



Every child is different and in a different place in their journey! Please use these ideas as appropriate for you, your child and your family.

# JOY

## FAMILY *Devotional*,

### ACTIVITY & TABLE TALK *Ideas*

#### **Everyone Is Important to God - Hide and Seek**

*Read Luke 15:1-7*

**Activity:** (This one can work well for a multifamily devotional!) Ask volunteers to be the shepherd and the sheep. The shepherd may pet the sheep and take care of them. Have the sheep make happy noises because they are under the care of the shepherd. Direct the lost sheep to wander off and to hide. The shepherd then looks for the sheep. Once the shepherd finds a lost sheep, have the shepherd give her a great big hug and carry her back to the other sheep. Once the sheep have been found, celebrate together with a dance party. This activity can be repeated allowing a different family member to play the role of the shepherd.

**Family Discussion:**

How did the shepherd feel when any of his sheep were lost?

How did the shepherd feel to find each one of the sheep?

How does it make you feel that Jesus cares and rejoices over each one of us?

#### **Joy In Times of Struggle - Movie Night**

Everybody will have times of struggle. Sometimes we struggle at a new skill and we have to keep trying until it gets easier for us, or sometimes we struggle through a hard time.

**Ask:** What are some things that you had to keep trying at until it got easier?

Jesus went through hard times too.

*Read Hebrews 12:2*

Jesus knew that he had something joyful (being together with God) to look forward to that helped him to not give up.

**Activity:** As a family, watch *Trolls* or *Moana*, or a similar movie where the character has to overcome obstacles.

**Family Discussion:**

What were some scenes that showed someone not giving up?

What do you think helped them to not give up?

What are some things that you have to do that are difficult and make you feel like giving up?

What can help you to not give up?

**Prayer:** "God, please help us to not quit or give up when things are hard. Help us to find joy in the struggle."





## Treasure Hunt

**Activity:** Plan a treasure hunt for the family. Make up clues and hide something of great value to your family (maybe a box of everyone's favorite treats to share at the end of the devotional). You can make a treasure map or you could hand out one clue to start that leads everyone to the second and the third and so on, until they find the treasure.

### *Family Discussion:*

Once the treasure has been found, have everyone sit and talk together about the treasure hunt. Was it fun? Did anyone guess what the treasure might be before it was found?

Were the clues easy or hard?

Why is it fun to go on a treasure hunt?

Why is it fun to find treasure?

When someone treasures something, how do they feel about that thing?

### *Read Deuteronomy 7:6*

Describe how God felt about the Israelites.

What does it mean that they were God's treasured possession? How do you treat something that you treasure? How does it make you feel to know that God loves, cares for and rejoices over his people, over you?

## Joyful Singing

*Read Zephaniah 3:17 & Psalm 95:1-2*

### *Family Discussion:*

How does it make you feel to hear that God rejoices over you in singing?

How do you think it makes God feel when we sing for joy to Him?

**Activity:** Have a singing devotional allowing each family member to choose a song or two. If you'd like, this could be a time to learn a new song together as a family!

**Prayer:** Thank God for rejoicing over us, for the gift of music, and for giving us many reasons to sing for joy to Him!

## Rejoice in Laughter

**Activity:** Watch a funny show or movie together that makes your family laugh (AFV is often a family favorite!)

*Read Proverbs 17:22*

### *Family Discussion:*

Why does a positive attitude give you strength, but a grumpy mood makes you feel worn out?

How can laughing and a cheerful heart be like medicine?

Discuss how amazing it is that God created us with the capacity for laughter.

Why do you think he gave us this ability?

Tell your children some of the joyful, funny things you remember about them as babies.

God really wants us to enjoy our lives and he wants us to laugh and have fun together!

**Prayer:** "Thank you God for giving us joy and laughter. Please help us to laugh together as a family, even through the hard times."

**Follow Up:** During dinner times the following week, have a joke of the day contest to keep the laughs coming!





## **Rejoice in Times of Remembrance**

It builds our joy (and faith!) to remember what God has done in our lives.

**Activity:** Take time to remember favorite family memories.

Here are a few ideas on how to do this together as a family:

watch a slide show of family pictures together; make a top 10 or 20 list of memories together; or write several significant events on separate pieces of paper and place them in a bowl or hat, take turns choosing and sharing about whatever is written on the paper, letting other family members fill in details about what they remember.

**Read 1 Chronicles 16:7-14**

**Family Discussion:**

Talk about how wonderful God is and how much he blesses our lives every day.

What blessings do you see that God has given our family?

How has our family learned to seek God and to rely on him during both good and challenging times?

Ask everyone to share how they feel about God right now as they are remembering wonderful times, lessons learned and how God has blessed them.

**Prayer:** Pray together at the end of the devotional, thanking and praising God for all the wonderful ways He has blessed you and your family.

**Follow Up:** During dinner times the following week, have family members share additional family memories that came to mind since the family devo and more blessings of God that have been seen or experienced that day.

## **TABLE TALKS:**

### **Read Psalm 147:11 & Jeremiah 32:38,41**

When you think of God, do you think of him as serious? Annoyed? Or happy - full of contentment and joy? What do you think makes God happy? God has many reasons to be full of joy. He can take joy in just being himself - all he is and does is beautiful! God is so happy that his happiness spills out on us in the form of mercy. He showers goodness on us because he enjoys it. He gets great joy sharing his joy with us! And it brings him great joy when we accept that everything we need to be happy is found in him. "The Lord's delight is in those who ... put their hope in his unfailing love." What are some things we think will make us happy? Why can these things never take the place of God as our source of lasting, real joy?

### **Read Psalm 104 & Psalm 77:11-12**

For most of us, there is a steady stream of noise that takes up space in our heads and shapes our thoughts from the sound of our alarm in the morning, to the conversations at school, to the music we listen to as we do homework.

Think through your day ... What fills up your ears and your thoughts?

David enjoyed thinking about what God is like, what he has done and what it means to him to be in a relationship with him. Meditation is when we think over, dwell on, and apply what we know about the works, ways, purposes and promises of God. It is the process we use to enjoy God and one that brings him joy. Is there a particular time you could use to meditate on a word, phrase or passage in the bible, or to simply think about God?

How do you think time spent meditating can bring joy to both you and God?

