



6 | **GOD'S WORD**
PETER'S POWERFUL
MESSAGE

8 | **TRADITIONS**
REDEEMING STORIES

25 | **MARRIAGE**
TELL THE NEXT
GENERATION

CONTENTS

FAMILY TIME

- 3 *Environment*
Storytelling
- 4 *Editor's Note*
- 5 *How to Use Family Time & the Family Verse*
- 6 *God's Word*
Peter's Powerful Message
- 7 *Prayer*
Prayer for Israel
- 8 *Traditions*
Redeeming Stories
- 9 *Game Time*
Not-So-Mad Lib
- 11 *Game Time*
Photophone
- 12 *Storytelling*
Savannah's Place in
The Big God Story

13 *Worship* Family Psalm

14 *Family Time Recipe* Sweet City Brownies

16 *Kids in the Kitchen* Lost Sheep

17 *Conversation Starters* Never Ending Story

18 *Create* What's Your Story?

19 *Global* Israel

20 *Blessing* Love One Another

INSPIRE

22 *The Everyday Parent* Remembering Angela

EQUIP

23 *Tot Time* Get Up

24 *Tough Topics* Broken Legacies

24 *The Middle* The Power Behind the Story

SUPPORT

25 *Marriage* Tell the Next Generation

26 *Spiritual Parenting* Inbox

26 *Spiritual Grandparenting* The Family Historian

27 *10 Environments*

“ We believe that the Holy Spirit is God’s chosen teacher. It is He who causes spiritual growth and formation when and as He chooses. As such, we have articulated 10 distinct environments to create in your home. We desire to create spiritual space, which we refer to as an environment, in which God’s Spirit can move freely. ”

God has been working throughout history. He is still moving and working today. All of the things that He has done, is doing, and will do in the future aren't stand-alone, independent stories. These things all relate to each other, and together they create one amazing story, which we like to call The Big God Story.

As we're inspired by The Big God Story, we're called not to keep it to ourselves but to give it away. We're called to share our experience of encountering a loving and faithful God. We're a faith community that needs to hear how God is moving and creating a unique story in each of our lives. As we share these stories, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can inspire and strengthen one another's faith.

Our hope is that this next generation will get a firsthand, awe-inspiring view of God as we pass down our personal stories of dependence on the Holy Spirit and share how God has shown Himself to us in unique and tangible ways.

This month, as your family begins to tell stories, we pray that your faith as a family would be encouraged and would compel you to share with others.



Michelle Anthony

Family Ministry Architect
David C Cook

 Follow Michelle: @TruInspiration

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF STORYTELLING



(an excerpt from *Spiritual Parenting* by Michelle Anthony)

A few years ago, we took our two children to the Dominican Republic on a family mission trip. This is a powerful way for teenagers to see life as bigger than their little world. A mission trip requires them to give of themselves sacrificially, so it combats their intense desire to remain egocentric. They meet people from other cultures and languages who call Jesus their Lord, and they sense their smallness (yet importance) in relationship to the real hero. A mission trip also gives teenagers some concrete experiences they need to make the story line of God's power come alive, so that it becomes a literal part of day-to-day life.

We spent three months preparing for this trip by attending missions orientation and training meetings. In these meetings we each chose serving teams. My son chose puppets, technical support, and drama. My daughter chose drama, crafts, and recreation. Both of them, like everyone else on the team, needed to practice giving their testimony. We gave each person the opportunity to tell their story, and then we celebrated with them. Of course, my children were nervous the first time they gave their testimony, but each time it got easier and easier.

One day while serving in a leprosarium, sharing the gospel with people scarred from the disease of leprosy, I was in awe as I stood back and watched my children. My son was walking up to hug the men and women without hands or arms. He shook the offered stub of a man without hesitation. He played the role of Jesus in the pantomime drama, so gently offering his outstretched arms to those without them.

My daughter sang like an angel that day, songs that she had learned in their language, and she later gave her testimony in front of more than sixty people through an interpreter. I cried. I thanked God. I knew that even if it were only one day, they had captured a part of The Big God Story. That for this moment in time, life was not about them or what they had or did not have, but about Jesus and His love. I will never forget that day, and maybe more importantly, neither will they.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Michelle Anthony'.

Design, Layout, and Photography by Brad Claypool

EDITOR'S NOTE



Debbie Guinn
HomeFront Editor-in-Chief
David C Cook

"If you don't know the trees, you may be lost in the forest; but if you don't know the stories, you may be lost in life." Siberian Elder

All human beings have an innate need to hear and tell stories. We're enchanted by them. As parents, we understand that we're living out our story in front of our children every single day. Line by line. Chapter by chapter. What will your story be? What story will your children tell their friends and future family about you? Will they be able to clearly see your place in the grandest narrative of all, The Big God Story?

This month's issue of HomeFront is filled with ideas that will help direct your family to find their place in The Big God Story. You'll discover how to put words to your own story while helping your children tell theirs. Our CONVERSATION STARTERS section features a game that will quickly become a family favorite. And as you dive into the GOD'S WORD section, you'll see the power of Peter's words as he shares The Big God Story. Our GLOBAL section this month focuses on Israel, a country rich in heritage that understands the importance of passing God's story on to future generations.

Storytelling has become a lost art, so we must truly be intentional about "painting pictures" with our words. We pray this HomeFront will give you the tools to rediscover this often-forgotten craft.

Debbie Guinn



HomeFront

a spiritual parenting resource

at your fingertips

available on the
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and at HomeFrontMag.com



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Follow us on Twitter @[@HFfamily](https://twitter.com/HFfamily) for updates and encouragement as you spiritually parent your children.

HOW TO USE FAMILY TIME ...

It's as easy as

ONE
TWO
THREE

1

Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family.

It can be an evening, afternoon, or morning. **Just commit to building this time into your family's natural rhythm.** It's usually best to build this time around a meal.

2

Look through *HomeFront* and see what stands out. **Choose two or three experiences you would like to incorporate into your family times each week.** Don't feel burdened to complete all the activities at once, but carefully select which ones will fit your family best. This resource provides your family with more than enough experiences to create transforming environments in your home throughout the month.

3

Remember to **HAVE FUN!** Strive to make each gathering unique to your own family as you enjoy spending time with God and each other.



FAMILY TIME



FAMILY VERSE

Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God's Spirit in these words who transforms. We come to know God more when we're willing to open our hearts and listen to His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with this verse, and think of creative ways to invite your family to open up to God as they commit this verse to memory.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

(Psalm 90:1-2)

Family Time ideas!



PETER'S *Powerful Message*



One of the most powerful things we can do is tell stories. This is why we highlight the concept of The Big God Story so much! All of history is one big story that belongs to God. It's a story that conveys the power and love of a God who stopped at nothing in His mission to redeem us and give us life. It's a story that changes lives.

Peter understood this. He'd lived it! He'd grown up hearing the Old Testament stories of a God who would send a Redeemer to restore our relationship with Him. Then Peter actually met that Redeemer. Peter talked with Him. Peter lived with Him. Peter saw Him crucified and saw Him resurrected. Peter was a firsthand witness to the power of The Big God Story.

So it's no surprise that on the day of Pentecost, when Peter had the opportunity to share with thousands of people from every nation, that he shared this story. And it's also no surprise that lives were changed. **Through Peter, the Holy Spirit spoke, and thousands came to Christ.** The impact of that day reverberates through time as it jumpstarted the greatest, most enduring movement in history: the church.

HEAR IT

Jesus had gone back to heaven and left the apostles to wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. After 10 days of waiting, worshipping, and praying (Acts 1), the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Read Acts 2:1-8.

People from every nation were there that day. Thousands of them! They spoke a lot of different languages, but, because of the power of the Holy Spirit, they could all understand each other. This provided an amazing opportunity for the apostles.

Read Acts 2:22-41.

When Peter had the opportunity to share with all of those people, what did he share? The Big God Story! He shared how God had come to earth to save His people through His Son, Jesus. And because Peter stood up and told that story, 3,000 people were saved, and the movement known as the church began.

DO IT

Peter shared The Big God Story from a unique perspective—his own! Peter had been there. He'd known Jesus. He'd walked with Him and talked with Him. He'd seen Him die and rise again.

But this story isn't just Peter's to tell. God's story is just as much yours and mine as it is Peter's, and it's just as much ours to tell as it was his.

When we share The Big God Story with others, there's power in also sharing our part in it. **Take some time as a family to share how God has used you.** Let each person share how she met Jesus and how Jesus has worked in her life. This may lead to a time of prayer for one another or a time of celebration as you rejoice in the ways God has been moving.

by Matt Barnes

prayer for ISRAEL

by Erika Abdelatif

Hundreds of generations ago, God chose the Israelites to be His representatives. He desired to see them as a nation set apart for His glory.

And throughout The Big God Story, we see God's people caught in a cycle. First they would rebel against Him, only to wind up in a mess. Then they would cry out for His mercy, and He would lovingly forgive and restore them.

Israel is the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. For two thousand years the Jewish people remained exiled from Israel, but they never stopped praying for and dreaming of their return. After the terrible Holocaust during World War II, when six million Jews were killed, the countries of the world realized that Jews needed their own country. The United Nations gave its support, and Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948.

Today the nation of Israel needs God's love and restoration. Gather as a family to pray for the nation of Israel. Thank God for continually pursuing His people. Ask God to grant peace to Israel and its surrounding nations. Ask God to shine a light in the midst of very dark conflict.

Above all, pray that God would redeem Israel and allow its people to recognize Jesus as the Messiah—the fulfillment of God's promise to His people.



TRADITIONS



Redeeming STORIES

A tradition is the handing down of statements, beliefs, or customs from generation to generation.

We're drawn to stories. Stories serve as great ways to point people back to The Big God Story—God's redemptive story for all of mankind.

Many narratives feature some kind of hero and some kind of villain. There's someone you're rooting for or a team you'd like to join. There's also some kind of redemptive piece—a problem or a struggle that needs to be solved and a hero who's going to fix it. There's a climax to the story where the viewer feels nervous about how it might turn out. And, at the end of every good story, there's a triumphant ending, a time when all is made right.

This, at the core, is The Big God Story: The story of mankind's fall and struggle, a

villain who seeks to destroy all of mankind, and the hero—God—who comes to rescue and restore His people.

Next time you read a story or watch a movie with your family, consider ways you might talk about those stories with your children. Make it a tradition to ask them questions that point them to The Big God Story. Who is the hero in the story? Who is the villain? What is the big problem or obstacle that must be overcome? Who wins in the end?

By taking even a few short minutes to engage with your kids in this way, you'll help them to see how The Big God Story relates to every aspect of life.

by Rae Lynn Lott

GAME TIME

Not-So-Mad Lib

 YOUNGER

Instructions: Working together with your child, complete the word list below. Then fill in the blanks on the following page by matching the numbers from the list to the numbers in the story. Any blank with a star next to it should be filled in with your child's name. Have fun! *by Heather Kasparian*



WHAT IS AN ADJECTIVE? It's a word that describes things!

For example: hungry, furry, happy, messy, big, cloudy, tired

WHAT IS A VERB? It's an action word!

For example: run, jog, walk, skip, crawl, fly

- 1) ADJECTIVE
- 2) ADJECTIVE
- 3) VERB (PAST TENSE)
- 4) VERB (PAST TENSE)
- 5) ADJECTIVE
- 6) ANIMAL
- 7) VERB (PAST TENSE)
- 8) ANIMAL
- 9) ADJECTIVE
- 10) COLOR
- 11) SHAPE
- 12) NUMBER
- 13) SIZE
- 14) FOOD
- 15) SOMETHING IN A GARDEN (PLURAL)
- 16) ADJECTIVE
- 17) VERB (PAST TENSE)
- 18) ADJECTIVE

Not-So-Mad Lib

A DAY IN THE GARDEN

One day, a very long time ago, Miles and McKenzie were walking through a beautiful garden with their friend (*). As they were walking, (*) looked up and saw a very (1) and (2) bird sitting on top of a tree. The bird (3) down and landed right on Miles' shoulder. (*) couldn't believe it! He/she got so excited that he/she (4) around with a huge smile on his/her face! They continued to walk. It wasn't long before they saw a (5) but friendly lion taking a nap next to a (6). (*) wanted to take a closer look, so they (7) over as slowly as possible because they didn't want to wake the animal during its nap. As they got closer, (*) began to realize that this wasn't a lion; it was actually a (8)! What a silly mistake he/she made! You see, (*) had been so (9) that morning that he/she had forgotten to put on his/her (10) (11) glasses! Oops! They walked around the garden for at least (12) hours. Everyone was starting to get pretty hungry. (*) offered to make his/her favorite meal, (13) (14). But he/she didn't have the right ingredients, so he/she had to use (15) instead! It ended up tasting really (16)! As it got closer to bedtime, (*) decided it was time to go home. He/she said good-bye to his/her friends, packed up his/her leftovers, and (17) all the way home. What a (18) day!

GAME TIME



PHOTOPHONE



OLDER

Gather your family in a circle to play a fun version of the game Telephone. **Give each family member several index cards—one card for every member of the family.** (For instance, if you have four people in your family, each person gets four cards.) Have each person choose one marker.

Ask each person to think of a noun (person, place, or thing) **and write it on the first card in the stack.** Set the timer to one minute. When everybody is ready, have each person pass all of his cards—the whole stack—to the person on the right.

Start the timer. From there, each person should silently read what's written on the top card and then move the card to the bottom of the stack,

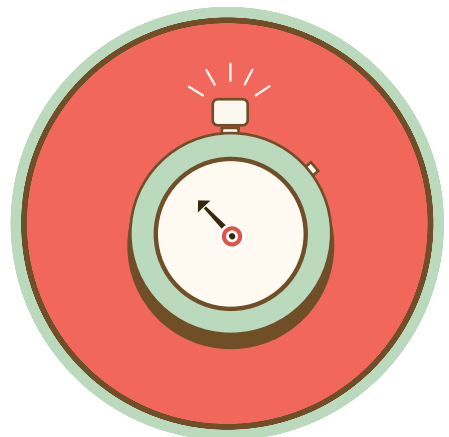
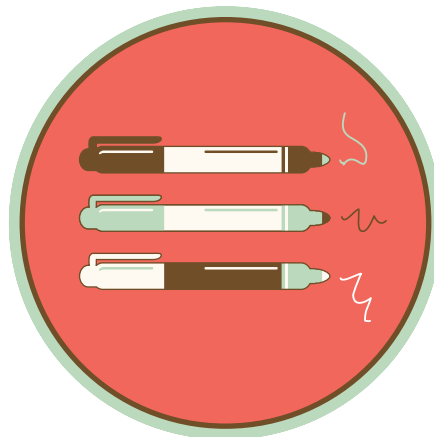
revealing a blank card. Each person should then draw a picture of what they see read on the previous card. **When the timer stops, each person should pass his cards—the entire stack—to the right.** The process continues all over again, but this time each person must write a word or phrase he thinks describes the picture the previous person just drew.

Continue this process until each stack of cards goes all the way around the circle and back to the original owner. Spend some time reading and laughing at the progression of words and photos!

by Erika Abdelatif

SUPPLIES

INDEX CARDS MARKERS STOPWATCH



STORYTELLING

SAVANNAH'S PLACE IN THE BIG GOD STORY

For my daughter Savannah, The Big God Story was the integral thread used by the Holy Spirit to bring to life years of sowing and planting. As a single parent, I often wonder, "How am I doing raising my child?" **Parenting is difficult. But when you go it alone, it's even more challenging.** Thankfully, I have a loving God and Father who loves my daughter. My job is to put my trust in Him and His guidance.

It seemed I dragged Savannah between this volunteer activity and that one, from this mission trip to another. I often wondered, **"Am I going to burn her out? Turn her off?"**

I heard the answer loud and clear while attending church services one Father's Day. As is the case each year, I was looking forward to picking her up and getting that 'little something' that the kids make for their dads during the Father's Day service. **My gift that particular day could not have been made by human hands!** The kids had been studying The Big God Story that day and, as

Parents,

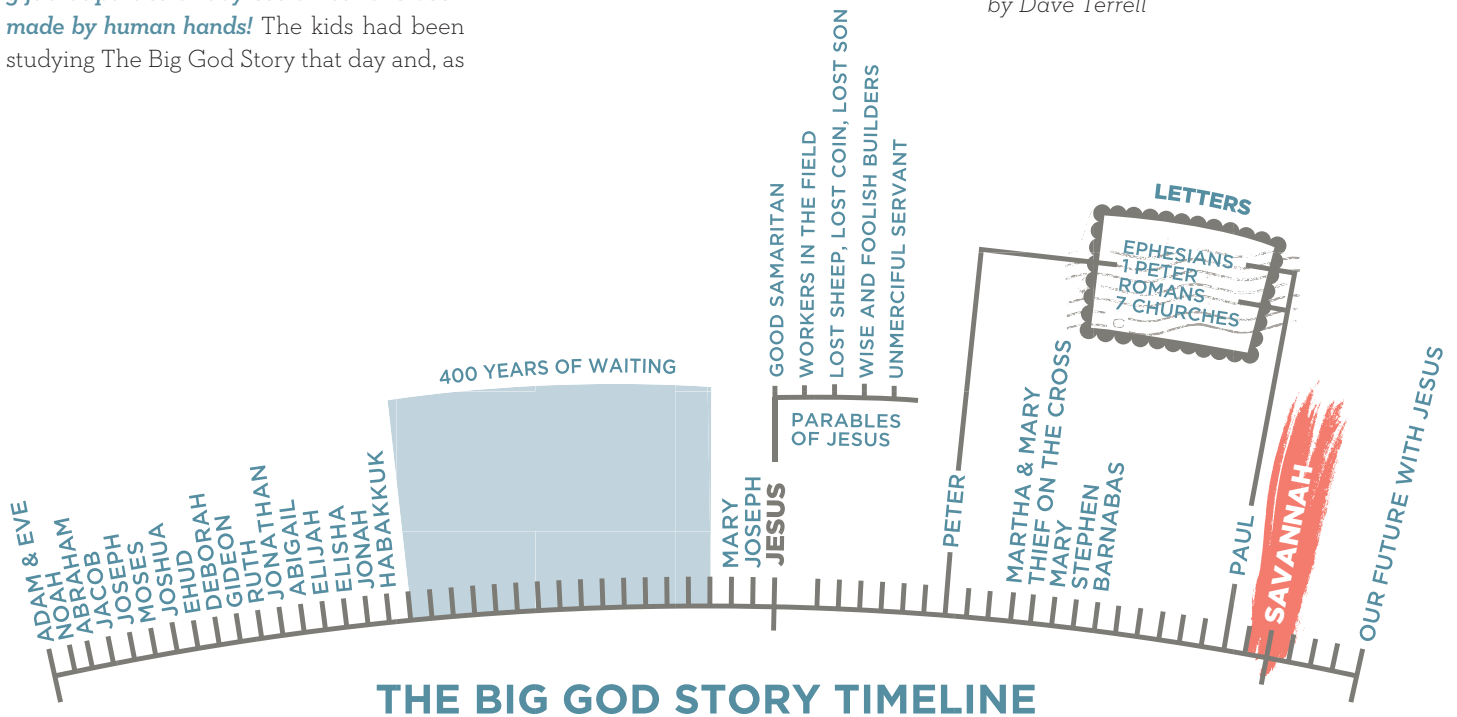
share with your children the first time you heard The Big God Story and how it impacted your life.

they sometimes do, had a calling at the end of the message for the children to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

When I went to pick up Savannah after service, I was greeted by a staff member who held Savannah close. Their smiles stretched from ear to ear smiles. The staff member explained to me that during the calling, Savannah raised her hand amidst the sea of children and declared in front of everyone, "I accept Christ as my Lord and Savior!" What a blessed gift. **What an answer to prayer.**

I'm excited to watch all the many ways God will continue to write Savannah's part of His story. **I am grateful that even as a single parent, my part in His story did not go unrewarded when on that Father's Day in 2009, Savannah found her place in The Big God Story.**

by Dave Terrell



FAMILY PSALM

by Justin Fox

Psalms 78 is an epic work of poetic storytelling. It's full of images, emotions, symbols, and colorful language. It opens by defining its reason for being written. In verse 7, it explains, **"Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands."** The highlights of God's story are recorded so we can remember them, reflect on them, and be inspired by them.

Take a moment with your family to practice the worshipful act of storytelling. As an expression of praise, recall some of God's big moments and miracles in your lives, and tell those stories as your own personal family psalm.

An example of this from Psalm 78 is the passage found in verses 12 through 16: "He did miracles in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan. He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand firm like a wall. He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers."

A family psalm might read something like this: "God has been faithful to us; He healed my sister when she had a fever last month. God gave wisdom to Dad at his job. He has provided our clothes, a roof over our head, and food for us to eat. God is awesome!"

You can shout it, sing it, or write it down. Make it poetic, colorful, and even illustrated if you want.

“ WE OFTEN THINK OF WORSHIP AS SINGING, BUT WE CAN WORSHIP GOD IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. ”

Lord,
YOU HAVE BEEN OUR
DWELLING PLACE
THROUGHOUT ALL
GENERATIONS.
BEFORE THE
MOUNTAINS
WERE BORN
or YOU BROUGHT FORTH
THE EARTH &
THE WORLD,
FROM
EVER → EVER
LASTING → LASTING
YOU ARE GOD.
PSALM 90:1-2

FAMILY TIME RECIPE



- The Legend of the Great Baker -
by Matt Barnes

Note to parents: In order to highlight the environment of STORYTELLING, we've included a story with our recipe this month. Read this story as a fun way to bring this family activity alive for younger children. Be sure to help them make the connection between the Great Baker and God. Remind them God has great plans for us in His big story; we just need to be willing to allow Him to use us in new and exciting ways. Enjoy!

For as long as anyone can remember, the far-off land known as Sweet Town has been creating the best desserts anyone could imagine. The ingredients for all of your favorite desserts live in Sweet Town, and they all work together just to create desserts for the world to enjoy.

For years the Great Baker would deliver recipes to the ingredients. The Great Baker loved the ingredients so much that he wanted to make sure they were the best they could be. He would show them how they could work together to create desserts they could never create alone. The ingredients still tell the stories of the Great Baker giving them the recipes to make their most famous desserts. They talk about the time they received the recipe that brought the chocolate together with the graham crackers and the marshmallows to create s'mores. They remember and celebrate the first time the eggs, oil, butter, chocolate, and more combined forces to make the first red velvet cupcake. And who could forget the creation of the first ice cream cake?

Yes, for many years, the Great Baker kept things very sweet in Sweet Town. But, over the years, the ingredients stopped listening for the recipes of the Great Baker. Some of the ingredients stopped listening because they were happy with the recipes they already had and didn't think they needed any new ones. Some thought they could come up with their own great recipes, but these usually didn't work out very well. This made the Great Baker sad. He loved the ingredients so much and wanted to help them work together to share his recipes with the world. But the ingredients had stopped listening.

One day, one small marshmallow living in Sweet Town had a thought. "What if there's more to being a marshmallow than just making plain old s'mores every day?" The little marshmallow remembered the great stories that the bigger

marshmallows had told her about the Great Baker and the amazing recipes he had given his ingredients. She wondered why nobody asked the Great Baker for recipes anymore. So, she gave it a try. She cried out, "Great Baker! Do you have any new recipes for us?" The Great Baker immediately replied, "Yes. I've had them all along. But the ingredients stopped listening to me." "I'm listening to you," said the little marshmallow. **"Give me your recipe and I'll get others to listen too!"**



So the Great Baker handed down a brand new recipe to the young marshmallow.

The marshmallow was so excited that she immediately ran out and gathered all of the ingredients she would need to create the new recipe. But once she got them together, they were annoyed. "Why are we here?" shouted a pecan. "Yeah, I should be making cherry pie!" yelled a cherry. The marshmallow explained that the Great Baker had given them all a brand new recipe. "But the Great Baker doesn't talk to us anymore. He hasn't given us a new recipe in years!" said a chocolate chip. The marshmallow replied, "That's not true! He's been talking to us all along. We just stopped listening!" And with that the young marshmallow began to share the recipe the Great Baker had given her. When she was done, some of the ingredients were amazed. Others were scared. Most didn't believe it could make a good dessert. They hadn't had a new recipe in so long.

Little by little, the ingredients began to believe in the recipe of the Great Baker. The little marshmallow was so excited when the last ingredient agreed to give it a try. On that day, history was made in Sweet Town. The marshmallows, cherries, graham crackers, and pecans (and a whole bunch of other ingredients) came together for the first time to let the Great Baker make something completely new: Sweet Town brownies! Nobody had ever thought to combine those ingredients and make something totally new. From that day forward, the ingredients of Sweet Town listened to the Great Baker and let him use them in all of his amazing new recipes. **And every time we eat one of the Great Baker's desserts, we pass on the story of that little marshmallow who let the Great Baker use her to change an entire town.**

FAMILY TIME RECIPE



*ready in 45
minutes!*

Sweet Town Brownies

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES SERVES: 15-20

◦ INGREDIENTS ◦

- + 1 (10 oz.) jar maraschino cherries
- + 1 (19.5 oz.) package fudge brownie mix (for 13" x 9" pan)
- + ½ cup oil
- + ¼ cup water
- + 2 eggs
- + ¼ cup butter, melted
- + 8 whole graham crackers
- + ½ cup milk chocolate chips
- + ½ cup chopped pecans
- + 1 cup miniature marshmallows

◦ DIRECTIONS ◦

1. Drain maraschino cherries on paper towels and cut in half. Set aside.
2. Prepare brownie mix according to package directions.
3. Spread melted butter in pan.
4. Cover bottom of pan with one layer of graham crackers. (If necessary, cut graham crackers with serrated knife to make them fit the pan.)
5. Spread brownie batter over graham crackers.
6. Bake in a preheated 350-degree (Fahrenheit) oven five minutes less than directed on the package.
7. Sprinkle chocolate chips, pecans, cherries, and marshmallows over the top.
8. Return to oven; bake an additional five to eight minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out almost clean.
9. Let cool. Cut into squares. Makes 24 squares.

FOR AN EASY METRIC CONVERSION CHART, SEARCH THE INTERNET FOR "METRIC KITCHEN."

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

Lost SHEEP

While Jesus was here on earth, He often told stories in which He referred to Himself as the Shepherd and us as sheep. In the book of Luke, Jesus told a compassionate story about a man who had 100 sheep. One day the man lost one of his sheep. Even though he had 99 left, he wouldn't stop searching until he found the one that was lost. Through this story Jesus revealed His heart for the lost. This story also helps people understand how much celebration there is in heaven when one sinner repents.

Read together Luke 15:3-7. Allow your children to retell this story back to you. Then ask them why they think Jesus told this story. Remind them that when people aren't in a relationship with God, they're referred to as "lost." Explain that sin separates us from God. Ask: "How does it feel to know that God cares about lost people?" Then talk about what a celebration in heaven might be like. **Rejoice together that God loves you and is a Good Shepherd!**

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Unroll the crescent roll dough. Divide into sections. Using one section, pinch off 14 tiny pieces and 7 slightly larger pieces. These will make the sheep's ears and tails.
3. Wrap the remaining sections of dough around the sausages (blanket-style). Close the dough around one end of the sausage, leaving the other end sticking out.
4. Create ears by attaching two of the tiny pieces of dough to the edge of the wrapped blanket where the sausage sticks out. Create the tails by placing the larger pieces of dough on the closed end of the wrapped blanket.
5. Place the sheep on a cookie sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes or until the crescent dough is golden brown.
6. With a toothpick, poke two holes in the sausages and insert peppercorns to create the sheep's eyes. Be sure to warn your children that peppercorns are spicy!
7. If you want to add legs to the sheep, slice additional cocktail sausages and attach them with toothpicks (after baking).

Kids in the Kitchen features simple, kid-friendly recipes that encourage families to spend time together while creating yummy treats.



Ingredients:

- + 1 can refrigerated crescent rolls
- + 7 cocktail sausages (add 7 more if you want to create legs for the sheep)
- + 14 peppercorns

Yields: 7 sheep Prep time: 15 min Bake time: 12-15 min.

CONVERSATION STARTERS



Never-ENDING Story

by Debbie Guinn

This month, have fun around the dinner table by **creating your own stories**. We've provided a list of 50 words and phrases. Cut apart these story prompts and put them into a jar on your dinner table.



Get your children talking ...

Allow each family member to draw three papers from the jar.

Then combine the story prompts and let them lead you into a story. Use all three prompts in any order to create your story.

(For younger children, you may need to read the words or phrases they draw from the jar and give them an example of how to storytell.) **Go around the table so each family member gets a turn.** Then return your papers to the jar and draw again to tell another story.

Remind your children that one story is the greatest story ever told: The Big God Story. Thank God together that you get to play a part in that story!

ONCE UPON A TIME	WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
HAPPILY EVER AFTER	VIOLINIST
LONG AGO IN A FARAWAY LAND	PERSON WHO NEEDS A JOB
WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS	BABYSITTER
PERSON WITH AN UNFORTUNATE NICKNAME	PERSON WITH VERY BAD BREATH
AT THE LAUNDROMAT	STAY-AT-HOME PARENT
DINNER WITH THE FAMILY	VENTRILOQUIST
AT AN AMUSEMENT PARK	PERSON WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF CATS
ATTACKED BY SQUIRRELS	POLICE OFFICER
A KEY THAT NO ONE ELSE HAS	CASHIER AT THE DOLLAR STORE
CHERISHED TOY	WAITER AT THE RESTAURANT
BEST VACATION EVER	SPACE ALIEN DISGUISED AS A PERSON
BROKEN BONE	TATTLETALE
CAR WON'T START	COWBOY
BAD DIRECTIONS	SUBJECT OF A MEDICAL EXPERIMENT
AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT	PERSON WHO NEVER GIVES UP
PHONE CALL AT 3 A.M.	KEEPER OF A FAMILY TRADITION
CLOTHES THAT DON'T FIT RIGHT	PASTOR
WHAT IS THAT SMELL?	EX-SUPERHERO
AFRAID OF THE DARK	DRIVER OF AN ICE CREAM TRUCK
FORGOT TO PASS ALONG THE INFORMATION	NOT-SO-GOOD SAMARITAN
IF ONLY WHAT WAS SAID COULD BE TAKEN BACK	THE LAST PERSON ANYONE WOULD EXPECT
LONG-LOST LOVE SPOTTED IN SUPERMARKET	EXTREMELY HAIRY PERSON
CAN'T GET DOWN	LAST DAY ON THE JOB
TALKING DOLL	MOTHER'S NECKLACE
BIRTHDAY PARTY	FIRST NIGHT ALONE

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

BY JENNIFER CHO SALAFF

God's Word is basically a love story—a story of the Lover pursuing His created ones in order to have a personal relationship with each one of them. This is The Big God Story: good and evil war with each other, evil seems to take over the world, but then Jesus shows up and defeats death! Those who follow Him all win in the end!

How amazing that we've been grafted into God's big story by His grace! And how marvelous that He's chosen a special part for each of us to play. ***As parents, it's important for us to help our children catch a glimpse of the storyline that they're uniquely a part of.*** This month's CREATE gives your kids a fun way to illustrate their place in The Big God Story. ***Allow your children to design "books" to show how they see themselves fitting into the greatest story ever told.***



WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 8.5" x 11" paper, notebook paper, construction paper, sticky notes, etc.
- crayons, colored pencils, and/or markers
- stapler or single-hole punch
- yarn or ribbon

HOW TO:

- Gather paper (any kind of paper—8.5" x 11", notebook, construction paper, etc.) to make your book.
- Stack as many sheets your child will need, fold in half (width-wise), then staple the binding (the folded part of the book) or single-hole punch at the binding and tie yarn or ribbon through the holes.
- Encourage your child to create a book in any style. It could be a picture book with fun illustrations, a comic book, a book of poetry, or even a pop-up book!



CREATE IS A TIME TO
ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY IN A
COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO
HEARING GOD'S WORD.

Where in the World Is ... ISRAEL

Awakening a compassionate heart and a global mindset in children for people beyond the boundaries of their own neighborhoods.



Israel is located in the Middle East and borders the Mediterranean Sea. In the south and southwest, it borders the Gulf of Aqaba and the Sinai Peninsula. To the east, Israel shares its borderline with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Palestinian Autonomous Area on the western shore of the Jordan River. In the north, Israel shares its borders with Lebanon and with Syria on the disputed Golan Heights.



NOW THAT WE KNOW THE LOCATION OF ISRAEL, LET'S MEET ITS PEOPLE.

More than seven million people call Israel home. Of these people, almost six million are Jewish.



If you lived in Israel, you would eat a lot of oranges—cut into wedges or squeezed into juice. Israeli people also enjoy many fresh vegetables, including radishes, cucumbers, and tomatoes. In Israel you might also eat *blintzes*, a food that's similar to a very thin pancake filled with cheese, sugar, and cinnamon.



Most people in Israel attend religious services at a Jewish temple.



POPULATION:
7,751,000
LANGUAGE:
Hebrew/Arabic
RELIGION:
83% Judaism
16% Islam
2% Christianity

DID YOU KNOW?

- *The glue on Israeli stamps is kosher. Kosher foods fulfill the requirements of Jewish dietary law.*
- *Israel's paper money features braille so it can be more easily used by the blind.*

TO GREET SOMEONE, YOU WOULD SAY:

“Shalom”
(pronounced *shah-LOHM*)

To talk with your friends in Israel, you would speak either Hebrew or Arabic. Most of the population speaks Hebrew.

BLESSING

TELL OF HIS WONDERS

Blessings can be spoken over your child for the purpose of declaring God's truths. This month, remind your children of the many wonders of God that we can share with others.

BLESS

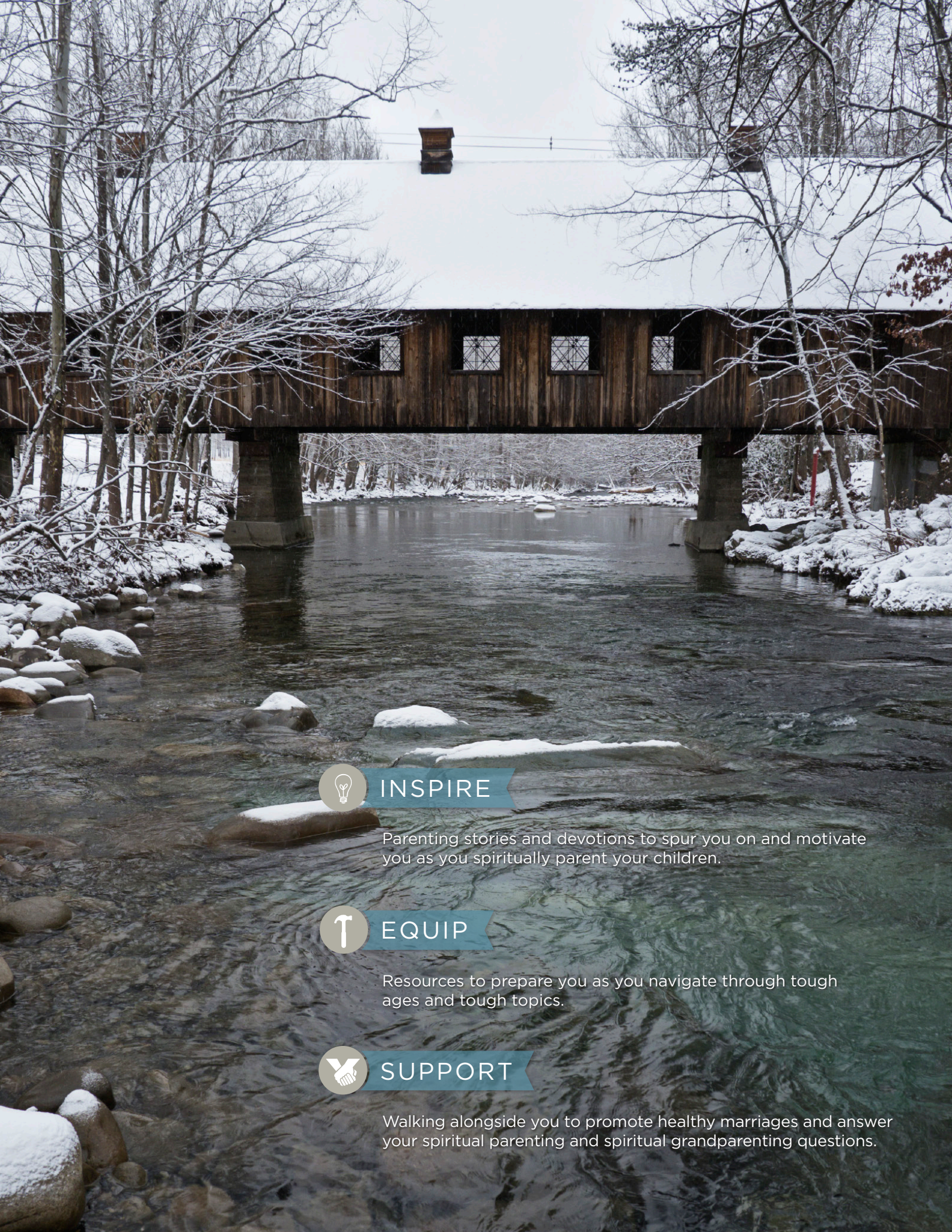
Speak these words of Scripture over your kids.

"Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare." Psalm 40:5

PRAY

(Child's name), may The Big God Story fill you with wonder. May you always be ready and willing to tell this amazing story to others.

Numbers 6:22-26 records the Lord instructing Moses to "bless" the people with these words: "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."



INSPIRE

Parenting stories and devotions to spur you on and motivate you as you spiritually parent your children.



EQUIP

Resources to prepare you as you navigate through tough ages and tough topics.



SUPPORT

Walking alongside you to promote healthy marriages and answer your spiritual parenting and spiritual grandparenting questions.

THE EVERYDAY PARENT

Be a legacy-builder, a faith-displayer. When you're 90, be confident God will say,

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!”
Matthew 25:21

by Rebekah Pogue

My husband's grandma recently turned 90. To celebrate her, every member of the family wrote her a letter, celebrating who she's been in our lives. As I wrote my letter, the word *legacy* came to mind. She is a legacy-builder—a faith-displayer.

Her life inspires me to reflect on the legacy I'm leaving as a parent. So much of the life we create as a family focuses on the day-to-day: school responsibilities, meals, errands, sharing, and playing, with traditions sprinkled in. When my boys look back at their childhood, I hope they see a legacy left by parents who loved Jesus and pointed them toward their heavenly Father. I'm not perfect; I make mistakes, and I lose my patience. But I'm real. I want to create a legacy of taking those often-imperfect moments and letting God turn them into something beautiful.

No matter your past, today you have the opportunity to leave an authentic legacy of inviting God into your family. Even with simple things, such as celebrating God's creation through a nature walk or park picnic, you're creating beautiful memories of displaying God's love in your family.

Remembering Angela

by Debbie Guinn

Beautiful. Healed. Whole. These large words boldly decorated the back of the stage in the sanctuary. Not exactly the words you might expect to see at a memorial service. But this was no ordinary service. **This was a celebration of life—a celebration of a promise kept by a trustworthy God.**

The memorial was filled with friends and family remembering and storytelling about Angela's life—her love for her family, her tenacious personality, and her passion for missions and Vacation Bible School. Then, one by one, each of her five sons stepped up to the microphone and shared his own personal memories. Each one of the boys, ages 9 through 20, had a unique story to tell. However, all the stories shared one common thread: Their mom, who had battled cancer for more than a decade, was now healed and whole. She wasn't dead; she was alive with Jesus. Each of Angela's sons proclaimed God's trustworthiness and faithfulness. **They knew they would see their mother again someday.**

It's easy to proclaim that God is trustworthy in the happy times of life, but it takes a much deeper faith to trust God when things don't turn out the way we planned. It's crucial to remember that in the peaks and valleys of life, God always proves Himself to be trustworthy. We can count on Him to hear our prayers and answer them. To comfort us and walk with us through all seasons of life, and to give us the courage to boldly proclaim this story to others—just like Angela's sons.



TOT TIME

(AGES 3 & UNDER)

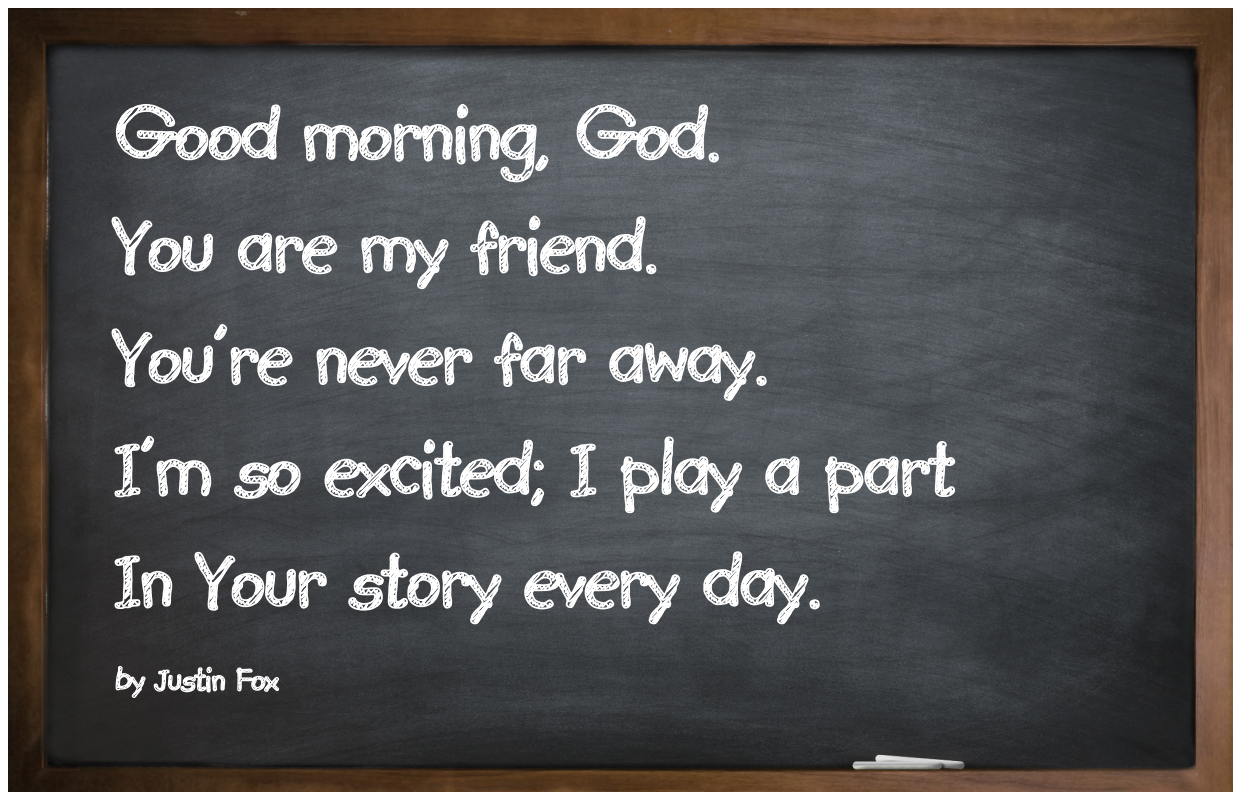
Repetition is fundamental to almost any learning style, so when you're attempting to teach your children, use repetition!



*These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you **sit at home** and when you walk **along the road**, when you **lie down** and when you **get up**.*

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

get up Use this rhyme as a way to remind your children to look for ways to be a part of The Big God Story.



TOUGH TOPICS

BROKEN LEGACIES



We love stories of parents who pass on rich legacies of faith to future generations. But not everyone has parents who are believers—and even those who do may have suffered at the hands of family. What do we do with our broken legacies: fragmented relationships, divorce, abuse, and abandonment? How do we process the negative legacies of our parents or our own poor choices?

It's critical to remember that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Even good people have flaws. Jesus tells us to forgive those who hurt us (Matthew 6:14). Sometimes forgiveness restores relationships; other times it simply restores our hearts. There are times we must draw uncomfortable boundaries with others so we can break bad cycles and begin afresh, but we do so with a heart cleansed by forgiveness, inviting the Holy Spirit to heal us. We may walk through a season of grief to mourn broken legacies, but while weeping lasts for a night, joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

God never leaves us alone and broken. Throughout Scripture He repeatedly promises to heal us. He's not only the author of our faith but the One who finishes the good work He starts. ***He puts our feet upon a new path and remakes us to live the legacy of His Son*** (Romans 8:28–29).

THE MIDDLE

(6TH TO 8TH GRADE)

◦ THE POWER BEHIND THE STORY ◦

It's important for your middle school child to see God's Word for what it truly is and not as a dusty and irrelevant story. Preteens or teenagers who have grown up in the church are prone to lose sight of the power of God's story. They may tend to become desensitized to God's Word instead of relating to it and discovering their own unique identity in His story.

God's word is powerful and relevant. Paul describes it best when he says in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." The story of God redeeming His people, the gospel, is powerful. It is relevant and personal because it enables us to go to God in faith.

It's essential to support your children by continuously encouraging them to see their part in the story God is writing. Help awaken them to the power and life-transforming truth of God's story in the everyday.

One of the best places to talk about these things is around the dinner table. As you sit down over a family meal, allow each person to share a specific life celebration and a specific challenge that has taken place in the last few weeks. ***After each person tells her story, direct the other family members to identify how they see God working in that person's celebration and challenge.*** After your family is comfortable doing this intentional storytelling time, add another level to this by asking family members to find

a story in the Bible that connects with the person's story.

At first, when you as a family start storytelling, your children might not be as excited to share and jump right in, but don't lose hope. The more you do this, the more comfortable they'll become—and the more ***they'll begin to identify the power of God's story being carried out in their own lives.***

by Bryan Pogue

MARRIAGE

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.

(Psalm 78:1-4)



Tell the Next **GENERATION**



A study of Psalm 78 reminds us we are to pass on to our children the things of God. As verse 4 says, “We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD.”

I am always reminded that God must be at the center of our marriages in order to pass on to our children a marriage that exemplifies love, compassion, kindness, sacrifice, and respect. I see so many couples unable to pass on to their children God’s deeds, power, or wonders because they are not experiencing them in their own marriages.

Many couples struggle to show these attributes of God (the stories of His faithfulness) because they either refuse to allow God to give them the power to love unconditionally, they become complacent, or they simply give up on their marriage.

Marriage is very difficult, and perhaps it’s the place where we need the Lord’s strength more than any other. We need His patience, kindness, and mercy.

TALK WITH YOUR SPOUSE about what attributes of God you can express to each other more. I would challenge you to work on your marriage and make it part of the story of God that you pass on as your legacy. Let your children see that you’re allowing God to work in your marriage to make it all that it can be.

TELL YOUR CHILDREN the story of how God brought you together and how you’ve had to rely on Him for wisdom, patience, and love to make your marriage successful. Tell them the stories of how you’ve prayed for each other and seen God work.

I can’t think of a more important way to show God’s faithfulness than by telling your children the story of God’s involvement in your marriages.

by Roger Tirabassi

SPIRITUAL PARENTING & SPIRITUAL GRANDPARENTING

Inbox w/ Michelle Anthony

Each month we choose questions for the Inbox from the [HomeFrontSP Facebook page](#). If you have spiritual parenting questions, go to [Facebook.com/HomeFrontSP](#) and join the conversation. Remember to  Like us too!

Q: My past is not so pretty! How do I tell my child my story of redemption in an age-appropriate way?

A: I like to use the structure of “God,” “Sin,” “Jesus,” “Live” when talking about how the gospel has impacted my life. You can start with **GOD**, sharing His perfect plan for you and your life. Next, share how your **SIN** impacted this perfect plan in negative ways. Here you can discuss your selfishness, anger, or other categories of sin, as opposed to the details of how that sin manifested itself (e.g., sexuality, drugs). When you get to the part about **JESUS**, tell your child how receiving His perfect sacrifice and grace healed you of your sin and now empowers you by His Holy Spirit to **LIVE** a new life to glorify God and not yourself.

Q: Do you have any suggestions on how to help my children grasp that they have important parts in The Big God Story like the stories they read in the Bible?

A: **One way that I love doing this with my child is in a two-part conversation. The first is to think of someone in the Bible.** This may be someone you pick for a specific conversation or a person whom your child is learning about in church. For example, if the person is David, then you can discuss his life, but then quickly put the focus on God. Ask your child: In the storyline of David fighting the giant, Goliath, what do you know about God? Perhaps your child may say that he knows that God is victorious or that God is big or strong. Next you can ask how God used David to show His victory or His strength. As the conversation continues, you can allow your child to talk about something in his life. **Next, ask what your child knows about God from that situation.** As your child shares that, you can then remind him that God is using him in His story to reveal Himself to your child ... and to those who are watching.

The Family Historian

by DEBBIE GUINN

A few weeks ago God provided for my grandchildren in a remarkable and unexpected way. He's done this numerous times in their short little lives. As I recounted the event to a friend, she proclaimed, **“You have to write this stuff down!”**

I began to think about the power of God's faith-fulness in my grandchildren's lives. I realized how important these stories would be to them one day. I know there will be times when they aren't sure God is real or present—times of questioning while living in a broken world. **I know they'll need these sacred reminders.**

In Joshua 4, the Lord told Joshua to take 12 stones from the Jordan River and place them in their camp. The purpose of this act was to create a memorial to the great and mighty way God took care of His people. God wanted those who came later, those who hadn't experienced this revelation, to know “that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.”

I believe we often fail to trust God because we forget the great things He's done. The faith of our children can be weak because they've never been told how good God is and how He's always working in our lives. Later generations need to know Him and know what He can do. Sometimes even those of us who have witnessed God's actions need to be reminded.

For this reason I'd like to encourage you to become the family historian. **Get a journal or create a blog where you can begin writing down your family's stories of God's grace and faithfulness.** As you begin to recount these stories, ask yourself, “What do I want my family to know about God? What good and powerful things can I share about God that will give them something to hold on to when facing rough times?”

When our families begin to recognize God's faithfulness, they will be encouraged and find the hope and strength they need to move forward.

(Parents: Consider setting up a blog or purchasing a journal for your children's grandparents. Tell them about the blog or hand them the journal along with a copy of this article. Explain to them how much it would mean to you and your children to have your family's personal faith stories recorded.)

10 ENVIRONMENTS

Below you'll find a brief explanation of each environment:

1. STORYTELLING—The power of The Big God Story impacts our lives by giving us an accurate and awe-inspiring perspective of how God has been moving throughout history. It is the story of redemption, salvation, and hope and tells how I have been grafted into it by grace. It further compels us to see how God is using every person's life and is creating a unique story that deserves to be told for God's glory.

"God has a big story, and I can be a part of it!"

2. IDENTITY—This environment highlights who we are in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, sealed, and given an inheritance in Christ ... all of which we did nothing to earn. This conviction allows children to stand firm against the destructive counter identities the world will offer.

"I belong to God, and He loves me!"

3. FAITH COMMUNITY—God designed us to live in community and to experience Him in ways that can only happen in proximity to one another. The faith community serves to create an environment to equip and disciple parents, to celebrate God's faithfulness, and to bring a richness of worship through tradition and rituals, which offer children an identity. Our love for each other reflects the love we have received from God.

"God's family cares for each other and worships God together."

4. SERVING—This posture of the heart asks the question, "What needs to be done?" It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and focuses on a cause bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that as Christ followers we are to view our lives as living sacrifices that we generously give away!

"Asks the question, 'What needs to be done?'"

5. OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE—As children are challenged to step out of their comfort zones from an early age, they learn to experience a dependence on the Holy Spirit to equip and strengthen them beyond their natural abilities and desires. We believe this environment will cultivate a generation that, instead of seeking comfort, seeks a radical life of faith in Christ.

"God transforms me when I step out in faith."

6. RESPONSIBILITY—This environment captures the ability to take ownership for one's life, gifts, and resources before God. A child must be challenged to take responsibility for his or her brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as for those who are spiritually lost. Our hope is that the Holy Spirit will use this environment to allow each child to understand that God has entrusted His world to us.

"God has entrusted me with the things and people He created around me."

7. COURSE CORRECTION—This environment flows out of Hebrews 12:11-13 and is the direct opposite of punishment. Instead, biblical discipline for a child encompasses a season of pain, the building up in love, and a vision of a corrected path for the individual with the purpose of healing at its core.

"When I get off track, God offers me a path of healing."

8. LOVE/RESPECT—Without love, our faith becomes futile. This environment recognizes that children need an environment of love and respect in order to be free to both receive and give God's grace. Key to this environment is the value that children are respected because they embody the image of God. We must speak to them, not at them, and we must commit to an environment where love and acceptance are never withheld due to one's behavior.

"God fills me with His love so I can give it away."

9. KNOWING—Nothing could be more important than knowing and being known by God. We live in a world that denies absolute truth, and yet God's Word offers just that. As we create an environment that upholds and displays God's truth, we give children a foundation based on knowing God, His Word, and a relationship with Him through Christ. God is holy, mighty, and awesome, yet He has chosen to make Himself known to us!

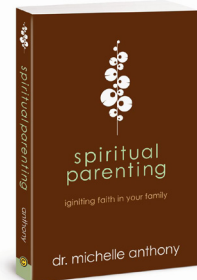
"God knows me, and I can know Him."

10. MODELING—Biblical content needs a practical living expression in order for it to be spiritually impacting. This environment serves as a hands-on example of what it means for children to put their faith into action. Modeling puts flesh on faith and reminds us that others are watching to see if we live what we believe.

"I see Christ in others, and they can see Him in me."



IT IS OUR PRAYER THAT HOMES AND CHURCHES WOULD CREATE THESE ENVIRONMENTS FOR KIDS TO LIVE IN SO THEIR FAITH WILL GROW IN A COMMUNITY OF CONSISTENCY, COMMON LANGUAGE, AND PRACTICE. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THESE ENVIRONMENTS CAN IGNITE A TRANSFORMING FAITH IN YOUR FAMILY, WE SUGGEST YOU READ:



SPIRITUAL PARENTING:
An Awakening for Today's Families
BY MICHELLE ANTHONY

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