



GROWN-UPS GUIDE

THE BIG WAY OF LOVE FOR KIDS

A Companion Resource for Grown Ups

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

brought to you
in partnership with  Forward
Movement



The BIG Way of Love for Kids: A Companion Resource for Grown Ups

A discipleship resource for kids and their beloved communities



Copyright © 2023 by The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church
815 2nd Ave
New York, NY 10017

The Old Testament, New Testament and Gospels readings are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright 1989, 1995, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The Collects, Psalms, and Canticles are from *The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*.

Learn more about The Way of Love and The Episcopal Church at www.episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove.

Share reflections and queries by writing to bigwaykids@episcopalchurch.org or on social media using [#bigwayoflove](https://twitter.com/bigwayoflove)

The BIG Way of Love for Kids: A Companion Resource for Grown-Ups

Introduction

Welcome to The BIG Way of Love for Kids!

Jesus makes it clear that children are a vital and vibrant part of the kingdom of God, and he holds them up as models for how our faith ought to look. He goes even further, insisting that when we welcome these little ones, we welcome him as well. We are thrilled to offer this resource for kids and the adults who love them, especially those who are looking for new and creative ways to follow Jesus and love our neighbors.

We know that time and love are your most precious resources, and we also know there's a lot of hustle and bustle involved in nurturing, raising, and loving our kids. So we've put together a deck of cards that contain simple lessons about Jesus and his Way of Love. Share them with the children in your life or ministry, whether you are a parent, caregiver, Sunday School teacher, godparent, or other guide in children's lives.

How might you use the cards? Invite a child to try it alone or with other kids, or sit with the child to talk and play with the cards together. Feel free to talk about the cards in carpool, during bedtime or at mealtime, on your way to the playing field, piano, ballet, or Scouts. Especially today, formation to live and love like Jesus happens in a lot of places and moments, not just on a Sunday morning.

The BIG Way of Love for Kids comes from the Way of Love, a set of seven practices we can follow in order to look, live, and love more like Jesus. Together, we **TURN** to Jesus, **LEARN** about him, **PRAY** to God, **WORSHIP** God, **BLESS** people close to us, **GO** walk with people who are different, and **REST** in God's love.

The same practices that we grown-ups take on to follow Jesus are here in these cards for kids to take on, too. Don't think of them as lessons to be studied and quizzed on later. The practices of the Way of Love are a way of life.

We are praying for you and the children in your life and ministry, and we are grateful for all the steps you take along his Way of Love. Please let us know how you and yours are playing along with the BIG Way of Love for Kids by tagging us on your social media channels with #bigwayoflove. Above all, may this resource draw you and the children you know and love closer to the heart of God.

With BIG hopes,

The BIG Way of Love for Kids Design Team

Rachel Jones, Kristin LeMay, Tina Clark, Jerusalem Greer, Emily Kenniston, Miriam McKenney, Missiouri McPhee, Donna Sweeting, and Stephanie Spellers



Using The BIG Way of Love for Kids

The primary resource in The BIG Way of Love for Kids is a deck of cards, which we hope makes the resource truly child-centered and child-led.

Engaging the Practices

Each card highlights one of three ways to engage a practice along the Way of Love: **Say it**, **Pray it**, and **Live it**.

- **Say it:** We listen to a story from the Bible, using the companion audio recordings in “The Big Way of Love for Kids Podcast,” or read a short passage from the Bible. We ponder God’s word together and say how the reading feels or sounds, or what it inspires in us.
- **Pray it:** We pause and ask God to help us understand how to approach this practice in the Way of Love. We talk to God about what might be hard or scary about loving our neighbors, sharing our stories, trying to be like Jesus. We talk to God about the things we are excited to share. We thank God for loving us and for helping us to learn how to give and receive love.
- **Live it:** We talk to each other about concrete ways to put the practice we have learned (or are in the process of learning) to good use. Can we donate something to a food or diaper pantry? Invite someone for a tea party? Start a family prayer habit? This can be as

simple or elaborate as the child(ren) and you decide you want it to be. The most important thing is that you make an intentional commitment and then do it together.

Reading Level

On the front of each card, you'll also notice one or more white pinwheel symbols. These indicate the level of skill necessary for reading and understanding the contents of that card.

- **One Pinwheel** = getting started. Early readers should be able to grasp the contents and concepts without too much trouble, though it may take some time. True beginners will need a little help. All other levels should have an easy time with these cards.
- **Two Pinwheels** = next level. Early readers will need a little help from another child or an adult. Kids with a little more reading experience should be able to handle these cards with little or no help.
- **Three Pinwheels** = all the way. These cards are worth a try for less advanced readers who have some help. They're especially good for strong readers, or if you're a grown-up reading with a child.

Your Role as a Grown-Up

The BIG Way of Love for Kids has been created primarily to be a child-guided resource. That doesn't mean you don't have a role. You might find ways to deploy the cards in creative ways at home, at church, at school, or on the go. Below are a few tips for using these cards in your context.

Step 1: Pray. The first step is to pray for the children who will be practicing the Way of Love with you. Pray that this experience would deepen your own relationship with Jesus. When we start with prayer, we are already walking the Way of Love.

Step 2: Become familiar with the cards. Read them and play with them yourself. Feel free to reflect on the readings, pray the prayers, and try out the activities in your own life. The more you engage with the cards on your own, the more effective you will be in sharing them—and the Way of Love practices—with children.

Step 3: Determine where you will use the cards. Feel free to work with more than one set and keep them handy. Store a set in a recipe box in your kitchen, stack a set on the coffee table, or keep a set in the car's glove compartment. Pack them into play-and-pray bags in your church sanctuary or splay them out on the table in your Sunday School room.

Step 5: Establish how you want to deploy these cards with your kids. Are these a free-choice activity during Sunday School or Vacation Bible School, or are they best as a children's chapel

lesson or at youth group? Could you use them to start your day as a household, on the way to school, or as part of a bedtime routine? Might they be a helpful starter for engaging kids at church during coffee hour?

Step 6: Decide how you will invite children to play with them. Some options are:

- In a classroom: Invite a child to draw one card from the deck. After they have chosen a card (which will have one of the three actions—"Say It," "Pray It," "Live It"), invite that child to invite the rest of their classmates to engage with the prompts. Offer guidance or assistance with reading and participation.
- In the home: Invite your child to choose one card to bring to the dinner table. As a household, try to follow the given prompts. If the prompt is for a game or act of service, spend some time planning how to live out that prompt together, maybe during or after a meal.
- At church: The "Pray It" and "Say It" cards (and the "Say It" paraphrases) work well for a children's sermon time, while the "Live It" cards can be useful during children's church. These cards are also great for times when childcare must be provided, and you want something more than babysitting but less than full-blown curriculum.

These are just a few ways that grown-ups can employ these cards to practice Jesus' Way of Love alongside children. The options are as vast as your and the children's imaginations.

Want to dive even deeper? Make sure to check out the "Say It" paraphrases and additional content.

Permission Granted

We hope you will feel free to use what works for you and the children in your care. You can stretch out these lessons as long as you need, and you can always repeat lessons that you or your children really love. You can also spend extra time talking about lessons that may be especially challenging or particularly relevant in your household, church, or community. As our friends in Godly Play remind us, "We have all the time we need."

Stay open to the Holy Spirit as you walk The BIG Way of Love together. In "Say It," you and the children can act out the story or talk about how the Bible story reminds you of an event or person in your lives. Imagine what you each would have done in the story. We can invite each person to say what they think might have happened just before or just after the action in our Bible story. In "Pray It," it's OK to simply open your hearts and offer prayers to God. In "Live It," well, genuinely try things on. It's OK if the conversations or practices get silly or serious, or if you get a simple or thoughtful response. Your children are learning, and so are you.

Using the Cards with Kids and on Your Own

Next up, you will find the text from each of The BIG Way of Love for Kids cards. Take time to look through each and familiarize yourself with their content.

With each “Say It” card, you’ll encounter a Bible story or passage that relates to a particular practice along the Way of Love. If you’re reflecting on your own, take a moment to read the passage aloud and consider what words or phrases stand out to you. Read it a second time, silently or aloud, asking the Holy Spirit to expand on those words or phrases in your heart.

With each “Pray It” card, you’ll find a prayer suitable for children but also for yourself. If you’re reflecting on your own or taking a turn with a child, feel free to offer one of the provided prayers, or offer one of your own to God in response to whatever practice you’re reflecting on.

With each “Live It” card, you’ll find a concrete way to try on a practice in the Way of Love. You’ll also find “Grown-Up Notes” peppered throughout the “Live It” sections. These notes may help you to drop deeper into the particular practice on the Way of Love and to ponder the card’s meaning for a child.

PLAY IT!: Supplemental Activities for Solo and Group Play

This special supplement contains enrichment activities for solo play, craft responses, and larger format games ideal for groups of 7-15 participants and at least two adult companions. Many of the activities are also easily adaptable for smaller or larger gatherings, including intergenerational opportunities. We hope you will enjoy exploring these games in tandem with the **BIG Way of Love for Kids** resource as part of your community’s formation time, as an opportunity for intergenerational play, or just as good fun – because we’re never too old or too young to walk the Way of Love with Jesus. We pray that with these activities’ simple rules and basic (sometimes no) supplies, you and the young people in your care will enjoy lots of laughs and teachable moments as you play along together for the love of Jesus.

Welcome - Let's Get Started

SAY it:

John 13: 3-5, 33-35

Listen to the story titled "Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples." In it, Jesus has a meal with his friends. To show his love, he kneels at their feet, washes and dries them. Then he says, "This is how people will know that you are my followers and my friends—by the way you love one another."

If you close your eyes, how do you picture this story?

Genesis 1:25-27 (Common English Bible version)

God made every kind of wildlife, every kind of livestock, and every kind of creature that crawls on the ground. God saw how good it was. Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth."

God created humanity in God's own image,
in the divine image God created them,
male and female God created them.

What words dance in your heart from this story?

Mark 12:28-31

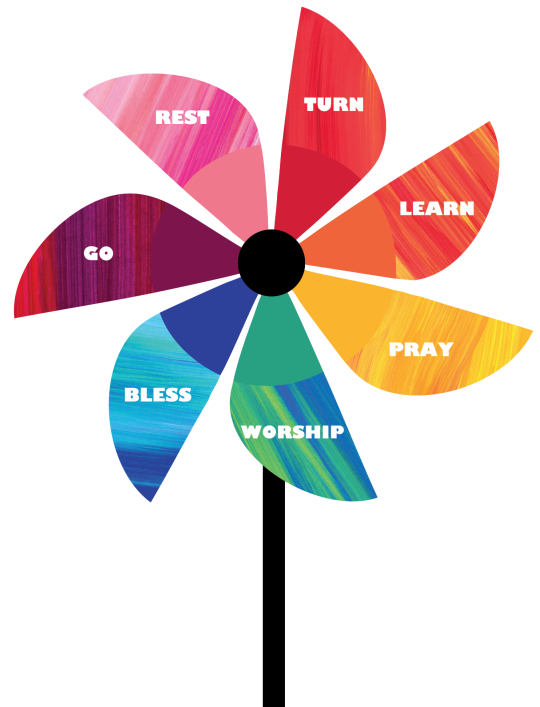
One of the scribes asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

What does this story make you want to do?

PRAY it:

Hi, God.

Thank you for loving everybody and me.



Amen

Dear God, you created all of us in your image. Wow, is that magic? We all look like God! That's amazing. Help me see you in each person I meet. When I forget, please remind me that you will never love any of us less, and you will never love any of us more. We are perfect exactly as we are because we look just like you. Thank you. Amen.

Eternal God, who created all things out of love,
We thank you for the gifts of life and faith;
open our hearts to receive your love
so that we might become like Jesus,
loving ourselves and our neighbors just as you love us;
through your many names we pray. Amen.

LIVE it:

Tea Party

Have a tea party with your friends, your family, or your stuffed animals. The food can be pretend or a simple snack. Practice saying only kind things to one another. Like, what do you like about each of your guests? Or, how do they make your life better? Ask each other, "What makes you feel loved?" When you're finished, you can wash each other's feet—for real or pretend.

Spreading Love

How can you show your family, friends, or teachers that you love them? Here are some ideas:

- Offer to help with the dishes or trash or another household chore.
- Draw pictures and give them to the people you love.
- Write notes telling your loved ones what you love about them.
- Give someone you love a smile and, if you feel like it, add a hug, a high-five, or a fist bump!

Being Loved

Jesus loves you for who you are, just as you are. Today, take a moment to look yourself in the eye (use a mirror) and tell yourself all the great, cool, lovely things about YOU. Or draw a picture of yourself doing and being all those cool, great, lovely things. Ask Jesus: "What do you love about me?" Imagine him naming the things God really loves about you, since you are God's creation.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: BIG Spirit Pinwheel

Basis: This activity is a reminder that the essence of God, God's breath rests on everyone. We think it's an especially fun game to play as an introduction to the BIG Way of Love, and to the disciplines of Say it, Pray It, Live it – all of which we can engage as we PLAY IT, with this fun set of resources! This is an excellent take-home project, to help your little friends to remember to play along with Jesus all week.

Materials Needed:

- Pencil with eraser
- Construction paper
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaner
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, glitter, etc.
- Push Pins/Thumbtacks

How to Play:

- Make sure the paper is square (6in x 6in)
- Take one corner of the paper and fold it diagonally so that it touches the other corner of the paper.
- Open the paper up and take the next corner and do the same with the opposite corner of the paper.
- Open the paper up again and color or decorate your square.
- Place a mark in the center of the paper.
- Carefully cut along the creases of the paper stopping just short of the center.
- Starting at one corner point, write TURN, LEARN, PRAY, BLESS, WORSHIP, GO, REST, and the name of the artist, on the back side of the paper. Write one word close to the point, and the next word close to the middle of your square.
- After you have added the BIG Way of Love words and name of the child, carefully pull every other "point" of the paper down to the center of the paper.
- Glue the corners to the center, one on top of the other. Hold it in place until it's dry.
- Twist the pipe cleaner tightly around the pencil top.
- Put the pipe cleaner through the pinwheel center. Wrap the end of the pipe cleaner around itself, making a ball in the center (leaving space to allow the pinwheel to spin!).
- Use your God-given breath to blow on it and make the pinwheel go round and round!

TURN

and choose to follow Jesus

SAY it:

Luke 15: 11-32 (PARAPHRASE)

Listen to the story titled “The Disobedient Son and the Forgiving Father.” In it, the son didn’t want to follow his father’s rules, so he left home. At last, he returned to say he was sorry. His father welcomed him with open arms, saying, “My son was lost and now he’s found!”

How does this story make you feel?

Psalms 51:10-12, 15

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

What words dance in your heart from this song?

Matthew 4:18-20

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

What would you like to say to Jesus—or ask Jesus—about this story?

PRAY it:

Hi, God.,



I love you.
Amen.

Dear God,

Thank you for teaching my heart to turn around, so that when I disappoint myself or someone else, I can turn around and say I'm sorry. I can offer to fix what I broke. I can turn my feelings and my body and try again. Help me to listen to the voice in my heart that reminds me you are always there, always ready to welcome me home, always loving me. Amen.

Every day I get to choose how I will follow Jesus. O God, I'm sorry for the ways I missed this chance today: *(name something from your day that you wish you could do over)*. I turn my heart to you again, Lord Jesus. Amen.

LIVE it:

The Opposites Game

You can play this game anywhere, because all you need is your words and imagination!

The first person picks a word. The next person has to name its opposite. (Things like: up/down, happy/sad, soft/hard.)

Next level: Name a way of behaving that isn't so great, and find its opposite. For example, if someone says: "When someone falls on the playground, I point and laugh at them,," The opposite could be, "When someone falls, I ask if they're OK, help them up, and invite them to play."

Grown-Up Note: Taking turns is a lesson we all begin learning early in our lives. Sometimes, we may cut in line or take more turns than is fair. When that happens, we have the chance to choose a different way to be: more like Jesus. One way to help our children understand taking turns or making better choices is to play with the idea of opposites.

Turning Stone

Find a rock that fits comfortably in one of your hands. Holding the rock, think of a time recently when you did or said something that you knew was wrong, mean, or hurtful.

Now close your eyes, and squeeze that mistake into the stone in your hand. Squeeze hard, and give that mistake over to Jesus.

Place the rock in a bowl and pour some water over it. Now you are ready to turn back to Jesus and follow his Way of Love!

Jesus with Me

Do you ever wonder what Jesus looked like, wore, and even ate?

Using any material, create an image of Jesus. Imagine how Jesus might look when you turn toward him. Is he smiling? Are his arms stretched out? Does he give you something? What does Jesus look like and what does he do?

Put your image of Jesus somewhere you will see it every day.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: What's in Your Heart?

Basis: This game is a really great one to play anytime you need to provide some extra encouragement without singling out any particular child or even as a prelude to Communion Instruction. This is one way to explain how and why we lift up our hearts to Jesus, and how much Jesus loves it when we try to follow him and his Way of Love. You can keep the hearts up long term and add to them as you like – or you can send them home with children and encourage them to read and pray along with their heart words all week long.

VERSION #1

How to Set Up:

- Have the leader draw a very large heart on the black/smart board. The heart can also be made of felt or any sort of construction paper.
- Draw objects in the heart that are representative of things we can offer up to Jesus.
- If the heart is made of felt, cut out objects from magazines and glue a small piece of Velcro to the back of it so that it can easily stick to and be removed from the felt fabric.

How to Play:

- With the heart that is on the black/smart board, ask the children which colors you should use for the words they suggest.
- With the heart that is made of felt, have the children select an object to Velcro to it and discuss why?

VERSION #2

- **Materials Needed:**

- Construction Paper
- Crayons | Markers | Colored Pencils | Stickers
- Cut out pictures from magazines, books, and the internet
- Glue Sticks

- **How to Play:**

- Have the children draw a heart on a sheet of construction paper.
- Have the children color/draw/glue pictures in their heart to represent what they are offering up to Jesus.

Activity #2: Jesus Says!

Basis: Jesus' disciples left everything immediately when Jesus called. The disciples did not question the call. We want to practice faithful obedience like the disciples. A derivative of the Activity **"Simon Says"**, **"Jesus Says, TURN!"** is meant to help children practice listening for – and following – Jesus. This game is especially good for those tender and tricky times when we all need a minute to refocus our intention, redirect our attention, and settle ourselves down so we can listen well.

How to Play:

- First, invite everyone to shake out all our antsy or anxious feelings, giggle out the rest of our sillies, and finish up one last thing we have to share with our friends or neighbor.
- Invite everyone to sit crisscross applesauce, facing you, making sure our bodies are not touching anyone else's body, and place our hands in our laps.
- Tell them that as soon as you remind them that "JESUS SAYS, TURN!" they must turn.
- Invite your friends to take a deep breath with you. Inhale slowly and deeply. Exhale slowly. Announce that JESUS SAYS, TURN!
- Invite the children to slowly and gently turn their bodies one quarter turn to the right. Allow them to settle, continuing to encourage them to move slowly and gently. Invite your friends to take another deep breath with you. Inhale slowly and deeply. Exhale slowly. Announce that JESUS SAYS, TURN!
- Repeat your gentle inhale and slow exhale. JESUS SAYS, TURN!
- Help your kids to mindfully and meditatively move an additional quarter turn. Settle. Breathe in; breathe out. JESUS SAYS, TURN!
- Let your group know we are turning one last time. Invite everyone to bring their bodies facing forward, slowly and gently. Engage in settling, breathing in, and breathing out. Take two more breath cycles.
- Welcome your friends back into your previously scheduled fun time or discussion or process conversation, etc.

LEARN

about the Bible and Jesus

SAY it:

Luke 2: 41-52

Listen to the story titled “Jesus Learns in the Temple.” In it, Jesus and his family visit Jerusalem. Though he is just a boy, he stays in the temple with the great teachers, listening and asking questions. People seem surprised, but he asks his mother, “Didn’t you know that I would be here in the temple, my father’s house?”

If you close your eyes, how do you picture this story?

John 14:7, 23 (Common English Bible)

Jesus said to his disciple, “If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him. Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

What would you like to say to Jesus—or ask Jesus—about this story?

Wisdom 7:25-27 (Good News Translation)

Wisdom is a breath of God's power—a pure and radiant stream of glory from the Almighty. ... She is a reflection of eternal light, a perfect mirror of God's activity and goodness. Even though Wisdom acts alone, she can do anything. She makes everything new, although she herself never changes. From generation to generation she enters the souls of holy people, and makes them God's friends and prophets.

How does this story make you feel?

PRAY it:

Hi, God.,
Thank you for the Bible.



Amen.

God, your story is my story, too. I pray today that you will help my heart and mind understand what your teachings mean for my life. Please guide me to people who can help me explore my questions about you and the world. Help me listen to the Spirit within me, so I can really follow Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 827.

LIVE it:

What is Goodness?

“Goodness” can look and feel different to everyone. Play this game at the breakfast or dinner table, in the car on the way to school, or with your friends. Notice that your answers may change from one day to another.

- What does goodness look like?
- What does goodness smell like?
- What does goodness feel like?
- What does goodness taste like?
- What does goodness sound like?

Grown-Up Note:

Our children are sponges for information. They are innate and expert learners. The best stories we can teach them, aside from their own story, are the ones about Jesus and his love for us. Jesus knows that children are important people in their own right, and he knows that they are frequently underestimated by the world. When Jesus feeds the 5,000, a little boy is the catalyst for a miracle. Children need to know they have a place of honor in God’s kingdom, in the church, and in their families. As we invite them further into Jesus’ love and life, and as they discern their own ministries, some of the most important nourishment we can offer them are the words of Jesus—his example of love and life in this world.

What is Scripture?

Scripture is what we call the words in the Bible. Do you have a children’s Bible? If you don’t have a children’s or story Bible, ask your family, or the library, or someone at church if you can buy or borrow

one. You can also watch the stories of Jesus, and of God and God's people, told by Godly Play storytellers on YouTube at The Godly Play Foundation's channel. Explore Scripture: God's story and your story!

Memory Verse

Once you start reading Scripture, find a short verse that makes you feel close to Jesus. (You might also ask your grown-ups for an idea.)

- Write the verse you've chosen on a notecard or sticky note and put it on the bathroom mirror.
- Invite everyone in your family to learn the verse together until you can say it from memory.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: Picture This

Basis: Playing this version of Pictionary will help children to immerse themselves in the story of an aspect of Jesus' life as a boy.

Materials needed:

- A printed copy of Luke 2:41-52
- Water soluble markers, drawing paper, stickers, crayons

How to Play:

- Ask the children to listen carefully as you share this story of Jesus as a big kid. Let them know you will read the story three times.
- 1st time through: ask the children what image stands out for them.
- 2nd time through: what scene stands out for them? (Name the different scenes in the story, as there's a lot happening here: a fun trip, a big crowded city, a holy place, parents, it's a bunch!)
- 3rd time through: draw the scene! (If you want to ask your friends to imagine themselves participating in the scene, feel free.)
- Share these marvelous creations with each other!

Activity #2: What's the Good News?

Basis: This activity is a fun way to help children commit the word of God to memory and in their hearts.

How to Play:

- Select John 14:6 (or any other verse) as a memory verse.
- Write it on a board or poster and place it in front of the group.
- Say the verse with the group several times.
- Have a child lead the group in doing an exercise (i.e. running in place, jumping jacks, etc.)
- When the child calls out “What’s the good news?!” the group enthusiastically quotes the verse.
- Repeat the verse eight to ten times, using different exercises and choosing different children to lead, always quoting the reference at the beginning and end of the verse.

Activity #3: Pearls of Wisdom

Basis: This game is great for teaching basic Biblical literacy: where the books of the Bible are, how to use an index and table of contents, and how to identify chapter and verse. Grown ups also tend to get a little excited to play this game, so it’s also a great intergenerational opportunity.

Materials: needed:

- One Bible per participant (or team of two. If you’re playing with grown ups, pair one grown up with one child)
- List of 20 Bible citations from both the Old and New Testaments, stopwatch or timer

How to Play:

- The person leading the game calls the players to order by asking them to place their unopened Bibles in front of them and to put their hands behind their backs.
- The leader then reveals the Bible citation (on a white board or a big flash card, especially if you have younger readers) and begins a 30 second timer.
- The first person to find the citation gets to read it out loud for the group.

PRAY

and dwell with God

SAY it:

Luke 11:1-4: (PARAPHRASE)

Listen to the story titled “Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray.”

In it, we see that Jesus spent lots of time praying. His disciples ask him to teach them to pray, and he does. He starts by saying, “Father, may we cherish your holy name.

May your kingdom come to us here on earth.”

What does this story make you want to do?

Luke 22:39,41-43

The night before the authorities came for Jesus, he went out to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ... He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” And an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

What would you like to say to Jesus—or ask Jesus—about this story?

Psalms 23:1-2,4,6

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures

and leads me beside still waters.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

What words dance in your heart from this song?

PRAY it:



Hi, God!

I am happy I can talk to you and hear from you anytime.

Amen.

Hi, God., I'm so glad you are always listening—I can talk to you whenever I want. Today, I have some things to tell you and some questions to ask. [*What do you need to tell or ask God today?*] Other people need your love, and I pray for [*name the people you want to pray for*]. Thank you that I can always come back and add more prayers, in the name of your son, my brother, Jesus. Amen.

Pray your own prayer

Prayer doesn't have to be hard. It just means talking to God, who loves to hear what we're thinking, feeling, and hoping. Try to pray to God now, with these simple steps:

- Say "thank you" for anything that is good.
- Say "I'm sorry" for anything you thought, did, or said that hurt someone.
- Ask God for "help!" with everything else.
- Amen

LIVE it:

Helping Prayers

Jesus taught us to pray together, and an important way to help others is through our prayers. Notice when someone in your family, or a friend or neighbor, or even a stranger you see is having a hard time. Stop and say, out loud or in your heart, “Jesus, please be with this person right now and help them.”

Teach Us to Pray

The words Jesus taught his followers are what we now call The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

- Write these words in a notebook, on paper, or type them and print it (remember to ask first).
- Decorate it using crayons, markers, stickers, drawings, or other craft supplies.
- Hang your copy of The Lord's Prayer somewhere you can see it and pray it every day.

Singing and Dancing Our Prayers

Prayer does not have to mean sitting still and quiet. You can put on a favorite song and let your dancing and singing be your prayer. Play a song now that makes you feel like God is with you, especially when you sing and move your body.

Grown-Up Note:

Prayer is one of the most important ways we can spend time with God. The prayers we find in the Book of Common Prayer are beautiful and steeped in the language of the Bible, but they aren't always easily accessible or understandable to children...or for us. Fortunately, God doesn't mind if we use the Book of Common Prayer or if we come up with our own ways to pray. God is always ready to hear whatever we have to say, any question we want to ask, anything good or bad we want to share. God loves to hear our prayers. If your family is looking for a way to begin praying together during your day, start with saying a blessing over your meals.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: The Prayer Stand

Basis: Have the children set up a prayer stand to hold a box or bowl to gather the written petitions of the church. This activity aims to reinforce the practice of prayer and praying for others.

Materials needed:

- Small table
- Medium size box, bowl, or other container
- Sign that says, "Prayer Stand." You may also want to include a brief explanation and directions on the sign.
- Blank index cards
- Pens or pencils

How to Play:

- Have the children decorate the table, sign, and prayer request container.

- Invite community members to place their prayer requests in the container, and be sure to check it often. An adult should go through the requests and offer up a summary of what the church members need prayer for: healing, wisdom, comfort, etc.
- On Sundays, during formation time, or anytime you're meeting together, help your friends remember to pray for parishioners using these prompts.

Activity #2: Pass It On

Basis: This activity is aimed to help children understand the shared work of prayer and the importance of praying for themselves and each other.

Materials needed:

- Large stuffy/pillow, ideally heart-shaped

How to Play:

- Have the children sit in a wide circle.
- Give the heart/pillow to one child.
- Ask that child to say a prayer for themselves or for someone else, or even just to name something or someone they want to pray for.
- Once the prayer is finished, ask the child to pass the heart to another who will say a prayer for themselves or someone else and throw the heart to another child.
- Continue until every child and the leader has had an opportunity to pass the heart and say a prayer for someone else, and to be prayed for in turn.

Activity #3: Body Prayer with Psalm 134

Basis: This is a great evening activity, especially if you're hosting a gathering for some first-time participants. You can also make this activity part of your evening chapel time during retreats, camp sessions, parents' night out, etc.

How to Play:

- The group leader begins by inviting everyone to take a deep breath together.
- Then the leader slowly walks the group through the words of the Psalm, inviting the group to do each gesture associated with those words:

*Behold

(we put our hand above our eyes, like we are shading them from a bright light)

*now, bless the LORD

(we give ourselves a big hug and raise our arms over our head)

*all you servants of the LORD

(dance in a little circle and point at all our friends)

*you that stand

(everyone stands super straight and tall with their hands by their sides)

*by night in the house of the LORD

(we make a little roof with our hands and place it above our heart)

*Lift up your hands

(we lift our hands as high as we can)

*in the holy place

(with our hands still lifted, we gently wave our arms and stretch out our necks and shoulders)

*and bless the LORD

(we give ourselves another big giant hug and make a big heart over our heads);

*the LORD who made

(we roll our hands together, and softly bend to touch the ground)

*heaven and earth bless you out of Zion

(we roll up from our soft bend to give ourselves another hug).

*AMEN.

- If you like, repeat the Psalm a second, or even a third time, as the children gain confidence with the gestures and words. You might even invite the children to say the words along with you as they become more confident.

WORSHIP

God in community

SAY it:

Luke 24: 13-16, 28-32

Listen to the “Jesus on the Road to Emmaus” story. In it, two of Jesus’s disciples are walking to Emmaus. They are sad because he has died. Jesus comes to walk with them, though they do not know who he is. They finally realize it is Jesus when he breaks bread, blesses it, and shares it with them.

What would you like to say to Jesus—or ask Jesus—about this story?

Psalm 95:1-2,6-7:

Come, let us sing to the LORD; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *

and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *

and kneel before the LORD our Maker.

For he is our God,

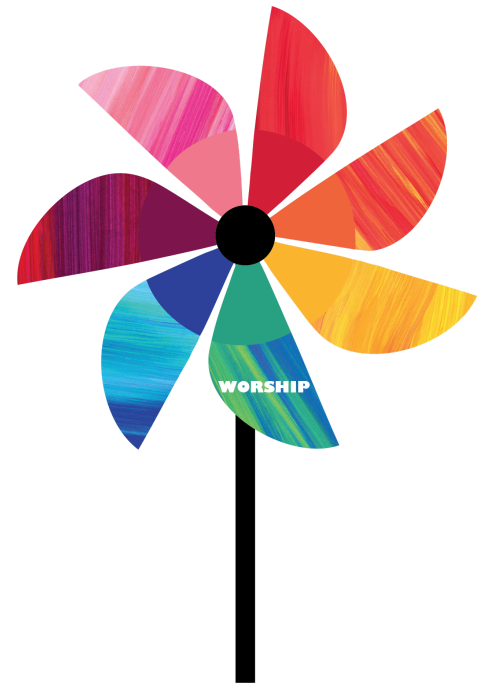
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *

Oh, that today you would listen to his voice!

What words dance in your heart from this song?

Acts 2:42,44,46-47 (Common English Bible)

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. All the believers were united and shared everything. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God’s goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.



What does this story make you want to do?

PRAY it:

Hi, God,
You are great!
Amen

God, I'm glad we have so many ways to worship you: with singing, praying, reading the Bible, preaching, giving offerings, gathering with the community, and just being quiet together. Thank you for welcoming everybody to make a home in your house and for taking care of everyone who needs your love. Thank you for dwelling with us and showing us how much you love us. And when we forget, light up our spirits to remind us. Amen.

In our worship, we give thanks to God as the giver of all gifts. Make a list of things you're grateful for today, saying "Thank you" to God for each of them.

LIVE it:

Church Happens Anywhere

You are God's beloved child and can worship God wherever you are.

- Sing. Share your favorite songs (from church or not!) with God.
- Read a Bible story. What does it tell you about God?
- Pray. Thank God for good things in your life, ask for help for yourself and others, and say you're sorry for mistakes. God welcomes all prayers.
- Before you begin to eat, ask God to bless your food and you!
- Share love. Remember to carry God's love, and the Good News of Jesus, wherever you go.

Seeing God Everywhere

God is always with and within each of us. Even if we don't always recognize God's presence, we are never alone! God comes in unexpected ways and in unexpected places. Our job is to notice.

Think about your day. Was there a time when you felt God with you? Comforting you? Thank God for being with you today.

Visit a Church

You don't have to go to church to find God, but church is a place where a community comes together to be with God, and to pray for and with each other, often with music.

Do other people in your family, or your friends, go to church? Ask your grown-ups if you can go with them some time to see what it's like. If you cannot attend in person, you can sit with a family member and watch a church service on YouTube.

Grown-Up Note:

One of the wonderful ways to help our children understand worship is to set up a home altar. While this can sound daunting, a home altar can be as simple as a small table with a tea light or as complicated as a set of shelves and a long, deep table. A home altar is simply a space and a few items you and your family set apart and use as a gathering spot for family prayers.

*Another way you can begin to introduce the idea of worship into your home is by using the **Book of Common Prayer**. There's a wonderful set of prayers and very short readings designed [especially for individuals and families](#). You might also want to thumb through the liturgy for [Compline](#) (a set of nighttime prayers) and see if it's right for your family's bedtime routine. Feel free to use any of these sets of prayers in ways that work for you and your family.*

Weekly worship with your parish family is an important way to help your children see their family of faith extending beyond their own living room. There are so many ways to take part in worship—praying and singing along with everyone, serving the altar (depending on age), helping with altar guild, being an usher or a greeter, or helping to prepare and clean up after snacks and social time.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: “I Spy Something Awesome” in the Sanctuary

Basis: To help children understand that worship is an essential part of faith, and that God's house is their home, too.

How to Play:

- Take the children on a short group walk around the church.
- Before starting, remind your friends to be on the look-out for things they might not be expecting to see and also for things they especially like in the church. Let them know you will be stopping every so often to explore and play the game.
- Play “I Spy” while moving around the church. The leader will begin, modeling the idea of spying something that might take a minute or two to find. “I spy with my little eye something awesome

in God's house, and it has black and white keys ..." A PIANO! Or "I spy with my little eye something awesome in God's house, and it has bright colorful petals and sits in glass ..." THE ALTAR FLOWERS!

- The first child to guess gets the next turn, and can decide whether to stay in the same spot, or to continue the walk to another spying spot. Make sure everyone gets a turn before you head back inside. Be ready to help out with hints or encouragement.
- After the children return inside, discuss with them how they might spend some time on their own looking for God's goodness in the world and sharing their discoveries with the folks in their lives.

Activity #2: Make A Joyful Noise

Basis: With this fun and creative activity, children will discover the joys of worship and feel invited to join in making their own joyful noise.

Materials needed:

Feel free to use your imagination and whatever supplies are at hand! Some ideas:

- several empty shoe boxes with or without lids
- rubber bands in various sizes and lengths
- yarn (some thick and thin options would be fantastic)
- wax paper
- unsharpened pencils
- marbles/buttons/coins
- rinsed plastic juice or water bottles with lids
- small plastic bowls with or without lids
- paper towel or bathroom tissue roll cores
- tape
- glue sticks
- scissors
- water soluble markers
- stickers
- wet wipes

How to Play:

- Invite your young friends to take a look at the craft items. Ask them to think about which ones might go together to make a drum, or a box banjo, or a harmonica, or a shaker, etc.
- Share stories with them about the importance of music in the bible:
 - Tell them the story of how King David loved music and would write and sing his prayers, when he was happy and when things were not great.
 - Tell them about the angels that surround the throne of God and sing as their whole reason for being.

- Help them understand that music has always been a part of how we worship God, and that our joyful noise is beautiful to God.
- As your friends start to pick out their supplies, you will want to be around to give a little guidance about assembly or offering ideas for little minds that may be blown by so many choices and options.
- Once everyone has finished building and decorating their instrument, you might share a simple song like “Jesus Loves Me” or “Peace Like a River (these are on Youtube if you need a refresher, as well) or teach them a whole new song. Then, play your hearts out.
- Take several encores. Go free form. Have fun and laugh and praise God with your joyful noise.
- Save the instruments for your next group time together or send them home (along with a note of explanation ... and maybe a request for forgiveness) for family enrichment.

Activity #3: Team Work Makes the Dream Work

Basis: One way we can fully join in worship is by serving in our congregations. It’s a great way to show children that God’s house is their house, and to remind them they can help out here like they help out at home.

How to Play:

- There are many ways children can serve in church.
 - They can serve as acolytes: the friends who light the altar candles, help carry the cross, hold the Bible during the Gospel reading, and help the priest or deacon set the table for Eucharist/Communion.
 - Children can help with greeting at the doors of the church with a family member.
 - They can sing in the choir (some churches have choirs just for kids).
 - They can read scripture lessons or read the prayers.
 - They can even offer a testimony about how God has blessed them. As they get older, they could even preach a sermon on a Sunday ... with a little help from a preacher at church.
- It can seem kind of scary to think about being in front of people, learning new words, wearing a special outfit, and sitting really still for a while. One way to make these activities seem less scary is to walk around the church during a time when there isn’t a service happening.
- If you have an acolyte coordinator or a choir director, invite them to meet you and the children in the church and show them the ins and outs of acolyting or being a junior chorister.
- Some churches also involve families with children as ushers or oblation bearers (the folks who carry the bread and wine to the front of the church after the offertory), so see if that might be an option for your big kids, in addition to exploring acolyting and singing.
- If your church doesn’t have natural ways for children to serve, consider whether inviting kids to simply move around the worship space, talking about and walking through the parts of the service and what roles people play, could be a helpful way to engage them in imagining a possible future role for themselves.

BLESS

others by sharing your faith, yourself, and your stuff

SAY it:

John 6:1-13 (PARAPHRASE)

Listen to the story titled “Jesus Feeds the 5,000.” In it, Jesus is on the mountain and looks out at a crowd of 5,000 people. He asks the disciples how they can feed them all. A boy gives his bread and fish, and Jesus blesses it, breaks it and gives out enough to feed everyone.

If you close your eyes, how do you picture this story?

Matthew 5:15-16

People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

How does this story make you feel?

1 Peter 4:8-11

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies.

What does this story make you want to do?

PRAY it:

Hi, God,



Please help me share with my family, friends, and others close to me.
Amen

God, thank you for the ways you bless me. I know you want me to bless others. Sometimes it's easy to think of ways to do that, and sometimes it's hard. Please help me to bless my friends and family with kindness and sharing. I share all of these big blessing thoughts in the name of my brother, your son, Jesus.
Amen.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love...
Amen.
The Book of Common Prayer, p 833

LIVE it:

Enough for Everyone

It's good to practice sharing our blessings with others. Grab a snack with lots of bites in the bag, and invite others (even your toys) to share:

- Wash your hands first.
- Open the bag and take one piece for yourself, then pass it around until everyone has taken one. Keep going until the bag is empty.
- If someone has more, talk about what to do with the extra.
- Bless the snack by saying, "God, thank you for this treat!"
- Enjoy your time together while you eat it.

Blessing Our Family

Think of someone in your family who takes care of you. How can you bless them with your thanks and love?

- Draw them a picture or make a card.
- Offer to help them with some household chores.
- Invite them to sit down and rest while you read them a story.
- Rub soft lotion into their hands and maybe even draw a cross on their hand when you're done.

Blessing Our Friends

Think of someone at school who needs a friend. How can you bless them with your friendship?

- Ask how they are today.
- Ask what games they like to play—maybe you like the same game!
- Invite them to eat or play with you.
- Offer to share a toy, or give them your turn on something fun like the swing or the tablet.

Grown-Up Note:

Sharing, giving, and serving are ways we can bless others and become more aware of the blessings God gives us. We tell our little ones over and over that “sharing is caring,” and it makes for a great place to put “bless” into practice in ways that are concrete. Whether we are talking to them about sharing toys with friends or being especially kind to people who are having a hard time, “bless” is one of those skills that we spend our whole lives teaching and learning. Jesus talks to a whole crowd about blessings we can offer each other.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: Blessing Boxes

Basis: This fun activity will help children to take seriously our calling - as Jesus’s followers - to bless others as we have been blessed.

Materials needed:

- One shoe box (including lid) for each child
- Butcher paper
- Scissors
- Glue and/or tape
- Ribbon
- Construction paper
- Markers, crayons, stickers, glitter and other decorative materials
- Fun food items that you or the children provide (a box of their favorite cookies and/or savory snacks, single-serving drink mix, favorite candy, etc.)
- Snack- or quart-size plastic bags

How to Play:

- Give each child a large piece of butcher paper or pieces of construction paper and ask them to draw and color the paper, making it “wrapping paper” that will cover the shoebox and lid.

- Once they are done with the decoration, have them wrap the shoe box by itself and then wrap the lid by itself. (if they're especially creative, they can attach more decorations after they've wrapped the box and lid).
- Have the children fill the box with a few food items from the supply of goodies. If items are loose, you might invite kids to use plastic bags to make a small bag of cookies, a small bag of candy, etc.
- Invite the children to take an index card or to fold a piece of paper and create a card for the person who will receive the box. The card message can be as simple as, "You are a blessing to me!" or "I hope you have a blessed day!" or "I am praying for you!"
- Place the lid on the box and tie it together with a ribbon.
- Tape the card on top of the box.
- Invite kids to give their box to someone in their family, a friend, a teacher, or someone else who needs some encouragement.

Activity #2: Growing Love

Basis: This activity is meant to help children understand how to become people of love and how to demonstrate that love is a seed that, when planted and watered, will grow and grow. It is also meant to help children understand that they can be the ones who share love and beauty, all of which is a blessing.

Materials needed:

- Seasonal flowers (seeds)
- Gardening tools
- Gardening gloves
- Water

How to Play:

- Prepare ahead: Ask permission to plant flowers at your church or a park or some other community area. Locate a place to plant the flowers.
- Let the children know that creating beauty that others will enjoy - and joining in tending God's creation - are all ways of showing love.
- Take the children outside to plant flowers.
- Say a blessing over the flowers after they've been planted.

Activity #3: Blessing Greeting Cards

Basis: Everyone likes to get mail and know someone is thinking of them. This activity invites kids to bless others as they have been blessed.

Materials needed:

- Scratch paper (think old copies with only one side printed, old letterhead, leftover construction paper or cardstock)
- Blank index cards
- Stickers
- Markers
- Crayons
- Decorative items like stickers, glitter, leaves, etc.
- Glue and/or tape
- (optional) List of shut-ins or sick folks from your community

How to Play:

- Gather your supplies and the children, and invite each person to make five greeting cards for members of their community.
- While you work, you might invite the children to share memories of a time when they received something in the mail, or an unexpected gift, that brightened their day.
- You can make birthday cards, feel-better cards, hope you have a nice day cards, etc.
- It's ok if you don't know the person you are writing to, and no one has to write a long letter. Just encourage kids to write a note to say you are praying for them and that Jesus loves them.
- Kids can add a drawing if they're inspired.
- Feel free to invite kids to take names from the church list of people who are sick and shut-in, and to address card to those members. They can also send cards to people they know and want to bless: friends, family, teachers, etc.

GO

to different people and places with love, like Jesus

SAY it:

Luke 4:14-15, 42-44

Listen to the story titled “Jesus Announces His Mission.” In it, he goes home to Nazareth and enters the synagogue (his worship community). Jesus tells everyone God has sent him to bring good news and love to people who are poor, blind and forgotten, and to those who have been hurt by others.

What would you like to say to Jesus—or ask Jesus—about this story?

Micah 6:8

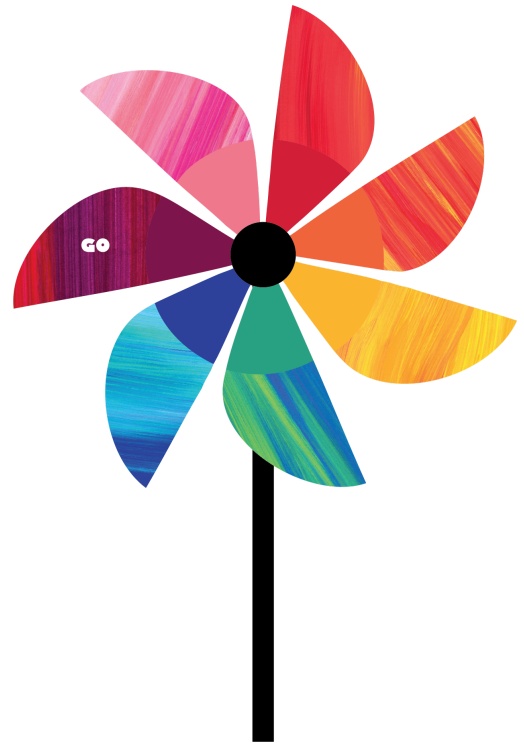
He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

What does this story make you want to do?

Acts 2:1-2, 4-6 (Common English Bible)

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

If you close your eyes, how do you picture this story?



PRAY it:

Hi, God.

Please help me be kind to everybody, especially those who are different from me.

Amen.

Hi, God, it's me. I want to be like Jesus, and he always stood up for people who were treated badly because they might be different. Please help me to notice where people around me might feel left out. Help me to befriend and learn from people who are different from me. When I feel nervous or anxious, remind me that you are always with me, *and* you're also with everyone else, too. Thank you for making all of us with such love. Amen.

God of Love, gather all people as one human family. Guide our community, our country, and the world. Help us to be kind to all people, creatures, and the earth. Be with all people who are sad, in need, or any trouble. May all who have died rest in peace. Amen.

Live It:

Put on Your Traveling Shoes

Jesus traveled and discovered new people and cultures all the time. Would you like to travel to new places? Ask the grown-ups around you about traveling:

- What's the farthest you've even been from here?
- What's your favorite place you've visited or lived?
- What was different about the places you traveled?
- How were the people in those places the same as us? How were they different?
- What did you learn from those new people and places?

Sharing the Stories of Jesus

It took courage for Jesus to talk about his big calling to live God's justice: to help people who were hungry to eat, help people who suffer to be free, help everyone know they are loved by God. Sometimes we need to be brave to share the Good News of God's love, too.

- Draw pictures and retell your favorite stories about Jesus. Where are you in the story?
- Give your stories to your family and friends, or anyone you think would like to know about Jesus.

Love like Jesus

It is not always easy to love like Jesus, is it? That's why we have to practice. Think about how you can be kind and safe, even when other people are not:

- Is there someone at school who isn't nice to you? Can you walk away instead of arguing with them? Can you ask an adult to help you talk to that person?
- Is there someone in your family who seems tired and stressed a lot? How can you show that person love?

Grown-Up Note:

Philosopher Cornel West once said, "We have to recognize that there cannot be relationships unless there is commitment, unless there is loyalty, unless there is love, patience, persistence. Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public. ..." God knows that we are all unique and wants us to work for each other so that everyone has what they need.

From the time they can move under their own power, small children understand the urgency of "GO" better than most of us. They are ready to have an adventure on every single trip, even if it's just to go put gas in the car or to drop off a sibling or parent. If you're going, they want to go, too. And they will sometimes be far more excited about going than you are. As you unpack your selected story with your family, you can ask them questions to stir up some suggestions about places in your own community that might need some love or food or hope. You can talk about ways your family can go to those places and what you might do when you get there.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: Flat Jesus

Basis: This activity is an adaptation of "Flat Stanley." This activity is designed to remind children that we need to welcome Jesus to go wherever we go and to share his Way of Love with the whole world.

Materials needed:

- Construction paper (11 x 17)
- Scissors
- Crayons and/or colored pencils
- Glue
- Decorations (glitter, confetti, etc.)

How to Play:

- Have the children draw a full body image of Jesus, color/decorate it, and cut it out. More than one Flat Jesus may need to be drawn.

- Have the children send the Flat Jesus to family, friends and/or church parishioners with instructions to take pictures with Flat Jesus and send (via snail mail or email) it back with a short story about them and Flat Jesus.
- The children can also take their Flat Jesus on an adventure to church, the zoo, grandma's house, school, etc. and take their own pictures. They can bring their picture(s) to the group and talk about their adventure(s) with Flat Jesus.

Activity #2: What Does the Lord Require?

Basis: Micah 6:8 says, “[God] has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” This activity gives children a chance to lean into and think deeply about this teaching with imagination, heart, and creativity.

Materials needed:

- Blue, red, and green construction paper
- Crayons.
- Feel free to also include stickers or other decorative items, if you wish.

How to Play:

- Trace and cut out the following objects:
 - (2) blue hands (Do Justice)
 - (1) red heart (Love Kindness)
 - (2) green feet (Walk Humbly)
- As you work, begin a conversation with your crafters about what it means to Do Justice, Love Kindness, and Walk Humbly.
- Have your crafters write justice words on the fingers and palm of the hands, words that represent kindness all over the heart, and methods of walking humbly on the feet.
- If you're at church, display their creations where other church members can see them. You may also send them home with their creations.

Activity 3#: Love On The Go Bags

Basis: Jesus invites all of us, even his youngest followers, to “go” in love out among all his people, even those who are different from us. This activity encourages children to take part in the ministry of love that Jesus embodied, by helping take care of our neighbors.

Materials needed:

- Suggested materials are below. As always, feel free to be creative and adapt your supplies to your own inspiration and for the number of kids and recipients in your community!
- 20 gallon size freezer bags with zip closure

- 20 ballpoint pens, several boxes of various sizes of bandaids
- 100 3x5 index cards, stickers
- Water soluble markers
- 20 each of the following travel size/complementary size items:
 - Toothbrush
 - Toothpaste
 - Pack of tissues
 - Bar soap
 - Shampoo
 - Conditioner
 - Moisturizer
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Baby powder or Gold Bond

How To Play:

- Feel free to ask folks in your community to help you collect these items, as well—you never know who has a secret drawer full of brand new hotel soaps and other goodies just waiting to be shared!
- When you are ready to assemble the bags, set up a work space in an assembly line that works for your group's personality and style of play.
- Let your friends know each of the items that go in the bag (set aside the index cards until it's time to seal the bags ... more on that later)
- Remind them that everyone likes to feel clean and fresh, but not everyone has the chance or the supplies to do that regularly.
- Talk about how they are just beginning to learn all the ways Jesus is calling them to go out into the world to love and serve his friends outside of our own cities and countries and continents. Let them know that when we go out into the world, it's good for us to share whatever we have with whoever we meet along the way.
- If you like, you might share some of the less violent and vivid aspects of the Good Samaritan story, focusing particularly that part of loving our neighbor is being willing to leave our house ready to share our stuff with anyone we meet who is having a hard time.
- Gently suggest that keeping a "Love on the Go" bag in the car might be a good way for them to always be ready to GO with something to share with folks they might see at traffic lights or on the way into some stores while they are out and about in their own town or in bigger cities than their usual context.
- Count out twenty index cards and have your kids draw pictures and put stickers allllllll over one side.
- On the other side, have your grown up/youth volunteer/ sidekick write down the name and phone number for your parish or organization.
- The pens, decorated cards, and extra blank index cards should be distributed evenly between the "Love on the Go" bags. Children can also decorate the outside with scatterings of stickers, if

they are so inclined—they may even decide to throw a sheet of stickers in the “Love on the Go” bags, as well.

- Divide the bags evenly between your friends, and remind them to make sure and give these gifts away to whoever they see that might need them. They don’t have to say anything, and the grown up driving their car would do the handing over, but this is definitely a way they can begin going into the world, ready to act and love like Jesus toward whoever they meet.

REST

in God's grace and peace

SAY it:

Mark 4:35-41

Listen to the story titled, "Jesus Calms the Sea." In it, he and his friends travel across the waters, but then a storm hits. The disciples are scared, but Jesus tells the wind and sea to be still, and they obey.

How does this story make you feel?

Genesis 2:2-3 (based on NRSV)

On the sixth day God completed all the work of creation, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that God had done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day God rested from all work.

What does this story make you want to do?

Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

What words dance in your heart from this story?

PRAY it:

Hi God,

Thank you for teaching me how to play, how to work, and how to rest.
Amen.



Dear God, you showed us through your actions that rest is important. You invite me to snuggle with a pet, color on a page, listen to music, read a story, or just sit outside and be amazed at nature as ways to rest when I'm not sleeping. Help me and my grown-ups to get a good rest—and help us to feel close to you, surrounded in peace when we rest. Amen.

Guide us waking, O Lord,
and guard us sleeping;
that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace. Amen.

LIVE it:

Breathing with God

When God created people, God filled them with God's breath in their lungs. Right after God did this, God took a day just to rest and enjoy the world. God wants us to feel that breath and wants us to take a day to rest and enjoy, as well. Invite your family or friends to join you in this game:

- Lie down on your bed or the floor.
- Put a stuffed animal on your belly.
- Close your eyes and breathe into your belly— - you should be able to feel the stuffed animal rising with your breath.
- Breathe out slowly, letting the stuffed animal slowly and gently sink back down.
- As you breathe in, say to yourself, "God, I feel you in me." As you breathe out, make a "whoosh" noise, like you're breathing out God's love.
- When you feel like you're done, smile and say, "Thank you, God," and quietly get up.

A Time to Rest

Sometimes it's hard to take time for rest because we want to keep playing, or it feels hard to make our bodies stop moving. God shows us that rest is important. Jesus even napped in the bottom of a rocking boat!

In the morning, before you get out of bed, take three deep breaths while you pray, "Good morning, God!"

In the afternoon, before dinnertime, try closing your eyes and breathing with God for one minute. Can you extend your quiet time to two minutes? Three minutes? How long can you breathe with God?

Resting from Worry

Rest is important for our bodies, and also for our minds and hearts. We might need to let go of a worry or say a fear out loud.

- Think about something that is making you sad or worried.
- Hold your cupped hands in front of your mouth.
- Whisper your trouble into your hands, as a prayer offered to Jesus.
- Take your hands from your face and open them to God.

Whenever you do this, God is helping to carry your sadness and your worries. You don't ever have to carry them alone.

Grown-Up Note: Select a few heavy items for your child. Invite them to try lifting these alone and ask them about it. Then, ask them to try lifting these items with your help. Repeat the check-in question and see what they say.

Many of us have a very complicated relationship with rest, and there are none more conflicted than toddlers and small children. You know by looking at them when they are tired, and you don't fault them for it. You want them to rest, to refresh themselves, to let themselves reset. God looks at us in this exact same way. Rest is hard—fear of missing out is real, whether you are 5 or 105. Add in the fact that our culture doesn't honor rest the way it does work, and it's a wonder we aren't all asleep right this minute.

God rests. God has created the world in such a way that even the animals and the plants take a nap for part of the year. When Elijah has nowhere left to run and people are trying to kill him, God tells him to eat a snack and take a nap. Jesus is famous for napping during a massive storm in the middle of a huge lake. God thinks rest is so important that God told Moses to make resting one day out of seven one of the Ten Commandments. God is serious about rest, and we can be, too—even if we fight naps or stay up too late working or worrying or whatever. God's not going to let us miss anything that is important for us to see or be a part of. So it's OK—more than OK—to rest.

PLAY it!

Activity #1: Peace Be Still

Basis: This is a really high-energy and noisy game that can both get our energy out and help us practice becoming still and finding rest.

Materials needed:

- Copy of Luke 8:22-25

How To Play:

- Start out by sharing the story of Jesus calming the storm, found in Luke 8:22-25.
- Begin with all players sitting on the floor, crisscross applesauce. The game leader explains that we are going to make a very loud rain storm.
- The game leader begins to rub their hands together, and tells the players to do so as well, and to follow her movements. This is the only sound in the room.
- Soon, the leader begins to snap their fingers, slowly at first and building in speed and intensity.
- Once everyone is snapping loud and quick, the leader begins slapping their knees. The leader will occasionally shift back and forth between snaps and slaps.
- The real downpour begins by hopping up and stomping on the floor with both feet. Shift between stomping and slapping and snapping.
- Once everyone is good and wild, the leader will VERY LOUDLY announce, "Peace, be still!!" Everyone immediately goes super silent.
- Feel free to play several rounds. This is a great waiting game to play between activities or while waiting for meals.

Activity #2: Pajama Party

Basis: After creating the world, God rested. God wants us to also take time to rest, too. This activity will help children understand the need for rest and to consider rest as a spiritual practice.

Materials needed:

- A good supply of soft blankets, quilts, comforters, sleeping bags, pillows and stuffed animals, so that each child has a wide selection of soft and comfy items to choose from. Note on gathering supplies:
 - If you're asking kids and their families to bring these items, be sure to notify them a month ahead and collect the supplies well in advance.
 - You might also invite your community to donate their gently used blankets, quilts, pillows, stuffed animals, sleeping bags, and throws. Let them know these items will be donated to a children's emergency services agency in your area.
- Unoccupied space, like your community's worship space, a classroom, a library, breakout room, or any place where you can get a little quiet and plenty of clear floor space.

How to Play:

- Have the children and leader dress in their favorite soft, comfy clothes (pajamas are just fine).

- Allow the children to explore the empty area. If you are in a worship space, remember to consistently encourage them to be gentle in their actions and soft in their speech.
- Remind them of the prayers we say together, encouraging them to remember that God is always ready to hear us, ready to hold our hearts, ready to help us take a deep breath and calm our worries or busy brains or hands or feet.
- Invite the kids to imagine that prayer is like snuggling into a safe and cozy space with God, where we can listen to God and God can listen to us.
- Next, invite the children to begin gently and thoughtfully picking out the elements for their own personal soft and safe space. Remind them to work only on their own, unless invited by someone else to be helpful.
- Allow ample time for assembly, providing guidance and spacing so folks are close enough to see each other but not in each other's space.
- Once all the prayer lairs/cuddle puddles have been assembled, invite the children to crawl into their quiet spots.
- Select a simple prayer for comfort, calm and peace and pray with the group.
- Gently invite them to offer their own prayers for themselves and their families.
- Pray another short prayer, asking God to help us remember and love people who don't have soft, quiet or safe places to rest. May the Holy Spirit help us be kind and brave in meeting people who need rest, love and soft, safe things.
- Invite them to pray for comfort and healing, for friendship and belonging in the lives of hurting people.
- Ask them to imagine their prayers and God's love meeting in the soft materials all around them, and to pray that whoever snuggles up in those covers, or on those pillows, or with those stuffed toys will know they are loved, important, and surrounded by God's grace and love.
- Let the snuggling and praying continue as long as seems appropriate.

Activity #3: The Color of Rest

Basis: We can experience rest in a lot of ways, including by seeing what it feels like to rest from different kinds of stimulus. In this activity, we invite children to think about how color can be restful, as well as how sounds can help us to rest. We learn that we don't only rest by sleeping; sometimes we rest by slowing down, being creative, and enjoying peace and quiet.

Materials needed:

- jewel-toned construction paper
- pastel tissue paper
- colored pencils/map colors
- glue sticks
- digital audio of soothing music/nature sounds (a sleep machine would work great)
- copy of the 23rd Psalm

How to Play:

- As you are able, lower the lights to about half-power in your activity space. Turn on the quiet music/soothing noise.
- Invite your friends to take three collective breaths with you. Inhale slowly, all together and exhale. Repeat two more times.
- When everyone has settled, briefly explain the Psalm and some of the ways it can remind us that rest is holy and important, and that God wants us to have rest for our bodies and minds.
- Ask the children to pay special attention to resting words they might hear you say.
- Read the Psalm very slowly. Invite the participants to very gently and softly share the rest-related words they heard.
- Now, before you read the Psalm again, ask your friends to close their eyes and listen to the Psalm. Request that this time, they pay special attention to any colors or textures their imagination might offer up while you are reading.
- Once you are done reading the second time, the children can approach the activity area.
- Ask them to think about the rest-related words and colors they thought of and to create a paper collage of restful colors using different shapes of paper, a variety of folds and fans or little paper wads of their own invention.
- Invite them to take their own supplies to a quiet spot, so they can rest from being busy and relax into their imagination.
- Send these artistic imaginings home with a reminder that anytime they need to rest and relax, they can look at their paper collage, read the 23rd Psalm or think about the resting words they remember, and they might just feel a little better.

Additional Resources for Episcopal Discipleship and Evangelism

Learn more about the Way of Love at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love>.

- If you want to start at the beginning, watch Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's introductory video [here](#) and read the brief [reflection handout](#).
- Watch the beautiful and engaging "[Traveling the Way of Love](#)" video series, which follows Episcopalians living out each of the practices in the Way of Love. Season 2 will be released at the end of June 2024.
- You can print [Way of Love cards](#) that welcome teens and adults to take on a Jesus-centered life.
- Listen to [Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's "Way of Love" podcast](#), where he engages conversation partners around their journey to follow Jesus, love their neighbors, and practice the Way of Love.
- You will also find adult curricula for individuals and small groups, seasonal liturgical materials, and much more.