



BIBLE READING GUIDE



1 JOHN

Parents, we know you want to help your children develop a love for the Bible, and we want to help you do that this summer! Part of their Grow Like Jesus Challenge this summer includes reading three books of the Bible. We recommend using some excellent video lessons to accompany reading the book of 1 John. You can access “1 John-What Is a Christian?” on RightNow Media, a resource provided to families by NLCC. These guides are created by RightNow to accompany the plan. Use these questions to talk to your child about the message of 1 John. Then consider taking the so-what challenge to incorporate this session’s message into your own life alongside your child.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA VIDEOS



SESSION 1:

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

- Who wrote 1 John? (John, the Apostle, one of Jesus's disciples.)
- What other books in the New Testament did he write? (John, 2,3 John, Revelation.)
- What are the 3 things we see in the life of a follower of Jesus? (True teaching, living, and loving.)
- Do we have to do what God asks to be accepted by Him? (No. We do what God asks because He has accepted us.)
- Why can't we follow Jesus and just stay right where we are? (Because "follow" is an action word. Following someone requires action.)
- How do you feel about the idea of following Jesus? Excited? Scared? Curious?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Play "follow the leader" with your child. Ask if your child wants to learn about following Jesus.
- For grade schoolers: Identify with your child those people whom he or she follows on a daily basis. Ask your child how following Jesus might be similar or different.
- For you: Who do you follow? A boss? A hero? Who would your child say you follow? How might their answer influence what you want to learn from 1 John?

SESSION 2:

1 JOHN 1:1-4

1 John 1:1-4

“We write you now about something that has always existed. We have heard. We have seen with our own eyes. We have watched, and we have touched with our hands. We write to you about the Word that gives life.” (1 John 1:1, ICB)

- Why does John talk about sense like “hearing,” “seeing” and “touching”? (To show that he was with Jesus and has the authority to teach.)
- What is the “Good News” about Jesus? (That He can give us a “forever kind of life” with God.)
- John wants us to have “fellowship” with God. What’s fellowship? (Doing life together with friends. Enjoying being together.)
- What is “joy”? (The best kind of happy—hug happy—that lasts much longer than “cookie happy.”)
- Is it wrong to want to be happy? (No. God wants us to be happy. But He wants us to be the best kind of happy, and that comes from being with Him, not from a cookie.)
- What kinds of things make you the happiest? Name some things that make you “cookie happy.” Name some things that make you “hug happy.”

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Say out loud three times: “God loves me and He wants to be my forever-friend.”
- For grade schoolers: Give a parent or a sibling a hug. Say: “God gives us joy. Hug happy.”
- For you: Go out of your way to do something fun or exciting with your child. Say: “The fun we have together is the kind of joy God wants to have with you.”

SESSION 3:

1 JOHN 1:5-10

1 John 1:5-10

“God is in the light. We should live in the light, too. If we live in the light, we share fellowship with each other. And when we live in the light, the blood of the death of Jesus, God’s Son, is making us clean from every sin.” (1 John 1:7, ICB)

- What does it mean to say God is “light”? (God is everything good.)
- What does it mean to live in “darkness”? (Living a life that is mean. Selfish. That hurts other people.)
- And living in the light means? (Living a life that is kind, loving and generous to other people.)
- Do we have to be perfectly good to be with God? (No. God accepts us just the way we are.)
- What does John mean when he talks about “The blood of Jesus”? (Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.)
- What does that sacrifice do for us? (It makes us clean, so we can be with God!)
- Do you ever mess up? How does it make you feel to know God loves you even when you mess up?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Take your child into a dark room. Have him or her turn on the light (help reach it). Say: “God is light. We live in light.” Try it again until your child says it on his or her own.
- For grade schoolers: Pick one thing with your child that he or she will do to “live in the light.” (Pick up without complaining, share a favorite toy with a sibling, thank a parent for making food.)
- For you: Own a failure to your child—mismanaged temper, forgotten commitment, ignored request for attention. Ask for forgiveness. Explain that your love for your child doesn’t change even when you’ve made a mistake.

SESSION 4:

1 JOHN 2:1-6

1 John 2:1-6

“My dear children, I write this letter to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have Jesus Christ to help us. He is the Righteous One. He defends us before God the Father.” (1 John 2:1, ICB)

- According to the Bible, what is the punishment for sin? (Death.)
- What does it mean to say Jesus “defends” us before God? (Jesus takes the punishment that we deserve.)
- Do we need to perfectly follow God’s rules to show we love Him? (No, we show we love God by trying. God shows He loves us by forgiving us when we don’t do it perfectly.)
- According to John, what does it mean if we don’t even try? (It means we don’t really love God—or even know Him. Knowing God means loving God.)
- When you think about what Jesus did for us so that we can live forever with God, how does it make you feel?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Hold a pillow in front of yourself. Help your child to do the same. Say, “Jesus defends us” three times together.
- For grade schoolers: Help your child pick something to sacrifice for someone else’s sake. (Give up computer time to wash dishes, let a sibling pick a movie, give allowance to a homeless shelter.)
- For you: Forgive a mistake or act of disobedience your child commits and suspend all punishment. In gentleness, explain that your ability to forgive comes from Jesus’s forgiveness of you.

SESSION 5:

1 JOHN 2:7-14

1 John 2:7-14

“Whoever loves his brother (or sister) lives in the light, and there is nothing in him that will cause him to do wrong.” (1 John 2:10, ICB)

- John says he is writing a new command that is also a very old command. What is it? (Love. Love God, and love your neighbors.)
- Why were the Israelites given so many rules about what to eat and what to wear? (So they would know they were different than their neighbors—that they were “set apart” for God.)
- What does the world “holy” mean? (Set apart for God.)
- Who called Himself “the Light of the World”? (Jesus.)
- Aren’t you glad you don’t have to follow 900 different rules?
- But sometimes, isn’t it easier to follow a rule like “don’t use bad words” than to actually be kind to someone you really don’t like? Do you see why sometimes people actually prefer the old kind of rules to the new rule about love?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: When your child obeys a rule, stop and thank him or her and say: “You showed me love by obeying.” Celebrate with your child his or her love.
- For grade schoolers: Help your child pick something to do for a family member or friend that will show love, but isn’t “required” by rules. (Volunteer to help with clean up after dinner, share a snack with a sibling, say three kind things to a friend.)
- For you: Do you have “personal time” carved out of your schedule? If so, spend some of it in one-on-one time with your child. If not, choose an activity to do with your child that might not be your favorite, but you know your child wants to do.

SESSION 6:

1 JOHN 2:15-29

1 John 2:15-29

“These are the evil things in the world: wanting things to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, being too proud of the things we have. But none of those things comes from the Father. All of them come from the world.” (1 John 2:16, ICB)

- What is love according to the world? (A feeling that comes and goes.)
- What is love according to the Bible? (A choice. A choice to make something or someone more important than other things.)
- To follow Jesus is to choose...what? (To choose to make God and our neighbors the most important things in our lives.)
- What is the opposite of true teaching? (False teaching.)
- Which kind of love do you think the world needs more of right now? The “feeling” love? Or the “choosing” love?
- Think of a way you could make someone else feel more important in your life.

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Give your child a choice—a choice in snack, play activity, toy—but express your desire for one of the options. Say: “We love by letting others choose first.” Let your child choose first. Then help him or her practice letting you choose first.
- For grade schoolers: Help your child identify something he or she can do for another person to make that person important, then help your child do it. (Rake leaves for a neighbor, make cookies for a friend, draw pictures for the older people at church.)
- For you: Turn off the TV, the computer, and the cell phone. Make your child important by focusing all of your attention on him or her for a half-hour.

SESSION 7:

1 JOHN 3:1-10

“The Father has loved us so much! He loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children.” (1 John 3:1a, ICB)

- Who were the ones who could talk to a king anytime and not get in trouble? (The king’s children.)
- Since God created everything, and is in charge of everything, what does that make Him? (The King of everything.)
- And John says because of Jesus we are invited to be ... what? (The children of God.)
- Which means we can be with God and talk to God when? (Whenever we want!)
- If we are God’s children, will we stop being mean and selfish all at once? (No, but over time we will become more kind and loving. That’s a sign of knowing God and being His child.)
- When Jesus comes back we will see Him “as He really is.” What does that mean? (Perfect.)
- And what will we be like then? And our whole world? (Also perfect. Without sickness, without death, without sin.)
- How does it make you feel to know you can always talk to God? About anything? And never get in trouble for interrupting Him? Do you really believe that we’re princes and princesses?
- Does this make you want to bring your problems to Him more often? How could that help you in a bad day?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Show your child a picture of him or her as an infant. Say: “You are my child.” Then show your child a picture of you as a kid. Say with your child, “We are God’s kids,” three times.
- For grade schoolers: Take a moment to sit and pray with your child. Walk him or her through a simple prayer thanking God that we can talk to Him at any time.
- For you: Let yourself be interrupted by your child—whether in the middle of a conversation, a TV show, reading a book—show your child with your actions what having God as Father is like.

SESSION 8:

1 JOHN 3:11-18

1 John 3:11-18

“My children, our love should not be only words and talk. Our love must be true love. And we should show that love by what we do.” (1 John 3:18, ICB)

- What does it mean to love someone, according to the Bible? (To choose them. To make them more important.)
- What does it mean to hate someone, according to the Bible? (To reject them. To make them less important.)
- What’s the ultimate example of making someone less important? (To say they don’t deserve to live. To take their life away.)
- Who does John give as an example of this kind of hate? (Cain, who killed his brother Abel.)
- What is the ultimate example of loving? Of making someone more important? (Giving your own life to save someone else.)
- Are there ways to show love without giving up your own life? (Yes! When we help someone who needs help, we make them more important. We show love.)
- We all do things that make other people feel less important. Think of something someone has done that made you feel less important, and something you’ve done to someone else.
- Now think of a way someone made you feel more important. Did you feel loved?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Help your child see the difference between saying and doing. Say you’ll give him or her a present (snack, toy, book), but don’t. Say, “Love does what it says,” three times. Let your child practice saying and doing.
- For grade schoolers: Help your child pick another activity where he or she can make others important (clean a sibling’s room, help a parent with chores, make a present for a friend).
- For you: Be intentional to carry out a promise or commitment to your child. Show what active love looks like.

SESSION 9:

1 JOHN 3:19-24

1 John 3:19-24

“This is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. When our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.” (1 John 3:12-20, ICB)

- What is the “the way of truth”? (The way of Jesus. Living like Jesus asks us to live.)
- If we’re walking with Jesus and we do something bad, are we “in trouble” with God? (No. We have peace with God no matter what.)
- When we pray, will God give us everything we ask for? (No. He will give us the things He wants for us.)
- What does it mean to pray “in Jesus’s name”? (To ask with the authority of Jesus because you’re asking for something Jesus wants to happen.)
- How do you feel when you pray for something and it doesn’t happen? Could it be that what God really wants to give you is even better?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice the sentence together: “Even when I’m wrong, God loves me.”
- For grade schoolers: Help your child make a list of things he or she likes to pray for or about. Take time to look at each one, and talk about how he or she would respond if God did or didn’t answer each.
- For you: When you correct or discipline your child, stop and make sure you’re not angry, and then gently remind your child that you love him or her, even when he or she does wrong.

SESSION 10:

1 JOHN 4:1-6

1 John 4:1-6

“This is how you can know God’s Spirit: One spirit says, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth and became a man.” That Spirit is from God.” (1 John 4:2, ICB)

- Who showed up in the Garden and lied to Adam and Eve? (A lying serpent. A “sneaky snake.”)
- Are angels fat babies with wings? (Nope. They are God’s messengers.)
- What name is given to the snake later in the Bible? (Satan.)
- Did Satan start out as an angel? (Yes. An angel who decided he wanted to be God’s enemy instead of God’s friend.)
- Why don’t we need to be afraid of God’s enemy? (Because God is the biggest!)
- What does John want us to know about the messages we hear? (Not all messages are from God! Test the messages against what you know is true about God.)
- Can you think of any messages you’ve heard on TV, in songs or at school that you’re pretty sure are “sneaky snake” messages, not God’s messages?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Create with your child—either drawing or with modeling clay. Make a “sneaky snake.” Say three times together, “God is the biggest.”
- For grade schoolers: Pick a song or movie your child likes. Talk with him or her about the “sneaky snake” messages that could be hiding in it. Talk about what God’s message would say in contrast.
- For you: Take a moment to think about the forms of entertainment you consume. What messages are you ingesting? What might your child learn from your choices in entertainment?

SESSION 11:

1 JOHN 4:7-12

1 John 4:7-12

“No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us. If we love each other, God’s love has reached its goal. It is made perfect in us.” (1 John 4:12, ICB)

- To be God’s child, do we first need to become good at loving? (Nope. God helps us grow in love after we become His children.)
- Where does true love come from? (God.)
- How did God show His true love for us? (By sending Jesus to save us from death.)
- How do we show God to others? (By loving them!)
- Sometimes we worry that we don’t know enough to tell people about God. Isn’t it great to know we can show people God, just by loving them?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Help your child see him or herself in a mirror. Ask who your child sees. Then say together, “When we love, people see God!” three times.
- For grade schoolers: Talk with your child and identify one person whom he or she would like to “show” God. Help him or her pick an act of love they can use to show God to that person.
- For you: Your child learns about God through your actions more than your words. Identify one area of behavior that you’d like to change to better show God to your child.

SESSION 12:

1 JOHN 4:13-21

1 John 4:13-21

“If God’s love is made perfect in us, then we can be without fear on the day God judges us. We will be without fear, because in this world we are like him.” (1 John 4:17, ICB)

- Can you name the three parts of the Trinity? (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.)
- Is Jesus a part of God? (Nope! Jesus is all God. And so is the Father. And so is the Holy Spirit.)
- When it’s time for God to make everyone pay for the bad things they’ve done, will we get in trouble? (No way! If we’ve put our trust in Jesus, we’ve already been forgiven!)
- No one likes to get in trouble. Can you think of a time you got in trouble? Isn’t it great that trusting in Jesus means we’ll never get in trouble with God?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Help your child see him or herself in a mirror. Say together three times, “When God looks at me, He sees Jesus!”
- For grade schoolers: When your child disobeys or misbehaves, take a moment to talk with him or her about God’s view of your child. Ask, “Does your disobedience change how God feels about you? Are you in trouble with God?” Follow up the conversation by affirming your love and compassion for your child.
- For you: Identify an area you feel guilty—in how you interact with your children, your spouse, or some other behavior. Read 1 John 4:13-21 again by yourself, and remember how God sees you in Jesus.

SESSION 13:

1 JOHN 5:1-5

1 John 5:1-5

“So the one who conquers the world is the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John 5:5, ICB)

- Loving God means obeying His commands. What commands? (Love God, and love our neighbors. Live the way Jesus taught.)
- What gives us the power to “win against the whispers of the world”? (Our faith.)
- Does “faith” mean we believe things that aren’t true? (No. It means we rely on the promise of someone or something. In this case, the promise of Jesus.)
- When do we have to power to win against the world? (When we put our trust in Jesus’s promise to save us—to give us the “forever kind of life” with God.)
- Does “faith in Jesus” depend on you being strong? Or Jesus being strong? Who has to be the strong one for us to beat the lies of the world?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Help your child stand on something stable—a stool, a box, or a chair. Say together three times, “We trust Jesus’s promises!”
- For grade schoolers: Talk with your child about the “world’s whispers” that he or she encounters—temptations, wrong thinking about friends, parents, or family, bad self-image. Ask who helps us overcome those whispers. Pick one to talk to Jesus about, and ask Him to help you be strong.
- For you: Identify a “whisper” in your own life that you’re tempted to believe. Confess it to your child, and ask him or her to pray with you that Jesus would help you see the truth.

SESSION 14:

1 JOHN 5:6-12

1 John 5:6-12

“Whoever has the Son has life. But the person who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” (1 John 5:12, ICB)

- What are John’s three witnesses about Jesus? (Spirit, water, and blood.)
- What event is the “witness” of the water? (Jesus’s baptism, when God the Father said Jesus was His Son.)
- What event is the “witness” of the blood? (Jesus rising against after His death on the cross, proving that He was God’s Son and has power over death.)
- What is the “witness” of the Spirit? (All the writings about Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that we have in the Bible.)
- How do we get the “forever kind of life” with God? (By believing Jesus is God’s Son and that He has beaten death for us by dying on the cross and rising again.)
- How does it feel to know all the work it takes for you to have the “forever kind of life” with God has already been done? That Jesus did it all, and all we have to do is accept it?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : “Rescue” your child from the floor by sweeping him or her into your arms. Shout together three times, “Jesus saves us!”
- For grade schoolers: Offer your child a choice—in food, a place to go play for the afternoon, an activity. After they choose, ask him or her what choice Jesus offers us (life with Him or separation), and ask which choice your child would like to make.
- For you: When given the choice between life bought with Jesus’ blood, or eternal death, which have you chosen? Take a moment to tell your child why.

SESSION 15:

1 JOHN 5:13-21

1 John 5:13-21

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding. Now we can know God, the One who is true. And our lives are in that true God and in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life.” (1 John 5:20, ICB)

- What does John want us to know for sure? (That we really can have the “forever kind of life” with God.)
- Why does God sometimes have us wait before He gives us good thing? (So we learn to focus on God, not on the things we want.)
- What is the only “sin that leads to eternal death”? (Rejecting Jesus. Saying we don’t want Him to save us.)
- If we’re following Jesus, do we need to worry about this? (Nope! We’ve already been saved to eternal life!)
- What are the “false gods” in our lives today? (Things like success, money, being popular or beautiful.)
- What does true teaching mean to you? True living? True loving? What was your favorite thing you learned from 1 John? And finally, would you like to have the “forever kind of life” with God, starting right now?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: : Sing “Jesus Loves Me” with your child. Ask him or her if Jesus loves him or her. Tell your child, yes, Jesus does.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child if he or she wants the “forever kind of life” that John talked about. Help your child to talk to God, ask for forgiveness, and trust Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to save.
- For you: Which aspect of John stood out to you? True teaching, living, or loving? Pick one area to reflect on for the next week. Talk to your child at least once a day about what you, yourself, have learned.



EPHESIANS

Parents, we know you want to help your children develop a love for the Bible, and we want to help you do that this summer! Part of their Grow Like Jesus Challenge this summer includes reading three books of the Bible. We recommend using some excellent video lessons to accompany reading the book of Ephesians. You can access “Ephesians-What Is God’s Plan?” on RightNow Media, a resource provided to families by NLCC. These guides are created by RightNow to accompany the plan. Use these questions to talk to your child about the message of Ephesians. Then consider taking the so-what challenge to incorporate this session’s message into your own life alongside your child.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA VIDEOS



SESSION 1:

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

- Who wrote the book of Ephesians? (The Apostle Paul.)
- Who did he write the book to? (The followers of Jesus in Ephesus.)
- What big question is answered by Ephesians? (What is God's plan?)
- What advice does Paul give in the letter? (How to live as a part of God's plan.)
- How do you feel about being part of God's plan? What do you think that plan might be?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Say "God has a big plan!" together three times.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child if he or she has ever made a big plan. What was the plan? How did it turn out? Discuss with your child whether he or she thinks God will be able to accomplish His plan. Why or why not?
- For you: Set aside your own plan for the day and be open to what God has planned for you today. What interruptions (your child, a neighbor, a service opportunity) could come up that might be God's plan for your day, rather than interruptions to your own plan?

SESSION 2:

EPHESIANS 1:1-11

Ephesians 1:1-11

“And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. That was what he wanted and what pleased him.” (Ephesians 1:5, ICB)

- What’s the amazing gift we’ve been given, according to Paul? (“Forever kind of lives” with God as His sons and daughters.)
- What’s the new big word we learned? (Reconciliation.)
- What does reconciliation mean? (Turning enemies into friends.)
- What was broken when Adam and Eve disobeyed? (Their relationships with God.)
- Does God want our relationships to be broken? (No, He wants to be friends.)
- Have you noticed anything broken about the world?
- Have you ever had a friend become an enemy?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Build a structure together using blocks or Duplo cubes. Knock it down together, then practice saying, “God puts broken things back together!” as you rebuild it.
- For grade schoolers: Ask, “How do you think enemies become friends?” Discuss what kinds of things a person can do to turn an enemy into a friend.
- For you: Is there a broken relationship in your life? Reach out to an estranged friend and take the first step toward reconciliation

SESSION 3:

EPHESIANS 1:12-23

Ephesians 1:12-23

**“That Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we will get what God promised for his people. This will bring full freedom to the people who belong to God, to bring praise to God’s glory.”
(Ephesians 1:14, ICB)**

- What were the Apostles chosen to do? (Show God’s power and plan to everyone.)
- If you’re “marked by the Holy Spirit,” does that mean you got a tattoo? (No. It means the Spirit of God shows up in your life with power.)
- What is hope? (When you are wishing for something good in the future.)
- What are the Ephesians supposed to be hoping for? (God’s plan to put things back together.)
- Have you seen God’s power show up in your life or in the life of someone around you?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice saying the phrase “God works in power!” while flexing your muscles together.
- For grade schoolers: Discuss hope together. Ask your child, “What is something you hope for?”
- For you: Spend time reading Scripture and ask God for a deeper knowledge of Himself.

SESSION 4:

EPHESIANS 2:1-11

Ephesians 2:1-11

“We were spiritually dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God’s grace.” (Ephesians 2:5, ICB)

- How does Paul describe the Ephesians’ lives before Jesus? (Dead because of their sins, living the way the world lives.)
- Who is the “Ruler of the Evil Powers?” (God’s enemy—the “Sneaky Snake” from Genesis.)
- We can have the “forever kind of life” with God because of... what? (Grace.)
- What is grace? (Unmerited favor. Being given something good that you have not earned.)
- What happens when we forget about God’s grace? (We can think we earned God’s blessing and that we’re better than other people.)
- If you think you’re better than someone, does that make it easier to love them? Or harder? Why?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Do something messy together—finger-paint, play in the dirt, or simply eat dinner! As you clean their hands, face, and clothes, practice saying together, “God’s grace cleans us up!”
- For grade schoolers: Discuss grace with your child, and assist them in giving someone a gift they did not earn. Maybe he or she could give their dessert to a sibling, do the dishes for mom or dad, or purchase a gift for a neighbor.
- For you: When your child disobeys or deserves punishment, choose to show grace. Instead of punishment, take your child for ice cream and talk about grace toward each other and the grace God shows us..

SESSION 5:

EPHESIANS 2:12-22

Ephesians 2:12-22

“Yes, at one time you were far away from God. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to God through the blood of Christ’s death.” (Ephesians 2:13, ICB)

- Paul talks about “The Jews.” Who were they? (God’s chosen people—the Israelites.)
- He also talks about “The Gentiles.” Who were they? (Everyone who wasn’t a Jew.)
- Jews and Gentiles were enemies. But in Jesus, they were becoming...what? (Friends. They were being reconciled!)
- There was a building in Jerusalem called the Temple. Who lived there? (God.)
- A new Temple is being built not out of bricks, but out of what? (People! All of Jesus’ followers are the new place God lives.)
- Is there anyone you think of as an enemy? What would it take to make them a friend?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Play a game with your toddler and hold up a blanket between the two of you so he or she can’t see you. When you drop the blanket and see your child’s face say, “Jesus knocks down the wall between friends and enemies!” Practice saying it together.
- For grade schoolers: Discuss the question, “Have you ever felt like you were better than another group of people? Why? How did you treat that other group?” Talk about how God has made enemies friends and how that affects our attitudes and actions toward others.
- For you: Have you ever felt superior to another group of people? Spend time in prayer, asking God to remove pride and self-righteousness and remind you that He has torn down the dividing wall.

SESSION 6:

EPHESIANS 3:1-13

Ephesians 3:1-13

“By God’s special gift of grace, I became a servant to tell that Good News. God gave me that grace through his power.”
(Ephesians 3:7, ICB)

- What is Paul’s special job? (Telling non-Jews the good news about Jesus.)
- What is the “Good News” Paul is telling everyone? (That through Jesus, anyone can become a child of God.)
- When Paul mentions the “Church,” is he talking about a building? (No, he’s talking about all the people who follow Jesus.)
- And what special job does the Church get to do now? (We get to tell the whole world about God’s big plan!)
- We don’t just tell people about God’s love, we also show them. Can you think of ways to show the world what God’s love looks like?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Hug your toddler and tell them, “You are my child!” Then practice saying together, “We are God’s children!”
- For grade schoolers: Do an art project together. Create a newspaper with the “Good News” as the front-page headline. Discuss how God means for the gospel to spread to the whole world.
- For you: Who in your life needs to hear the Good News about Jesus? Pray for an opportunity, then share the gospel.

SESSION 7:

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Ephesians 3:14-21

“Christ’s love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19, ICB)

- Paul is praying for something. What is it? (That we would all know Christ’s love.)
- How do we turn enemies back into friends? (By showing God’s supernatural love.)
- What kind of love? The mushy gushy kind? (No—the kind that puts others first. That makes other people more important.)
- Who is the ultimate example of this kind of love? (Jesus.)
- Do we have enough love in us to love the whole world? (Nope. But God does. He can help us love more and more.)
- Is there anyone in your life you could show this kind of love this week?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Hug each other and say, “God’s love is the greatest love,” several times.
- For grade schoolers: Brainstorm ways to show God’s supernatural love to others this week. That could mean your child forgives someone who has wronged him or her, does something kind, or tells someone about the gospel.
- For you: How can you love someone in a sacrificial way this week? Reach out to someone in love, even when it is costly..

SESSION 8:

EPHESIANS 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:1-3

“You are joined together with peace through the Spirit. Do all you can to continue together in this way. Let peace hold you together.” (Ephesians 4:3, ICB)

- What is orthodoxy? (Correct belief.)
- What is orthopraxy? (Correct living.)
- How are God’s people supposed to live? (By loving each other.)
- What is unity? (Being joined together as one.)
- What do friends need in order to stay friends? (Peace.)
- How does the Holy Spirit give us peace? (By changing our hearts and teaching us to love like God loves.)
- Have you ever lost a friend because of a fight? Because there wasn’t any peace?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Give your toddler a chance to gently stroke a baby or a pet. Practice saying, “Be gentle. Don’t hurt the baby/pet!” Help them learn what gentleness looks and feels like.
- For grade schoolers: This week, practice patience together. When there are opportunities to wait, take them. Sit in traffic together without complaining, serve others first, or choose to love when it’s easier to be irritable.
- For you: Give preference to someone else and exercise humility. Allow someone to go before you in line, or make dinner for your family even when they forget to thank you.

SESSION 9:

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

Ephesians 4:4-6

“There is one body and one Spirit. And God called you to have one hope.” (Ephesians 4:4, ICB)

- What is unity? (Different things coming together as one thing.)
- What is the “one body” Paul mentions? (The body of Christ—the Church!)
- What do we get to do as the Body of Christ? (Show God’s love to the whole world. We’re Jesus’ hands and feet!)
- Why does Paul talk so much about unity—about being “one?” (People usually just look out for themselves. Our mission in Jesus is better than any of us! We come together to show God’s love!)
- What do you think of the idea of being part of a “Giant Robot” on a mission from God? Does that sound exciting? Scary?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice helping around the house using the phrase “helping hands!” as you work together with your hands.
- For grade schoolers: Together, brainstorm ways your child can be the “hands and feet” of Christ at school this week.
- For you: Look for ways to encourage unity in your family this week. Lead the way by working together on a project or initiate a family effort to rally behind one of the children who have a school report or a big game this week.

SESSION 10:

EPHESIANS 4:7-16

Ephesians 4:7-16

“The whole body depends on Christ. And all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part of the body does its own work. And this makes the whole body grow and be strong with love.” (Ephesians 4:16, ICB)

- Why does Jesus give His followers gifts? (To make the Body of Christ stronger.)
- What are the gifts that God gives to His people? (Talents and abilities.)
- What is the work the Body of Christ is doing together? (Serving Jesus.)
- Not all evil looks like monsters...what are some evils in the world today? (Selfishness, pride, greed.)
- How do we get these spiritual gifts? (We grow them by using them.)
- How is walking with Jesus like becoming a Jedi? (You start as a student and gradually become stronger and stronger.)
- What special gifts could you share with the Body of Christ?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Wrap or unwrap a present together and talk about the way God gives His children special gifts.
- For grade schoolers: Talk together about the gifts, talents, and abilities God has given your child. Then discuss a way he or she can share God’s love this week through that gift. Maybe your child can write an encouraging card to a friend, bake cookies for a neighbor, or play the piano at a nursing home.
- For you: Take a moment to reflect on where you fit in the Body of Christ. In what ways are you serving to make the Body stronger? Where could you begin to use your gifts and abilities to further God’s Kingdom?

SESSION 11:

EPHESIANS 4:17-24

Ephesians 4:17-24

**“But you were taught to be made new in your hearts.”
(Ephesians 4:23, ICB)**

- How do we go from “baby” Christians to “Jedi Master” Christians? (“Taking off” our old self and “putting on” our new self.)
- What does it mean to take off the old self and put on the new? (Walk away from old habits and build new ones.)
- Paul calls us to be holy. What does he mean? (Set apart for a different kind of life.)
- What are some of the “new habits” we should put on? (Prayer, reading the Bible, using our gifts.)
- What could you do to start making some new habits?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: As you help your child get dressed in the morning, practice saying together, “Take off self, put on Christ.”
- For grade schoolers: Talk about habits together. Help them make a plan to start the habit of reading the Bible each day. When, where, and what will your child read? Keep track of the number of days they stick with this habit on a special chart.
- For you: Use an external cue to develop the habit of prayer. Choose something that you do daily to remind you to pray—maybe while you wash dishes, brush your teeth, or drive to work. Each time you do that activity, pray. Begin to reframe this time as an opportunity to commune with God.

SESSION 12:

EPHESIANS 4:25-32

Ephesians 4:25-32

“Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.” (Ephesians 4:32, ICB)

- What does Paul tell us we need to do to have unity? (We need to be honest with each other.)
- Paul says when you're angry, don't...what? (Sin.)
- Is it wrong to feel angry? (No. Anger is a feeling we all feel sometimes. What we do next can be the problem.)
- What kind of words does God want us to use? (Words that help and don't hurt.)
- Why doesn't God's enemy want us to forgive each other? (He doesn't want God's plan of reconciliation to work.)
- Have you seen how words can hurt people? Can you think of ways you can use words to help?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice saying kind words. Encourage your child when he or she says kind things to others. Remind your toddler, “God wants us to use helping words!”
- For grade schoolers: Brainstorm what helpful words sound like. Challenge your child to speak helpful words to five people this week. This may look like encouragement, blessing, forgiveness, or praise to God.
- For you: Watch your words this week and choose to speak words of life, rather than words that tear down. This may mean a challenge to not complain, gossip, or use your words to hurt. Remind yourself of the Holy Spirit, who helps and enables you to speak words of life.

SESSION 13:

EPHESIANS 5:1-21

Ephesians 5:1-21

“In the past you were full of darkness, but now you are full of light in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light.” (Ephesians 5:8, ICB)

- What is the ultimate example of a “sweet smelling” sacrifice? (Jesus dying on the cross for us.)
- How does Paul ask us to live because of Jesus’ sacrifice? (We should live a life of love, loving others like Jesus loved us.)
- What kind of love are we talking about? The mushy gushy kind? (Nope. The kind of love that sacrifices for others.)
- When Paul talks about “darkness” and “light,” what does he mean? (Darkness is our old way of living, light is our new way of living.)
- How do we show the world what is true? (By doing what is true, not just saying what is true.)
- What’s easier...saying what is true, or doing what is true? Why?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Play a game together by turning a light on and off. In the dark say, “The world is dark,” but when you flip the light on say, “But Jesus gives us light!”
- For grade schoolers: Take time to sing together! Play hymns around a piano, turn on a playlist of your favorite worship songs in the car, or sing and dance in the living room to worship the Lord. Allow this time to encourage both of your hearts.
- For you: How is your life a sweet-smelling sacrifice to the Lord? What is a way you could sacrifice for someone else and display the same kind of love Jesus displayed for us? Seek out an opportunity this week.

SESSION 14:

EPHESIANS 5:22–33

Ephesians 5:22–33, 6:1

“Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. This is the right thing to do.” (Ephesians 6:1, ICB)

- What is a household? (More than just a family—it also included servants and workers.)
- Who had the most power in an ancient household? (The father.)
- How are men to love their wives? (Like Jesus loves us—willing to sacrifice for them.)
- What does Paul tell kids they need to do? (Obey their parents.)
- In a Christian family, why is it extra good to obey your parents? (Your mom and dad are the #1 way you will learn about Jesus.)
- Would the Bible kind of love—sacrificial love—make a family get along better or worse? Why?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: When your toddler obeys you, encourage them by saying, “We love God when we obey!” Reinforce their obedience with encouragement.
- For grade schoolers: Talk with your child about what it looks like to honor and obey their parents. Make a goal together for how they are to obey: immediately, completely, and with a cheerful heart. Encourage them when you notice them doing this.
- For you: Reflect on your relationship with your spouse or employer. If you’re a husband, are you showing sacrificial love for your wife? If you are a wife, are you showing respect for your husband? If you are a worker, are you working with excellence, as toward the Lord? Set a goal this week on how you might do this with greater joy.

SESSION 15:

EPHESIANS 6:1-24

Ephesians 6:1-24

**“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his great power.”
(Ephesians 6:10, ICB)**

- What does a warrior do before they go into battle? (They “suit up” and put on their armor.)
- Paul tells us we need to put on armor. Who are we fighting? (We are fighting against God’s enemy and his lies.)
- How many pieces of God’s armor can you name? (Belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit.)
- Are you ready to be a part of God’s big plan? What could you do to get started?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Have fun together by having a pretend sword fight. Put on “armor” before the duel and practice saying together, “God protects us from the enemy!”
- For grade schoolers: Talk together about the burning arrows of the evil one. What lies does your child hear? Talk about one of those lies, and how he or she can extinguish it with the shield of faith by turning to the truth of God’s Word. Pray together that your child will be able to recognize the lie from the “Sneaky Snake” and return to God’s truth.
- For you: What lies from the enemy are you believing? How can you take up your shield of faith this week and extinguish those burning darts? Find Scripture that addresses one of these lies, and memorize its truth as you take up the shield of faith.



PHILIPPIANS

Parents, we know you want to help your children develop a love for the Bible, and we want to help you do that this summer! Part of their Grow Like Jesus Challenge this summer includes reading three books of the Bible. We recommend using some excellent video lessons to accompany reading the book of Philippians. You can access “Philippians - Where Does Joy Come From?” on RightNow Media, a resource provided to families by NLCC. These guides are created by RightNow to accompany the plan. Use these questions to talk to your child about the message of Philippians. Then consider taking the so-what challenge to incorporate this session’s message into your own life alongside your child.

RIGHT NOW MEDIA VIDEOS



SESSION 1:

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2

Philippians 1:1-2

“From Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ. To all of God’s holy people in Christ Jesus who live in Philippi.”
(Philippians 1:1, ICB)

- How many times does the word “fun” appear in the Bible? (Just once.)
- What is in the Bible a lot that is even better than fun? (Joy.)
- What is joy? (Deep happy. Hug happy, not cookie happy.)
- Who wrote Philippians...and to whom did they write it? (Paul wrote Philippians. He wrote it to the Christians in Philippi.)
- Have you ever ridden a ride at an amusement park all by yourself? How was that different than riding with friends?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice teaching your child about joy. Ask, “What does the Bible tell us is better than fun?” and every time he or she responds with “joy” give them a hug.
- For grade schoolers: Each day this week, when you hug your child remind them, “God gives us hug happy joy.”
- For you: Where do you look for joy? Does your child see Christ as your joy? How should your answer frame the way you approach this study of Philippians?

SESSION 2:

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-6

Philippians 1:3-6

“I always pray for all of you with joy.” (Philippians 1:4, ICB)

- What is the first thing Paul talks about that brings him joy? (Remembering his friends in Philippi. Remembering the people he loves, who love him.)
- What is the second thing that brings Paul joy? (Seeing people meet Jesus and become children of God.)
- What is the third thing that brings Paul joy? (Knowing that God’s promises will come true. He and his friends will find their “happily ever after” with God.)
- Can the Roman guards take away the things that bring Paul joy? (No. When Paul remembers these things, he can have joy, even in prison.)
- If you thought about these things when you were having bad days, how do you think it might change your attitude?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: “God gives us a happily ever after” with your child three times.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child to list their closest friends. Once they do, talk about what life would be like without those friends and how they are a blessing from God to create joy.
- For you: Who among your friends has yet to meet Jesus and become a child of God? Commit to regularly praying for them that God would soften their hearts to the message of His gospel.

SESSION 3:

PHILIPPIANS 1:7-11

Philippians 1:7-11

**“This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love.”
(Philippians 1:9, ICB)**

- Does working extra hard get Paul extra blessing from God? (No. All God’s children get all of God’s blessing.)
- Then why does Paul work extra hard? (Because it brings him joy. Paul loves seeing people meet God.)
- Paul wants us to grow in...what? (Love! Love is the big thing in the Bible.)
- Paul also prays that our lives will be filled with fruit. Does he mean apples and bananas? (No, he means patience, contentment, joy, and love.)
- Do you think God will like you more if you work extra hard? What if God really likes you just the way you are? How would that make you feel?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Take a handful of building blocks and set them in a line individually. Point to them one by one while asking your child, “How much blessing do God’s children get? One? Two?” and so on. When you get to the end of the line, say with your child, “All of God’s blessing” and push the blocks together into a pile.
- For grade schoolers: Talk about love together. Ask your child what he or she loves and discuss what it would look like to love in ways that honor God.
- For you: As you consider the way you approach your work, your family, your marriage, and so on can you identify ways that you’re working for extra blessing from God? Spend time this week confessing that to God and asking Him to give you rest in the fullness of His grace.

SESSION 4:

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

Philippians 1:12-18

“I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the palace guards and everyone else knows this.” (Philippians 1:13, ICB)

- Since Paul is in prison, does that mean he can't tell people about God anymore? (No way! Paul is telling everyone in prison about God. Even the guards!)
- Since Paul has been thrown in prison, are other Christians more scared, or more brave? (They're becoming more brave.)
- Why would Paul being in prison make other Christians more brave? (Because they see that God is with Paul, even in prison. Bad things aren't as scary when we know God will be with us.)
- What has Paul learned about God and bad things? (That God can take bad things and turn them into something good.)
- Do you believe God is with you? Even when bad things happen?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Stand in a room with your child while holding hands. Then turn off the light and say, “Can you still feel me with you?” After he or she responds, turn the light back on and talk about how God never leaves us. He is always with us.
- For grade schoolers: Talk with your child about times when God has taken bad things in their life and turned them into something good. Encourage your child to tell that story to someone this week, like Paul did with prison guards.
- For you: Reflect on the ways God has used bleak circumstances in your life for His good. Ask Him to renew your sense of confidence in His presence at all times.

SESSION 5:

PHILIPPIANS 1:19–26

Philippians 1:19–26

“The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, as always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live.” (Philippians 1:20, ICB)

- What does the word “rejoice” mean? (To feel or show great joy. Like yelling, “Hooray!”)
- It was possible that the Romans would kill Paul. Did he know that? (Yes he did.)
- Was Paul scared of dying? (No he wasn’t. If he was alive, his life was all about Jesus. If he did, he’d get to be with Jesus! Both were good!)
- If we really believe what God has promised, will we live more bravely, or less bravely? (More bravely! When we trust God, no matter what happens, we can be fearless!)
- Would you like to live your life without any fear? Would you like to be brave? How could God’s promises help you live that kind of life?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Read this passage out loud again with your child and have him or her yell “Hooray!” every time you say the word “Christ” to remember that He is the reason for our joy.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child to name the bravest person he or she can think of. Then talk about the bravery of Jesus and what He accomplished by laying down His life and rising from the dead. Remind him or her that it’s those truths that give us ultimate bravery in life.
- For you: Where are you experiencing fear today? Where do you need bravery? Confess to the Lord and ask Him to replace your fear with courageous obedience.

SESSION 6:

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30

Philippians 1:27-30

“Be sure that you live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ. Then whether I come and visit you or am away from you, I will hear good things about you. I will hear that you continue strong with one purpose and that you work together as a team for the faith of the Good News.” (Philippians 1:27, ICB)

- How do we “honor” the Good News? (When we live new lives, when people see how God’s power can change us, we show that the Good News is true.)
- What does it mean when Paul says we are “saved”? (It means we are saved from the bad things we do, and we get to be with God forever.)
- What does it mean to be “lost”? (The opposite of being saved. Being away from God forever.)
- Paul says suffering for Jesus brings glory to Him. How? (It shows how much we love Jesus, and it gives God the chance to show up with us and do amazing things!)
- When bad things happen to you, what if, instead of complaining, you prayed that God would show up and do something amazing?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Say or sing with your child, “I was lost, but now I’m saved!”
- For grade schoolers: Ask how your child feels about the truth that Jesus saves us from the bad things we do. Use that time to talk about how the work of Jesus allows us to treat others with the same kind of mercy, patience, and kindness.
- For you: How do you tend to react to bad circumstances in your life? Resolve going forward to face frustrating or difficult times with prayer instead of complaints.

SESSION 7:

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

Philippians 2:1-4

“When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4, ICB)

- What gives Paul so much joy he says he'll almost burst? (That Christians have the same thoughts, share the same love, and have one mind and purpose.)
- What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ”? (We see things the way Jesus sees things, think the way Jesus thinks, and act the way Jesus acts.)
- And how is that? How does Jesus see, think, and act? (With love.)
- What kind of love? Hugs and kisses? (No. Love that puts other people first, instead of putting ourselves first.)
- If everyone lived this way and put each other first, how would that change your school? Your neighborhood? The world?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Tell your child that you need to dance or you'll burst! Spend some time dancing together. Then talk about how loving Jesus gives us the same kind of feeling.
- For grade schoolers: Talk to your child about the kind of love discussed in this session and give them an opportunity to put others first. Maybe he or she could wash the dishes for a parent, share a toy with a sibling, or encourage a friend who's having a bad day.
- For you: Who do you struggle to serve? What are the obstacles that keep you from doing so? Spend time reflecting on the way Christ has extended His love to you and ask Him to change your heart so that you can model His love for those who make it hard to love.

SESSION 8:

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-30

Philippians 2:5-18

“Do everything without complaining or arguing.” (Philippians 2:14, ICB)

- To follow Jesus is to learn to...what? (Think and act like Jesus.)
- What does it mean to work on our salvation with “fear and trembling”? (It means to take it seriously. God has given us an amazing gift!)
- Why does Paul compare us to bright stars in a dark sky? (Because living like Jesus really makes us stand out in a selfish world.)
- Why isn’t Paul afraid to die? (Because the things that bring him joy can’t be taken away! When we follow Jesus, no one can steal our joy!)
- Picture yourself in your school or in your neighborhood, walking around and glowing like a star! Do you like that idea?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Play a game of “Follow the Leader” with your child asking them to mimic every move you make. Then explain that’s how we are to follow Jesus.
- For grade schoolers: Pick a night this week to look at the stars with your child. As you do, talk to him or her about ways we can shine as Christians.
- For you: Where has God given you opportunities to shine for His glory in your family? Your neighborhood? Your workplace? Choose at least one way to practically “shine” over the course of this next week and act on it.

SESSION 9:

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-16

Philippians 3:1-16

“All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ’s sufferings and become like him in his death.” (Philippians 3:10, ICB)

- What was Paul most proud of before he met Jesus? (How good he was at following all the rules.)
- Rather than being good at following rules, Paul has a new goal. What is it? (To be like Jesus.)
- What does the word “Christian” mean? (“Little Christ”...or “Christ One.” Someone who is like Jesus.)
- Paul says he’s looking forward to his prize. What prize is he talking about? (New life. “Forever life” with God.)
- Did you know you can have the same prize Paul was so excited about? And you can’t earn it. It’s a gift! Have you ever asked God to give you that gift?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Make up a simple song with your child and sing together about how you want “forever life with God” as your prize.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child to recall the best gift they’ve ever received. Talk with him or her about what it means to receive forever life with God as a free gift.
- For you: As you think on your life, are you still proud of your obedience to the rules? Does your pride conflict with your love for Christ in this way? Make a conscious effort to surrender that to God this week and walk in His freely given grace.

SESSION 10:

PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

Philippians 3:17-21

“But our homeland is in heaven, and we are waiting for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven.” (Philippians 3:20, ICB)

- What’s the best way to learn to live like Jesus? (Watch other people who have been following Jesus for a long, long time.)
- Paul says for some people, their “God is their belly.” What does that mean? (They don’t live to please God, they live to please themselves.)
- Paul and the apostles are focused not on what they want, but... what? (What God wants. They are focused on Jesus and His love.)
- One day Jesus will change our bodies to be like His body. What does that mean? (We won’t want things that aren’t good for us, and we’ll never get old or die.)
- Do you ever want things you know aren’t good for you? What if Jesus could change that? Would you want him to?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Play “Simon Says” with your child, but change it to “Jesus Says.” Have him or her mirror different actions and then talk about why it’s good for us to do what Jesus says.
- For grade schoolers: Have a conversation about wants and desires. Ask your child about what he or she wants most out of life and whether or not they are focused on Jesus and His love. Pray together for God to shape both of your hearts for Him.
- For you: As you watched this session, did the Holy Spirit convict you of any ways in which you desire things that are not good for you? Confess those to God this week and ask Him to replace those desires with desires for what is good.

SESSION 11:

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

Philippians 4:4-7

**“Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy.”
(Philippians 4:4, ICB)**

- Did Jesus come to take our fun away? (No. Jesus came so we could have lives filled with joy, love, peace, patience...all the good things!)
- Why does Paul ask us to be gentle with each other? (Because we're part of the family of God. We try hard not to hurt each other, which takes gentleness!)
- Is Paul teaching us how to get stuff from God? (No. Paul is teaching us how to get peace. The peace of God is better than stuff!)
- What does Paul say we should do with all our worries? (Give them to God. Let God worry about them.)
- What do you worry about a lot? Could you give those worries to God, and trust Him to take care of you?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Build a small structure out of blocks and talk to your child about what it means to be gentle. Like the structure, God is making each of us part of His family and we need to be gentle so that we don't hurt one another (or knock over the structure).
- For grade schoolers: Talk to your child about gentleness. Brainstorm a few ways for him or her to be gentle to others this week—an encouraging remark, a hug, letting someone else go first, etc.
- For you: What are you worried about? How does worry affect your daily life? Begin each day this week with a moment of being still before the Lord and bringing your worries to Him. Ask that He would care for you and grant you peace.

SESSION 12:

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

Philippians 4:8-9

“Brothers, continue to think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected.” (Philippians 4:8, ICB)

- What is this whole section of Philippians about? (How to live. It’s about what should come out of our lives if we’re following Jesus.)
- Paul tells us to think about things that are good and pure and beautiful. Does that mean we have to ignore bad news? (No. We should never ignore it when others are hurting.)
- Then what does Paul mean? (He means when we look for examples of how to live, look for examples that are good, pure, and beautiful.)
- Is it wrong to read stories where bad people do bad things? (Only if the bad things are being called “good,” or good things are being called “bad.”)
- Can you think of a movie where someone does bad things? Did the movie say those things were “bad” or “good”?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Make up a simple song with the line, “Let’s think about what is good and beautiful,” and sing it with your child.
- For grade schoolers: Work with your child to memorize Philippians 4:8. Encourage him or her to use it as a reminder to think on what God tells us is good, pure, and beautiful.
- For you: Who are your examples? Who do you look to in order to learn how best to follow Jesus? Spend some time considering whether or not you dwell on what is good, pure, and beautiful. And make changes where necessary.

SESSION 13:

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-18

Philippians 4:10-18

“I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:10-13, ICB)

- What’s one way to help figure out the meaning to a verse? (Read the verses around it to see what the author was talking about before and after.)
- When Paul says he can do anything through Christ, does he mean he can fly? Or turn into the Hulk? (No. Paul means he can do anything God wants him to do.)
- What was God helping Paul do when he wrote this letter? (God was giving Paul the strength to be happy in any situation.)
- Is that the only thing God can help us to? (No. God will help us do anything He has asked us to do.)
- It sounds fun to think of God helping us do anything we want to do. But can you think of ways it could be trouble?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Teach your child the phrase, “With Jesus, I can do all God wants me to.”
- For grade schoolers: Have a conversation about the happiness Paul talks about in this passage. What are some recent situations that have made your child unhappy? Talk to him or her about how God can give them strength to be happy in every situation, even that difficult one.
- For you: Life is tough. There’s no getting around that fact, but Paul’s contentment isn’t meant to be a truth for children alone. Where do you struggle to experience the kind of happiness we discussed in this session? Ask God to continue shaping your heart to rely on Him at all times for contentment.

SESSION 14:

PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20

Philippians 4:19-20

“My God will use his wonderful riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need. Glory to our God and Father forever and ever! Amen.” (Philippians 4:19-20, ICB)

- Why did Paul need his friends in Philippi to help take care of him? (In ancient prisons, sometimes they wouldn't feed you or take care of you. Friends had to do that.)
- Is Paul promising that God will give us everything we need? Everything we ask Him for? (No. Even Paul didn't have everything he needed all the time.)
- Then what is Paul trying to teach us? (To trust God. To tell God what we're worried about, and give those worries to Him.)
- What will God give us in return? (Peace, love, and joy. What we really need most of all!)
- Have you ever said, “But I NEED this!” about something you really didn't need at all? Why do you think it's so hard to tell the difference between what we need, and what we want?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Practice shouting, “God gives me everything I really need!”
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child to describe a time when he or she had to trust. What did he or she learn from the experience? What would it look like for him or her to trust God in the same way?
- For you: Have you felt God saying “no” to certain prayers lately? Is it possible that you're asking for things you want when He wants to give you what you need? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight and direction in your life in the days ahead.

SESSION 15:

PHILIPPIANS 4:21-23

Philippians 4:21-23

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” (Philippians 4:21-23, ICB)

- Where does joy come from? (From relationships with friends and with God. From helping other people meet God. From knowing that God’s promises will come true.)
- What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ”? (It means we see, think, and act like Jesus. With love.)
- How do we learn to live like Jesus? (We watch people who have been living like Jesus for a long, long time.) “I can do all things through Christ because He gives me strength,” means...what? (God will give me the strength to do anything He asks me to do.)
- The world says we need all of our problems solved to be happy. Paul says all we need to be happy is a relationship with God. What do you think?

SO WHAT?

- For toddlers: Bookend this series by reminding your child about joy. Ask, “What does the Bible tell us is better than fun?” and every time he or she responds with “joy” cheer and give them a hug.
- For grade schoolers: Ask your child to identify 2-3 people who love Jesus and talk to him or her about what stands out about the faith of those individuals. Talk about how your child could model the faith of those he or she admires.
- For you: Find a moment to be still before God and thank Him for the relationship He has given you through Christ. Remind yourself, as Paul says, all we need to be happy is a relationship with God.