

# OCTOBER 2024

## “PLANTING SEEDS IN OUR FAMILY GARDEN”



**Spiritual Practice:**  
Prayer



**Bible Story:**  
When Things Fall Apart



**Memory Verse:**  
Colossians 3:12-13



*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*

## FORMATION ACTIVITY:



### PARENTS:

Watch the video– Planting Seeds in our Family Garden.

Last month your family talked about how parents are the primary people who prepare the soil of their own children’s hearts to receive the seed of God’s Word and grow up to be mature believers. Last month you discussed your Christian beliefs, so how are you living out those beliefs in your family life? This month you will plant seeds in your family to grow Christian character. You have heard the saying, orthodoxy leads to orthopraxy. In other words, sound doctrine leads to right living. Parents know this isn’t always true with children, or adults for that matter. All of us have known God’s truth and not followed it. Romans 3:23

## FORMATION ACTIVITY (CONTINUED):

You may have told your child a million times to be kind to their siblings and they may comprehend the truth of that statement, but can't quite always live it out. You want to see your child move from knowing God's truth to walking in those truths as a disciple of Christ.

The most effective way to teach your children about the character traits of a Christian is to model it yourself! In your activity bag, you have a great book by Kathy Koch, titled "Parent Differently". She discusses Christian character and how to model, teach, and encourage your children to lead godly lives that influence the culture of our world.

Depending on the resource, they will interchange the terms character traits, values, or virtues but each term points toward the way we choose to live so our faith and actions point others to Christ. How do we teach our children the difference between good character traits and bad ones? We must not only teach their intellect but engage their hearts. Romans 2:4 says, "God's kindness leads us to repentance." When children are struggling to do the right thing, we model correct behavior more often than we correct behavior.

In our activities this month, we will follow Dr. Russell Hall's terminology and use the word "values" for the character traits we want in our lives. Values are traits you strongly believe are good and right. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you or your child always act on those beliefs. When a value becomes an internal desire and also an external behavior, it moves from a value to a virtue that you exhibit. We want our children to choose values freely and also choose to live a virtuous life.

Dr. Phillip Mamalakis has written a beautiful book, "Parenting Toward the Kingdom", and we have it in our Lending Library. It is worth reading. I'd like to leave you with some of his thoughts from the 5th chapter titled, Name your child's struggles, pages 88 - 93, as you begin this month. It may change how you view struggles in your home.

**"Within each struggle, our children are learning the values and virtues of the Kingdom of God". 88**

"In the home, in the struggles, is where we are learning patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control, sharing, taking turns, helping others, and essentially selfless love. It is in the home that we are working out our salvation, being perfected in Christ, and being made holy". 89

## FORMATION ACTIVITY (CONTINUED):

- **“Family life is about acquiring the virtues we need to succeed in life”. 91**

“It is hard for us to remember, and impossible for children to see, that through their struggles they’re acquiring the timeless virtues that will transform them and lead to a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless life. These struggles are the path of learning. We are working for the salvation of our children’s souls, and God is forming them as persons through our responses to their struggles”. 91

- **“What we say to our children in the struggle is written on their hearts for a lifetime.” 93**

We have several activities this month that connect your family with values and character traits. Here is a suggested timeline. Children may want to do some of these several times so start early in the month .

- Week 1: Parents: watch Dr. Hall’s video to get an overview of the topic before you engage the children in the activities, (Planting Values Game, Compass Activity). Read the notes connected to the video, “Making God’s values our values.” This can be found in the resource section.
- Week 2: Use your compass and the walking activity to read what God’s word says about this topic.
- Week 3: Play the Planting Values Game to learn more about what each person values.
- Week 4: Each person will choose their top 5 values. Discuss the character traits each person values and choose your family’s top 5 valued traits. Put these up in your home in full view.

Throughout the month Re-engage with these values when there is a conflict or struggle. These values are like a compass to help correct direction and navigate choices.

Read the book “Parent Differently” in your activity bag, when you find time.

# TELLING GOD'S STORY



## FAMILY:

Watch the video—When Things Fall Apart.

For families with children of all ages: Once your family watches the video, take turns telling the story this month. Use the props from your October activity bag. These are some ways to interact with the story as a family:

- You may look at the script or try to tell the story from memory.
- After each person tells the story spend time together wondering about the meaning of the story.
- Allow the children to ask questions without giving them an interpretation or moral to the story too soon.
- Ask each child to imagine they are in the story. They could place a peg person somewhere in the story to pretend they were there. When they pretend they explore their relationship with God and the characters in the story.

For families with Teens: We encourage you to watch the video and practice telling the story. Also, we have a new opportunity this month to use art and music as you explore the devastating effect of separation from God's presence during the Fall. You can find all of your supplies in a clear plastic envelope in your October Activity Bag. Look for the Video with Steph Peterson as your guide to this spiritual exercise.

## COUNSELING VIDEO



## PARENTS:

Watch the video—Begin with the End in Mind.

Dr. Russell Hall has provided notes from his Parenting Video that are extremely helpful to parents as they teach their children about values and virtues that exemplify the Kingdom of God. Look for these notes in the resources section titled, Making God's Values Our Values. They will guide you through the Compass Activity and the Planting Values Game.

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE



## Prayer:

“When you call on me when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen.”

–Jeremiah 29:12 The Message

Please note: The resources mentioned in the underlined text are listed on the October recommended materials page of the Growing Families website.

### What is the spiritual practice of prayer?

Prayer is listening and talking to God. This can be done through speaking, writing, singing songs, moving your body, being silent, or using tools like prayer stations or a palm cross.

### What are ways a family can pray together?

- Some families pray before meals and at bedtime and some set aside a specific time for the parents to pray with their children
- Some parents find using a prayer guide beneficial. such as [Praying the Scriptures for Your Children 20th Anniversary Edition: Discover How to Pray God's Purpose for Their Lives](#) by Jodie Berndt.

Use your Growing Families’ Journal to record your responses to these journal prompts. Parents with small children you could do this without your children or invite them to participate as they are able.

1. How does your family currently practice praying together?
2. Observe who initiates prayer. How often do you pray together? What are your topics and what family members participate in this?
3. What would you like prayer to look like in your family? In your journal list some new ways you’d like to try praying together. Intentionally ask God for a richer family prayer life.
4. Try at least one new way to pray with your family this month and record the experience.

Ideas for when prayer is hard:

Sometimes children at different stages don’t want to pray out loud. This is a good article to read: [Help! My kid won't pray.](#) These authors wrote a great book, [Raising Prayerful Kids](#), and we have it in our Lending Library along with some other great reads on prayer.

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE (CONTINUED)

## Ideas for new ways your family can pray together.

Allow different family members to choose one idea for your family to try at family prayer time. If possible, whoever selects the idea leads the prayer.

- Sing a prayer together
- Dance before God as a prayer practice. Medine Keener suggests one of the songs that she and her grandchildren listen to as they pray and dance. [Praise \(feat. Brandon Lake, Chris Brown & Chandler Moore\)](#). | [Elevation Worship](#)
- Read a child's prayer book. Families with small children received [God Gave Us Prayer](#), by Lisa Tawn Bergren. This is a great resource!
- Use your imagination as you pray (picture Jesus sitting next to you, picture the person for whom you are praying, etc.)
- Take a prayer walk around the neighborhood and thank God for everything around you. Also, pray for the people you pass by.
- Side-by-side prayer journaling. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Turn on worship music if you want, and then all sit silently with journals in hand. Each person can pray differently. Some will list prayer requests, some will write out their thoughts and emotions, and some will draw what they are sensing or hearing from God. The important thing is that you all do it at the same time.
- Breath prayer is a good bedtime routine to relax and rest in God's love. Think of a short phrase in your mind, as you breathe, begin to pray. For example, as you inhale, say "You are with me." And as you exhale, say, "I am not alone." Or, inhale: "I am your child." Exhale: "I am always loved." Or you can create an original breath prayer.
- Prayer postures - Individuals choose how they will hold or move their body as they pray. Stand tall, kneel, lay down, fold your hands, or dance as you pray.
- Use an app for family prayer such as [Lectio for Families](#)
- Books on prayer with children/youth are in our lending library. You can check them out when we gather for our Growing Families monthly meeting.

Questions for parents with preteens and teens about prayer:

Parent Tips: listen with an open mind. Respect your teen's opinion and try not to judge. Listen for the need/feeling underneath what they are saying. Reflect to them what you hear, "It sounds like you..." Thank them for sharing even if you don't agree or don't like what was said.

- How do you talk to God when you are alone? What helps you do this?
- Where do you go to talk to God?





## SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

### Individual Family Ideas for October

Below are a few things your family can get involved in:

1. October 10 is World Homeless Day: As a family, you can either volunteer at or donate (clothing, blankets, food, or hygiene supplies) to a homeless shelter such as the ones below:
  - Jessamine Homeless Coalition, 218 E Maple St, Nicholasville, KY 40356. (859) 813-0233
  - New Life Day Center, 224 N Martin Luther King Blvd, Lexington, KY 40507. (859) 721-2325
  - Lexington Rescue Mission, 444 Glen Arvin Ave, Lexington, KY 40508 (859) 381-9600
2. October 13 is Clergy/Pastor Appreciation Day - Your family can decide how to bless one of God's servants in your community or someone serving abroad. Here are a few ideas to get you started:
  - Start an Amazon wish list of items your clergy wants or needs,
  - Collect money from others in the congregation to bless your clergy family.
  - Host them for a family meal and make their favorite foods.
    - a. Mark their birthday on your calendar so that you don't forget it when it comes around.
3. Welcome new Kalas families. We've had an influx of new families join our community. Invite a family from another country for dinner or join in with another family in Growing Families and have a dessert night for new families. Make sure the children help prepare the food and serve it. Pray together for your guests before they come to your house.
4. Choose your own service project. Have a planning meeting with your children about where you may want to serve. After your time serving, gather as a family and discuss what everyone enjoyed, what was hard, or maybe not as enjoyable. Discuss when each family member noticed Jesus during your time.