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M O N T H L Y

ENVIRONMENT

out of the comfort zone

God transforms me
when I step out in faith.

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How to Use this Resource

It's as easy as 1 ... 2 ... 3 ...

1 Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening, afternoon, or morning. Just commit to building this time into your family's natural rhythm. (It's usually best to build this time around a meal!)

2 Look through the HomeFront Monthly and see what stands out. Choose one or two experiences that you would like to incorporate into your family times this week. Don't feel burdened to complete all the activities at once, but carefully select which ones will fit your family best. Each month's issue provides more than enough experiences to last you throughout the month.

3 Remember to **HAVE FUN!** Strive to make each gathering unique to your own family as you enjoy spending time with God and each other.



Editor's Note

When we are at our wits' end for an answer, then the Holy Spirit can give us an answer. But how can He give us an answer when we are still well supplied with all sorts of answers of our own? —Karl Barth

Needless to say, it is uncomfortable to reach our "wits' end"; however, often times that is when we submit to God, allowing Him to work in us. Scripture is filled with the accounts of great and godly people reaching their "wits' end," and God redeeming and rescuing them in amazing ways.

As parents, it is our natural instinct to comfort our children. We feel we are being responsible when we care for their every need, when we rescue them from hard times. It's a tricky balance to allow our children to experience just enough trials and suffering to actually strengthen them. And it is impossible to do without the help of the Holy Spirit.

This issue of HomeFront Monthly is filled with stories and creative ways to live in the environment of OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE. It is God's desire that we learn to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit—which can sometimes come in a quiet whisper or in the loving voice of a concerned friend. ☺

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Debbie Guinn".

DEBBIE GUINN | EDITOR
the Tru Team | Costa Mesa, CA

ENVIRONMENT

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

This environment recognizes that God transforms us when we step out in faith. Our flesh seeks comfort, but God's Spirit wants to try our faith in order to grow it.

As children are challenged to step out of their comfort zone from an early age, they learn to experience a dependence on the Holy Spirit, who will equip and strengthen them beyond their natural abilities and desires. We believe this environment will cultivate a generation that, instead of seeking comfort, seeks a radical life of dying to self and following Christ.

I think that as children are challenged to step out of what's comfortable, they begin to understand what dependence on the Holy Spirit is like far earlier than most of us adults. When we're in situations where our own resources fulfill what is needed, we tend to accomplish it in our own strength.

Our kids, on the other hand, don't have nearly as many personal resources to fall back on. Their pure faith often helps them to depend on the Holy Spirit far more readily than we do, as adults. That's why James says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2). Joy in trials may seem like an oxymoron, but when we come to the end of our resources and our strength and we depend on the Holy Spirit, then we are truly in a relationship with the Almighty. That is the place where sanctification happens ... and where we find true joy!

This month, as your family examines the routines and boundaries that you've come to take comfort in, our prayer is that you would risk stepping outside of this comfort and experience a new dependence on Christ and His love. 🙏



Michelle Anthony

MICHELLE ANTHONY
FAMILY MINISTRY ARCHITECT
the Tru Team | Costa Mesa, CA

VERSE OF THE MONTH

Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God's Spirit in these words that transforms. We come to know God more when we are willing to open our hearts and hear His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with these verses and think of creative ways to invite your family to open up to God as they commit these verses to memory.

3

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

2 Timothy 1:7

"I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."

Philippians 4:13 (NLT)

FAMILY FOOD TIME

Recipe

There are some foods that have become a tradition in our family. The smells and memories of these foods bring a sense of comfort to us. One of those meals is homemade chicken pot pie.

Chicken Pot Pie (SERVES 8)

Prep Time: 40 min. Cook Time: 55 min.

Ingredients

Filling

- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cubed
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 cup frozen green peas
- ½ cup sliced celery

Sauce

- 1/3 cup butter
- 2/3 cup chopped onion
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon celery seed
- 3 ½ cups chicken broth
- 1 1/3 cup milk

Pie Crust

- 2 (9 inch) unbaked pie crusts

Pie Crust Ingredients (makes one crust)

½ c. butter or vegetable shortening

1 ½ c. all-purpose flour

½ tsp. salt

½ c. cold water



TIME SAVING TIPS

- REPLACE FRESH VEGETABLES WITH THE SAME AMOUNT OF FROZEN VEGETABLES
- USE A READY MADE PIE CRUST
- REPLACE SAUCE WITH 2 CANS OF CREAM OF CHICKEN CONDENSED SOUP

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. In a saucepan, combine chicken, carrots, peas, and celery. Add water to cover, and boil for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, drain, and set aside.
3. In another saucepan, over medium heat, cook onions in butter until soft and translucent. Stir in flour, salt, pepper, and celery seed. Slowly stir in chicken broth and milk. Simmer over medium-low heat until thick. Remove from heat, and set aside.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 40 to 45 minutes, or until pastry is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Crust

1. Blend butter, flour, and salt together in a food processor, until very crumbly. Add as much water as needed until dough holds together.
2. Roll dough gently on a floured surface to about an inch larger than a deep dish pie plate. Fold carefully in half, lift to pie plate, and unfold. Press into pan. Bake in oven for 10 minutes, then remove.
3. Pour the chicken mixture into pie crust. Pour sauce over all. Cover with top crust, seal edges, and cut away excess dough. Make several small slits in the top to allow steam to escape.



by Debbie Guinn

Conversation Starters

Often we are faced with situations that demand a right choice. It is in those times that we need to listen to the Holy Spirit as He directs us to do what is right.

Get your children talking ...

Pose these questions to your family, and let everyone offer their answers, then discuss them together. Feel free to personalize the questions to make the situation challenge fit the age and interests of your family.

Try to include new situation challenges each week this month while you are living in the environment of OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE.

“You find a black wallet lying on the ground. No one is around. Inside the wallet you find several things, including \$50, a Sponge Bob sticker, a coffee house gift certificate, and spare change.”

What Would You Do?

“You’re having fun playing with your friends at the playground. You see a little boy or girl your age without any friends and not playing.”

BEGINNINGS (AGES 3 & UNDER)



Get up



Lie down



Sit at home



Along the road

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. **Talk about them** when you **sit at home** and when you walk **along the road**, when you **lie down** and when you **get up.**”

Deuteronomy 6:6–7



ALONG THE ROAD

Drive time is a perfect time to instill God's truths in your little ones. Turn off the radio and use this rhyme to remind them that even in uncomfortable situations, we are loved and in God's hands.

JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW,
HE IS WITH ME WHERE I GO.
HAPPY, HURT, SCARED OR SAD,
JESUS ALWAYS MAKES ME GLAD.

GAME TIME

Learning to listen to the Holy Spirit is an important part of living in the environment of OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE. Use the following games to encourage your children to be good listeners. Remind them that God wants us to turn to Him, and listen for what He is trying to teach us in every circumstance we experience in life.

Younger: Red Light, Green Light

This game is great for kids ages two and up. You can play with as few as three players and is most fun played in an open field, but can be played in a long hallway, too!

STEP 1

Choose one player to be a "red light." He should stand about 25 yards from the other players, with his back turned to them.

STEP 2

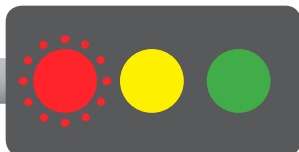
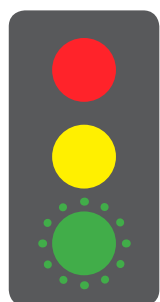
The other players should be lined up, shoulder to shoulder behind him. Their goal is to get close enough to tap the "red light" on the shoulder, but can move only when he says, "Green light."

STEP 3

To begin play, "red light" closes his eyes and yells, "Green light!" Players then run at top speed toward him until he yells, "Red light!," and turns around as fast as he can. The instant the other players hear "Red light!," they must stop running. Anyone "red light" sees still moving when he turns around must return to the starting line.

STEP 4

This sequence is repeated until a player gets close enough to tap "red light" on the shoulder when his back is turned. This player wins and becomes the next "red light."



Older: The Forbidden Letter

The idea of this game is to see how many sentences can be spoken without containing a certain letter, which has been agreed on.

For example, the letter "F" is the forbidden letter. The first player might ask, "Is this a new game to you?"

The second player could answer, "Oh, no! I played it years ago."

They would perhaps turn to a third player and ask, "You remember it, don't you?"

The third player might answer, "Yes; but we used to play it differently."

The third player, having spoken a word with the letter "F" in it, is out of the game.

The answers should be given quickly, without hesitation, and the player who avoids using a word containing the forbidden letter for the greatest length of time wins the game. You can then change the forbidden letter and play again. 🎮



STORYTELLING

Recognizing God's Voice

My mom is an amazing mother to three daughters. Even though she didn't have parents who taught her about Jesus, she committed her life to Him and has a deep loving relationship with Him. My mom has done an incredible job of passing down her faith to each of us. She modeled for us what it looks like to have a disciplined prayer life, how to see and meet the needs of others, and most importantly, how to truly love our husbands and children.

When I turned 20, I was trying to figure out what to do with my life. I remember seeking my mom's advice, as I always had, and asking, "Mom, what should I do?" However, instead of her answering, "Well, you should ..." (and then telling me her idea of a great plan), she said, "Pray about it, and ask God."

Whoa! Wait a second. Pray about it, and ask God? What does that mean? And how am I supposed to even know what God's voice sounds like? To be honest, I was angry. I wanted a clear answer from my mom. I wanted to hear her thoughts and opinions on what she thought I should do. Why all of sudden was I supposed to figure this all out on my own?

From that point, I began a journey of seeking God's voice. At times it came in the whisper of the Holy Spirit. Other times it came straight from the Bible and even from the wise words of a friend. It took me quite a while to actually learn to recognize God's voice. It wasn't until recently that I can confidently say I know what the Holy Spirit feels like and sounds like.

Something that really excites me is the opportunity to teach my own daughter how to recognize God's voice from an early age. I treasure the thought that she won't ever know a life without His gentle whisper. She will never be shocked when my husband and I encourage her to, "Pray about it, and ask God," because she will already have been flexing these faith muscles.

As parents, we have the opportunity to encourage this next generation to begin the journey of seeking the Holy Spirit in their earliest of years. Take some time this month to share a story with your children about a time when you recognized God's leading in your life. Share with them how you knew it was God's voice. 🙏



GOD'S WORD

Mission Possible

The story of the Good Samaritan in the gospel of Luke has worked its way deep into our society. The phrase “Good Samaritan” is used to describe any person who goes out of his way to help another. However, this parable is about more than doing good deeds—it is about taking responsibility for one’s neighbor.

In Luke, we read what many call Jesus’ mission statement for His public ministry.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. Luke 4:18–19



In preparation for His ministry, Jesus was “taken by the Spirit” into the desert for a time of solitude, where He was tempted by the Enemy during His time of prayer and fasting. He came out of this time fully empowered to bring about the ministry that lay before Him. Jesus was the One who, better than any other, knew the importance of solitude.

This is why we see Him repeatedly going off into a secluded place to be alone with His Father.

We have at our disposal the same spiritual resources that Jesus used when He faced and defeated Satan:

- Prayer
- The Father’s love
- The power of the Spirit
- The Word of God

In addition, we have in heaven the interceding Savior who has defeated the Enemy completely. Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us, but God uses these difficult experiences to put the best into us. Temptation is Satan’s weapon to defeat us, but it becomes God’s tool to build us up and set us on the path of the mission He has for each of our lives.



HEAR IT

Read together **Luke 4:1–21**. Afterward, ask your children how Jesus responded to being taken out of His comfort zone? Read verse 1 again— *“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit ...”*

Remind your children that this experience helped prepare our Lord for His present ministry as our sympathetic High Priest, so that we may come to Him for the help we need to overcome the trials that come our way.

DO IT

Create a space for solitude in your home—a place to hear from the Holy Spirit. After designating a spot, gather the following items:

- God’s Word
- A journal
- Markers
- CD with worship music

Allow your family to visit this place of solitude throughout the month.

Encourage them to write or draw in the journal anything they hear from God. At the end of the month, gather as a family and go through the journal.

Celebrate together knowing that God has prepared a mission for each of our lives. Leaning into His plans for us is exactly where we are supposed to be, even if it feels uncomfortable at times. ☺

by Michelle Anthony

PRAYER

Not Enough Comfort ... or Too Much?

You will need to assess where your family is right now. What is the climate of comfort in your home? What causes have led you to your comfort or discomfort? If your home has become excessively comfortable because of overprotection and hovering parents, you will recognize the symptoms.

Signs of a home whose children are living in excessive comfort include laziness, ingratitude, lack of motivation, selfishness, entitlement, a critical spirit, and gluttony—among others. When you see the buds of these beginning to blossom, you will know that it is time for the environment of OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE. You will want to act—without delay.

After assessing, pray together, and ask God to reveal to you any places of abnormal comfort in each of your lives. Then, ask God to give you the strength to correct it. It may hurt at first, much like an unused muscle does on the first day of a workout, but in time, being taken out of those places of comfort will begin to produce qualities that had been lacking. ●

What's the climate of comfort in your home?



Out of the Comfort Zone

hardworking

grateful

motivated

selflessness

selfish

unmotivated

ungrateful

laziness

Too Much Comfort

WORSHIP

Mommy Goes to Haiti

On January 12, 2010, at 4:53 p.m., local time, Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake. This was the country's most severe earthquake in over 200 years.

The epicenter of the quake was just outside the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. Widespread damage resulted from the quake, and the capital city was devastated. By February 10, 2010, the Haitian government announced a death toll of 230,000. As many as one million Haitians were left homeless and injuries were reported in the hundreds of thousands.

Many people from around the world rushed to the aid of the injured—one of those who participated in the relief efforts was a pediatrician from Southern California named Sandra Oak Lee.

After Sandy's return, she wanted to somehow share her experience with her 7-year-old daughter, Sayana. After some discussion, they decided to write a children's book about the earthquake, the response of the international community, and a mommy's experience assisting in Haiti. Fortunately, Sayana was as excited about the project as her mother was. They agreed to use the book as a way to raise awareness and money for Haiti relief.

Sayana wanted to draw the pictures herself, and soon they were able to find illustrator, Kenny Yamada, who generously donated his time and energy to help with the process. The result is *Mommy Goes*



to Haiti, (mommygoestohaiti.org), written by both Sayana and Sandy, and illustrated by Sayana and Kenny Yamada. All proceeds go to two projects: Mosaic Beyond Us (building homes in Haiti for families), and Project Medishare (building hospitals in Haiti).

Sandy, Sayana, and Kenny hope the book can be a vehicle to talk with children about events that occur internationally, how we can respond to extreme needs/disasters, and how individuals (even young children) can positively impact the world.

It is in God's nature to use specific and unique circumstances to refine His children. What is our response when we find ourselves in uncomfortable situations? Is it to run and hide, and make ourselves comfortable? Or, are we willing to embrace the situation and worship God in the midst of hardship? ●



WE OFTEN THINK OF WORSHIP AS SINGING, BUT WE CAN WORSHIP GOD IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS: PRAYER, SILENCE, ART, DANCE, GIVING, SHARING, AND THANKSGIVING —JUST TO NAME A FEW. MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR FAMILY WORSHIP TIME, BUT PREPARE YOURSELF TO HOLD THESE PLANS LOOSELY IF THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS YOU IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION.

Gather some paper and markers, and, as an act of worship, encourage your children to illustrate a time when they were taken out of their comfort zones. Talk together about how God used that time in their lives to help them grow.

CREATE

Life on a Mission

Sometimes we get comfortable in our everyday routines and surroundings and forget that God has called us to live our lives on a mission.

Jesus told His disciples to “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:19–20

These beads will serve as a reminder to you that we are to tell others the good news even when it feels a little out of our comfort zone. Remember too, that God is always right there with us. ☺

Gold—Represents who God is, and that He loves us and has a home for us in heaven. John 3:16

Navy blue—Represents darkness, sin, and separation from God. Romans 3:23

Red—Represents Jesus’ shed blood, and His death and resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

White—Represents our invitation to turn from sin, trusting Christ alone. John 1:12

Green—Represents spiritual growth. Confession of sin, prayer, and reading God’s Word. 1 John 1:9

Purple—Represents the Holy Spirit, our Comforter. John 14:26



INSTRUCTIONS

- Gather the beads.
- String the beads.
- Attach a clip.
- Attach beads on key chains, backpacks, or any place where you can see them everyday as a reminder.



CREATE IS A TIME TO ENGAGE YOUR FAMILY IN A COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO HEARING GOD’S TRUTH.

TRADITIONS

Hear and Obey

James 1:5–6 reads, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”

A tradition of “Hear God, and Obey” in a family, is a valuable gift you can give your children. To begin, use the following questions to open a dialogue with them.

- *Why do you think God wants us to ask Him for wisdom?*
- *What is wisdom?*
- *Do we know what is the best decision all the time? Why or why not?*
- *Can God’s advice be trusted? Why or why not?*
- *How do you know you can ask the perfect God, who knows all things, for help?*

Now that we understand that God wants to help us make decisions, we can ask for wisdom and guidance with confidence. When teaching your children to ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit, it is valuable to establish two things: first, that God’s advice is always what is best; and second, that we are willing to obey what we hear.

When it comes to asking the Holy Spirit to speak to us, we can use the idea of a traffic signal. A red light means, stop in your tracks. A green light means, go forward confidently. A yellow light means, wait, go slow, and ask for advice.

Next time your family has a decision to make, gather together, and pray, asking the Holy Spirit for advice.

FOR EXAMPLE

Decision: Should we get a puppy?

Together, pray something like this, but in your own words:

Dear Jesus,

We love You so much, and as a family we want to build a tradition where we ask for Your wisdom. You said in Your Word that You love us and that we could ask for wisdom anytime we need it. We come to You together now to ask, with confidence, for wisdom, knowing You hear us and want to speak to us. We choose to put our own ideas away, the things we want and wish for—because You know what is best. We choose to say, “Yes” to whatever You say.

Then ask, “Should our family get a new puppy?” Next, listen, and ask God to show you the things that you may or may not be thinking about, such as finances, time, your home environment, allergies, neighbors, etc.

Ask God to show you a red light if a puppy is not a good choice for your family right now; to show you a green light if you should go ahead; or to show you a yellow light if you should go slow, and ask for advice. Share with each other the color that comes to your mind.

This is where you will be stretched out of the comfort zone! It will be a challenge at first to trust that the Holy Spirit can lead you. God has an amazing way of rewarding those who diligently seek Him. If you give space for the Holy Spirit to speak into the life of your family, He will! ☺

Red light means, stop in your tracks!

Yellow light means, wait, go slow, and ask for advice.

Green light means, go forward confidently.

by Roger Taribassi

MARRIAGE

God Transforms Me when I Step Out in Faith

I can't think of an area in our lives where living out of the comfort zone is more applicable than in marriage. In fact, one promise the Bible gives about marriage in **1 Corinthians 7:28** is this, *"Those who marry will face many troubles."* Some people are so afraid of leaving their comfort zone that they never marry. We call this condition, "commitment phobia."

Let me give you a word of comfort: Marriage takes every spouse out of their comfort zones! No marriage succeeds without great sacrifice, without dying to one's self. Men and women are very different, and marriage often magnifies those differences. In order to have an effective marriage, we need to do things that often feel uncomfortable or unnatural to us.

For example, we have to learn to love our partner the way they want to be loved. My wife, Becky, feels loved when I make her breakfast, help with the dishes, or go on walks with her. I don't really like making breakfast, doing the dishes, and for that matter, walking as a form of exercise. But in order to have a great marriage, I must leave my comfort zone and do things that show her my love. You are transformed when you step out of your comfort zone.

And when you become more sacrificial and more loving, you become more like Jesus.

What specific things can you do that would move you out of your comfort zone and improve your relationship with your spouse? If you're not sure, simply make a list of 10 things each of you could do to help the other feel more loved.

Keep the list in your Bible, and try to do at least one of those things every day—without fail. Though you may be out of your comfort zone, your marriage will start to look and feel radically different—transformed by love! 🍷

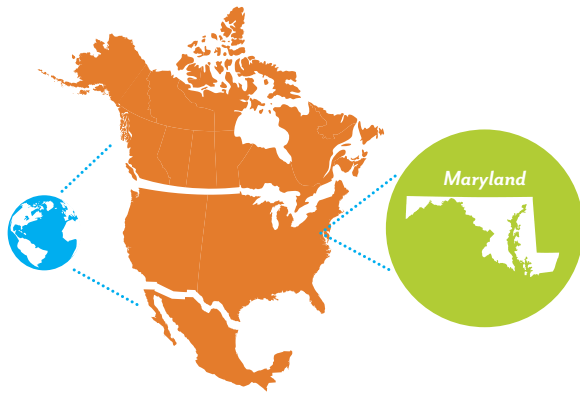


by Debbie Guinn

GLOBAL

Where In the World Is ...

Haiti is 10,714 square miles—slightly smaller than the state of Maryland.



Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, which it shares with the Dominican Republic.

Now that we know where in the world Haiti is, **let's meet and greet its people.** There are almost 10 million people that call Haiti their home. Forty percent of the population in Haiti is below the age of 14.

If you lived in Haiti, you would eat a lot of beans and rice, along with local fruits, vegetables, and spicy meat. You might also eat something called Bannana Peze, which is a plantain, sliced and fried in oil.

If you went to church in Haiti, you would most likely go to a Roman Catholic church. ☺

Awakening a compassionate heart and a global mindset in children for people beyond the boundaries of their own neighborhoods.



HOMEFONT | ENVIRONMENT | OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

To greet someone you would say . . .



To talk with your friends in Haiti, you would speak French or Haitian Creole.

Did you know?

- Spaghetti is most often served for breakfast in Haiti. It is cooked with a hot dog, and served with ketchup, and chili is made with goat meat.
- Haiti is the home to Royal Palm trees, which can reach 60 ft. tall—the height of a five-story building.

POPULATION
9,719,932 Million

LANGUAGE
French/Haitian

RELIGION
80% Roman Catholic
16% Protestant
3% Voodoo traditions

by Michelle Anthony

BLESSING

Pure Joy

The best gift we can give our children is the confidence to see that we believe everything is filtered (even the bad stuff) through God's hands.

We need to release our control of their circumstances. We need to start looking at these hard things that happen in our kids' lives as things that God wants to use to refine them—and then we need to walk with them, prayerfully, and model for them how they should respond in grace under trial. ☉



This month, read the following Scripture as a reminder to your children that all families will most likely go through seasons of difficulties, as well as seasons of prosperity and comfort.

“Consider it pure joy, [my children], whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4”

A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a Bible passages or words of encouragement. As your children are blessed, tell them that they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely give away to others the joy and love they have received from God. Blessings can also be spoken over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy, and wisdom over him.

HomeFront
MONTHLY



At your fingertips



home|front

HomeFront Weekly: Don't forget to grab your HomeFront Weekly: A resource to get parents and kids talking about God's Word together.

What's Happening in Your FAITH COMMUNITY?