

In This Home

A 7-Day, Hands-On, Family Devotional

We get it: You want kids who love God's Word. You have ... kids you just want to stop yelling across the house. Get ready for engaging, totally doable family devotions that help your kids lean in—and maybe even laugh out loud. Each day of this 7-day devotional includes an easy activity, a short read, and questions to help your kids develop changed hearts that live out truth. Follow with prayer. Shaping your kids to love God and His Word just got a little easier.





Day 1: In this home, one voice matters most.



Read: (For families of only younger kids, read only the **bold** verses.)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. **The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:1-10)



Play:

Divide the family into pairs—one person will be blindfolded, the other will be “the voice.”

Blindfolded participants go to another room while their partners create an obstacle course.

To play, blindfolded participants attempt to get through the obstacle course using only the verbal guidance of their “voice” partner. It’s fine—and encouraged—to distract the other teams!



Talk it out:

Someone comes up to you after school and says, “Your parent called me. They said you should make sure to light something on fire this afternoon, and then pick a fight with your sister.”

Would you believe that person really heard from your parent? Why?

Turns out you not only know your parent’s voice—you know what kinds of things your parent says.

Believe it or not, we get to know God’s voice by listening, too. When someone tells us God says something, we can compare that to what’s written in His Word. It’s part of how we learn to listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice in our own hearts—which is different from the selfish voice in our own heads.

Kind of like the obstacle course you just navigated. Maybe someone from another team tried to steer you off course by yelling louder. But you knew you should only listen to one voice.

Read 1 Kings 19:9-13. How did God end up speaking to Elijah?

A still, small voice.

If you were blindfolded and your “Voice” partner was whispering, how would you hear them?

Leaning closer. Making other voices be quiet.

Learning God’s voice often means we need to quiet down the noise around us and inside our hearts. We need to make enough time to be with God, rather than *quick, read the Bible and pray so I can be done with my quiet time!*

This week, tell a parent when you heard the difference between God’s voice and a total poser. Maybe during an argument with a sibling?

Other than God’s, what “voices” are you most tempted by?

Parents answer, too! This could be the voices of other people, pressure to have nice things or more comfort, the voice saying I should get to do what I want, the voice saying I’m not worth anything, etc.

Pretend a sibling or friend is unkind to you. What are the voices in your head telling you to do? What would God’s voice tell you to do?



Day 2: In this home, we encourage the way you're uniquely made.



Read: *(For families of only younger kids, read only the **bold** verses.)*

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body ...

If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose ... As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (1 Corinthians 12:14-20)



Play:

Grab colored sticky notes for every family member as well as pens, markers, or crayons. Set a time limit of 5-7 minutes.

When you say “go,” everyone writes positive words or pictures about each other: how God created them special, what you love about them, something kind they’ve done, etc. Put one thought/drawing on each sticky note. **(If you don’t have sticky notes,** have everyone write their name on a piece of paper and set it on the table. Walk around the table and write two on each person’s paper.)

When time’s up, take turns reading or explaining your encouraging words. Were any of the notes about you surprising? Which ones made you smile?



Talk it out:

What is your favorite body part?

You know what no one ever says? Their pancreas.

But do you know what happens if your pancreas doesn't work right?

(Answer: *diabetes*.) If people have diabetes and aren't careful, they can get really sick. That's because of a body part none of us have ever even seen!

God says the people who love Him are like one giant body—and Jesus is the Head, making everything work together. Our family is like a little version of that Body. We each play really important parts.

Sometimes you might feel like your part isn't as important—or maybe that your part is more important. But God's body needs every part, even the parts others might not notice. He even says we give special honor to the parts that don't look as important or attractive.

If all of our papers/sticky notes were the same, this family wouldn't be very interesting. We wouldn't be able to do a lot of the cool things we do or reflect God in the same ways.

We may not be The Incredibles. But we don't have to be a super-family to honor God in just the way He designed.

Can you think of a time when something small in your body wasn't working right, but it was a frustrating problem for your whole body?

(Maybe a splinter or papercut, something in your eye, or a sore throat.)

What does this tell us about how our whole bodies are affected when one part is in pain?

What does this tell us about our families?



Day 3: In this home, we lift up rather than tear down.



Read:

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Ephesians 4:29)



Play:

You'll need: an egg, 1 cup of water, a box of salt, and a tablespoon.

Place the egg in a glass filled with the water. As the egg sinks, explain that this is like a person having a hard time. (Who can they think of that may be struggling right now?)

Let kids take turns adding a tablespoon of salt. Each time, have them suggest a kind act of encouragement. Watch as kindness “lifts up” your egg!



Talk it out:

Ever had a device with a password?

What happens if you type in the wrong password?

(Talk about a time when you were exasperated because you couldn't get into a device.)

That device is programmed to only open if you meet the qualifications. Sorry, Charlie.

**Believe it or not, the Bible has a sort of “passcode”
we’re supposed to put on our mouths.**

It says there are rules our words need to fit before they can come out.
If the words don’t fit, the mouth stays locked—or damage could be done.

Let’s read today’s verse again. See if you can hear any of the mouth-passcode rules in this verse.

There are about four rules in there that make up the “passcode” of what can unlock our mouths so we can talk.

Did you catch any of the four?

Our words ...

- 1. Can’t tear down.** That doesn’t mean that telling you the truth won’t hurt sometimes. But we’ll try to tell each other truth in ways that speak love at the same time.
- 2. Have to build up.** Just like the salt we added lifted up our egg, the kind words we use can lift another person up.
- 3. Are said at the right time.** Just because something is true doesn’t mean it’s always the right time to say it.
- 4. Show God’s kindness—which we don’t deserve.** Part of this means when someone says something insulting or rude, we respond with kindness.

There will be times when your passcode will be tested. You’ll have words that are close to what God might want you to say, but when you’re honest, they miss one of these four.

In this house, we want our mouths to stay locked unless our words fit this passcode. That’s when they honor God and love others.



Day 4: In this home, we seek to serve.



Read:

Now...when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.

He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

...When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." (John 13:1-5, 12-17)



Play:

Gather towels and a basin (big enough for a foot) filled with soapy water.

Ask one of your kids to read today's verse. After, have each person wash the feet of the person to their right. (Encourage kids not to make jokes about someone's feet being gross.)

Focus on Jesus' final message: "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."



Talk it out:

Parents, grab a sheet of paper and a marker to write down what your kids say.

Tell me what TV or social media say will make you into a person everyone wants to be. Go.

(You'll probably hear things like the newest device; a cool car; being beautiful; having a lot of money; being famous, athletic, or smart; getting your way. Prompt kids toward these answers if they get stuck.)

But what about people you don't want to be like?

You don't want to be weak. (Write "weak" at the bottom of your page, along with phrases from the next sentences.) You don't want to have to clean up after other people's messes or deal with all the ways they're broken or dirty. You don't want to be poor or need help.

(Hold up the paper with the world's values at the top.) But God's Kingdom takes what this world says is important and flips it on its head. (Flip the paper upside down, so God's Kingdom values are at the top.)

Even though Jesus was actually King of the planet, He got down on His knees and did the work normally saved for slaves. He was okay doing the dirty work.

In fact, He says when we're looking for the person who's the most important in God's Kingdom, we look for the person serving everyone else—even the lowest person around (Matthew 23:11).

And we're looking to have a heart like Jesus' as a family. Not to be the best by being the most successful or best-looking or the most charming or athletic or smartest. But to have hearts that follow Jesus in serving each other.

What are small ways we can serve each other every day?

(Ask how you can serve each member of the family. Give space to think, but you can offer a few ideas.)

Tip: *Tomorrow's activity needs a few supplies; might make sure you have them!*



Day 5: In this home, God is remaking us into something beautiful and useful.



Read:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)



Play:

All-Things-New Slime

You'll need

- 1 bottle glue
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- Big squirt contact lens solution (check the ingredient list: needs boric acid or sodium borate!)
- Optional: 2-3 cups shaving cream (not gel)
- Optional: food coloring, glitter, and/or beads

Pour your entire bottle of glue into a bowl and mix in the baking soda and food coloring. If you have shaving cream, add it now. Squirt in your contact solution. Once everything is stirred together, if your slime is too sticky, add more solution. If you'd like, add the optional glitter or beads!

Isn't it cool how none of these ingredients were very much alike? But like these ingredients, God makes us a new creation, with a new purpose!



Talk it out:

What do leggings, a park bench, a rug, a dog collar, and a bathing suit have in common?

If you buy the recycled version, each was a very different product. They used to be plastic bottles, cardboard, environmental waste, and mohair and alpaca fur destined for a landfill.

And recycling is a little picture of what God does for us. The Bible's clear that because we've rebelled against God, we are worthy of being destroyed (Matthew 7:13-14). But God has a beautiful purpose for us instead—a future and a hope.

In fact, 2 Corinthians 5:15 says Jesus “died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

That's our “recycled” purpose: living for God. In fact, part of that new purpose is God appealing to other people through us. He wants them to find forgiveness, purpose, and care through Him (verse 20)—and we're the people He uses to let the world know.

So it *does* matter how we live at school, work, or home. We want to “walk in a manner worthy” of Jesus' sacrifice. Which is worth a lot more than a heap of plastic bottles.

What are some of the ways God uniquely made each of us? How can we use those for Him?

That kid who's great with children can show them God's kindness and fun. That athlete can honor God rather than Himself—and behave with integrity on and off the field.



Day 6: In this home, we reflect to the world what God's creating inside us.



Read: *(For families of only younger kids, read only the **bold** verses.)*

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end...But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:12-13, 16-18)

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)



Play:

You'll need: old CDs and flashlights.

Hand CDs out or hang some from the ceiling or a light fixture.

With the flashlights, see how you can bounce light off the CDs! Can you get light to land in a specific place? If you spin a few suspended CD's, can you make the effect look like a disco ball?

Can you light up someone's face (preferably not shining in their eyes)?



Talk it out:

In 1977 in New York City—long before you were born—lightning struck an electrical power station by the Hudson River. Two more lightning bolts left entire neighborhoods in darkness.

Unfortunately, this happened during a time when a lot of people were struggling to have enough money. Some people stole things or hurt other people.

Why do you think people were willing to break the law because it was dark?

Let's talk about some things light does in our lives.

Keeps us from getting hurt. Helps us feel safe. Shows us what's really happening.

The Bible says God is light—with zero darkness.

It says even if we say we're walking with God but keep choosing sin, we're walking in darkness—where things hide and don't show the truth.

But when we choose to tell the truth, it's like walking in light with Him. We allow God to work on what's wrong and help us not to hurt ourselves or other people.

And when we walk in the light, God's light is reflected to the whole world—like the CDs in today's activity. In fact, when Moses went to get the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, his actual face lit up for days after being with God (Exodus 34:29-30)!

Obviously, we don't expect your actual face to shine like a glow stick with your love for God. But people are naturally drawn to what lights up—to seeing God's kindness and courage and character.

Why do you think some kids are afraid of the dark?

How is being with God like turning on a light?

For kids and adults, it's hard to be honest about our own sin. If there's sin in your life you've been hiding, we want to help you more than we want you to get in trouble! In the next week, come and tell us the truth so we can help you walk in the light and start connecting with God again.



Day 7: In this home, Jesus dying and being raised for us is a message we need daily.



Read:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)



Play:

Paper airplane competition! Put out a stack of paper, art supplies, scissors, tape—and go to town.

Important: *You need to set a distance goal for these planes that is unreachable, even if it doesn't look like it right away.*

Feel free to hand out other rewards (most creative, fastest, most colorful, etc.)—but the unreachable goal is the focus.



Talk it out:

Okay, we rigged today's competition. The goal was impossible, no matter how cool of an airplane you built. I want to use this to make a point.

You've probably heard the verse telling us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). You just saw your planes fall short of the goal: even the best, the fastest, the snazziest.

It's funny—most of us think Jesus dying for us and being raised from the dead is something we need to know so we can be saved. But do we really need to hear about it all the time? What's the big deal?

This is actually a message we need to tell ourselves every day.

When we don't really believe that God loves us enough to die for us, it leaves a hole in our hearts. We become like gigantic vacuums, sucking up things to try to fill the hole. We try to be special or holy or sweet or smart or safe or popular or powerful or in control so that we feel good about ourselves—like we're in a competition to be good enough, like our airplanes.

But when we remind ourselves Jesus loves us, we can put down all our paper airplanes that never fly close enough. Jesus did the impossible work of being completely, 100% perfect. He lets us share in the prize He won. We don't have to keep trying to be people who are worthy or good enough.

That's why Jesus' death and resurrection are the good news we have to be reminded of every day. Jesus' death tells us, *Have peace. I already won. Everything good you do can be to honor me, not to show the world you're okay.*

When are some times when you don't feel good enough? What do you do to make yourself feel better?

In those times, what's one truth from God's Word you can remind yourself of?