

♥ Faith & Family

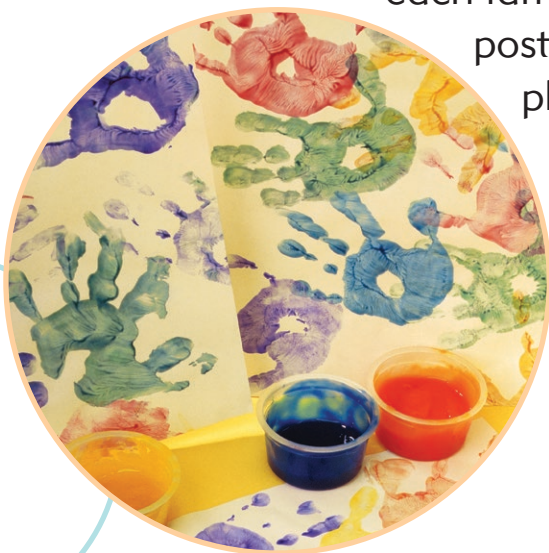
CARE & SHARE

Do a project involving everyone in your family. Maybe your family can make or purchase small gifts for people living at an assisted living center or a homeless shelter. Take your gifts and visit with those people. Take time to share the joy of Jesus' birth.



FAMILY CREATIONS

Provide a poster board, finger paint, and markers. Have each family member make handprints on the poster board. When the paint is dry, write phrases on the poster that name things you can praise God for. You might write: "We praise You, God, for Jesus" or "We praise You, God, for loving us." Hang the finished poster on a wall where everyone can see it.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 1:5-24, 57-69.
Remember, **God prepared to send His Son, Jesus, to the world.**

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GAME TIME!

Play a game of "Name that Baby!" Starting with the letter A, go through the alphabet and see if you can list a boy's name for each letter from A–Z. Repeat the game, listing girls' names. Talk about the meaning of Jesus' name. *Jesus* means "the Lord saves." Read these Bible verses about Jesus' name:
Matthew 1:20, 21; Luke 1:30-32;
Luke 2:10, 11.



TOGETHER TIME!

Share photographs of each child's first days with your family. Ask family members to share the excitement they felt when they were getting ready to add a child to the family, whether by birth, adoption, or marriage. Talk about how each person reacted to the news of becoming a parent or a big brother or sister. Compare this to how Mary must have felt when she learned she would be the mother of Jesus.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 1:26-56.
Remember, **Jesus is the Son of God.**

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FAMILY CREATIONS

Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth or newspaper. Get out modeling clay and make figures of Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus, the shepherds, and so on. As you make the figures, practice telling each other the story of Jesus' birth. Plan to give the figures to a friend or family member who needs to hear about Jesus. You can write a short story about Jesus' birth to give along with the crafts.



FAMILY OUTING



Plan a family outing that will help you experience some of what the shepherds experienced when Jesus was born. Check local newspapers for community events that depict the birth of Jesus. Do any of these events have live animals, such as sheep or a donkey? Walk together to a predetermined destination, preferably up and down hills. Hurry to get to your destination. Imagine seeing a mother and father with their newborn baby. Act out telling others about the baby.

LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 2:1-20.
Remember, **Jesus is God's promised Son.**

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TOGETHER TIME!

When Simeon and Anna saw baby Jesus, they knew immediately that He was the Son of God and the answer to their prayers. This week, keep a family prayer journal and take time to notice God's answers. Write down prayer requests, both big and small. Note when and how God answers those prayers. Thank and praise God for His answers!



GAME TIME!

Plan an afternoon of family games that help you think about Jesus' birth. Draw a manger scene and play "Pin the Sheep by the Manger." Play "Follow the Star," with the leader holding up a large paper star to follow. On individual slips of paper, write Bible verses that thank and praise God. Place the papers inside balloons, and then blow up and tie the balloons. Have a "Pop the Balloon" race and read the messages hidden inside. Be sure to invite some friends who may never have heard the story of Jesus. As you play the games together, you can thank God for Jesus' birth.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 2:22-39.
Remember, **We should thank God for His Son, Jesus.**

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TOGETHER Time!

Be like the wise men and make sure worshipping Jesus is the highest priority in your family's life. Talk about how the wise men bowed down and worshipped Jesus; they showed Him respect. Discuss how worship is a time to show Jesus just how much we honor and respect Him. Read some worship verses from the Bible, such as Psalm 95:6, 7 and Revelation 5:12, 13. Pray to God. Sing a song of worship to Jesus.



CARE & SHARE

The wise men took gifts to Jesus. As a family, make a list of gifts you can give to Jesus. Maybe you can use some family time to help a neighbor.



Maybe you can do a family project to earn some extra money and then give the money to a missionary so others will hear about Jesus. Once your gift list has been made, choose one act of worship to carry out together. In doing so, you will be helping members of your family be wise too.

LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Matthew 2:1-12.
Remember, **We should worship Jesus.**

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GAME TIME!

Sit in a circle and play a family game of "Telephone." Ask a family member to whisper a message in the ear of the person next to her. The last person must say aloud the message he or she heard. When it's your turn to start the message, whisper, "Jesus is the Son of God." After the message has been shared aloud, talk about people you could tell this message to. Continue the game, whispering other messages that tell about Jesus.



FAMILY CREATIONS

Set out a clear jar. Ask family members to write on slips of paper the names of people they know who don't know Jesus. Put the papers in the jar. Periodically pull out a name and think how your family could tell that person about Jesus. Maybe you could invite the person to a worship service. Maybe you could give something to the person with a note attached that says "Jesus loves you." Remember to pray for the people who don't know Jesus.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Matthew 3:1-6, 13-17; John 1:32-34. Remember, **We can tell others that Jesus is God's Son.**

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GAME TIME!

Play a game to review a Bible verse your family has been memorizing. Have everyone gather in a circle. Pass a small ball or beanbag around the circle. When each person gets the ball, he is to say the next word of the verse. Start by passing the ball very slowly. Repeat the verse several times, passing the ball faster each time.



FAMILY CREATIONS

Temptations to lie, cheat, steal, disobey, and break promises can be strong. Designate this month as "Learn Bible Verses Month." Encourage family members to create posters that feature Bible verses that can help them fight off such temptations. Verses might include: Colossians 3:9; Exodus 20:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; and 1 John 3:23. Display the posters around your home and encourage everyone to memorize the verses.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Matthew 4:1-11. Remember, **God's Word** can help us obey Jesus, God's Son.

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CARE & SHARE

Make a list of ways your family can lead by example. The list might include helping with a church or community cleanup day, organizing or participating in a fundraiser that benefits people with special needs, or hosting a “Get to Know Your Neighbor” party. Choose one of the activities to carry out. Be sure you lead by example in your attitudes too. Strive to be generous, willing, humble, and cheerful.



TOGETHER TIME!

Plan a family skit night. Let family members pair up and present impromptu skits where one person is the leader and the other person is a follower.

Assign leader roles to be acted out—police officer, president of the country, teacher, parent, coach, construction crew leader, band director, etc. Have fun acting out the roles. Talk about why people like to follow good leaders. Thank God for His Son, Jesus—the best leader to follow!



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from John 1:35-51.
Remember, **We should follow Jesus, God's Son.**

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GAME TIME!

Ask each family member to gather several items that would make a distinct sound when dropped on a hard surface. The items can be hidden in plastic grocery bags until they are needed. Take turns dropping the collected items, one by one. With their backs turned to the person dropping the items, other family members are to try to identify each item by how it sounds. Talk about the importance of carefully listening to parents, teachers, bosses, and, most of all, Jesus!



TOGETHER TIME!



Gather the family for story time. Ask a volunteer to tell or read a favorite story. Tell the rest of the family to listen carefully because there will be a prize for the best listener. When the person is done telling the story, have her ask questions about the story. Award a small prize to the person who correctly answers the most questions. Continue the story time, allowing other family members to tell or read stories. Pray and ask God to help each family member be a good listener, especially when it comes to listening to Jesus.

LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Matthew 17:1-9.
Remember, **We can know that Jesus is God's Son.**

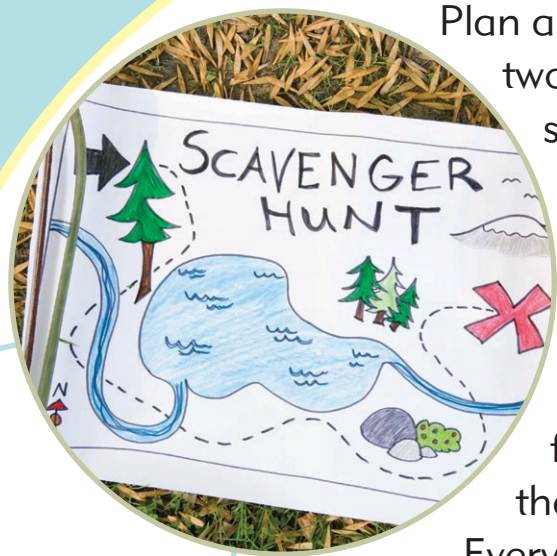
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TOGETHER TIME!

Follow an acrostic for your family prayer times this week: Sunday—say thanks for God's Son, Jesus; Monday—pray for people whose name begins with M; Tuesday—thank God for a talent you have; Wednesday—ask God to help you do what is right; Thursday—praise God for two good things that happened today; Friday—thank God for the food He gives you; Saturday—tell God you are sorry for wrong things you have done.



FAMILY OUTING



Plan a family scavenger hunt. Divide the family into two teams. Create a map of the trail that teams should follow. If the weather does not permit you to do this outdoors, plan to go to local mall for your hunt. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil. Challenge the teams to find and list on their papers things they see along the trail that they can thank God for. Set a time limit for the hunt. The team that lists the most things to thank God for, wins. Everyone will be a winner, of course, as you pray and thank God for all the things listed.

LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together portions of this week's Bible story from Matthew 6:5-13; Luke 11:1-4. Remember, **Jesus wants us to pray.**

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TOGETHER Time!

Designate one day during the week as "Sharing Day." Challenge all family members to share as much as they can during the day. At the end of the day, let family members tell how they shared. You may have so much fun you will want to designate one day each month as "Sharing Day"!



CARE & SHARE

As a family, put into practice Jesus' teaching about sharing with others. Ask each family member to go through his or her personal belongings and choose two or three items that could be shared with people who have a need for such items. Toys (in good shape) electronic games (that work), and clothing items (in good condition) can be included. Together, look at your food pantry and select some items that can be donated. As a family, deliver the donated items to a ministry or community group working with families in need.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 12:13-21.
Remember, **Jesus wants us to share.**

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Care & Share

Think about your neighbors. Could your family help any of them? Maybe a neighbor needs help with yard work. Maybe a neighbor needs help with babysitting. Maybe a neighbor needs help with _____ (you fill in the blank). Plan for your family to take at least an hour to be a good neighbor.



Game Time!

Play a family game that can help everyone realize the importance of helping each other. Act out being some kind of machine, perhaps a bicycle. One person can be the body of the bike. Add human handle bars, pedals, wheels, a rider, and so on. All the “parts” will need to move together to get the rider across the room. What other machines require helping parts? a food blender? a merry-go-round? See how many machines your family can act out. Thank God that you can work together to help others.



Look in The Book

Read together this week's Bible story from Luke 10:25-37.
Remember, **Jesus wants us to help others.**

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FAMILY CREATIONS

Together, name things your family knows about God. For example, God created the world; God loves us; God sent His Son, Jesus. Write each statement on a separate sheet of paper, leaving room to add an illustration on each page. When you have written eight to ten statements about God, work together to illustrate each statement. Make a cover page, titled "Our Family Book About God." Staple together the finished pages and read the book.



TOGETHER TIME!

Ask each family member to write down at least one question he or she has about God. Assist younger children as needed. Collect the papers and read each question aloud. Rather than just giving answers you know, find verses in the Bible that answer the questions. (Using a Bible concordance or topical Bible can be helpful in finding verses.) Of course, some questions about God are not answered in the Bible. Pray and ask God to help you trust Him when answers cannot be found.



LOOK IN THE BOOK

Read together this week's Bible story from John 3:1-17; 7:50, 51; 19:38-40. Remember, **Jesus wants us to learn about God.**