

# FAITH@HOME

June, 2017

For: Individuals, Families, and Friends of

St. James United Church of Christ (Havertown, PA)

We can develop and own our faith when we do the following four key actions: **TALK, PRAY, RITUALIZE, AND REACH OUT**. Given the research behind this proven focus, we as a church will be providing at the end of each month an activity in each of these areas, which we hope you will try (at least one, maybe two or three, or even all four) during the month.

## DEVOTIONS: PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

### Insect Prayers (Ages 4+)

Materials: Internet access or a library, if you want to find out more about the insects listed below.

Insects are plentiful during the summer. Learn about them and say a prayer for others related to the insect's purpose.



- Ants: Pray for people who carry heavy loads, like construction workers or truck drivers.
- Bees: Pray for florists and gardeners who provide flowers to brighten our day.
- Beetles: Pray for farmers and those who harvest crops.
- Butterflies: Pray for artists and painters who catch our attention in beautiful ways.
- Crickets: Pray for musicians who fill our lives with song.
- Dragonflies: Pray for pilots and rescue squad workers.
- Firefly/Lightning Bug: Pray for someone who is sad.
- Mosquitoes: Pray for people who are sick with malaria or West Nile disease and those who care for them.
- Spiders (are not insects): Pray for people who weave cloth or make clothing.

## RITUAL AND TRADITION

### A Blessing for Travel

Materials: "Our Vacation Worksheet" (provided) and pen, pencils, and crayons



1. After everything is packed and you're ready to leave the house. Read the following prayer:  
*Dear God, thank you for vacations. Please be with us while we travel. Keep us healthy and safe. While we are enjoying our adventures, help us to grow closer to others and to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*
2. During your trip, take a few moments at bedtime each night to review the day and record a highlight or two on the Our Vacation worksheet. Children can draw a picture or adults can record a memory that children dictate to them. Tell the children that you'll look at what you've drawn and written when you pray before going back home. Later, you might add your drawings and memories to a scrapbook or photo album.
3. Before you leave to return home, review the highlights of the trip you recorded on the Our Vacation worksheet. Offer this prayer:  
*Dear God, thank you for vacations! Thank you especially for (family members name highlights of the trip). Please guide us and keep us safe as we travel home. May our memories of this trip continue to bless us as we return to our daily lives. Amen.*

## SERVICE

### Love-Your-Neighbor Jar



Materials: Jar, Paper to Cover the Jar, Marker, and other things to decorate the jar, if desired,

1. Begin with this prayer: *God, we know there are people who need our help, even in the summer time. Help us to be good neighbors, and to show your love to others. Amen.*
2. Read aloud Mark 12:28-31 below. Discuss: What does Jesus mean by "love your neighbor as yourself"? In what ways might our family do this?

#### **Mark 12:28-31 The Great Commandment**

<sup>28</sup> And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

3. Wrap your container with plain paper and print "Love Your Neighbor" on it. Do not put a lid on it. Decorate the container with buttons, colorful paper scraps, markers, or any other craft materials you have on hand.
4. Work together to read the ideas on the Love-Your-Neighbor Jar worksheet (provided). Add your own ideas in the blank spaces. Cut the slips apart and put them in your container.
5. Choose a week each month during June, July and August to draw a slip and work together as a family to do the act of love described on it. If needed, modify it to fit your family or your community.
6. After you draw the slip, say this prayer:  
*Dear God, may our words and deeds help someone today. Amen*
7. You may want to share stories about your experience with the Love-Your-Neighbor activity before bedtime on the day you did the activity.

## CARING CONVERSATION ABOUT FAITH

### "Family Heroes"

Materials: None

1. Name three family members (living or dead) who have shown great courage, strength, and wisdom...
2. In remembering them, tell a story from their life that shows how they exhibited these qualities as "heroes".
3. Pick one of their qualities that you think you need and discuss/reflect on how you might use his/her example in an upcoming situation you will need to face.
4. Close in prayer: Thank you God for the superheroes in our family who can show us what we need to do and how we can handle our upcoming challenges. Amen.








# A Blessing For Travel - Our Vacation

Highlights of things we did, saw, experienced, and enjoyed.



Date	Place	Memory

# Love-Your-Neighbor Jar - worksheet

<p>Invite a friend or neighbor to attend worship, Sunday School, or other church activity with you.</p>	 <p>Gather loose change from around the house and use it to buy food for our food pantry.</p>	<p>Pick flowers or vegetables from your garden and take them to a neighbor. (If you don't have a garden, make a bouquet of paper flowers or buy one.)</p> 
<p>Take a walk or a bike ride. Smile and say "Hello" to each person you see.</p> 	<p>Put on work gloves. Walk around your neighborhood or favorite park and pick up any trash you see. Be sure to recycle bottles and cans.</p>	<p>Telephone an older family member or neighbor and sing a song to him or her.</p>
<p>Contact a local housing shelter and ask if they would like some toys and games in good condition. If they would, clean out your closets and drawers and find some to donate.</p>	 <p>As a family, offer to help a neighbor with some yardwork. Or sweep a neighbor's sidewalk without being seen!</p>	<p>Our Idea:</p>
<p>Our Idea:</p> 	<p>Our Idea:</p>	<p>Our Idea:</p> 