WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

When a family gathers together at home for prayer, Bible reading, and turning their hearts to the Lord - that is family worship.

In Deuteronomy 6:5-7 we find what Jesus called, “the first and greatest commandment.”

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give to you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home...”

Immediately after the Great Commandment, parents are called to impress the hearts of their children with a love for God. How can we as sinful parents possibly do this? God tells us to begin with family worship - talking as a family about God and His Word.

God calls us to family worship for many reasons. Family worship deepens and strengthens family relationships. Family worship provides an opportunity for parents to take the lead in passing faith to their children. Families that worship at home bring that spirit of worship into the church.

START SLOWLY

Unfortunately, few Christian adults today grew up in homes that practiced family worship. You probably did not have this modeled for you, and if you are like most Christian families this has not been a regular part of your life. There is good news! It is never too late to begin family worship - with teenagers, or with grandchildren. It is OK to start slowly. This guide is designed to give you a wide variety of creative ideas to begin family worship and spiritual conversations in your home. Don’t feel pressure to use all of the ideas in each lesson. Start slow!

UNDERSTANDING THE FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE

This guide is a part of the spiritual growth journey for children, teens, and families at Wheaton Bible Church. Our vision is to see the church partner with parents so that our children and grandchildren would know and love God.

In order to bring our church and our families together to pass faith to our children, we have strategically aligned all of our children’s and youth ministry curriculum with this family worship guide.

Here is how it works. Each Sunday morning we invite families to worship together in a church service. In addition to attending church, many kids and teens participate in our children’s and youth ministry programming. Each Sunday, all the kids and teens in the church have the opportunity to study the same section of Scripture.

We will work our way through the Bible over a four year period. This means that if a child grows up in our church family (1st through 12th grade), they will have worked their way through the Bible three times - going deeper each time.
We are excited about what kids and teens will have a chance to learn about God and His Word at church but we believe that the spiritual teaching they receive at home is essential for their faith development. God created parents to take the lead in passing faith to their children at home, and it is the church’s job to help parents be successful. That is what the family worship guide is all about. We want to give you the tools, ideas, and resources you need to impress the hearts of your children and teens with a love for God.

Each week, this guide will help you talk about God’s Word as a family. Every section is aligned with the same Bible passages that kids and teens will be learning about at church. By using this guide during the week, your family will be able to grow in the Lord, and then if your kids or teens join us for children’s or youth ministry, we will reinforce the Scriptures and truths that they have been learning about at home. This is a key point. The family worship guide is strategically built for your family to explore the Bible together during the week prior to kids and teens hearing that Scripture taught in their church program. Home first - church second.

**HOW TO USE THE FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE**

Every chapter of the worship guide has two sections: 1) Family Worship and 2) Grow Together Throughout the Week. As you read through these descriptions, feel free to look ahead at the first week of ideas beginning on page 5.

The first heading for each week of the worship guide will look like this:

*FAMILY WORSHIP*

Following this heading you will find a suggested plan which will help you have one time of family worship that week. Each family worship time has five suggested components: 1) Activity, 2) Singing, 3) Scripture reading, 4) Talk about it, and 5) Prayer. Don’t feel pressure to do all of these elements every time. If time is short, focus on the most important elements - Bible reading and prayer. Here is a short description of the five components.

**ACTIVITY**

If time permits, start with something fun! These activities range from crafts, to games, to object lessons. They usually require little or no prep. Feel free to adjust and adapt the activity to fit your family. If you have teens, encourage them to lead the activity for the younger kids. If all your kids are older, you may choose to skip the activity.

**SINGING**

Yikes! Did you say singing? One of the ways that God invites us to worship Him is by singing. If your children are younger, and you are enthusiastic about it, they will love it, and you will lay the
groundwork for singing in your family for generations to come. If your kids are all teenagers, and you have never tried singing together as a family, you may want to try this in a few months - after family worship has taken root. Younger kids will enjoy using any instruments (drums, sticks, etc). Children who have taken musical lessons can be encouraged to use their instrument and learn songs that the family likes to sing. It can be helpful to use worship CDs or DVDs. Each week we recommend some hymns and praise songs to consider. If you don’t know the songs, use the internet to find the lyrics. Just type the song title into your favorite search engine.

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Each family worship time will be focused on a particular passage in Scripture. This is the most important part of family worship. God uses His Word to transform us!

**TALK ABOUT IT**

After each Scripture reading you will find a series of questions that will help your family dig into the truth of God’s Word and apply it. Choose only the questions that you think will work well for your family. Change the questions as needed. The family worship guide is not a homework assignment. It is a tool for you to use, adapt, and improve to help lead your family in worshipping God at home.

**PRAYER**

End your family worship time with prayer. One way to pray together is to use the ACTS model. Adapt this prayer time to best suit the needs of your family.

- A – Adoration, telling God how wonderful He is
- C – Confession, admitting our sins to God
- T – Thanksgiving, expressing our gratitude to God
- S – Supplication, asking God for things we need

**GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

After the section on family worship, you will find the section titled “Grow Together Throughout The Week.” There you will find a variety of ideas for how to keep spiritual conversations going through your normal life. Use only what is helpful. Don’t feel pressure to make use of all the ideas.

The first thing you will find in this section are additional questions that you can talk about with your kids during meal times, car time, etc.
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE
Each week you will find a Scripture which you may consider memorizing as a family. You may choose
to write it on a 3x5 card for everyone to keep with them during the week. The more you repeat the
Scripture throughout the week, the more likely you are to remember it.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS
Catechism is a fancy word for using questions and answers to teach children about God and His Word.
You may be surprised how much your children love to memorize the answers to these questions. Each
week, you will find a few questions and answers to learn together as a family. Kids particularly enjoy
it when they can be the “catechiser” - which means they get to ask the questions of the other family
members and see if they know the answer.

DIGGING DEEPER FOR TEENS
Every week you will find suggested conversations, questions, online research, or videos to watch that
will help engage your teenager in a substantive conversation about God and His Word. The questions
are also designed to help parents and teens deepen their relationship. When our kids are teenagers, they
need us more than ever before as they are making major decisions that will impact the rest of their lives.

PRESCHOOL FUN
Here you will find fun, simple ways to help your preschooler talk with you about God and His Word.

RESOURCES TO SUPER-CHARGE FAMILY WORSHIP
Throughout the guide we will point you to additional resources which can be a tremendous help to your
family. Here are a few we encourage you to consider to maximize your spiritual life at home.

THE CHILD’S STORY BIBLE by Catherine Vos
Don’t be fooled by the title. This is not a “kiddy Bible.” This is the Bible in powerful story form, and it
can be used as a great complement to your family Bible reading time.

FAMILY TIME TRAINING - www.famtime.com
When we put some creativity and fun into family worship - kids love it! That is where Family Time
Training comes in. Sign up for a free once-a-month email service at the website above and receive a
fun, free, creative idea for family worship.

THE BIG PICTURE BIBLE - by David R. Helm
Great for preschoolers! The Big Picture Bible is designed to teach the “big story” of the Bible -
connecting all the events of Scripture with Christ.

SEEDS FAMILY WORSHIP
Fun, Scripture based songs on CD that can help your family sing together and worship God.

VISIONARY PARENTING - www.visionaryparenting.com
Resources and equipping for parents and grandparents on how to pass faith to your children.
ACTIVITY

Words in **bold** are what you can say to lead this activity (from www.famtime.com - Total Access.)

Supplies needed:
1. A 3 foot length of string or fishing line.
2. A small metal washer, small enough to fit through the top of a 2 liter pop bottle.
3. A 2 liter pop bottle, half filled with water.
4. A fan, or someone willing to act like a fan (see below)

Tie the washer to the end of the string or fishing line.

To begin our family worship time, I have a challenge for you. Here, I have a string with a washer tied to the end. I also have a 2 liter bottle. Is there a volunteer who can help me, who wants to try this?

Here is your mission. I am going to put the bottle on the floor. You will stand on a chair. You have to hold the end of the string, and lower the washer down into the bottle. Think you can do it?

Wait! There is one more thing. I am going to turn on this fan and it will be blowing the air around the bottle making this a bit more challenging. (Another way to do this is to ask another family member to sit on the floor next to the bottle and be a human fan - trying to blow the washer away from the bottle!)

OK, let’s see if you can do it.

Give your volunteer a few chances to do it. With some practice he or she should be successful. Then give other family members an opportunity to try if they would like to. After everyone has tried, let everyone try again, but this time without the fan (or the person blowing). It will be a lot easier!

What did we learn from this game? The wind made it really hard to succeed. The reason we did this game is because it is an illustration of something that we all face in life. The wind in this game is like the pressure we face from people to do certain things. This person says, “do this,” your friend says, “do that,” your parents say, “do this,” God says, “do that.” Who should we listen to? In a few minutes we are going to read about a woman named Rahab who had some dangerous decisions to make.

SINGING

Consider one or more of the following songs to praise God for His creation. Use the resources in the introduction to find music and lyrics for suggested songs.

Hymns: I Sing the Mighty Power of God
       O Worship the King

Praise songs: Lord, We Lift Your Name on High
             Our God is an Awesome God
SCRIPTURE READING

Read the following Scripture aloud as a family. Encourage younger children to read portions of the chapter.

Joshua 2

TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions as a family. The brief answers provided may help you guide the conversation as needed.

1. In chapter 1, God promises Joshua that he would be successful in taking the Promised Land. But Joshua did not become proud or over-confident. What was the first thing he did in the beginning of chapter 2?

   Joshua sent in two spies to scout out the city of Jericho. He continued to make wise and cautious decisions.

2. The spies stayed in the house of a woman named Rahab. What did Rahab do when the king of Jericho told her to turn the men over to him?

   She lied to the king and told him that the men had already left, when in fact she had hidden them up on her roof.

3. Why did Rahab protect the spies?

   Rahab had heard about all the great things God had done in bringing the people out of Egypt. She, like many of the people of Jericho, was afraid that God would conquer their city. Most importantly, Rahab believed that the God of Israel was the one true God! She said, “For the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below” (Josh 2:11).

4. What did Rahab want the spies to do for her?

   She wanted them to help her save her family. She knew that the LORD would overthrow the city and she wanted herself and her family to be on the right side of the battle.

5. How did the spies respond to her request?

   They promised her that if she did not turn them in, if she tied a scarlet rope to her window, and if her family was careful to stay hidden in her house, that they would do everything they could to save her family.

6. Rahab showed tremendous faith and courage to protect the spies. She feared the power of God more than the power of the king. In what ways today do we also need to choose to follow and obey God rather than people around us?

   There are many possible conversations at this point. You may choose to talk about peer pressure and the importance of wanting to please God more than wanting to please friends. You may choose to talk about standing up for those around you who are weak or made fun of, knowing that it pleases God.

PRAYER

A powerful way to pray as a family is to follow ACTS.

   A – Adoration, telling God how wonderful He is
   C – Confession, admitting our sins to God
   T – Thanksgiving, expressing our gratitude to God
   S – Supplication, asking God for things we need

You may choose to pray through one or all of these sections. Invite anyone who wants to pray to do so.
ADORATION
In reading the Bible today, what are some of the things we have learned about God? He is powerful. He protects those who believe in Him and trust in Him. Let’s begin our time in prayer by worshipping him for who He is, for His love and His holiness.

CONFESSION
God forgave Rahab for her sin of lying. Rahab believed God! We can confess our sins to God and because of Jesus’ death and resurrection we can be forgiven. It is important that a parent begin this time of confession. Kids need to see parents set the example of how to humbly admit and confess sin.

THANKSGIVING
Thank God for His protection and His power. Thank Him that He fights our battles.

SUPPLICATION
Just as Rahab wanted God to protect her family, pray for God to protect your family from temptation, from sickness, and from worldliness. Use this time to offer all your requests to Him.
A parent can conclude the family worship time with a prayer of thanks to God.

GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Keep the conversation about God, His Word, and His Creation going throughout the week. Consider talking about some of these questions at meal times, in the car, or before bed. Some brief answers are provided to help you guide the conversation.

1. The people of Jericho were very afraid of the Israelites, even though they had never seen an Israelite! Why were they so afraid?
   The people of Jericho had heard the news of what God had done for His people. They heard how their God had parted the Red Sea. They heard how their God had destroyed the Amorite cities on the other side of the Jordan River. The people were terrified and the battle had not even started!

2. In James 2, God says that “faith without works is dead.” What does that mean, and how does it relate to what Rahab did?
   If we truly believe in God, our faith shows itself in how we act, think, and talk. True faith can be seen by other people. Rahab demonstrated she believed that the LORD was God, because she talked about her faith in God, tried to protect the spies, and did what she could to save her family.

3. When was the last time you felt afraid?
   Use this opportunity to talk with your child about the things he or she is afraid of. Talk about how the people of Jericho were afraid but they didn’t trust God. Then talk about how Rahab and the spies faced fear, but they did trust God and He protected them.
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

Work together as a family to memorize this verse this week.

“The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.”
- Joshua 2:24

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

As you go through your week, help each other learn the answers to these important questions. You may choose to include catechism as a part of your family worship time. The family worship guides work through a series of 45 questions each year.

9. What is God? God is a Spirit, and does not have a body like men.
10. Where is God? God is everywhere.
11. Can you see God? No, I cannot see God, but He always sees me.

DIGGING DEEPER – FOR TEENS

Talk about these questions with your teenager:

1. Rahab broke the law of the king when she hid the spies. Can you think of other times in history when Christians have had to disobey human laws in order to obey God?

   One example would be the Christians who hid the Jews from the Nazis in World War II.

2. If someone asked you, “How could it ever be right for a Christian to disobey the government?”, what would you say?

   The answer is that God created human government. He established the purposes and limits for governments. A human government does not have the right to force its citizens to disobey God. If a government seeks to do this, Christians must obey and fear God, rather than obeying and fearing man.

3. Did Rahab do the right thing by lying? It was certainly right to try and protect the spies, but was it right to lie?

   This is a complicated question! We know that Rahab had faith in God. We know that she was trying to do the right thing. However, she lied, which is a sin. There is no biblical basis for us to say “Rahab was right to lie.” Rather, this is yet another situation when God shows His mercy and His grace to us, in spite of our sin.

4. Read Matthew 1:1-6. The story of Rahab doesn’t end here in Joshua, what do we find out about her in this passage?

   Rahab was King David’s great-great-great-great grandmother! Because she was an ancestor to King David, she is also in the line of the King of Kings - Jesus.

PRESCHOOL FUN

Take your preschooler into a completely dark room - such as a closet, bathroom, or basement. Talk about how it sometimes makes us feel afraid to be completely in the dark. Ask your child how he or she would feel if they were all alone in the dark? Chances are they feel a lot more comfortable knowing that you are with them. Talk together about how there are many times in life when we feel afraid, but if we believe in God we are never alone. Even though we can’t see God, He promises to always be with us, to comfort us, and help us to not be afraid.
ACTIVITY

Words in **bold** are what you can say to lead this activity.

Supplies needed: For option 1 - none; For option 2 - a deck of “memory” cards, or a computer that has the game “memory” on it.

We are going to start family worship today with some stretching. We are not going to stretch our bodies, but our minds. Who here thinks that they have a pretty good memory? Here is a question to get us started. **Who can remember what they had for breakfast two days ago?** Listen to family members share their answers. Now choose one of the optional activities below.

**Option 1 - The telephone game**

Some of you have probably played this game before. It is called “telephone.” Here is how it works. I am going to whisper a sentence into another person’s ear. They have to listen carefully, and repeat the sentence to the person next to them. The message has to then be passed all the way around the family, and the last person says it out loud for all to hear. The challenge is to be able to have the last person say the exact same thing that I whisper into the first person’s ear. Got it? Here we go.

You can come up with your own sentence or use this one. “Today in family worship we are going to continue reading through the book of Joshua and learn about how God did a great miracle at the Jordan River.”

**Option 2 - The memory game**

Some of you have played this game before. It is called “memory.” I will lay out all the cards face down and you get to pick two cards. If they match, you get to keep them and pick two more. If they don’t match, you have to turn them back over and then it is someone else’s turn. The goal of the game is to remember where the cards are and get as many matches as you can.

Play until the game is over.

God gave us the ability to remember things. Our memories are very important! Many times in the Bible God tells us that He wants us to remember who He is and the great things He has done. In our Bible reading today we are going to learn more about that.

SINGING

Consider one or more of the following songs to praise God for His creation. Use the resources in the introduction to find music and lyrics for suggested songs.

Hymns:  
- Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus
- Great is The Lord

Praise songs:  
- Psalm 121 (I Lift My Eyes Up)
- Sanctuary
SCRIPTURE READING

Read the following Scriptures aloud as a family. This is a longer section, so consider having different family members read different portions.

Joshua 3

TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions as a family. The brief answers provided may help you guide the conversation as needed.

1. The time had finally come! The people of Israel were camped out next to the deep and fast moving Jordan River. On the other side was the Promised Land. What did Joshua tell the people to do?

   He told them to be ready and to look for the ark of the covenant passing through the camp. He told them to immediately follow the ark, but to stay more than a half-mile behind it. The ark reminded them that God was with them, but because of God's holiness and power they were not to be close to the ark. He also told the people to “consecrate themselves” which means that they were to pray, worship God, and prepare their hearts to obey Him.

2. The Jordan River was at flood stage. It was not a safe river. But what did Joshua tell the priests carrying the ark to do?

   He told them to step into the river. God wanted the people to trust Him.

3. What happened when the priests obeyed and their feet touched the water’s edge?

   The river stopped flowing! The water below them continued to move away. The water in the river above them was pushed back 15 miles into a big pile! Not only did God stop the water from flowing, but He dried the ground as well so the people could walk across.

4. Why do you think God chose to bring the people of Israel into the Promised Land this way? Why would He split the waters again like He did at the Red Sea?

   The people of Israel, who saw God do the amazing miracle at the Red Sea, had died in the desert because of their disobedience. God wanted to show this new generation another evidence of His mighty power. He had brought them out of Egypt by parting the waters. Now He would bring them into the Promised Land by parting the waters. He wanted to make sure all the people knew that He was King of the Universe!

5. From this point forward, all these Israelites would be able to say, “I remember when God showed us His power as we crossed the Jordan.” In the Bible we have many examples of God’s power. But what about here and now? What are some ways that God has proved His love and power to our family?

   Talk about how God has answered prayers for you as individuals and as a family. You might talk about His protection of your family, how He has grown your character, or enabled you to make a difference in the lives of others. Perhaps you will talk about how He has never abandoned you in hard and painful times. Consider writing down some of these special moments. God wants you to never forget His miracles!

PRAYER

A powerful way to pray as a family is to follow ACTS.

A – Adoration, telling God how wonderful He is
C – Confession, admitting our sins to God
T – Thanksgiving, expressing our gratitude to God
S – Supplication, asking God for things we need
You may choose to pray through one or all of these sections. Invite anyone who wants to pray to do so.

ADORATION
In reading the Bible today, what are some of the things we have learned about God? He keeps His promises. He is holy and perfect. He controls the world. Praise God for these things.

CONFESSION
Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land God told them to sanctify themselves. Part of this meant that they were to confess their sins. God has important things planned for our family to do for Him! If we want to serve Him best we also need to confess our sins to Him. *It is important that a parent begin this time of confession. Kids need to see parents set the example of how to humbly admit and confess sin.*

THANKSGIVING
Can you imagine how thankful the Israelites were to finally enter the Promised Land? We also have much to be thankful for. Let’s thank God for all the ways He has worked in our family over the years.

SUPPLICATION
God showed His tremendous power when He stopped the Jordan River. The Bible says that God uses that same power to answer our prayers. Let’s ask God for the things we need.

A parent can conclude the family worship time with a prayer of thanks to God.

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**GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

Keep the conversation about God and His Word going throughout the week. Consider talking about some of these questions at meal times, in the car, or before bed. Some brief answers are provided to help you guide the conversation.

1. **God told the priests to step into the Jordan River, and then He made the water stop flowing. Why do you think He didn’t cause the water to stop flowing before they stepped in?**

   *This was a test of the people’s faith and obedience. Would they obey Joshua? Would they obey God? Would they step into the river even though it was fast and dangerous? The priests “stepped out” in faith, and God then worked an amazing miracle.*

2. **How do you think that the people who lived in the town of Adam responded when they saw the Jordan River pile up in a big heap outside their town?**

   *We can only imagine how scared and amazed they must have been! Some time later the word had spread to all the villages that the God of the Israelites had stopped the river so they could cross. Perhaps some of them even put their faith in God, the way Rahab did.*
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

Work together as a family to memorize this verse this week.

“Joshua told the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.’”

- Joshua 3:5

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

As you go through your week, help each other learn the answers to these important questions. You may choose to include catechism as a part of your family worship time.

12. Does God know all things? Yes; nothing can be hidden from God.

13. Can God do all things? Yes; God can do anything He wants.

14. Where do you learn to love and obey God? In the Bible alone.

DIGGING DEEPER – FOR TEENS

Talk about these questions with your teen.

1. What is something important that you have coming up in the next few days or weeks?

   It may be an academic test, a sports game, or a time of serving grandparents. Identify one or more important things that are coming up for your teen or for your family.

2. When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, God wanted them spiritually prepared. He told them to consecrate themselves, which meant to make themselves spiritually ready. In what ways do you need to get “spiritually ready” for the important things coming up in your life?

   Talk about a plan to increase time in prayer, Bible reading, and family worship. Talk about sins that may need to be confessed and relationships which may need to be mended.

3. God told the priests to take a “step of faith” when they came to the Jordan River. Are there any steps of faith God is calling you to take right now?

   Share with your teen pivotal moments in your life when you needed to step out in faith. What happened when you did? What happened when you did not?

PRESCHOOL FUN

Fill the bathtub with water. Bring your preschooler in and try to work with him or her to separate the water in the tub into two sections, using only your hands. Can you part the waters in the bathtub? (Prepare to get a little wet). This challenge will probably prove quite difficult. After trying to part the waters in the tub, read the story from Joshua 3 about how God separated an entire river in order for His people to cross in safety.

WATCH A MOVIE!

Your family will enjoy watching a DVD from Ray Vander Laan called “Faith Lessons on the Promised Land.” Dr. Vander Laan will take you to the Jordan River and explain Joshua chapter 3 in a way that you will never forget. This particular lesson refers to episode 2, called “Wet Feet.” The “Faith Lessons Video Series” is available online and in the church library.
ACTIVITY

Words in **bold** are what you can say to lead this activity.

Supplies needed: None

During our family worship time today we are going to read about a famous battle, so I thought we would begin by experiencing a little bit of war ourselves. One family member will emerge as the champion of our war. What kind of war will it be? A thumb war.

A thumb war is when two people lock their fists together with their thumbs sticking straight up in the air. The object of the thumb war is to trap your opponent's thumb against their hand, under your thumb, and hold it there for a “1, 2, 3” count. Opponents should keep their arms as still as possible so that the battle is between thumbs, not entire bodies flailing and pulling on each other.

Match opponents up with each other, and allow them to battle each other. Whoever wins the best of three wars, moves on to the next round. Play as many rounds as needed until one family member emerges victorious. Encourage older siblings to give younger siblings a chance.

**Congratulations to the winner of our thumb war!** Well done. In a few minutes we are going to read the true history of one of the most famous battles of all time, the battle of Jericho. Perhaps you have even heard the words to the old tune, “Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho, Joshua fought the battle of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down.”

It is a catchy tune, but the song isn’t very accurate about what really happened. We are going to learn that it was actually God who fought the battle of Jericho, and because of that, there wasn’t much of a battle. When God fights, the battle is over quickly!

Before we read the true story from the Bible, let’s worship God by singing together.

SINGING

Consider one or more of the following songs to praise God for His creation. Use the resources in the introduction to find music and lyrics for suggested songs. Consider visiting www.seedsfamilyworship.com for some of the best CDs and DVDs which can help your family sing praises to God at home.

**Hymns:** Trust and Obey

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

**Praise songs:** Lord I Lift Your Name on High

Better is One Day
SCRIPTURE READING

Read the following Scriptures aloud as a family. If time is short for your family worship time, skip other sections, not this one. God’s Word has supernatural power and when we read it with an open heart, it changes us.

Joshua 6

TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions as a family. The brief answers provided may help you guide the conversation as needed.

1. Let’s go back and look at verse 1. Would someone read that verse again? What is the point of saying that Jericho was “tightly shut up?”

   The first thing God tells us is that the city was totally sealed off. It was completely protected, and there was no way for the Israelites to invade the city.

2. In verse 2, the situation immediately changes. What does God tell Joshua?

   God tells Joshua, “I have delivered Jericho into your hands,” and says that if the people would follow His directions the walls of the city would come down. God promised Joshua that He would win this battle for the people of Israel.

3. If you were Joshua, what would you have thought of God’s battle plan to just walk around the city, and on the last time around to shout and blow the trumpets?

   Joshua was a military leader. From a military standpoint, this was a ridiculous strategy. Walls don’t come down with shouts and trumpets. Never the less, Joshua did not hesitate to carefully follow all of God’s instructions.

4. When the people shouted and blew the trumpets, God flattened the walls of the city! The men of Israel ran straight in from all sides. God told them to destroy everything in the city, but to save one family. Who was that family?

   Rahab’s family was saved. She had hidden the spies from the king, and the Israelites kept their promise to save her and her household. Rahab’s family continued to live among the Israelites.

5. Joshua told the people of Israel not to take any of the idols from Jericho into their homes. What were these idols, and why was it so important that the people not take them?

   The people of Jericho worshipped false gods. They made statues and worshipped them. These were their idols. God warned the Israelites to completely separate themselves from idols and idol worship.

6. We often call this portion of history “the battle of Jericho.” But there wasn’t much of a battle, was there? God did all the work and flattened the walls, and the people of Israel simply obeyed God’s instructions. Are there some battles we need God to fight for us today on behalf of our family? Are there simple instructions He is giving us in the Bible that we need to obey?

   Talk about challenges you are facing in your family and in your church. Pray and ask God in faith to use His power and His strength to fight against the forces of evil that oppose you. Talk as a family about how you can increasingly obey the Bible as a family.

PRAYER

For your prayer time today, consider using the “High-Low” prayer approach. You can use the words in bold below to help guide you.

Today in our prayer time I would like us to do “High-Low.” To start, I would like to see if each person
would be willing to share the high, or the best part, of your day or week.

Encourage as many people in the family to share their high points.

Thank you all for sharing those things. Would someone be willing to pray and thank God and give Him praise for all the blessings that were just shared?

If no one is comfortable praying, you can take the lead and thank God for the “highs” that were shared.

Now, would someone be willing to tell us about a “low” from today or from this week? What was the worst part of your day or week?

It is helpful for you to go first when sharing “lows.” Listen to each person share their lows with the family.

Thank you all for sharing those things. It is so important for us to open our hearts to each other. Would someone be willing to pray and ask God to help us with all the things we have just heard? God loves us and we can bring everything to Him.

If no one is comfortable praying, you can lead this time of prayer. Ask God to help each person in your family as they face difficult situations.

**GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

Keep the conversation about God and His Word going throughout the week. Consider talking about some of these questions at meal times, in the car, or before bed. Some brief answers are provided to help you guide the conversation.

1. **How do you think the people of Israel felt as they were walking around the city of Jericho?**

   We don’t know for sure, but they may have been filled with fear, questions, and doubts. Perhaps the people were thinking, “Why would God tell Joshua to tell us to quietly march around the city? What good will that do?” But the people trusted God and trusted Joshua, and they obeyed.

2. **What do you think would have happened if the people had not followed God’s instructions?**

   God would not have done the miracle of knocking down the walls of Jericho. God wanted to continue to teach the people to pay careful attention to His Word, and that if they wanted to do His will, they had to do it His way.

3. **Joshua kept his promise to protect Rahab and her family. Have you ever made a promise but did not stick with it? Has someone ever made a promise to you, but let you down?**

   Talk about how promises are very powerful things, and we should be careful when we make them. Rather than making promises, Jesus tells us to “let your yes be yes, and your no be no.” In other words, just tell people what you are going to do, and do it.
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

Work together as a family to memorize this verse this week.

And the LORD said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.”

- Joshua 6:2

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

As you go through your week, help each other learn the answers to these important questions. You may choose to include catechism as a part of your family worship time.

15. Who wrote the Bible? Holy men who were taught by the Holy Spirit.
16. Who were our first parents? Adam and Eve.
17. Of what were our first parents made? God made the body of Adam out of the ground, and made Eve out of one of Adam’s ribs.

DIGGING DEEPER – FOR TEENS

Talk about these questions with your teen.

1. The Israelites faced an impossible situation. Jericho was tightly shut up. No one came out. No one went in. Nevertheless, the people of Israel trusted God. Are you facing any situations in your life right now that seem impossible?

   Use this opportunity to talk with your teen about situations you have faced, or are facing in your life now, that seem impossible. Talk and pray together about what it means to trust, pray, and obey God when faced with challenges that seem impossible. Consider reading Philippians 4:13 together.

2. God told the Israelites to kill everyone in Jericho except for Rahab and her family. Does this seem harsh or unfair to you? Why did God tell the Israelites to do this?

   The answer is found in Genesis 15:16 where God talks about the people of Jericho (the Amorites and Canaanites) and He says that their sin is not yet complete. The people of Jericho were wicked and violent. God had been patient with them for 600 years since the time of Abraham. Rather than repent and turn to God, they continued in their sin. The time had come for the judgment of their city. God chose to use the army of Israel as the tool of His judgment.

PRESCHOOL FUN

Re-enact the “battle” at Jericho. Find some blocks, cushions, or toys that can be stacked up to represent the walls of the city of Jericho. Explain to your child that the walls were high and thick and that the Israelites had no chance of conquering the city. Explain how God told the people to march around the city for seven days, and finally to shout and blow their trumpets. March around your pretend city of Jericho seven times. Shout and pretend to blow a trumpet. Then knock the wall down flat! Remind your child that the Israelites did not knock the wall down, God did.

MISSIONSFEST

During the next week, Wheaton Bible Church celebrates our annual Missionsfest where we turn our hearts and prayers to what God is doing around the world, and how we can be a part of it! For some great family worship ideas during the week of Missionsfest stop by one of our family ministry desks or visit www.wheatonbible.org/family. The next family worship time in Joshua is for the week of October 4.
Activity

Words in bold are what you can say to lead this activity.

Supplies needed: A glass and a pencil with a good eraser on the end.

I am looking forward to our time of family worship. To get started I have a challenging activity for us. At first, it might look easy to you, but looks can be deceiving.

I have here a glass and a pencil. Your challenge is to see if you can bounce the pencil off the table, and cause the pencil to flip into the glass. If the eraser hits the table just right, the pencil will bounce up in the air, and the lead end of the pencil will land in the glass.

The goal of the game is to get five points. We will go around and give each person a chance to bounce the pencil into the glass. Here are a couple of extra rules that you need to pay attention to.

If you bounce the pencil into the glass, you get one point, but each person on either side of you also gets a point. Your success spills over and gives them a point too! But the opposite is also true. If you miss the cup, you lose a point, and each person on either side of you also loses a point. Your “missing the mark” doesn’t just bring your score down, it brings other people’s scores down as well.

Ready to play?

Play the game until someone earns 5 points. It may be that no one is able to get that many points because the people around them are frequently causing them to lose points by missing the target. Expect that this may cause some frustration from people who really want to win! After playing the game, continue with this discussion:

Well done everyone. How did it feel to win points when someone next to you succeeded? Listen to the responses. How did it feel to lose points when someone else missed the mark? Listen again to the responses. It doesn’t seem fair, does it? They missed, not you! Why should you lose a point? We played this game because it illustrates something very serious that we are going to learn from God’s Word today. We are going to learn that when we sin, other people around us can be hurt. Sin is a very serious thing, especially when we try and keep our sins secret. Before we read God’s Word, let’s worship Him together.

Singing

Consider one or more of the following songs to praise God for how He leads and directs our lives. Use the resources in the introduction to find music and lyrics for suggested songs.

Hymns: Jesus, Friend of Sinners

Praise songs: Be The Center

I Could Sing of Your Love Forever
**SCRIPTURE READING**

Read the following Scriptures aloud as a family. Encourage different family members to read the Scriptures.

Joshua 7

**TALK ABOUT IT**

Discuss the following questions as a family. The brief answers provided may help you guide the conversation as needed. Feel free to change and adapt the questions as needed. See where God will take your conversation!

1. When God conquered Jericho, He told the people not to take any of the idols out of the city. They were not to keep any of the treasures for themselves. But what did Achan do?
   
   Achan secretly took some of the treasures from Jericho and hid them under the rug in his tent.

2. The Israelites then went to fight against the city of Ai. What happened?
   
   Even though Ai was a small city, their army was defeated and thirty-six of their soldiers died.

3. What did Joshua do immediately after this terrible defeat?
   
   He mourned, fell face down on the ground, and prayed for God to save them.

4. God responded to Joshua’s prayer. What did He tell Joshua?
   
   God told Joshua that one of the people had violated His covenant and stolen some of the treasure from Jericho. He told Joshua to bring forth all the people and that God would reveal the guilty person.

5. Who had sinned, and what happened to him?
   
   The man’s name was Achan. God immediately brought judgment against Achan and his entire family. As a punishment for their sin they were stoned.

6. This is a very serious part of the Bible. What are some of the things that God wants us to learn from these true events?
   
   A) Sin is very serious. Sin always has consequences.
   B) God knows about our secret sins and will bring them to light. We can sometimes hide our sins from other people, but we can never hide them from God.
   C) Our secret sins do not just affect us, but they affect our entire family and church as well. The people we love can suffer because of our sins.
   
   When we read the true history of Achan, it calls us to take sin very seriously. It calls us to repent quickly, and to be sure that we have no hidden sins in our lives, not only for our own sake, but for the sake of our families. Use your family prayer time to confess sin and seek forgiveness.

**PRAYER**

A powerful way to pray as a family is to follow ACTS.

A – Adoration, telling God how wonderful He is
C – Confession, admitting our sins to God
T – Thanksgiving, expressing our gratitude to God
S – Supplication, asking God for things we need

You may choose to pray through one or all of these sections. Invite anyone who wants to pray to do so.
ADORATION
In reading the Bible today, what are some of the things that we learned about God? He is holy. He is perfect. He is just. He judges sin. He reveals every hidden thing. Let’s begin our prayer time by worshipping and praising God for these things.

CONFESSION
The story of Achan calls us to confess. God loves us so much that He has made a way for us to be forgiven, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can confess all our hidden sins to Him, and He promises to forgive us because of Jesus. Let’s take time now and confess our sins to God. If we have hidden or secret sins, we should confess them so that God will not bring judgment against our family.

It is valuable for a parent to be the first one to confess sin.

THANKSGIVING
Let’s thank God for his graciousness and forgiveness. Thank Him for his patience with us.

SUPPLICATION
The God of the Universe invites us to share our needs and requests with Him. Like a loving Father, He loves to bless us. Let’s ask God for the things we need.

A parent can conclude the family worship time with a prayer of thanks to God.

GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Keep the conversation about God and His Word going throughout the week. Consider talking about some of these questions at meal times, in the car, or before bed. Some brief answers are provided to help you guide the conversation.

1. Why do you think Achan stole the treasure from Jericho?

   When Achan admitted what he did, he said that he saw the treasures and coveted them. He wanted them for himself, so he took them. Coveting means wanting something that does not belong to you, or being jealous.

2. Have you ever seen something that you wanted really, really bad? What did you do?

   All of us know what it means to covet something. We see things on TV that we really want. We see things that our friends have that we wish we had. We see candy or treats in the house we wish we could eat right now. Talk about times you have faced this temptation. What did you do? Were there times you resisted the temptation? Were there times that you gave in and took what you wanted? Even seemingly small things, like sneaking treats from the kitchen, are examples of coveting and taking things we should leave alone.

3. If we want God’s blessings in our family and in our church, what must we do?

   We must seek to be obedient to Him. God wants to bless us. God wanted to bless the Israelites with victory at Ai, but instead of blessing them with victory, they suffered a defeat.
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

Work together as a family to memorize this verse this week.

“Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged.’”

- Joshua 8:1a

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

As you go through your week, help each other learn the answers to these important questions. You may choose to include catechism as a part of your family worship time.

In the last three weeks you have worked on 9 new questions. Take time this week to review the past questions. Can anyone in the family answer all 17 questions you have studied so far?

DIGGING DEEPER – FOR TEENS

Consider having some of the following conversations with your teenager this week.

1. The story of Achan is very serious and very sobering. One of the ways Satan tempts us to sin is by telling us that if we do something wrong, “we will only be hurting ourselves.” Is that true?

   The story of Achan teaches us that sin spreads and infects those around us. Achan sinned in secret. Because of his secret sin 36 other men died in battle. Ultimately his whole family died because of what he did. Satan loves it when we sin in secret, because he knows the consequences of that sin will not only affect us, but other people around us.

2. What is the difference between confessing sin and getting caught? Can you think of a time that you had to choose between these two options?

   Achan did not confess his sin. He got caught. He was forced to confess. It may be because Achan did not confess that God brought judgment against him and his family. When we sin, we are desperate to keep it a secret. God wants us to confess our sins quickly so we don’t get caught!

   This is a great opportunity to talk with your teen about things that you did wrong as a teenager, and the lessons you learned as a result.

PARENTING PRINCIPLE

One valuable parenting principle to teach your children is this, “One of the most important tests of your character is not whether or not you make mistakes, but what you do afterwards.” Everyone of us sins. God can help us sin less and less as we grow in Him. But even the most holy person continues to sin. After we sin we face a major character test. What will we do? Will we repent and confess it, or will we try and cover it up?

REACH THE WORLD

Get a copy of the book, “Window on the World: When We Pray God Works.” This book features one country or ethnic group on each two page spread, with stories, interesting facts, beautiful pictures and prayer requests. Take a few minutes this week, perhaps after a meal, to learn together about a country or people group in need of the Gospel. Then pray as a family for God to work in that part of the world and for many to come to know and fear the one true God (1 Kings 8:43).
ACTIVITY

Words in bold are what you can say to lead this activity.

Supplies needed:
One ball for each person (tennis ball, plastic golf ball, or small rubber ball)
One small box (like a shoe box)

Welcome back to family worship! We will start with a game, and I am going to need everyone to play in order to make this work. In a few minutes I will give each of you a ball. The object of the game is to roll your ball (you can’t throw it) across the floor and into the shoe box.

Turn the shoe box on its side so that it looks like a small soccer goal. Set the box down on the other side of the room, or down a hallway. The ball should be able to roll directly into the box.

Who would like to try first? Great! Here is how the game works. You take your ball to the other side of the room (or hall) from the goal and sit down. The rest of us will take our balls and we will sit down behind the goal. On the count of three, you roll your ball toward the goal. At the exact same time, we all roll our balls in the opposite direction, trying to knock your ball off course!

So, the only way you can get your ball in the goal is if your ball can make it through all the rest of the balls moving toward you. It is important that we all roll our balls at the same time. Let’s give it a try!

Give each person a few turns. When you are done, bring the family back together.

This game helps us start thinking about our Bible reading for today. In order to score a goal, you had to go against the flow. You had to go in the opposite direction of everyone else. You needed to stand alone. We will be reading the last chapter of the book of Joshua, and learning how God calls Christians to do the exact same thing. God calls us to go against the flow, to not go with the crowd, and often to stand alone for Him.

SINGING

Consider one or more of the following songs to praise God for how He leads and directs our lives. Use the resources in the introduction to find music and lyrics for suggested songs.

Hymns: Holy, Holy, Holy
Praise songs: O, Praise Him (All This For a King)
I Could Sing of Your Love Forever
SCRIPTURE READING
Read the following Scriptures aloud as a family. This is a long chapter so encourage different family members to read.
Joshua 24

TALK ABOUT IT
Discuss the following questions as a family. The brief answers provided may help you guide the conversation as needed. Feel free to change and adapt the questions as needed. See where God will take your conversation!

1. We just read Joshua’s final words to the people of Israel. Final words are very important. How did Joshua begin his message to the people?

   He reminded them of all the ways that God had been faithful to them. He reminded them of the many miracles that God did for them.

2. God is a God who makes and keeps His promises. Would someone be willing to read Joshua 23:14? What does Joshua say about the promises of God?

   Joshua reminded the people, he pleaded with them to remember with all their hearts and souls, that not one of all the good promises the LORD had given them had failed.

3. God had given the Promised Land to His people. But now the people were faced with a big decision. What was it?

   The people of Israel had to decide if they wanted to be like the people in the land who worshipped false gods, or whether they would be totally different from them and worship the LORD.

4. Joshua made it clear to the people the path that he and his family chose. What did Joshua say?

   He said, “As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord!”

5. The people of Israel responded to Joshua’s challenge by promising that they would serve the LORD as well. Joshua responded by commanding them to prove their promise by doing what?

   Joshua told them that if they wanted to serve the LORD they had to throw away all of the idols they had hidden in their homes, and to yield their hearts fully to the LORD. It is easy to say, “I love God,” or “I want to follow God,” but the test is whether or not we act on those words. Are there idols we need to get rid of?

6. The people had to make a choice. Blend in, or be different? Look like everyone else, or worship God? God calls our family to that same choice today. In what ways would Satan want our family to blend in with our culture? In what ways would God want us to be completely different?

   Consider writing down the responses that are shared. The pressure to fit in is intense, and it does not come from God. From the beginning, God has wanted His people to be different and separate. If our families are not different from the world, how can we ever hope to make an impact in the world? Is it the desire of your family to say, “As for me and my family, we will serve the LORD?” If that is the desire of your heart, consider making that commitment together before God in prayer, just like Joshua did.

PRAYER
For your prayer time today, consider using the “High-Low” prayer approach. You can use the words in bold below to help guide you.

Today in our prayer time I would like us to do “High-Low.” To start, I would like to see if each person
would be willing to share the high, or the best part, of your day or week.

Encourage as many people in the family to share their high points.

Thank you all for sharing those things. Would someone be willing to pray and thank God and give Him praise for all the blessings that were just shared?

If no one is comfortable praying, you can take the lead and thank God for the “highs” that were shared.

Now, would someone be willing to tell us about a “low” from today or from this week? What was the worst part of your day or week?

It is helpful for you to go first when sharing “lows.” Listen to each person share their lows with the family.

Thank you all for sharing those things. It is so important for us to open our hearts to each other. Would someone be willing to pray and ask God to help us with all the things we have just heard? God loves us and we can bring everything to Him.

If no one is comfortable praying, you can lead this time of prayer. Ask God to help each person in your family as they face difficult situations.

GROW TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Keep the conversation about God and His Word going throughout the week. Consider talking about some of these questions at meal times, in the car, or before bed. Some brief answers are provided to help you guide the conversation.

1. Have you ever been afraid of being different or not fitting in?
   
   Use this opportunity to encourage your child to open his or her heart up to you - resist the urge to interrupt or interject. After they share, consider sharing a story from your past or present where you felt pressured to fit in.

2. Have you ever heard the phrase, “actions speak louder than words”? What does it mean?
   
   It is easy for us to make promises or say that we will do certain things. Many people are good “talkers.” However, we prove ourselves in our words and actions. The Israelites told Joshua multiple times that they wanted to serve the Lord, but Joshua wanted to see them get rid of their idols. Their actions spoke louder than their words.

3. If someone were to watch our family for a day, would they be able to tell we are Christians? Why or why not?

   If someone watched your family for a day, would they see you reading the Bible together? Would they hear you talking about Jesus? Would they see you going out of your way to serve others and reach out to those who are hurting?
FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

Work together as a family to memorize this verse this week.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
- Joshua 24:15

CATECHISM QUESTIONS

As you go through your week, help each other learn the answers to these important questions. You may choose to include catechism as a part of your family worship time.

18. In what condition did God make Adam and Eve? He made them holy and happy.
19. What is sin? Sin is any disobedience to God’s Law.
20. What does every sin deserve? The wrath and judgment of God.

DIGGING DEEPER – FOR TEENS

Consider having some of the following conversations with your teenager this week.

1. The first part of Joshua’s promise to the people was “As for me...” Joshua made the personal decision to follow God and obey God’s Word at all costs. What words would you use to describe your relationship and commitment to God during this past month?

   Encourage your teen to be open and honest with you. If they are far from God right now, let them know that you value their honesty above all else, and that they can always open their heart to you. Share with them the times that you have struggled with your own faithfulness and commitment to God.

2. The second part of Joshua’s promise to the people was, “...and my family, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua understood that his relationship with God was not just a personal thing, but involved his entire family. In what ways can our entire family follow God more faithfully?

   Talk with your teen about the spiritual environment of the home that you grew up in, compared to the faith life in your home today. Communicate this in a way so as to show appropriate honor to your parents. Listen to your son or daughter’s perspective and input on how the family can follow God in a deeper way.

3. In our country we are not tempted to worship little statues of wood and metal. But we are still tempted to worship idols. What are some of the idols we might struggle with today?

   An idol is anything or anyone we look to, other than God, to meet needs that only God can provide. We can be tempted to find significance, peace, and happiness in possessions, money, romance, etc.

REACH THE WORLD

One of the ways that God wants His people to be different from the world is by sharing and being generous with the resources and material things He has blessed us with.

As a family, brainstorm whether you have furniture (especially mattresses and lamps), household items (i.e. dishes, bedding, bathroom supplies, etc.) or outdoor winter gear (i.e. coats, scarves, etc.) you don’t use anymore (or don’t really need) that could be useful for a new refugee family. Contact the World Relief DuPage office—for furniture donations, Zach Taylor at ZTaylor@wr.org or 630.462.7566, x19, and for other donations, Meg Lavery, mlavery@wr.org or 630.462.7566, x 46.
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give to you today are to be upon your hearts.”

“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home...”

– Deut. 6:5-7

Questions about children, youth, or family ministries at Wheaton Bible Church?
Contact Pam Moore at 630.260.1600, pmoore@wheatonbible.org

This family worship guide is also available online at www.wheatonbible.org.