Summer
FAMILY
ACTIVITY GUIDE

Families,

Welcome to summer! For many of you, the next few months will be filled with travel, adventure and increased opportunities to spend time together as a family. As you begin to think about and plan how you will spend the next few months, we'd like to present you with the Summer Family Activity Guide. It is a family resource that gives you ideas on how to be intentional with the time you spend together this summer.

There is a charge given in the book of Deuteronomy to continually and intentionally talk with children about what it means to love God with all they are—no matter where they are, no matter what they're doing:

> *4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*
>
> **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9**

We have put the Summer Family Activity Guide together with this charge in mind. Whether you're hanging out at home, traveling across the country or running errands around town, there is no shortage of opportunities to help your children see the things of the Lord. Our hope is to help you see and take advantage of these moments.

The activities and devotionals in this resource have been divided into four sections to follow the model of Deuteronomy 6:

SET A RHYTHM. These are activities your family can do repeatedly and consistently throughout the summer. Some of them will help you put things in place to establish a routine for your family. Others will help you think about ways to be missional—intentionally connecting with people in your community whom you interact with on a consistent basis.

AT HOME. These activities can be easily done as you spend time at home. Many of them include a devotional at the end that will help your kids make a connection between what they have done and a truth from Scripture.

OUT AND ABOUT. These activities can be done on outings you take as a family.

ON THE WAY. These are activities that can be done as your family travels—whether you're moving about by land, air or sea.

We've marked each activity with an icon, indicating how it fits into our framework for family discipleship.

TIME: creating intentional time built into the rhythm of the family's life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about and living out the gospel.

MOMENTS: capturing and leveraging opportunities in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations.

MILESTONES: marking and making occasions to celebrate and commemorate significant spiritual milestones of God's work in the life of the family and child.

We also put together several appendices and an index at the back to make this guide even more useful. Enjoy the next few months. We love you and are praying for a summer that draws your family closer together and closer to Jesus.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to be a help and resource for your family as you think about and plan what your summer will look like. The activities and devotionals have been written with elementary-age children in mind. Many of them can be modified for younger or older children or for families with children across a broad age range.

Here are a few tips on how to get the most out of your Summer Family Activity Guide:

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. There are more activities provided in this guide than your family will be able to do this summer. Our hope is not that you would do all of them but rather that you would pick those that best fit your family. As you read through the guide, mark the activities that seem interesting and doable and come up with a plan to make those happen.

PLAN AHEAD. No one stumbles into intentionality. Take time to think and pray about what you want this summer to be like for your family. At the end of it, what do you want your kids to remember? How do you want them to be different? What do you hope they learn about Jesus? What will you put in place to help make that happen?

HAVE FUN. No matter what your family's plans are for the summer—whether you're taking exotic trips or sticking close to home—have fun! Enjoy being with your kids. Laugh a lot. Make memories out of even the most mundane moments.

KEEP IT HANDY. You never know when the dreaded and often forbidden words of summer —"I'm bored"—will come out of your children's mouths. Make sure you have your Summer Family Activity Guide handy so that you can neutralize boredom and make the most of your time together.

Set a Rhythm

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR FAMILY SET
A RHYTHM AS YOU SPEND TIME THIS SUMMER

TIME IN THE WORD

This summer, make spending time with God and being in His Word a priority for your family. Set a time and place for each person to consistently read the Bible, individually if possible. This will look different for children of different ages and reading levels.

For example, a first grader's time and place might be: "read with mom or dad for 15 minutes on the couch after breakfast," while a fifth grader's might be: "read for 30 minutes in my room before bed."

Talk together about what works best for each person. Even if your children don't understand everything they read, practicing the discipline of consistent time in the Scriptures will benefit them as they get older and grow in their relationship with the Lord. Giving them an opportunity to see their parents consistently spending time in the Scriptures will also be very impactful. We have put together several family reading plans in Appendix A to help you plan this time.

Additionally, make a plan for the time you will spend together reading from God's Word and praying as a family. Consider keeping a prayer journal throughout the course of the summer. Set aside one night after dinner each week when your family will spend time praying. Record requests in a notebook or journal. Each week, look back at the requests that have been made. Make note of places where you've seen God answer prayer and praise Him for His faithfulness. Make note of places where you need to continue asking.

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEARTS

As a family, pick several verses to memorize this summer. Get creative with the ways you commit each verse to memory. Below are a few examples of activities you can do:

Sidewalk chalk. Use sidewalk chalk to write the verse on your sidewalk or driveway. Practice with your kids by leaving blanks for them to fill in.

Make a placemat. Using construction paper, cardstock or poster board, have each person create a placemat with the verse on it. Use the placemats at meal times and review the verse together.

Draw in shaving cream. Give everyone a blob of shaving cream to spread out and let them use their fingers to write the verse in it. Be careful to do this activity on a countertop, cookie sheet or comparable surface that will be unharmed by shaving cream.

Draw it on a mirror. Use dry erase markers or bath crayons to write the verse on your bathroom mirror. Read the verse out loud each time you brush your teeth.

Make up a song. Use the words of the verse to create a song. You can either make up a brand new melody or simply change the words of a song you already know.

Create motions. Take the major words in the verse and make up motions for them. Do the motions as you say the verse out loud.

Funny accents. Repeat the verse using different accents. Examples include British, French, robot, Western, Valley girl, etc.

SUMMER MEMORY JAR

Keep track of all the fun and significant things that happen this summer by making a Summer Memory Jar. Put an empty jar or container in a central location in your house. Put small strips of paper and pens next to it. Throughout the course of the summer, write down memories you make as a family—funny things you say, hard lessons you learn, trips you take, people you meet, fears you overcome, etc. At the end of the summer, do the "Dump Your Summer Memory Jar" activity in the At Home section (p. 25).

POPSICLE® PRAYERS

The pastor and teachers have been entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping and caring for both the church family as a whole and the individuals that are a part of it. Their job is weighty and cannot be done without the help, leading, protection and empowerment of God. As a church family, we need to consistently pray for these people as they seek the Lord and lead our church.

As a family, spend time praying for our elders this summer. (A list of their names and pictures is available on our website.) Write each name (you could also include a picture) on a Popsicle stick and put all the sticks in a can or container. Set a time during the week to pray for our elders, drawing two or three sticks out of the can. Write a note of encouragement or gratitude to the different elders you pray for and mail it to the church.

OPEN YOUR HOME

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Think about ways to open your home to missional opportunities this summer. As a family, plan times that you will invite friends, neighbors and Home Group members over for dinner, dessert or game nights. Be intentional about having both believers and unbelievers over at the same time, looking for ways to display the love of God and speak about Jesus. Be prayerful before and after having people in your home. Read the following Scriptures and talk together about God's purpose for you in your neighborhood: Matthew 28:18-20, John 13:34-35, Acts 17:26-27.

ICE CREAM OPPORTUNITIES

If the ice cream truck consistently visits your neighborhood, use that as an opportunity to meet and talk with your neighbors. Your family can show God's generosity by saving money each week to buy an ice cream for someone who lives near you. Another option would be to visit the same snow cone stand or ice cream shop throughout the summer. Invite your friends and neighbors to go with you and be intentional about getting to know the people who work there. Read the following Scriptures and talk together about God's purpose for you in your neighborhood and community: Matthew 28:18-20, John 13:34-35, Acts 17:26-27.

LOVING OTHERS AT THE LIBRARY

The library is a great place to spend time during the summer. Plan to take your trips to the library on the same day and at the same time each week. Be intentional about getting to know the library staff. Before each trip, think of a way you could bless or encourage them. Read the following Scriptures and talk together about God's purpose for you in your community: Matthew 28:18-20, John 13:34-35, Acts 17:26-27.

LOOK UP

Throughout the course of the summer, challenge your family to take greater notice of the sky. Watch the sunrise or sunset together. Spend time watching the clouds, noticing how they change and looking for the shapes they sometimes make. At night, try to count the stars or find constellations. As you do these things, read and talk about Psalm 19 and how the beauty of the sky glorifies the God who made it.

SERVE AS A FAMILY

As a family, brainstorm a list of ways you can serve together this summer. Think of ways you can serve the people in your home, those who live near you or people in need within your community. Connect with your Elementary teacher if you need help or ideas. Contact information can be found in Appendix C.

At Home

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU BE INTENTIONAL
WITH TIME YOU SPEND AT HOME

SEEKING REFUGE

After dinner one night, build a fort for one or more members of your family to sleep in using blankets, pillows, furniture and other items from your home.

As you build, talk about the purpose of a fort and how it's a place of safety and protection. In the same way, the Bible teaches that God is a refuge for His children.

Together, read Psalm 59:16-17.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- How is God a fortress and refuge for His children?
- What else does David, the author of this psalm, call God?
- What are hard or scary things in your life that you need to be protected from?
- How can you trust God as a refuge when things are hard with friends?
- How can you trust God as a refuge when someone you love gets sick?
- How can you trust God as a refuge when you have bad dreams?
- How is Jesus a refuge from God's anger toward sin for those who love and trust Him?

Pray as a family, praising God for being a refuge for His children. Ask the Lord for faith to trust His strong protection and respond with songs of praise like David did.

PUT IT ON

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Raid each other's closets and put together a silly outfit to wear. Turn on music and have a fashion show with each person modeling an outfit. After the show, have everyone share which outfit was their favorite and why. Then talk about the kind of clothes God tells His children to put on.

Together, read Colossians 3:12-14.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What does Paul, the writer of this letter, tell God's dearly loved children to put on?
- What does that mean? What would it look like for someone to "wear" each of these virtues?
- Which of these things is the hardest for you to put on? Why?
- Who are the people in your life who are the hardest for you to love the way Scripture teaches?
- What can you do when you fail to treat others the way this passage tells you to?

Spend time praying over each other and the relationships God has put in your life. Ask for God's forgiveness in places you've failed to treat others the way He commands and ask for His help to love the way He loves you.

LATE NIGHT WITH THE LORD

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Pick one night to stay up late. Watch a movie, make a huge ice cream sundae or play a game. As it gets late, make note of the time and go outside with a flashlight and your Bible to talk about God's attentiveness.

- What time is it right now?
- Listen and look around. What is the late night like? What are most people doing right now?
- Why is it good for you to sleep?

Together, read Psalm 121.

- Are there any words in this psalm that you do not recognize or understand?
- Does God sleep? Why or why not? How do you know?
- When you need help, where does it come from?
- If God is your help, why is it good that He doesn't need to sleep?
- What other things does this psalm say about God, our Helper?
- Can you think of a time you asked God to help you and He did?
- Why do you sometimes forget to ask God to help you with hard things?
- What do you need God's help with right now?

Spend time praying together, praising God for keeping watch over you and asking for His help with the things you mentioned.

WATER WARS

Fill water balloons or water guns and organize either a family or neighborhood battle. Afterward, talk together about the spiritual battle you are called to fight.

Together, read Ephesians 6:10-18.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- Whom does Paul, the writer of this letter, say you are really fighting against?

- What is the difference between fighting things spiritually rather than physically?
- What pieces of armor are listed in these verses?
- What does Paul tell believers to do with these pieces of armor? What does that look like?
- Who is stronger than sin and Satan? Where was that strength most clearly shown?
- In whose strength are God's children to trust? What happens if you try to fight a spiritual fight based on your strength instead of God's?
- What truth can you memorize to help you stand against spiritual attack? Think about the verses you're memorizing as a family this summer.

Spend time praying as a family, praising God for fully and finally defeating sin and Satan through Jesus' death and resurrection. Ask for God's help and protection as you put on the armor described in Ephesians 6.

A MEAL WITH YOUR CHILD'S SMALL GROUP LEADER

Invite your child's small group leader over for a meal. Spend time getting to know them—where they're from, what they like to do, how they came to know the Lord, what they were like as a child, etc. Giving your child the opportunity to interact with their leader outside church services helps establish that relationship and increases the credibility that leader has with your child. Let your child play an active part in serving the man or woman who serves them each weekend. Give your child opportunities to help set the table, prepare and serve the food and clean up at the end.

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN JULY

As a family, remember and celebrate the coming of Jesus by setting aside July 25 as "Christmas in July." Here are a few ideas on how to mark this special occasion:

- Host a "Christmas in July" party. Have everyone wear funny Christmas accessories or clothes, decorate your house, make cookies, serve hot chocolate, etc. As people are gathered, read through the Christmas narrative (Matt. 1:18-2:12, Luke 2:1-20) and thank God for His faithfulness in sending Jesus as the Promised Savior.
- Pull out or make a nativity scene. Put all of the pieces in their correct place as you read through the Christmas narrative.
- Put the name of each family member in a hat. Have each person draw a name and create a homemade present to exchange on July 25. As you open presents, talk about the generosity of God in giving His only Son to die in the place of sinners.

WALKING AND WASHING

Go on an evening walk—barefoot—and talk about the life of Jesus. What things did He do? What was He like? Whom did He spend time with?

After your walk, take notice of each other's dirty feet. Parents, wash your children's feet and talk about how Jesus washed and served the disciples.

- Why are dirty feet gross? How would you feel about washing the dirty feet of 12 grown men?
- What do you think of when you hear the words "serve" and "servant"?

Together, read John 13:1-17.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- How did Jesus serve His disciples?
- Who deserved to be served—Jesus or the disciples? Why?
- What was Jesus trying to teach His disciples by doing this?
- What is the greatest way Jesus served God's children?
- How can you follow the example of Jesus and serve the other people in your family?
- How can your family follow the example of Jesus and serve those around you or in your community?

Pray together for God to give you a servant's heart like Jesus.

TURN OFF THE TV

For one week this summer, have your family fast from all TV, movies, video games, social media and time spent on mobile devices. See how the absence of these things affects each person's mood and the amount of time you spend together. Be strategic and plan a few special activities to leverage the increased time and focus you have as a family. Here are a few ideas:

- Spend time praying and making cards for people you know who could use encouragement.
- Go on a walk or bike ride as a family.
- Turn dinner into a picnic either in your front yard or a park.
- Bake and decorate cookies together and take them to a neighbor.
- Play board games.

CREATE YOUR OWN ART EXHIBIT

God is creative. You can see this in the variety of colors, textures, shapes and sounds that are present in creation. Being creative is one of the ways people are like God. Cultivate and express your creativity by making your own art exhibit. Look for things you already have around the house that can be transformed into art—dried pasta, cereal, newspaper, paper towel tubes, yarn, empty jars—along with normal art supplies. Use these materials to create works of art. Name each piece and hang them in your home, creating your own art installation.

I SPY

Help your child practice navigating the Scriptures by reviewing the difference between the testaments, books, chapters and verses in a Scripture reference.

Using the table of contents in your Bible, play "I Spy" with the names of the books. Begin by saying, "I spy a book in the Old/New Testament that begins with the letter ___." Your child will look for a book that fits that description. Once they figure it out, ask them what page the book starts on and then turn there together. Point out the chapter numbers as well as the verses. Use the phrases provided in Appendix B to help your child remember the difference between each part of a reference.

TOOTHPASTE RACES

Give each person a tube of toothpaste and have them race to see who can empty their tube first. Then, race to see who can put the toothpaste back into the tube. It should be obvious that once the toothpaste is squeezed out, it cannot go back. The same thing is true of our words. Use the questions below to process the activity and see what the Bible teaches about where our words come from and what they show about our hearts.

- As you squeezed the tube, what came out? Why?
- How easy was it to put the toothpaste back into the tube?
- What do you think this teaches us about our words?

Together, read Matthew 12:34-36.

- Are there any words in these verses you do not recognize or understand?
- Where does Jesus say our words actually come from?
- How do our words often show what's truly going on in our heart?
- Once you say something, how easy is it to take those words back?
- How do we sin with our words?
- How can we show love for God with our words?
- How can we show love for others with our words?

Pray together, confessing where you have sinned against God and others with your words. Praise God that the words He speaks bring life. Ask Him for help to speak carefully in a way that honors Him and blesses others.

ENCOURAGE A MISSIONARY

Help your kids see that the world is big by talking about missionaries and picking one missionary or missionary family to encourage. Contact your missions leader for the names of either long-term or short-term missionaries being sent out from your campus.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SONG

Talk about the kind of music each person in your family likes to listen to and why. Then talk about the significance of song by reading and acting out 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

- In the story, what three nations were about to attack the people of Judah?
- Whom did King Jehoshaphat turn to and why?
- What did God tell the king and the people of Judah? How did King Jehoshaphat respond?
- On the day of battle, who was on the front lines of Judah's army? What were those people doing?
- What song of praise did those people sing to the LORD?
- What happened to the nations that were about to attack God's people?
- What does this story teach you about the significance of singing praise to God?
- What enemy attacks God's children? How can you use song to fight him?

After talking about the story, make up a song of praise that your family can sing to God when facing temptation, discouragement or attack from the enemy. Age-appropriate worship songs can be found online

OPEN YOUR HOME TO THE NATIONS

Invite someone from another country over for dinner. As you get to know that person, ask them to tell you about their country and culture. Ask them to teach you a phrase or song in their native language. Contact your Groups minister or the organizations listed in Appendix C for information on how to connect with internationals living in your community.

GIVE AWAY SOMETHING YOU LOVE

As you get ready to head back to school, clean out your closets, drawers, etc. Donate clothes and toys that you no longer use. In addition to giving away what's old and no longer needed, have each person pick one thing they love to give away as well. Use this as an opportunity to talk about what it means to sacrifice something. How does your experience in giving away something you love affect the way you think about the Father's sacrifice of Jesus in your place?

DUMP YOUR SUMMER MEMORY JAR

This is a follow-up to the Summer Memory Jar activity in the Set a Rhythm section (p. 11). As the summer draws to a close, spend time remembering and celebrating the things you learned and did. As a family, dump out your Summer Memory Jar and read through your memories together. As you remember, praise God for His goodness to your family through both the sweet and bitter providences of the past few months.

Out & About

OUTINGS AND ADVENTURES YOU CAN TAKE AS A FAMILY

SEEK AND FIND

Play a game of hide-and-seek as a family or hide a sum of money, a gift card or another valuable item in a certain room in your house and tell your kids to find it. Pay attention to the urgency and diligence of their search. Once the person or object is found, debrief the experience by reading about how Jesus diligently seeks after sinners.

Together, read Luke 15:1-10.

- Are there any words in this passage you do not recognize or understand?
- What similarities do you see in these two parables?
- Think about how diligent you were in your search earlier. What do these parables help you understand about how Jesus pursues sinners who need to repent?
- Is that how you expect Jesus to feel about sinners? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to "repent" and come to Jesus?
- How do the angels in heaven respond when a sinner comes to repentance?
- As a family, who should we pursue in love and prayer who does not know the Lord?

TRASH AND TREASURE

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As a family, go to a local park and pick up trash. When you're finished, find a shaded place to talk about the difference between trash and treasure.

Together, read Philippians 3:7-8.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What is a "gain"? What did Paul mean when he used that word?
- What does it mean to consider something as loss or rubbish?
- When you were picking up trash, what kinds of things did you throw away?
- What things did Paul consider to be like trash compared to the treasure of knowing Jesus?
- What was Paul's greatest treasure? Whom did he show, honor and enjoy as most valuable? How do you know?
- What is your greatest treasure? Is there anything that can feel more valuable than knowing God?
- How did Jesus make it possible for sinners to know and be known by God, the most valuable treasure?

Pray for one another that you would show, honor and enjoy God as most valuable and love Him as the greatest treasure.

CREATION SCAVENGER HUNT

4

Make a trip to the zoo or aquarium. As you do, read Genesis 1 and talk about each day of creation. While on your outing, look for each of the things on the following list:

- **DAY 1** (Day and Night): Find an animal that is nocturnal. Talk about how God made light and separated the light and darkness. The light was called "day," and the darkness was called "night."

- **DAY 2** (Sky): Find an animal that can fly. Talk about how God made the sky.

- **DAY 3** (Oceans, Dry Land and Plants): Find three different plants. Talk about how God made the sea and the land. Talk about how God made plants grow from the ground.

- **DAY 4** (Sun, Moon, Planets and Stars): Find a plant that needs lots of sunlight. Find a plant that doesn't need lots of sunlight. Talk about how God made the sun, moon and stars.

- **DAY 5** (Birds and Sea Creatures): Find an animal that lives underwater. Talk about how God made the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky.

- **DAY 6** (Land Animals and People): Find an animal that lives on the ground or under it. Talk about how God made the animals.

- **DAY 7** (Rest): Find a place to rest and talk over the questions below.

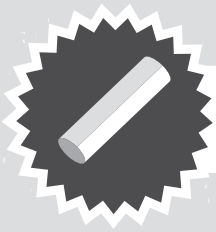
After finding everything on the list, talk about what you saw.

- What was your favorite animal or plant?
- Who made that animal or plant?
- What was the strangest thing you saw?
- Who is the Creator of that thing?
- Who made it possible for sinners to know and have a relationship with the Creator God? How did He do that?
- Think about the creativity and power that God displayed in making everything. What is the right response to God as you enjoy His creation?

Praise God together for His beautiful creation.

INTERNATIONAL FOOD EXPERIENCE

Find a recipe from a different country or go to a restaurant that serves ethnic food. Before your meal, use www.operationworld.org to research that country or part of the world. Talk about what you learned as you eat, as well as the sights, smells, tastes and textures of your meal and experiences that might be unfamiliar. After dinner, spend time praying for both the church and unbelievers who live in that part of the world.



CHALK THE BLOCK

Think of people who live near you to encourage. With sidewalk chalk in hand, visit each person's house. Write a note or draw a picture on their sidewalk so when they, along with their neighbors, go outside the next day, they will see your act of kindness. When you return home, pray that those who read your messages will know the unfailing love of God. **Parents, please use discretion during this activity. Check your local codes and ordinances and make sure the people you choose will be blessed by it and not see it as vandalism.*

EXPECTANT WAITING

As you plan to head out to an amusement park, write Romans 8:18, 23 and Jude 1:21 on a note card or put the verses in your phone to bring with you. As you spend time waiting in line for rides, redeem the time by pulling out these verses and talking about how waiting to get on the ride can be a picture of waiting for the return of Jesus. Use the following questions to guide you.

- Why are you waiting in line?
- What are you looking forward to?
- Why are you willing to wait in this line for so long?
- What would happen if you decided you were finished waiting and just went to do something else?
- What do the verses say that God's children wait for?
- How do God's children wait?
- Why are they willing to wait a long time for Jesus to return?

CONSIDER THE BIRDS

Go feed the ducks. As you do, take notice of the plants, animals and other birds around you. Talk together about how God always takes care of and provides for His children.

Together, read Matthew 6:25-34.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What are some things you worry about?
- What does Jesus tell you not to do? What does He say to do instead?
- How does God take care of birds? How does He take care of the grass, flowers and trees you see around you?
- If God takes care of these parts of creation, how does He take care of His children?
- How does trusting that truth help you to not worry? What do you know about God that gives you confidence that He will always provide?

Spend time praying together. Confess places of fear or worry and ask God to help you trust Him.

CELEBRATE A GREATER FREEDOM ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

Find a place to watch fireworks or buy sparklers to light together. As you enjoy the festivities and celebrate the freedom of our nation, talk about the greater freedom God's children have been given in Jesus.

- What do you celebrate on July 4?
- What do you know about America's freedom? Why do we celebrate it?
- What is the opposite of being free?

Together, read Romans 8:1-2.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What kind of freedom is being described here?
- How are God's children set free from sin and death?
- How can you celebrate the freedom that comes by loving and trusting Jesus?

Praise God together for the freedom given from sin through Jesus' death and resurrection.

MARRIAGE AS A PICTURE

Be intentional in talking with your kids about the significance and meaning of marriage. If you're invited to a wedding this summer, attend it as a family. Or sit down together and look through photos from your wedding. Tell the story of how you met, laugh at how different you looked then and talk about marriage as a picture of Jesus' love for the church family.

Together, read Ephesians 5:22-33.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What did you enjoy about the wedding ceremony? What were some things you noticed?
- What do you think of when you think about marriage? What do you think of when you hear the words “husband” and “wife”?
- What do these verses say wives are to do? What about husbands?
- God created marriage to be a picture of a great relationship. What relationship does marriage show?
- How are wives supposed to be like the church family?
- How are husbands supposed to be like Jesus?
- Does any marriage perfectly show the relationship between Jesus and the church family?
- Even if marriages aren’t perfect, what do we know about Jesus’ love for and faithfulness to the Church?

Spend time praying for people in your life who are married. Pray they would be a picture of the relationship between Jesus and the church family. Parents, spend time praying for the potential future spouse of your children.

MIGHTY WAVES

Look for opportunities to be around waves, either by traveling to the beach or going to a wave pool. If those aren’t options for your family, look online for videos of large waves. Do some research to learn how powerful waves can be and how big they can get. Then talk about how waves can teach you about the power of God.

Together, read Psalm 93.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?

- The first two verses describe God as a king. What do you know about kings? How is God like a king?
- Are the waves of the ocean stronger than you? How much stronger?
- Are the waves of the ocean stronger than God? How do you know?
- What does it mean for God to be mighty?
- What are some things that are too hard for you?
- What are some things that are too hard for God?
- How can you rely on God's strength instead of your own when things are hard?

Spend time praying together. Ask God to help you trust His perfect strength.

FISHING AND FOLLOWING JESUS

Go fishing and, as you do, spend time talking about Jesus and His disciples.

Together, read Luke 5:1-11.

- Are there any words in these verses that you do not recognize or understand?
- What were the men doing while Jesus was standing by the lake?
- What amazing thing did Jesus do in front of them?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus?
- What did these fishermen leave behind to follow Jesus? Why was that important?
- A disciple is a follower of Jesus. How does your life show that you are a disciple of Jesus?

Pray together that you would be like the disciples, willing to leave everything behind in order to follow Jesus.

VISIT AN ART MUSEUM

Cultivate your family's creativity by going to see an art exhibit. Many museums have days during the month with discounted or free admission. After you walk through each exhibit, talk about what stood out to you and why. Ask everyone what they would paint if they were given a blank canvas and unlimited colors. Talk about how creative God is as the Creator.

On the Way

THINGS TO DO AS YOUR FAMILY TRAVELS

POSTCARD PRAYERS

As you travel, collect postcards from the places you visit. On each postcard, write a prayer to God thanking Him for where you are and the great things you've experienced and seen. Praise Him for being the Creator who made all the things you delight in. When you return home, put these postcards in your Summer Memory Jar (p. 11).

FROM A TO Z

As you travel, play the Alphabet Game. Let each person take a turn looking for a letter of the alphabet on signs or license plates you see as you drive. The first person finds an "A," the second a "B" and so on until you've found all 26 letters. After each turn, name one thing you can thank God for that starts with that letter.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

If you're traveling by plane and have extra time at the airport, look at the list of arrivals and departures. See if you can name which state or country each city is in. Talk about any interesting facts you know about those places. As you do, consider how great and mighty God is that He has authority over every state, country and person in the whole world.

LISTEN AND IMAGINE

During a family road trip, listen to an audiobook together. Along the way, push pause and talk about what each person thinks of the story so far. Listen for ways that the story reminds you of the gospel. You can borrow audiobooks from your library or download great classics for free at www.loyalbooks.com.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS

Redeem time in the car or on the plane by writing a note of encouragement to someone you know. You can also spend time encouraging one another as you drive or fly together.

ONCE UPON A TIME

As you travel, create a story together. Have one person start and let everyone else add to it. You can even draw pictures that go along with your story. After you finish, talk about the bigger and better story—God's story—that you are each part of. Unlike the story you just made up, God's story is real. Ask your children what they know about God's story and help them see how they are part of it.

The story started with God creating the world. God made everything, and everything He made was good. Adam and Eve were the first people. They knew God and were in perfect relationship with Him. The story took a

devastating turn when they disobeyed God's good commands. Sin entered the world, and their relationship with God was broken. God made a promise that He would send a Savior to rescue His children from sin. God's people waited thousands of years for this Savior to come. God kept His promise by sending Jesus Christ, His Son. Jesus lived a perfect life. He died on the cross for sin and rose again. He defeated sin and death, making a way for all who love and trust Him to be forgiven. Today, you are part of that story. There is coming a day when Jesus will return to the earth and make all things new. Until then, God's children are watching and waiting for Him to come. As they wait, they love God and tell others about Jesus and what it means to be His children.

Talk together about what it looks like for your family to be part of God's story by loving Him and telling others about Jesus.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD

Have each person in your family share a favorite childhood memory. Talk about how things have changed as each person has gotten older. Then talk together about Hebrews 13:8, God's unchanging nature and why it is such good news that God never changes.

THE GOOD NEWS

Spend time talking as a family about the gospel. Give each person the opportunity to talk about who first shared Jesus with them. Make a list of people who do not yet know Jesus whom your family can pray for and share the gospel with.

CRUISING AND CALMING THE STORM

If you are on a cruise or spending time on a boat, try to imagine what it would have been like for the disciples who saw Jesus calm the storm. Pay attention to the water you're on—how you feel when it's calm or choppy.

Together, read Mark 4:35-41.

- Are there any words in this verse that you do not recognize or understand?
- What do you think the disciples saw, heard and felt as the storm came upon them?
- Was there anything they could do to stop the storm or save themselves?
- What did Jesus do when the disciples cried out to Him for help?
- Why did the wind and waves obey Jesus?
- What other things is Jesus in charge of?
- What other things does Jesus save people from?
- How does He save people from sin and death?

Pray together, praising God for being in charge of everything and providing salvation through Jesus.

APPENDIX A

TIME IN THE WORD: SUMMER FAMILY READING PLANS

Based on your child's reading level, choose the appropriate reading plan for your family to follow this summer.

BEGINNING READER

Read through the suggested passage(s) with your child several times. Then talk through the questions provided as a family.

READING PLAN

WEEK 1	PSALM 1; JEREMIAH 17:5-8
WEEK 2	GENESIS 1; PSALM 19:1-6
WEEK 3	PSALM 23
WEEK 4	PSALM 86
WEEK 5	PSALM 100
WEEK 6	PSALM 136
WEEK 7	PSALM 148
WEEK 8	JOHN 6:1-21
WEEK 9	JOHN 14-15
WEEK 10	JOHN 19
WEEK 11	JOHN 20-21

Other suggestions for early readers include *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* by Sally Lloyd-Jones and *The Gospel Story Bible: Discovering Jesus in the Old and New Testaments* by Marty Machowski. These books contain Bible stories, shorter amounts of text and lots of pictures.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What words did you not recognize or understand?
- What attributes of God do you see? What did you learn about God?
- What is the right response to what you learned about God?

INTERMEDIATE READER

Each week, have your child read the suggested passage 2-3 times and think through the questions provided. Then talk about them as a family.

READING PLAN

WEEK 1	PSALM 1; JEREMIAH 17:5-8
WEEK 2	GENESIS 1; JOHN 1
WEEK 3	PSALM 19:1-6; ISAIAH 40
WEEK 4	PSALM 23; PSALM 27
WEEK 5	PSALM 91; PSALM 103
WEEK 6	PSALM 136; ROMANS 5:1-8
WEEK 7	JOHN 3
WEEK 8	JOHN 6:1-21
WEEK 9	JOHN 14-15
WEEK 10	JOHN 18-19
WEEK 11	JOHN 20-21

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What words did you not recognize or understand?
- What attributes of God do you see? What did you learn about God?
- What is the right response to what you learned about God?

ADVANCED READER

Have your child read the suggested passage 2-3 times and think through the questions provided. Encourage them to write down questions they have, things they don't understand and what they learn in a journal. Then talk about them as a family.

READING PLAN

WEEK 1	PSALM 1; JEREMIAH 17:5-8; EPHESIANS 3:14-19
WEEK 2	GENESIS 1; JOHN 1
WEEK 3	PSALM 19:1-6; ISAIAH 40
WEEK 4	PSALM 18
WEEK 5	PSALM 136; ROMANS 5:1-8
WEEK 6	MATTHEW 5
WEEK 7	MATTHEW 5-6
WEEK 8	MATTHEW 5-7
WEEK 9	JOHN 14-15
WEEK 10	JOHN 18-19
WEEK 11	JOHN 20-21

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What words did you not recognize or understand?
- What attributes of God do you see? What did you learn about God?
- What is the right response to what you learned about God?

APPENDIX B
READING THE BIBLE WITH YOUR CHILD

Throughout the Summer Family Activity Guide, there are opportunities for you to read and talk about the Scriptures as a family. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you think about how to approach this time with your children:

Pray for God's help. Each time you open the Bible, ask God to help you understand and believe what you read in His Word. See Psalm 119:18 for an example.

Find the verses together. Many elementary-age children are still learning how to navigate the Scriptures. Help them gain these skills and the confidence to use them by demonstrating how to look up a verse or passage and letting them practice.

- Make sure each person has a Bible so that everyone has the opportunity to open and navigate the Scriptures.
- Together, open to the table of contents. Find the name of the book and the page number it starts on. Make note of whether the book is found in the Old Testament or New Testament.
- Turn to the first page of the book. Find the chapter and verse. Point out that the chapter is in large print and the verse is in small print.

Read the verses together. Most readers, whether adults or children, need to read something at least three times to really understand and internalize its meaning. You might try some of the following ideas:

- Have each person read it individually.
- Have one person read the entire passage out loud while everyone else follows along.
- If there are multiple verses, assign each person a verse to read out loud.
- Read it out loud together.

Help your children understand what it says. As you're reading, make sure each person understands what the verse or passage is saying. In 1st and 2nd grade, children are learning to read. It isn't until 3rd grade that they begin reading to learn. They will likely need your help understanding what words mean and what the writers are trying to communicate.

- Set everyone at ease by encouraging them that it's okay to ask questions. No one needs to feel scared or embarrassed if there are things they don't understand. Parents, it's okay if you don't know how to answer every question your child asks. Admitting that you aren't sure how to answer them demonstrates humility and creates an opportunity for you to learn something together.
- After you read a verse or passage, always ask your child if there are any words they don't recognize or understand. Keep a dictionary handy to help explain words that are unfamiliar or confusing.
- Ask questions of the text:
  - Who wrote or spoke these words? Who was the audience?
  - What was going on as they were written or said?
- Ask someone to summarize what the Bible is saying in their own words.

Help them understand what it means. Once you've talked about what a text says, talk about what it means. Keep the following questions in mind:

- What does this teach you about God?
- What does this teach you about yourself?

Help them personalize and apply it. Spending time with God and in His Word should affect the way we see God, ourselves and other people. It should also affect the way we think, feel, speak and act. Think about the following questions as you read and talk together:

- Do you believe this? Why or why not?
- How and why does this matter to you?
- How does believing this change the way you live?

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Below are some of the definitions used to teach children at The Village. They may be helpful as you read and explain to your children.

Glorify: to show, honor and enjoy God as most valuable

Worship: the right response to the goodness of God

Sin: more than just "bad things we do." It is a sickness of the heart that we are all born with. It is the reason we do, think, feel and say sinful things.

Prayer: having a conversation with God. God's children pray to the Father because of Jesus the Son with the help of the Holy Spirit.

God's children: those who love and trust Jesus

Repentance: confessing your sin and turning away from it to follow Jesus

TALKING ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's true Word. It is from God and about God.
The testaments: there are two, the old and the new
The books: have the names, like Genesis, Job and James
The chapters: the big number
The verses: the little number

FOUR TYPES OF PRAYER

Praise and adoration: telling God how good He is
Thanksgiving: thanking God for what He gives and does
Confession: telling God the truth about your sin
Request: asking God for what you need

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

God is good: He is what is best. In love, God created the world and everything in it. He created people to know Him, enjoy Him and glorify Him forever. What God created was pleasing to Him, and He called all things good (Gen. 1-2; Ps. 19:1; Rom. 5:12; Rev. 21:1-5; Rev. 22:1-5).

God is holy: He is completely perfect and separate from sin.[1] Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. They did not trust Him, believing the lies of the serpent instead of what God had said. Because God is holy, completely perfect and separate from sin, Adam and Eve were separated from God. Like Adam and Eve, we are all guilty of sin and separated from God. We are born with sin in our hearts, loving other things more than God. Sin is not just the bad things we do, say and think. Sin is a sickness of the heart and the reason we do those things (Gen. 3-4, Gen. 6; Isa. 63; Rom. 1-2, Rom. 6-8; Col. 1).

God is just: He is right to punish sin. Sin separates all of us from God, and that separation is bad. God is angry at sin, and because sin is in us, that means God is angry at us. It is good and right for God to punish sin, and the punishment all sinners deserve is death and separation from God forever (Gen. 6:7; Num. 16:20-21; Isa. 63:3; Ezek. 16:30-58; Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23; Gal. 3:13).

God is loving: He does what is best. In love and for His glory, God sent Jesus to die and take the punishment deserved by sinners—that includes you and me. When Jesus died, He absorbed all of God's anger toward sin and sinners. He defeated the power of sin by dying on the cross and taking the punishment we deserved for sin. He defeated the power of death by rising three days later (Matt. 1:21; Mark 1:15; John 2:13-22; Rom. 3-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Pet. 1:8-9, 1 Pet. 3:18).

God is merciful: He does not give sinners the punishment they deserve but rather adopts into His family those who love and trust Jesus. We are forgiven for our sin and adopted as children of God when God opens our hearts to love and trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior (John 1:12).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE AND TRUST JESUS?

Love

- To see God for who He is, believe that He is what is best, love Him more than anything and value Him as most valuable.
- Confess your sin and turn away from it to follow Jesus because He is most valuable.

[1] *Definition taken from "The ABC's of God: A Study for Children on the Greatness and Worth of God" © 1998 Jill Nelson Published by Desiring God Ministries, Minneapolis, MN.*

Trust

- Understand that you are guilty of sin and deserve God's just punishment.
- Have full confidence that God forgives your sin because of what Jesus has done, not because of anything you have done.
- Have full confidence that God counts you as righteous because of Jesus' perfect life and righteousness, not because of your obedience.