



Easter Family Do-Votionals

6 fun experiences that bring families closer
to Jesus and each other

Friends,

Get ready to take your family on a journey this Lent with these easy, family-friendly do-votionals. Gather your family at mealtime, right before bedtime, or at the start of each week to spend a few moments learning and growing together. Each week includes a short learning activity that combines simple supplies, Scripture, and talking points that will challenge your entire family to prepare their hearts during Lent as we journey toward Easter.

Enjoy the Journey!

Patty Smith, Gary Lindsay, and Carmen Kamrath

Idea 1: Thirsty for God

Scripture: John 4:14

You'll Need: A pitcher of water, saltine crackers, foam cups, and a Bible

ASK:

- When do you experience being thirsty most often? Why?
- What quenches your thirst?

As family members share, place a pitcher of cool ice water in the center of your gathering area. Then challenge your family to do the following tasks. In between each task, ask your family, "Are you thirsty?"

- 20 jumping jacks
- Run in place for a minute
- Eat four saltine crackers

Mention that you are thirsty.

SAY: As human beings, we are naturally hungry and thirsty; it's how we are made. Deprive people of food or water for too long and they'll do some crazy things to get it. If we go too long without these life-sustaining elements, we could die. In the same way, there is a spiritual hunger and thirst in us, too. Just like our body needs food and water to survive, our spiritual life needs to be nourished or it won't survive either.

Open a Bible and read aloud John 4:14.

Pour each family member a cup of water and have everyone take a drink.

SAY: This water nourishes us. In the same way, our spiritual life can be nourished by spending time with the Living Water, Jesus, in prayer. We can also quench our spiritual thirst by doing things such as reading the Bible and spending time with Christian friends. Doing these things is called having a thirst for God.

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Idea 1: Thirsty for God (Continued)

ASK:

- When you read the Bible, what important discoveries do you make about God? About yourself?
- How do these things nourish or feed your spiritual life?
- How do they help you grow closer to God?

SAY: When you pray, how does God speak to you? Sometimes you may hear a small voice, but God can also speak to you through friends and family, too.

ASK:

- How does prayer help you grow closer to God? Use your fingernail to lightly etch into the side of your cup your thoughts about this question with words, pictures, or symbols.

ASK:

- Think about your friends. How does spending time with them help you grow closer to God? Use your fingernail to lightly etch into the side of your cup to express your thoughts about this question with words, pictures, or symbols.

Have family members hold their cups in their hands. Lead your family in prayer, asking God to help each person to continue to thirst for him. Encourage family members to keep their cup somewhere they'll see it often as a reminder to thirst for God each day and grow closer to him

Idea 2: Aware of Grace

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8

You'll Need: A board game that will have a definite winner such as Apples to Apples or a smart phone game app (like bowling) that your family can play for points that declares a winner. You'll also need a bag of M&M candies and a Bible.

Explain to your family members that they will be playing a game to win points that could earn them a present.

(Play the game.)

After the game, give everyone a few M&M candies, regardless of the points they've earned.

- ASK:**
- How did you feel when you received candy because you didn't win the game?
 - (To the winner) What were you thinking and feeling when everyone received candy, even though they didn't win the game?

Open a Bible and read aloud Ephesians 2:8.

SAY: Grace is getting something that you didn't deserve. The verse I just read tells us there is nothing we can do to earn God's love and forgiveness.

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Idea 2: Aware of Grace (Continued)

ASK:

- How was receiving candy regardless of the points you earned like experiencing God's grace?

SAY: God's grace is like receiving the candy even though you didn't earn it. God's grace and love is free to all of us.

ASK:

- Describe a time you experienced grace; how did it make you feel?
- When have you shown others grace?

SAY: When we experience God's grace, we can share it with others.

Open another packet of M&M candies. Invite family members to place the candy in their mouths. As it dissolves, have them thank God for the gift of grace and the ability to share it with others.

Idea 3: Shaped by Scripture Scripture: Mark 12:31, Luke 9:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, and James 1:19

You'll Need: Bibles

Have family members form pairs. Choose who'll be the sculptor and the clay. Have the "clay" close his or her eyes. Sculptors shape the clay into a favorite animal by moving arms, feet, and hands into a position or stance that represents the animal.

Allow 90 seconds for sculpting and then have the "clay" open his or her eyes and look around the room. Take turns guessing the different types of animals that were sculpted.

After everyone guesses, have the clay and the sculpture switch places. The new sculptors will create their favorite animal from clay.

Allow another 90 seconds and have the "clay" open their eyes. Take turns guessing the different types of animals.

ASK:

- As you sculpted, what did you use to help you shape your animal?
- How did you know how you would shape your clay into the animal you wanted?

SAY: We all needed something to help us shape our clay whether it was a mental picture, a memory, or a real animal. In the same way, God gives us something to help shape our words, actions, and behaviors—The Bible. The Bible is God's Word and helps us live, love, and obey God. Open a Bible and read the following Scriptures:

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Idea 3: Shaped by Scripture (Continued)

(Option for larger families: Have family members form pairs, and assign each pair a verse to look up and read.)

- Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)
- Take up your cross and follow me. (Luke 9:23)
- Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. (James 1:19)

ASK:

- How do these verses shape your life today?
- What will you do differently now that you've heard and read what God's Word says in these verses?

SAY: God's Word helps us live in ways that are pleasing to God or make God smile.

Regroup with your partner and choose who'll be the sculptor and the clay.

SAY: Sculptors, shape your clay into one way these verses or God's Word has shaped your life. Use your "clay" as a way to represent how you will live based on one of these Scripture verses.

When the sculptors are finished, take turns guessing the action or verse their clay represents.

Be sure to switch roles so each person has the opportunity to sculpt, and everyone can guess what actions or verse their creation portrays.

For extra fun, take photos of your sculptures and post them on facebook. Invite friends to guess the actions or verse portrayed.

Idea 4: Practicing Forgiveness

Scripture: Matthew 6:14-15

You'll Need: Two large rubber bands or bandanas per person or something family members can bind their hands together with, cookies, paper, crayons, and a Bible

SAY: As you wrap the rubber bands or bandanas around your kids' hands, have them name times people have wounded or sinned against them---for example, called you a name, lied to you, or bullied you. As you mention the times you've been hurt, twist your hands or wrists, tightening the bandanas or rubber bands.

ASK: How does it feel to have your hands bound tightly?

- How is that feeling like or unlike how you felt when people hurt you or sinned against you?

SAY: When people hurt us or sin against us, we often feel sad, frustrated, or experience pain. These emotions prevent us from forgiving others and experiencing a life with God's love and joy. Let's try something to see what that's like.

Be sure kids' hands are still bound together and challenge them to do the following tasks:

Try to pick up a cookie, hug a family member, give a high five, or draw a picture.

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Idea 4: Practicing Forgiveness (Continued)

ASK:

- What was it like trying to experience these things with your hands tied together?
- How did having your hands tied change the way you experienced these tasks?

SAY: Being tied up prevented us from eating, hugging, giving a high five, and drawing a picture. In the same way, not forgiving someone prevents us from experiencing everything that God wants to give and show us.

Open a Bible and read aloud Matthew 6:14-15.

ASK: How is refusing to forgive others like or unlike having your hands tied and trying to do the things we want to do?

SAY: Having our hands tied together stops us from experiencing things we love to do in life like hugging family members, playing together, or being creative. In the same way, not forgiving others makes it hard for us to experience God's abundant love and forgiveness.

ASK:

- Who is one person that you need to show forgiveness to this week?
- How will you show forgiveness to him or her?

Close with this prayer activity:

SAY: As we pray, slowly unravel your hands, asking God to help you forgive others and also thank God for how he forgives you.

Idea 5: Attentiveness to Others

Scripture: Philippians 2:4

You'll Need: Plastic grocery bags, one dark-colored marker per person, white copy paper, and a Bible

Give each family member a plastic bag, piece of copy paper, and a marker. Have each person put the paper inside the bag. Have family members sit face-to-face and draw each other's portrait, without looking at the paper or removing the marker from the paper inside the bag. Emphasize that family members should keep their eyes firmly focused on their partner's face and they should not lift their pen from the paper.

(Allow 5-10 minutes for drawing,)

Have family members reveal their portraits to each other.

ASK: As you were drawing, what did you notice about your partner's face and features?

- What did you have to do to stay focused on their face?

SAY: When we look carefully at other people, we can see things we've never seen before such as freckles, scars, a beautiful eye color, or even a bright smile.

Open a Bible and read aloud Philippians 2:4.

ASK:

- How was this drawing experience like or unlike the verse I just read?

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Idea 5: Attentiveness to Others (Continued)

SAY: In our drawing experience you had to look carefully at your partner to draw his or her face. In this verse, God wants us to look at the interests or needs of others and serve them. For example, if we know someone who is sick, God wants us to offer that person help. If we know someone who is hungry, God wants us to offer him or her food.

ASK: Why do you think God wants us to look to the interests of others?

- When you think of the word “others” what specific people come to mind?
- How can you be attentive to their needs?

SAY: Grab your portrait again. Hold it in your hands and look at it while we pray.

Dear God, help me to look carefully at others and see what they might need; whether it be food, a hug, a high five, or clothing. Give me strength and creativity to serve them.

After the prayer, have family members write a note of affirmation on the portrait and give the portraits to the people depicted in them.

Idea 6: Seeking the Truth Scripture: Matthew 6:33

You'll Need: Various scavenger hunt items (see suggestions below), paper, a pen, and a Bible

Create a fun scavenger hunt for your family. Have family members form pairs and the first pair to bring all of items to the table first, wins. Here are some suggested items to search for:

- A toothbrush
- Garbage bag
- CD
- Toy that makes noise
- Ball
- Tissue box
- Paper airplane
- Crayon
- Paper clip
- Remote

ASK: In this hunt you had to search for different types of things. What did you do to find them?

SAY: The Bible talks about seeking something, too.

Open a Bible and read aloud Matthew 6:33.

ASK:

- How was what we searched for like or unlike seeking the kingdom?
- When you seek the kingdom, what are you looking for?
- What did you do in the scavenger hunt that might help you seek the kingdom?

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Idea 6: Seeking the Truth (Continued)

SAY: In our scavenger hunt, we looked for stuff like toys, crayons, and a remote. When we seek the kingdom, we're not looking for stuff; we're looking for God and spiritual truths like love, forgiveness, hope, and a forever friendship with Jesus. These are things that you can't really touch, but we can definitely feel and experience them.

The Bible, friends, pastors, and parents can help people seek the kingdom of God through their words and actions.

ASK: If you were to design a hunt that would help people seek the kingdom of God, what would you put on the list to search for? (*Write down answers as family members brainstorm.*)

- How would you guide people on their search?
- Where do you need guidance as you seek the kingdom of God?

Share your hunt for the kingdom with another family and post pictures on your Facebook page or Twitter feed about your hunt and the things you find that lead to the kingdom.