



# Parent Guide

Hi, grownups. Let's address one important item right away:

You don't need to be a professional Sunday School teacher, musician, or artist for this experience to be meaningful for your family.

You love your kids. That's all the prerequisite you need.

The creative, fun activities in this resource are designed to accompany your family's daily rhythm. Really! There's no need to rearrange your schedule to "fit this in." Motivation and energy will ebb and flow during the day... and we encourage you to follow that flow.

- A Bible Beat to begin the day with purpose.
- A simple, open-ended art project when children and parents are feeling inspired.
- A nature devotion to share during outdoor play.
- A game to engage that pre-meal energy.
- A family worship experience to end the day.
- And a musical soundtrack to accompany any type of activity.

As parents ourselves, we've seen first-hand how a simple, cooperative game can harness untamed energy. We've seen how music sparks joy and provides comfort. And we've seen how an introspective art project can diffuse intense emotions. Bring these activities alongside your family's daily rhythm, using creativity and the arts as meaningful ways to grow in faith.

## A Few Tips As You Begin...

1. It's a good idea to read through each activity before guiding your kids through it.
2. Allow kids the space to create on their own. If they feel stuck, sometimes it's best to answer a question with a question... it might help their creative wheels start to turn.
3. You have the freedom to modify. Want to use paints instead of markers? Go for it. Want to worship around a backyard bonfire (with s'mores)? Totally allowed.
4. It's OK to say, "I don't know." Even grownups don't have all the answers.
5. Jump in and create alongside your kids. Try the art projects. Play the games!
6. Use these activity and devotional times as screen-free opportunities. Put down the phones and tablets, and just be present with the people you love most.

# The Activities



## Bible Beats

It all begins here – with a meaningful biblical text set to rhythm. The simple Bible Beat rhythm is ideal for a wide variety of ages. Young children are concrete thinkers and this activity not only allows the children to hear the rhythm, but feel it and see it, too. Each of the four Bible Beats works together in a percussion groove, and older children may have fun layering the parts together as the week rolls on.

*What do you use to play the Bible Beat?* Well, first use voices only – and chant the text in rhythm. Next, add body percussion and ask the children to pat their lap or their chest as they speak in rhythm. For even more fun, add some instruments.

*What if we don't have drums at home?* A quick lap around the kitchen or garage will result in some handy percussion instruments. Try these out:

- A coffee can
- A 5-gallon bucket
- An empty ice cream pail
- Sandpaper
- A shoe box
- An oatmeal canister
- A cookie sheet
- An empty laundry detergent bottle



## Songs

The songs featured in this resource come directly from *In the Image*, a children's musical by composer Mark Burrows. This musical features a group of children who wonder what it really means to be created *in the image* of God. Through humorous, earnest exploration, the children discover that being created in the image of God isn't about physical appearance. It's about creativity, faithfulness, responsibility, community, and the ability to find the good in things.

These catchy melodies and meaningful rhymes will provide a wonderful soundtrack for your week. Play the soundtrack as you play games, create art, and prepare meals together. A song or two is also featured in each family worship experience.



## Treasures of Nature

One of the unforeseen side effects of our shelter-in-place/safer-at-home time is how people are connecting more with nature. For many families, outdoor activities are bringing great peace and comfort right now - a walk in the park, a family bike ride, a picnic in the yard, the simple joy of being outdoors! In a time when we're forced to spend so much time interacting *virtually*, reconnecting with nature reminds us all that WE ARE REAL.

A global pandemic is not a good thing. It's just not. And it doesn't mean your faith is weak if you don't see this trial as a "blessing." Full stop. But here's the good news: as children of God, we have a sacred ability to hear whispers of blessing and find moments of meaning, even in the hardest times.

Included here are five simple devotions, each based around a treasure of nature. Consider going outside to share these devotion times.

This is slow time ... breathable time. No need to rush.

Before you say anything, encourage the children to simply hold each object, examine it.

What does it look like?

What does it feel like?

Does it feel the way you expected?

Remind the children to handle each object gently and carefully.



## Art Experiences

Creating art is a wonderful way to express feelings, capture wonder, and appreciate beauty. The art experiences in this resource don't require an art degree or fancy supplies. You won't find cookie-cutter crafts. These projects are designed to be intuitive and open-ended – using what you have on hand to craft something beautiful. Something with purpose and meaning.



## Games

The games featured in this resource are simple, creative, and fun. With very few items required (if any), these small-group games will help your family flex their creative & cooperative muscles – all while reinforcing the themes of the week.



## Creating a Sacred Space: Family Worship

During this season of quarantine, we miss people – being in the physical presence of friends, extended family, teachers, neighbors, teams, classes, choirs. Something else people seem to be missing are the places where we all gather together. We know God is with us everywhere. And yet our places of worship are special. They are sacred spaces – *set apart* for a special purpose. Great care is taken through art, architecture, lighting, symbolism, music, and more to curate an environment where we can feel genuinely close to God.

Daily family worship experiences in this curriculum follow a familiar rhythm of worship: gathering together, proclaiming God’s Word, responding to God’s Word, and being sent forth. During the week, create a special sacred space in or around your home. A place that’s *set apart*.

- It could be a corner of a room or a place near a window that overlooks nature. (Though preferably not a window that overlooks a street with cars going by frequently.)
- It could be an area around a firepit or in the corner of the yard.

As children participate in the art activities and nature experiences, anything tangible that emerges from these activities could be added to the sacred space. You might mark this space with a big blanket where participants sit together. You could also keep a children’s Bible nearby. A cross can be made from sticks fastened with yarn. Consider adding an LED candle (or a wax candle – just be safe).

A more playful (though no less prayerful) option could use a very large overturned cardboard box. The “ceiling” of the box could be decorated with each day’s Bible story, *a la* the Sistine Chapel.

This sacred space can be utilized well beyond the end of this week. It could be a place for family prayers, to explore new Bible stories, or where individuals can go for some “alone time” with God. (Jesus did that a LOT.)

Through these activities, your family will discover what it means to be created *in the image* of God:

**embracing your inherent creative abilities,  
seeing the good in things,  
taking responsibility to care for creation,  
creating community,  
and valuing rest.**

We hope a few of these activities might even become part of your family’s routine and create moments you’ll treasure for a long time to come.