

FAITH@HOME

JULY, 2017

For: Individuals, Families, and Friends of
St. James United Church of Christ (Havertown, PA)

As a church, we seek to equip and empower individuals, couples and families with children to: talk about their faith, pray in ways that are comfortable and comforting, ritualize important moments, and reach out in service and support of others. Therefore, at the end of each month we provide an activity in each of these areas, which you can do at home to grow and strengthen your faith. We hope you will try at least one, maybe even all four, during the month.

DEVOTIONS: PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

July Prayer Calendar

1. Think of people/situations/events for which you can pray.
2. Put each one on a particular day on the calendar.
Optional: You may decorate the calendar.
3. When finished, read, "*The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know.*" (1 Timothy 2:1)
4. Post the prayer calendar on the refrigerator, family bulletin board or other community space accessible to everyone, where it will serve as a daily reminder to spend time in prayer. You may want to set a time each day to pray, such as mealtime or bedtime.

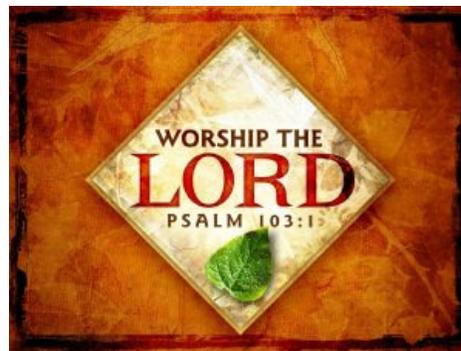


RITUAL AND TRADITION

Traveling Worship

1. When you are away from home, choose a place to worship: in your hotel room, at the beach, in a park, in a tent or in your car. Make sure to pack your Bible and the worship cards provided.
2. Divide the worship cards among family members. Allow people to choose the parts they feel most comfortable leading, but make sure each person takes at least one card. Some people may take more than one.
3. Allow a few moments for people to prepare what they will lead. Here is an order for worship, which can be modified to fit your family.

- Opening prayer
- Song
- Bible story
- Faith story
- Lord's Prayer
- Song
- Closing Prayer



SERVICE

Decreasing Your Garbage



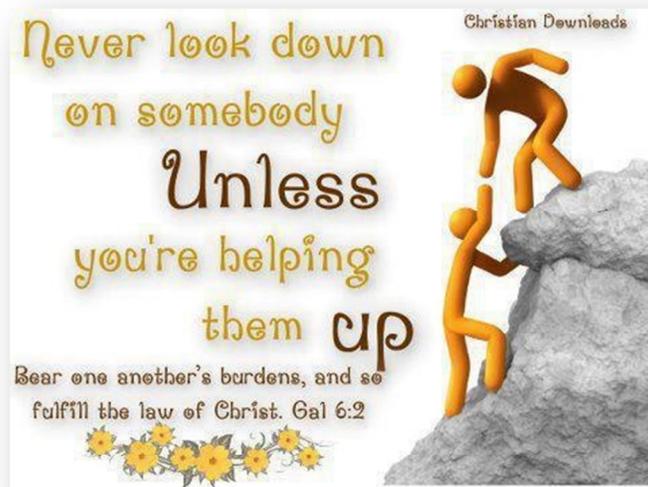
The goal of this activity is to honor God, the creator of the universe, by noticing and decreasing the amount of garbage you create in a day, a week or a month. The average American produces about 4.4 pounds of garbage a day, or a total of 29 pounds per week. We can exert personal control over the amount of garbage we generate.

1. Ponder the creation story in *Genesis 1*, especially the following excerpt on how God wants us to be stewards of the earth, which we hold in trust.
"God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good."
2. Decide whether you want to observe and control garbage for a day, a week, or a month.
3. Decide what is going to count as garbage (ex. non-composted food scraps, items you are not recycling, plastic bags that are not returned to the store, anything flushed down the toilet, sink, or put in the trashcan).
4. Decide how you can reduce the amount of garbage you produce.
 - Use cloth or reusable bags when shopping.
 - Evaluate the packaging of each purchase you make. Can it be recycled? Is it necessary? Is there an alternative with less or no packaging?
 - Try to avoid things made of, or packaged in, styrofoam or requiring batteries.
 - Clean or repair items that might otherwise be thrown out.
5. At the end of the day, week or month, notice how little garbage you have collected. Take a photo of it to help you feel a sense of accomplishment for having so little.
6. Think and talk about what was the hardest part of decreasing your garbage.
7. Pray *"Thank you Creator of the universe for giving us such a complex and beautiful natural world. Help us to be worthy stewards/keepers/trustees of this gift."*

CARING CONVERSATION ABOUT FAITH

Bearing One Another's Burdens

1. Read aloud, *"Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:2)
2. Each person should find a rock.
3. With a marker each person should write on the rock something that is a burden or a worry or something that is bothering him/her.
4. Read aloud what is written on the rock. In response, all should say, *"We'll carry your burden to fulfill the law of Christ."*
5. Give your rock to someone else who has agreed to pray for you regarding your burden or place your rock(s) at your front door.
6. Think and talk about: *How does it feel to know that someone is helping you with your burden? How can you help others with their burdens? Why is it important to carry each others burdens?*
7. Finish by praying, *"Dear Jesus, help us to show others how important they are by helping them to carry the heavy burdens in their lives. Just like you carried the burden of the cross, remind us we never carry our worries or troubles alone. Thank you, God. Amen."*



Traveling Worship Cards

Opening Prayer

An opening prayer prepares everyone for a time of worship by thanking God for being with you and asking God's Spirit to inspire your worship. Speak from your heart and your prayer will be perfect.

Bible Reading

Choose a favorite Bible story or passage to read aloud. If you need ideas, most Bibles have a section in the back with lists of verses on specific topics or lists of Bible stories. If it speaks to your heart, it's perfect to read.

Song

Plan to lead or play two songs. If you have worship songs on your phone or other electronic device, you might play songs from there. If not, choose familiar songs to sing from Bible camp or Sunday school. You could also read aloud a Psalm, as the psalms were originally composed as worship songs. Psalm 100 or Psalm 121 or Psalm 145:1-10 might work well.

Lord's Prayer

Lead your family in the prayer Jesus taught. If your family does not know a version of this prayer by heart, read the prayer aloud from Matthew 6:9-13.

Faith Story

What is the story of your faith? Tell your family how God has touched your life. Thinking of how you would answer the following questions is a good starting place: What or who has helped you to believe in God? Why is your Christian faith important to you? When has your faith helped you through a challenging time?

Closing Prayer

A closing prayer gives thanks to God for the time to worship and asks God for ongoing guidance in your daily lives. Your prayer may include specific requests for family members or for other people.

