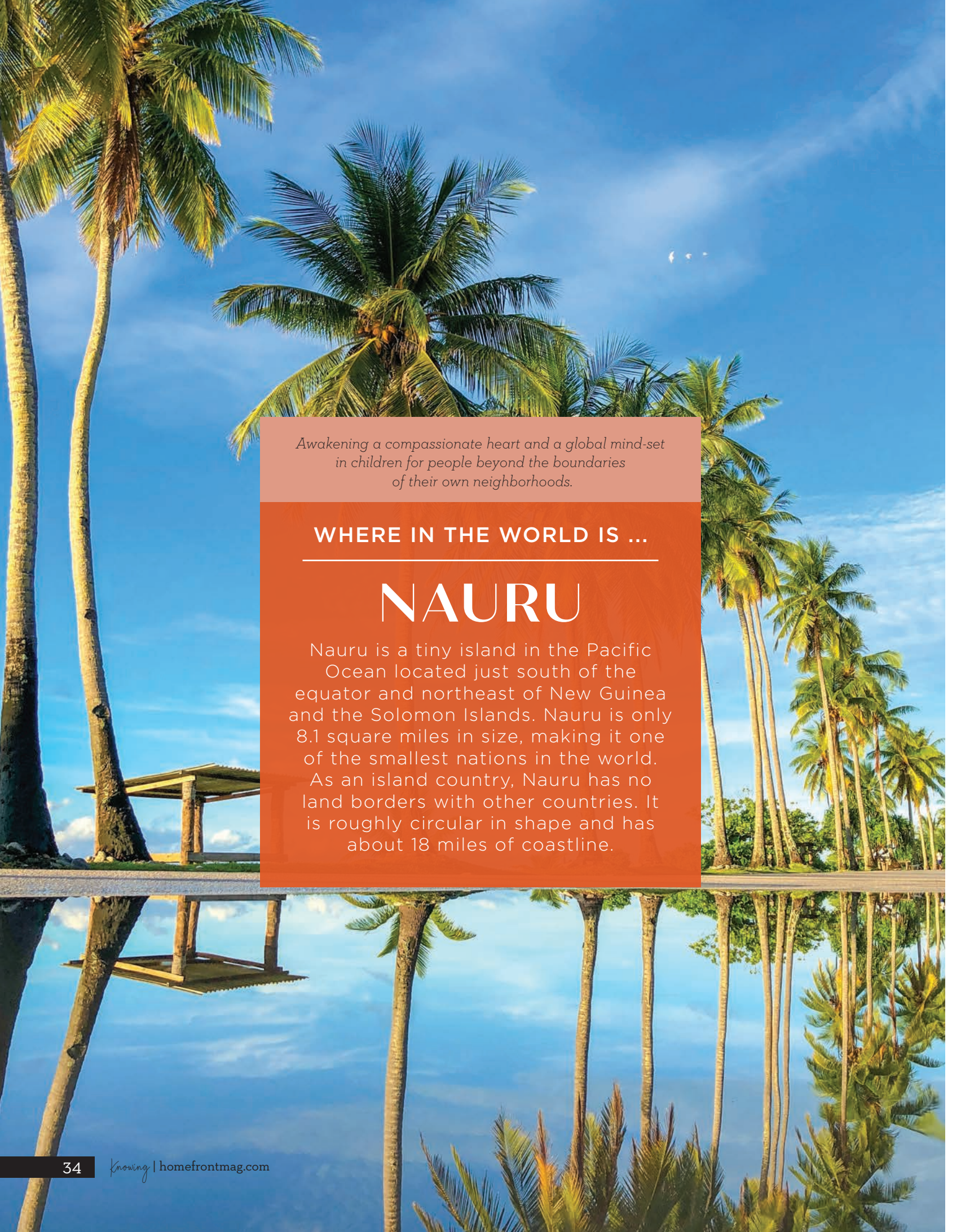
DWELL: WHAT?

So what is Dwell then? By providing simple, beautiful tools to recall and memorize the word, Dwell helps people dwell differently. When you become a member, you receive monthly packages equipping you to memorize the verse of the month. Inspired by how effective writing the letters on my arm was, the package will include temporary tattoos as well as other tools to memorize Scripture.

As a side note, there is no person too old or too young or too wise or too stupid to know God's Word more. So all are welcome to join. If you ever receive a verse you already know, guess what ... share it with a friend!

I hope you join us. Let's choose to dwell differently.

Sincerely, Vera Schmitz
Dwell founder



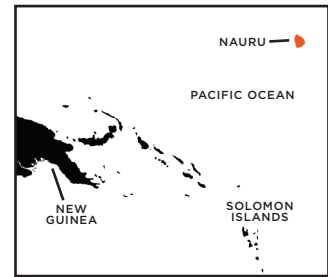
*Awakening a compassionate heart and a global mind-set
in children for people beyond the boundaries
of their own neighborhoods.*

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS ...

NAURU

Nauru is a tiny island in the Pacific Ocean located just south of the equator and northeast of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Nauru is only 8.1 square miles in size, making it one of the smallest nations in the world. As an island country, Nauru has no land borders with other countries. It is roughly circular in shape and has about 18 miles of coastline.

GLOBAL



NOW THAT WE KNOW WHERE IN THE WORLD NAURU IS, LET'S MEET AND GREET THE PEOPLE.



There are over 10,000 people who call Nauru their home.



If you lived in Nauru you most likely would worship in a Christian Congregational church. Religion: Nauruan Congregational Church 36%, Roman Catholic 33%, Assemblies of God 13%, Nauruan Indigenous Religion 10%



If you lived in Nauru you would speak Nauruan. To say, "Hello" in Nauruan, you would say, "Ekamowir omo" (pronounced E-kamou-I-r-omo).



If you lived in Nauru you might eat a lot of imported canned food. Cultivation is difficult on Nauru due to the poor soil, irregular rainfall, and the impact of mining. There is no local fruit or vegetables. Fresh food is limited to a small amount of fish and, very occasionally, beef.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Nauru has no cities, and its population lives in small settlements along the coast.
- Nauru is also known as Pleasant Island.
- Nauru tops the list of the least-known countries in the world.

Six Countries You Have Never Heard Of

1. **NAURU** Apparently only 200 tourists visited Nauru in 2011, even though its coral reefs are loaded with exotic snorkeling spots. The island has space for only two hotels.
2. **KYRGYZSTAN** This Asian country is trapped between mountain ranges, so horseback riding is a common means of transportation.
3. **BRUNEI** Nobody pays taxes in this little mosque-covered nation on the island of Borneo.
4. **KIRIBATI** If you clumped together all 33 of Kiribati's teensy islands, they'd be about the size of New York City. But the teensy islands are so spread out in the Pacific Ocean that it takes six hours to fly from the first one to the last.
5. **DJIBOUTI** This desert country's major landmark is Lake Assal, the third-lowest point on earth. The lake is hot and salty; temperatures around it are scorching. Fresh water is so scarce that people accept bottled water as payment.
6. **MALTA** This little island off the coast of Sicily belonged to Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, and Napoleon before winning independence in the 1960s. It's known as the original homeland of both the dwarf hippo and the Maltese dog. Its temple complexes are also some of the oldest freestanding structures known to man.

huffpost.com/entry/countries-youve-never-heard-of_n_4004491

STUDENT ID
MIDDLE SCHOOL

YOU ARE KNOWN

This past winter I had the joy of teaching middle schoolers for a weekend of winter camp. When God called, I said, “Yes,” and where did He lead this California girl? ARKANSAS! While I mentally prepared for cow-filled farms, some unique food, and empty dirt roads, I spiritually prepared for the Lord to speak truth to these young people in a way that they would know that it was God speaking. We spent the entire weekend discussing our identity in Christ and the truth that we are part of His story.

There was one particular night where I reminded them that while this story is not about us, God desires more than anything to use us in the exact, unique ways we were made. Sharing the passage from Psalm 139 and reminding them of what God thinks of them as their Heavenly Father, I got off the stage thinking surely my three-point message stuck and we were going to call it a night, brush our teeth, and hit the back-breaking bunk beds. The lesson God taught me that night was that He will use my words to share truth, but He is the One with the power to transform the lives of the listener.

After the message, I walked around to various small group discussions and overheard girls emotionally processing the truth that God made them and that He knows all of them. Then, a girl from the group raised her hand timidly to share what she felt God was telling her to say: **“You guys, He knit us together. He wanted to make me, He knows all of me, and He knit me together!”** Pausing amidst some tears, a chuckle broke out as she asked, “Have any of you ever knitted before?! It takes so much time!” After the group laughed a bit, she profoundly stated,

“DO YOU
KNOW
WHAT THAT
MEANS? MY
GOD TOOK
TIME ON
ME!”

“Do you know what that means? My God took time on me!” My mouth dropped. I had never shared that profound truth; however, I was reminded that God was speaking because He wanted this girl to know that He took time on her and knows all about her because of that. This middle school-aged girl left that weekend confident that God cared about her as His sheep and knowing that she was fully known, fully loved, and worthy of being crafted by her heavenly Father.

Do you believe that you are deeply known and loved by God?

As we long for our kids to take a deep dive into that truth, I believe we need to first be confident in that truth for ourselves as parents, leaders, and shepherds. God took time on you because He cares about you! Before you are a parent, you are His sheep. Before you are a parent, you are His daughter or son. Before you are a parent, you are the one He “took time on”! How much different would our parenting be if our identity was first rooted in the confidence we have as His beloved,

created ones—ones He took time on? Take time to get to know your God and rest confident in that truth.

by Haley Downey

Haley is the middle school pastor at Arbor Road Church, Long Beach, CA. She is passionate about building community and adventuring alongside junior high students as they discover who God is and the gifts they've been given to make His name great.

 @haleydowney

He knit us together



STUDENT ID
HIGH SCHOOLKNOWING
GOD'S VOICE

I'm not proud of it, but I am a loud talker. I have tried to “keep it down” and it works—for a bit. But inevitably, the volume of my voice will increase, and I will be the loudest one in the room. My wife and I worked at the same church for a while, and she always knew when I was in the office—from across the office. Probably the worst is when I can be located in crowded places like malls and airports based on my conversations and boisterous words. I guess it's not the worst thing in the world. My family and friends can always find me. I just get a little embarrassed when people know I am in the area and I am nowhere to be seen, just heard. For my family specifically, they always say that they **know** it's me when they **hear** my voice.

That is ultimately what we want for our kids in their relationship with their heavenly Father. As they grow into young adults, we want them to mature in their faith so that they can:

- *hear* and *know* God's voice,
- *desire* to obey it,
- *obey* it in the power of God's Spirit (not their own strength).

—Michelle Anthony¹

KNOWING God's voice. What a gift! Not like a piercing voice that is too loud at a hospital (sorry, that was me) but being able to clearly hear from God, know what He wants from us, and live changed lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. We then become a reflection of His character and nature. Other people may have different experiences than I do. Their ears may be more in tune with the Holy Spirit

speaking to them. But for me, this is a skill that takes time and gets easier the more I do it. It shouldn't be a surprise though. The more time I spend with someone, the more I *know* about him. The more interactions I have, the more I *know* and recognize his voice, habits, and patterns.

The best thing we can do for our children as spiritual influencers is to place them around God's voice and help them recognize it. The same kind, loving, gentle, correcting, restoring voice that we have heard in our own lives. We do this through environments of worship, service, storytelling, responsibility, and more. As His Word proclaims, our entire lives can become a response because we **KNOW** God. “I praise you because ... your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:14).

May we be people who hear and obey God's voice and then help our children to hear that same voice.

by Jeff Bachman

Jeff has been in youth and family ministry for 26 years and is currently working at Mariners Church Mission Viejo in Mission Viejo, CA, as the student ministry pastor. He is passionate about getting a glimpse of the eternal through the lives of the people he works with. Jeff has had the privilege of communicating with thousands of students and young adults through preaching and teaching at his own church, at camps, and at national and international student events. He has been a contributing writer for Download Youth Ministry, Interlic, Journal of Student Ministries, and David C. Cook publishing. Jeff has his master's degree from Western Seminary in evangelism and equipping. He and his wife of 17 years, Shara, have three children: Jackson (12), Isabella (10), and Charlotte (8). Jeff loves music, cooking, traveling, comic books, and sitting over conversation with a beverage..

¹ Anthony, Michelle. *Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today's Families*. David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO: 2010. p. 194



KEEPING UP WITH YOUR KIDS!

Know what your kids are talking about

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

“SNACC”

A unique way of describing someone a person is attracted to (i.e., you want to gobble that person up like a snack).

“THICC”

Commonly used to describe someone if he or she is overweight in desirable places for the opposite gender.

SURVEY SAYS! COMPUTERS//KIDS’ ULTIMATE SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE!

“Lenovo Computers surveyed 15,000 people around the globe and learned that 75% of parents say their kids are now more likely to look up information online than ask them for help ... 83% of respondents say they think technology is helping schoolkids perform better. And 84% of parents confess that the new technologies encourage them to stay in the workplace longer, to satisfy their own interests” (mediapost.com).

mediapost.com/publications/article/338853/study-kids-go-online-rather-than-ask-parents-for.html

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Sometimes you think you fully know someone until something happens that causes you to rethink whether you really did! What would it look like to constantly have a posture of learning about each other when it comes to each individual member of your family? A way to gain knowledge is having the humility to ask questions. Jesus loved asking questions too. Spend this week thinking through a few questions you want to intentionally ask each member of your family with the goal of learning about each other. In turn, you will know how to love each other better!

EQUIPPING RESOURCES OF THE MONTH

Blogs to Follow

- Prayer resource: *Raising Prayerful Kids*, raisingprayerfulkids.com
- Family blog: *Parent Cue*, theparentcue.org

Books

- *Parenting: From Surviving to Thriving: Building Healthy Families in a Changing World* by Charles R. Swindoll

Podcast

What It Is, What It Means is a youth ministry/pop culture podcast in a rapidly changing world. Join Jeff and Shara Bachman as they navigate through the complex world of music, movies, media, and tech to tell you what it is and what it means for you, your family, and your ministry. You can find *What It Is, What It Means* on iTunes podcasts or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts.



by Haley Downey

Haley is the middle school pastor at Arbor Road Church, Long Beach, CA.



It was one of those moments when all I wanted was a few minutes of uninterrupted quiet. You know, the kind where you're left with no other option but to lock yourself in the bathroom. On this night I was desperate. So, I fed my family dinner, gave everyone the night off from helping with the dishes, and rewarded every family member with half an hour of screen time, all in an attempt to distract them from my absence.

Earlier that day I'd enjoyed a long overdue lunch date with one of my dearest friends. We have the kind of friendship that never runs short on conversation. We caught up on all the happenings in our families, shared details of a recent vacation, and commiserated over our mutual readiness for sweater weather and pumpkin spice season. We are two peas in a pod, she and I. I would have sworn that I knew everything about her until, while sharing a prayer request, she began talking in some strange language that she and I had never conversed in before. She matter of factly told me that as an Enneagram 2 with a wing 3, she noticed herself veering into an unhealthy 8, which was why she was struggling.

Say what now?!

I listened. I nodded and smiled. And I did what every good Christian friend does. I said, "Girl, you know I'll be praying for you." But honestly, I wasn't sure what I was praying for. A 2 wing 3 with an 8 something or other? All I could think was that this sounded like some exciting new combo meal from Chick-fil-A. What in the world was she talking about? Even though I was fairly certain this wasn't about chicken, I still could not wait to get home and grab a quiet minute to figure it out. All day long I was so bothered! To me, it felt like, in the course of one ordinary day, I went from believing I knew all of my best friend's ins and outs to feeling

flabbergasted by the possible reality that there was a huge part of her that I did not know at all. Thus, my desperate need to lock myself in the bathroom—with my laptop—to decode this 2, 3, 8 madness.

I locked the bathroom door and quietly opened my laptop, eagerly waiting for Google to open. With my heart racing, I began to type, “What is a 2 wing 3”? But before I could hit the enter key, something happened.

Alone in the quiet, Jesus whispered softly in my ear, “Daughter, I see how desperately you long to know your friend, but I’m just wondering, do you long to know Me this well? Have you ever felt this much urgency to uncover the truth of who I am? Is your desire for Me enough to make you stop everything and lock yourself away so you can spend time with Me?”



“ALONE IN THE QUIET, JESUS WHISPERED SOFTLY IN MY EAR, ‘DAUGHTER, I SEE HOW DESPERATELY YOU LONG TO KNOW YOUR FRIEND, BUT I’M JUST WONDERING, DO YOU LONG TO KNOW ME THIS WELL? HAVE YOU EVER FELT THIS MUCH URGENCY TO UNCOVER THE TRUTH OF WHO I AM? IS YOUR DESIRE FOR ME ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU STOP EVERYTHING AND LOCK YOURSELF AWAY SO YOU CAN SPEND TIME WITH ME?’”

That still small voice of His permeated through all the chaos I was feeling. He gently drew me in, tenderly reminding me of His longing for a friendship with me.

I have heard people say that God is a mystery that is impossible to solve. Nothing could be further from the truth. God has given us 24/7/365 access to Him through the gift of the Word. Every detail about the life of Jesus and the love of the Father and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is in the Bible, just waiting for us. And if that’s not awesome enough, by asking Jesus into our hearts, we acquire the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a permanent guide to constantly point us to Jesus. God is constantly pursuing us. Just as He knows us, He wants us to know Him.

I ceased my search to decode this mystery about my friend, and instead of relying on Google, I closed my laptop and opened my Bible to the words in red. Moms, it is here, through the life of Jesus, where we can all go to receive a deeper understanding of God. By spending time with the Friend of all Friends, and by taking Him up on His offer to ASK, SEEK, and KNOCK, He eagerly meets us wherever we are, even if it’s behind a locked bathroom door.

by Cyndi Clark

Cyndi has been married to her high school sweetheart for 27 years and is the proud mom of two beautiful daughters and one son-in-law. Their family lives in a small community in Franklin, TN. When she and her husband aren't busy renovating their property, she is either completing the manuscript of her first book or blogging encouraging messages for women. Cyndi would love to engage with you through Instagram.

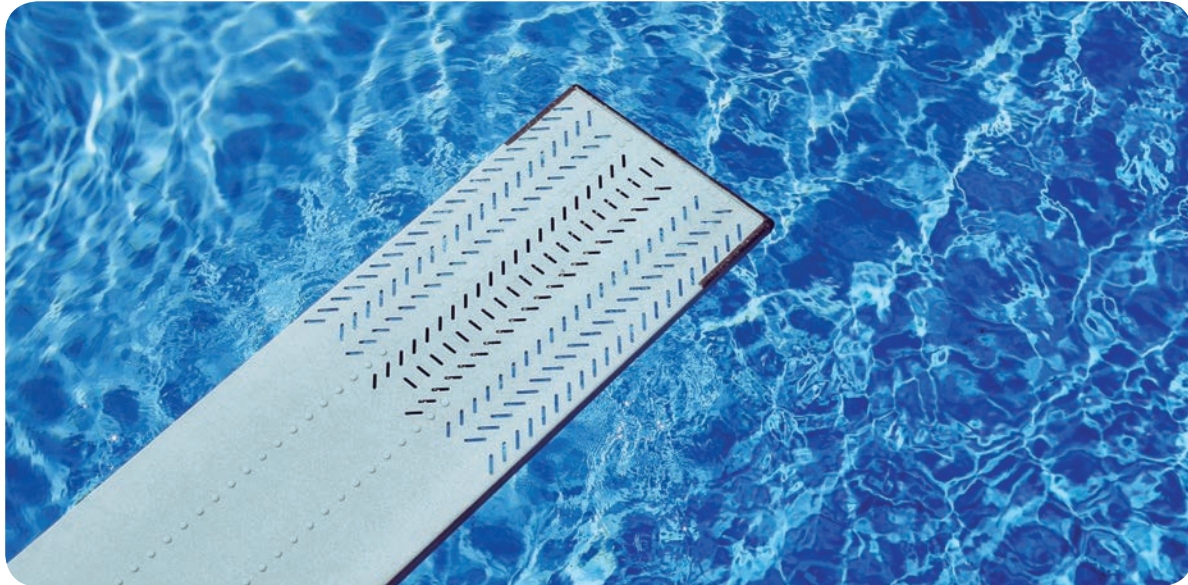
 @Cyn4Jesus

“I Want to Do That Again!”

It was a scorching hot summer day in Texas, and we were hanging out with several families at a community pool. Our middle child was trying to muster the courage to take a turn jumping off the diving board. She saw how much fun the other kids were having splashing into the deep waters, but fear kept her swimming on the safe, shallow end of the pool.

Finally, after enough watching she decided she'd give it a try. I remember her telling me, “Daddy, I'm just going to jump off the diving board one time.”

“Sure thing, baby girl,” I replied as I watched her walk over and get in line.



Next came the moment of truth. Facing her fears, she slowly walked down the diving board, and her tiny toes clenched the edge of the board like a bird on a branch. This was her moment. Mom and Dad were watching in anticipation, and we encouraged her to jump.

She sprang off the board into the water and swam over to the side. Perfect! With a huge smile on her face she immediately exclaimed, “I want to do that again!”

From that point on, we couldn't keep her off the diving board. No more swimming in the shallow end. She had tasted the thrill of jumping off the diving board, and nothing would stop her from experiencing it again and again.

What changed? How did our timid, fearful swimmer immediately become a courageous, bold diver?

I believe her *actions* changed when her *thoughts* changed. When she stopped dwelling on all the things she didn't know and started thinking about all the things she did know, she courageously jumped. So, what did she know?

=====
“I believe her *actions* changed when her *thoughts* changed. When she stopped dwelling on all the things she didn’t know and started thinking about all the things she did know, she courageously jumped.”
=====



She knew Dad was close by. As she stood on the edge of the diving board, her eyes looked at mine. My eyes, focused on her, gave her the courage to jump.

Did you know your heavenly Father watches over you? Psalm 121:5 says, “The LORD watches over you.”

What a promise! If you find yourself stuck in the shallow end of life, afraid to courageously live out God’s calling, then I pray this simple truth takes root in you. The Lord watches over you—we can KNOW that.

If you are facing a challenging situation in your life, don’t get stuck thinking about all the things you don’t know. Think about the things you do know. God is near, and He is watching over you. As you look to Him, through His Son Jesus Christ, fear subsides, and courage grows. In the end you’ll likely say, “I want to do that again!”

by Andy Comer

Andy is the lead pastor of Antioch Georgetown, a new church in the Austin, TX, area that launched January 2018. He and his wife, Erin, have three daughters, and they enjoy an eclectic mix of ministry, graphic design, and making old things new.

 andycomer.org

TOUGH TOPICS



TRUSTING ABBA FATHER

I was spiritually stuck. As a Christian since childhood, a 29-year children's pastor, a pastor's wife, and a Bible college graduate, I knew a lot about God and the Bible. And, of course, I wanted everyone's identity to be rooted in Christ and His love!

What rocked my world was discovering, in a two-year spiritual formation group, that I didn't really know God the way our Abba Father longs for us to know Him. Childhood wounding blocked the love Jesus wanted to lavish upon me. When I heard that I was *beloved, valued, and worthy*, my super-powered protective barrier went up and all of those truths ricocheted off, never penetrating my soul.

Buried childhood wounds began to surface. How could I experience God's amazing love when I had been unseen, unprotected, and wounded? Diving deeper, I realized had shoved down memories to protect myself, but I was often still responding as that hurt little girl.

With Jesus' help I began to demolish the barrier. In order to experience God's love, I had to not only love myself but take care of the wounded child within. By dwelling on the truths of God's love for me while recalling painful childhood events, I began to heal. He loved this wounded little girl; I needed to love her too. **The child within was asking in a soft, childlike voice: "Jesus, do You REALLY love ME? ... Me?"**

I encourage you to read the "story" below to the child within you—"little (your name)." Before reading, recall times as a child when you were weak and vulnerable. Listen as that child, and ask yourself, "What am I feeling?" Reflect upon: "Is this how 'little me' sees herself/himself?" Could these words, which you may easily embrace as an adult, not be reaching all of you? Often the child within needs to hear them most.

Did you know that long before you were born, our big God knew you? Yes, our big God knew everything



***“We all long to
be seen, loved,
and cherished.”***

about YOU! What color eyes and hair you would have, whether you would be interested in dance, sports, science, art, or reading—and it brings Him great joy! Our big God knew you would be outgoing, quiet, or somewhere in-between.

He delights in your uniqueness and loves everything about you—His precious creation.

Our big God looks at YOU, His child, as a perfect loving parent would—with total love! When He looks at you our big God shouts: “YOU are precious! YOU are unique! YOU are loved!” His love for you is HUGE!

Our big God hears you. He’s longing for you to share your daily experiences with Him, both happy and sad. Just like your best friend, He wants to hear what’s on your heart. He wants to talk to you, too.

Our big God has a journey just for you. Once you embrace how deep and wide His love is for you, He is ready to take your hand and guide you in this amazing adventure He has for YOU.

We all long to be seen, loved, and cherished. As we experience God’s amazing love for us, it destroys those protective barriers we often build as children, and He floods the places once filled with pain. You begin to see yourself as your **Abba Father sees you—BELOVED! VALUED! WORTHY!**

Jesus lived in this sense of belovedness that gave Him security and peace. At His baptism His Abba expressed, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). Take your Abba Father’s hand in yours and step into an amazing adventure to discover your belovedness.

by Cathi Phillips

Cathi and her husband have served as pastors in the same church in Irvine, CA, their entire marriage. She has 35 years experience as a children’s pastor, is a graduate of Hope International University, and still finds joy being with her two adult children. Her journey with Jesus is leading her into new frontiers as a mentor and consultant while pursuing her endless quest to find the ultimate chips and salsa pairing.

MARRIAGE

Speak What You Know

“You’re mean!”

With three young daughters sharing tight quarters in our home, those two words bounce down the hallways far more often than I would like to admit. So, my husband and I recently banned the phrase and replaced it with an important reminder: “A single unkind action does not make your sister an unkind person. You must speak only what you know to be true.”

The reminder is a tough but important one, and we soon realized how much our marriage could benefit from the same kind of verbal overhaul. Too often the heat of conflict can inject our conversations with such inflammatory words as “always” and “never”—words that convey our frustrations but certainly not the truth.

These infractions may seem trivial, or at least run of the mill when it comes to marriage, but if we are committed to creating a home environment where the inhabitants desire to know God’s truth, we must take captive every threat of dishonesty that would creep inside our borders—even those that are unintended or perhaps even socially acceptable.

Think about it for a minute. How many popular sitcoms can you name that employ marital conflict as comedic relief? Arguments between spouses are backed by a laugh track, even when the words being volleyed back and forth are exaggerated, untruthful, and downright hurtful. Often the storyline is propelled even further when the husband and wife berate and criticize each other to their friends.

The sad reality is, popular culture doesn’t care whether or not our marriages succeed, let alone whether or not they glorify God. But if we desire these outcomes, we must train ourselves to speak only what we know, no matter how fiercely our emotions try to influence us.

What does this look like on a practical level? For starters, sit down with your spouse and identify those areas where you are prone to drift from absolute truth and then practice keeping a steady course. For example, I tend to view circumstances disproportionately when I am feeling stressed or overwhelmed (e.g., “You always forget about this” or “You never consider my feelings”). I have to practice alternate phrases such as “When you do this, it makes me feel ...” so that my responses under stress will be only those that I know to be true. On the other hand, my husband hates conflict, so he tends to acquiesce for the sake of peace. He’ll mutter, “You’re right,” even when we both know he doesn’t truly feel that way. Once we identified these areas of weakness (and ultimately, dishonesty), we were able to adjust our responses accordingly.

On the flip side, consider what encouraging truths your spouse needs to hear and commit to speaking them regularly—regardless of your feelings. “I love you,” “I’m proud of you,” and “You are a blessing to me” are words we should aim to speak daily, not just when our emotions line up.

As Proverbs 18:21 says, “The tongue has the power of life and death.” The battle for absolutely honesty—even in the midst of conflict—is one that must be fought tirelessly. But let us not grow weary! For speaking what we know rather than what we feel is a powerful practice that will impact not only our marriages but also our entire families.

And that’s the truth.

by Brittany Woodward

Brittany is a classically homeschooling mama who lives in the heart of Tornado Alley with her husband and three young daughters. A lifelong book junkie, she’s passionate about the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty and the power of storytelling to shape faith and culture. When she’s not drilling Latin conjugations, she can probably be found running, reading, baking, or attempting to brew the perfect cup of coffee.



SPIRITUAL GRANDPARENTING

Teach

and Model the Truth

Truth. In this day and age, our grandchildren are often taught that truth is subjective; each person decides for himself what his own “truth” is and then no other person should question it. Far too often this “truth” comes with a high price—lives are destroyed and people end up in bondage to their “truth.”

We know the Bible teaches us that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We can know the truth, and it will make us free (John 8:32). Jesus wants us to know the truth so we will have the freedom and life found in Him. One of the most important things we will ever do as grandparents is teach and model an absolute trust and belief in Jesus. This is done by the words we speak and the lives we live. We even influence our grown children as well as our grandchildren when they see that truth matters to us.

Throughout the coming school year our grandchildren will learn many things—some that are true and some that aren't. While we're not able to stop them from hearing false things at school or from friends, we are able to teach and model the truth to them and encourage them to turn to Jesus whenever they wonder what the truth is (Luke 11:9).

Consider giving your grandchildren sticky notepads to write down their prayer requests and then place the notes where they'll see them—next to their beds, on the bathroom mirrors, inside their lockers or notebooks. When they see the requests, tell them to talk with God about those requests. As God answers, suggest they write what He did to answer and then save the notes as reminders of God's care. Teach and model the truth—do not give up. When difficult and sad times come—and they will—continue to teach and model a life grounded in the truth. When people you love turn from a life of faith—and this may happen—do not give up. When the world around you and the ones you love become even more contrary to the truth—and they will—do not give up. When you persevere, you will leave the ones you love a great gift that has the ability to impact generations.

by Lynda Freeman

*Lynda Freeman has been married to her husband for 38 years; they have a daughter, son, daughter-in-law, and three grandsons. She is one of the founding team members for the Legacy Coalition and is the founder of Grandmas with Heart (grandmaswithheart.blogspot.com). She is the author of *The DNA of Grandparents and Parents Who Hand Down the Faith*.*



*“TEACH AND MODEL THE
TRUTH
—DO NOT GIVE UP.”*

10

ENVIRONMENTS

The order of the 10 Environments listed coincides with the monthly distribution of this resource.

2

“God transforms me when I step out in faith.”

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

As children and students are challenged to step out of their comfort zone from an early age, they learn to experience a dependence on the Holy Spirit to equip and strengthen them beyond their natural abilities and desires. We believe this environment will cultivate a generation that, instead of seeking comfort, seeks a radical life of faith in Christ.

1

“God has entrusted me with the things and people He created around me.”

RESPONSIBILITY

This environment captures the ability to take ownership for one’s life, gifts, and resources before God. A child must be challenged to take responsibility for his or her brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as for those who are spiritually lost. Our hope is that the Holy Spirit will use this environment to allow each child to understand that God has entrusted His world to us.

3

“Asks the question, ‘What needs to be done?’”

SERVING

This posture of the heart asks the question, “What needs to be done?” It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and focuses on a cause bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that as Christ-followers we are to view our lives as living sacrifices that we generously give away!

4

“God fills me with His love so I can give it away.”

LOVE & RESPECT

Without love, our faith becomes futile. This environment recognizes that children need an environment of love and respect in order to be free to both receive and give God’s grace. Innate to this environment is the value that children are respected because they embody the image of God. We must speak to them, not at them, and we must commit to an environment where love and acceptance are never withheld due to one’s behavior.

5

“God has a big story, and I can be a part of it!”

STORYTELLING

The power of The Big God Story impacts our lives by giving us an accurate and awe-inspiring perspective into how God has been moving throughout history. It is the story of redemption, salvation, and hope and tells how I have been grafted into it by grace. It further compels us to see how God is using every person’s life and is creating a unique story that deserves to be told for God’s glory.

6

“God knows me, and I can know Him.”

KNOWING

Nothing could be more important than knowing and being known by God. We live in a world that denies absolute truth, and yet God’s Word offers just that. As we create an environment that upholds and displays God’s truth, we give children a foundation based on knowing God, knowing His Word, and a relationship with Him through Christ. God is holy, mighty, and awesome, and yet He has chosen to make Himself known to us!

7

“I belong to God, and He loves me!”

IDENTITY

This environment highlights who we are in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, and given an inheritance in Christ ... all of which we did nothing to earn. This conviction allows children to stand firm against the destructive counter-identities the world will offer.

8

“When I get off track, God offers me a path of healing.”

COURSE CORRECTION

This environment flows out of Hebrews 12:11-13 and is the direct opposite of punishment. Instead, biblical discipline for a child encompasses a season of pain, the building up in love, and a vision of a corrected path for the individual with the purpose of healing at its core.

9

“God’s family cares for each other and worships God together.”

FAITH COMMUNITY

God designed us to live in community and to experience Him in ways that can only happen in proximity to one another. The faith community serves to create an environment to equip and disciple parents, to celebrate God’s faithfulness, and to bring a richness of worship through tradition and rituals, which offer children an identity. Our love for each other reflects the love we have received from God.

IT IS OUR PRAYER THAT HOMES AND CHURCHES WOULD CREATE THESE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN TO LIVE IN SO THEIR FAITH WILL GROW IN A COMMUNITY OF CONSISTENCY, COMMON LANGUAGE, AND PRACTICE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THESE ENVIRONMENTS CAN IGNITE A TRANSFORMING FAITH IN YOUR FAMILY, WE SUGGEST YOU READ:

10

“I see Christ in others, and they can see Him in me.”

MODELING

Biblical content needs a practical living expression in order for it to be spiritually impacting. This environment serves as a hands-on example of what it means for children to put their faith into action. Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others are watching to see if we live what we believe.



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
An Awakening for Today’s Families
BY MICHELLE ANTHONY
© 2010 DAVID C COOK

IT'S TIME TO SCOOT OVER!



It's time to SCOOT OVER and notice who's missing in the spaces you live in.

In a world of divisions and margins, those who grow a little differently are all too often shoved aside. In this book, Heather Avis has made it her mission to introduce the world to the unique gifts of those pushed to the edges of society. ***Scoot Over and Make Some Room*** tells hilarious stories of Heather's navigating the challenges and joys of parenthood. This book is your invitation to a table where space is unlimited and every voice can be heard. **Because when you open your life to the wild beauty of every unique individual, you'll discover your own colorful soul and the extraordinary, abundant heart of humanity.**

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE BOOKS ARE SOLD.

ScootOverBook.com

 ZONDERVAN.com