

# NOTICE

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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Random.

Chaotic.

Circumstantial.

Sound familiar? If you live with an adolescent in your home, chances are these words describe quite a bit of your daily life experience. Teenagers engage all kinds of vital life tasks in random, chaotic, and circumstantial ways. Like their friendships. And dating relationships. And homework. And probably their interactions with you.

But we aren't using the words random, chaotic, and circumstantial to describe any of those areas of life right now. **We're using them to describe what we've learned from research about the prayer life of teenagers.**

Research shows that faith practices are important to what we call *Sticky Faith*—faith that lasts beyond high school and into college and young adulthood.\* Yet often teenagers aren't sure how to nurture their own spiritual growth. Our research at the Fuller Youth Institute has indicated that only about half of graduating youth group seniors pray once a day or read the Bible once a week. Beyond prayer and Scripture study, teenagers also don't seem have experience with a host of other timeless faith practices that could make a difference in their day to day lives.

As a follow up to the *Sticky Faith* research, we are exploring what disciplines best connect kids with God and nurture lasting faith, in particular those that help integrate faith practices with all of life. Out of that exploration we've created this resource as an entry point for youth workers and parents to invite young people to create new faith rhythms.

You might notice that we've tried to create ideas that get both you and your kids talking. Research shows that parents are one of—if not the—biggest influences on their kids' faith. Yes, even for teenagers. Further, our Sticky Faith research revealed that while it's important for parents to talk with their kids about the kids' faith, it's just as important for parents to *talk about their own faith journeys with their kids*. We're convinced you will all grow from these kinds of conversations.

The overall theme of this Every Day series is noticing God. Some people say "paying attention" is the core of the spiritual life. We think they're on to something. So this journey over the next weeks (for many of you, this 8 week journey might work well to use during the Lent season as preparation for Easter) is an invitation to notice. *Noticing* might mean you have to stop, listen, change up your steps a bit. It might mean trying some new things as a family. One way to think of these practices is that they are ways we learn to pay attention to and notice God and God's work in and around us.

## *Ideas to Engage Your Whole Family in Noticing God More*

Below are some ideas and tips for you as you engage this journey together with your family. Please note that you won't be able to implement all of these ideas, so pick one or two you'd like to focus on and give them a try together!

- Many parents have noticed that the moment they pull out the printed family devotion is the moment the kids shut down. If you've experienced this, think about ways to have these conversations or try these activities without using this (or another) resource as a cue sheet. Your kids will appreciate your own words and your authentic presence more than anything we could write for you.
- Read Psalm 103: 6-14 together. Wonder together what it means that the writer uses such big language for God's love and for how dramatically God removes our sin. You might also ask: What does it mean that God is "slow to anger"? Do you think that describes our family, and why/why not? How do we need God to work in our family to make us all more like God in this area?
- Talk together about something your family might want to fast from as a family during this journey. If you do, be sure you choose as a *family*. Also consider how you can invite your kids to participate, but also give them permission not to participate. Remember that the point is creating ways we can notice God more during our everyday life.
- Acknowledge that certain sacrifices will likely mean something different to your kids than to you. For example, given the pervasive role digital technology plays in the lives of adolescents today (it's truly all they have ever known), living without the internet or their cell phone is comparable to an adult imagining life without electricity. So rather than fighting with your teenager over instituting a blanket "No media on Sundays" rule, invite them to work together with you toward something that's manageable as a practice everyone is willing to try together. In the end they might long for more time apart from their digital connectivity, but that desire will have to come from them, not you, in order to really be effective.
- Find a local or global outreach opportunity or cause to support as a family. If you're giving up something together that involves time and/or money, also decide together what you'll do with that time and/or money. Maybe you can channel money to help build a well in another community, or maybe you can visit pediatric cancer patients in your city at the local children's hospital. Do some research, incorporating your kids' web savvy, and try something new together.

- If you're doing this during Lent and you attend an Ash Wednesday service together, ask on the way to or from the service or over dinner, "Why do we wear the ashes on our bodies today?" and explore what it means to different members of your family. Be sure you answer this—and every—question yourself!
- This week the DAILY GUIDE invites your kids to read and re-read Psalm 25:1-7. Consider doing the same and sharing together about the impressions the passage has made on each of you at the end of the week.
- In the DAILY GUIDE we invite your kids to consider incorporating the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 into their daily and weekly rhythm of prayer. You might also want to do this in your family as a way to reinforce, wonder about, and be changed by this prayer. In fact, we encourage you to consider using the DAILY GUIDE yourself throughout this 8-week series!

Our hope is that this resource leads to new long-term rhythms for your family and for your children in their own life with God. Here's to nurturing Sticky Faith...Every Day!

# UNPLUG

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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This week our focus is on making room for Sabbath rest in our lives: time to intentionally interrupt our week's activity in order to notice God at work.

Here are some ideas for you to engage the whole family this week (please don't feel like you have to do all of them; just pick one or two):

- Part of noticing God is to look for ways in which God is at work in the world around us. This can be hard to do when we are overwhelmed with life's distractions. This is what Sabbath practices invite us to do. What is something you could temporarily "unplug" from to create space to notice God? This doesn't need to be something that literally plugs in (like a computer or phone, although those are definitely included). This could be any of life's distractions. Could you choose to intentionally "unplug" from something (like cell phones or television) – for an hour a week, ten minutes a day, one day a week or even for the rest of this series? Lead by example and unplug. Share this commitment with your family, and discuss as a family how you might find a way to unplug together.
- In the spirit of the Sabbath (a regular interruption of our normal routine to notice God), could you surprise your family with a Sabbath moment? Perhaps dismiss a usual weekly chore to give kids a break. Take everyone on a field trip to a local museum or park to notice God's creation. Say "no" to an unnecessary commitment on behalf of your family (a birthday party or extra soccer practice) and treat them to a relaxing night home instead. Or instead of working on the computer when you're around the house this weekend, keep it turned off and see who notices. Then at the end of the weekend ask what it was like for other members of your family for you to spend the weekend away from your computer.
- Connect with a friend or two this week and ask for ideas their family has tried in order to create more Sabbath rhythms in their lives.

# RECEIVE

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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Too often in life, gifts come to us with “strings” attached—expectations, obligations, or work we must do to earn them. This week we look at a different kind of gift. In John 1 the Bible describes Jesus’ grace as a free gift to us, something we are invited to simply receive. Below are a few suggestions for talking as families about our ability to receive with “no strings attached.”

### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in RECEIVE

- In the DAILY GUIDE there is an invitation to journey through Psalm 51 in different ways each day. You may want to sit down together over dinner and walk through this journey as a family, or practice the exercises individually and process them together.
- An unspoken affirmation is no affirmation at all. During the week when you see family members doing things you appreciate, jot it down on a note and express your appreciation in a location you know they will see it. See how many come up during the week, and at the end of the week talk about how it felt to receive affirmation from one another.
- Plan a specific date with your children to shop for inexpensive gifts for another family member. Go together to a store and with \$5 or \$10 each, break away and in 30 minutes come up with the best gift you want the other person to receive. When you come back together, share why you chose that gift. Talk about the concept of receiving and what it’s like to give or receive gifts freely. (NOTE: As an alternative, you might go to the store and pick out the gift you would want the other person to receive if you had any amount of money to spend, and talk about it in the store).
- Create an obstacle course as a family, go to one nearby, or make one up on the spot at a local park playground. You can decide whether to time each other or race through all at once depending on your family’s style and competitive preference. Afterwards go out for ice cream or a dessert somewhere (or bring one with you from home) and talk about some of the things that get in our way of noticing God. Perhaps look over Psalm 51 and the obstacles that kept David from receiving all God had for him. You may even talk about obstacles as a family that can get in the way of noticing God as well. What obstacles—personal or family ones—keep us from receiving the gifts of God’s grace and love?

# YIELD

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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This week our focus is yielding. To yield something is to give it up for some other reason or purpose. By learning to yield our will to God's will, we open ourselves to trust God more, and know God more every day.

### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in YIELD

- To help your family understand this, think of some ways you yield already. Where do you personally yield your time or resources? Where does your family do this? Do you have any stories where yielding to God's purposes produced a memorable, positive result? By celebrating where you already do this, you can start this process with some momentum and a clear definition of what success looks like. Once you've done this reflection, start to dream of where God might be leading you to other yielding.
- Give your family a real-life example of yielding. Maybe you can take a chore off someone's plate, or run an errand, or clear out "your shows" on the DVR... something that is an act of yielding what matters to you for the sake of another. It could lead to some beautiful and creative "pay it forward" moments.
- If your family were to yield a few hours some time, or even half a day, what could you do together? Dream of ways you can team up and bless others and each other. This might be helping out for a morning at the local food bank, or visiting some older folks in a home, or just spending unstructured down time with one another if it's been awhile. If the thought of yielding that time seems nonsensical since everyone is so busy and has important commitments (and believe us, we're there with you) – even better! Talk about why you feel that way as a family, and what it might look like to yield less of your time to certain commitments in order to yield more time to serving or playing together.
- The DAILY GUIDE invites us to imagine yielding our relationships to God in light of Colossians 3:1-14. Consider reading this together as a family and asking about ways your family might live more in line with Paul's words in this passage in your relationships with one another. You might want to read on to Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Perhaps this becomes a passage you post somewhere in your home this week to encourage one another to yield all that we do to God.

# SIMPLIFY

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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Below are some ideas and tips for you as you continue to engage this series with your family. This week we are considering the ways that we can simplify our lives by letting go of stuff in order to have space to notice God and to trust in God's provision. Please note that you won't be able to implement all of these ideas, so pick one or two that you would like to focus on and give them a try together!

### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in SIMPLIFY

- It's an age-old adage that "more is caught than taught." As parents, think about some ways that you can simplify your lives in order to notice God more this week. What is something that you can let go of? Share your thoughts and plans with your kids, including why it can be hard to simplify and also some of the worries and concerns that you are bringing before God. Remember that letting your kids know why you're engaging in these practices is just as important as letting them know what you are planning on doing. If your family has made a specific choice to fast from (or "subtract") something, now is a good time to check in on that in light of this discussion of simplicity.
- Open up a conversation with your kids about their worries and concerns and what they find themselves chasing after. This may not be the time to try and fix their problems or to question their judgment. Listen first, invite your kids to think about how they can trust in God's provision, and spend some time praying for your kids and their worries and concerns.
- Read Matthew 6:25-34 together as a family and invite everyone to share one way that they have seen God provide for themselves or for someone else. Again, this does not need to be a rigid family devotion moment. This is something that can happen in the car with the help of a smart-phone Bible app and a little bit of traffic. Just make sure the person reading is not the person driving!
- Spend one mealtime together as a family this week sharing a simple meal and then preparing a meal together to deliver to a member of your church or someone in your neighborhood. Discuss as a family how simplifying your own lives gives you space, time, and resources to bless others.

- Have a family night where everyone unplugs from computers, internet, texting, and even television to play a board game or go out for ice cream, or even go for a hike together. Try to keep the activity as simple as possible, making sure that it doesn't cost you much to do it. To be really effective it's best to make this an *invitation* with your kids and not an *imposition* on them.
- In many communities there are local shelters or rescue missions that help distribute clothes, toys, and certain necessities to those in need. Consider as a family donating one item each to a local organization. But here's the catch: ask everyone to choose something that they would *actually wear or use*. It's easy to give away the sweater that Grandma gave you two Christmases ago. Again, make this an invitation and give your kids permission to say no. Hopefully as they are engaging in the SIMPLIFY theme, they'll start asking questions about what they really need. Dropping off your donations together may also be a great experience for your family.

# LAMENT

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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Lament isn't a topic we often spend a lot of time talking about, so below are some ideas to help start conversations within your family about lament. Not all of these will be applicable or helpful to your family (and there are too many to tackle them all!), so just pick one or two that stand out to your family.

### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in LAMENT

- Music often helps us articulate our emotions. Take some time to share songs (Christian or secular) that have been significant in your spiritual journey – either songs that have expressed your lament in a particularly difficult time or songs that have reminded you of the goodness of God. Why were those songs significant to you? Be sure to share your own as well as inviting your kids to share their songs. Also, be prepared to listen without judgment even if your kids share songs that you think hold little value (musical or otherwise); this is a time to listen and affirm!
- More than a few biblical characters have experienced disappointment or grief and expressed their lament to God. Read through one of these stories and talk about how the main character dealt with his emotions. What part of this lament is the easiest for you to relate to? Which is the most difficult to relate to?
  - Job (the whole book of Job would be worth reading through, but particularly Job 23:1-12)
  - Abraham (Genesis 15:1-6)
  - Can you or your kids think of other Biblical characters who went through struggles and cried out to God?
- Lament begins and ends with the understanding that God is present in the midst of our suffering, but sometimes the middle of suffering is the hardest time to remember God's presence. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel sets up a stone monument, which he calls an Ebenezer (literally, "stone of help"), to remember the place that God led the Israelites in victory over the Philistines. Talk about any physical reminders of God's presence and faithfulness that your family might have. What might it look like to begin a practice of collecting physical Ebenezers (reminders) of God's faithfulness to your family?
- The DAILY GUIDE encourages individuals to practice pouring out their hearts to God (see Psalm 62:8). Talk about how different members of your family pour out their hearts to God. Praying out loud? Journaling? Song writing? Dancing? What could it look like to try a new way of praying, individually or as a family?

# LOSE

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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If we want to experience the fullness of life God offers through Jesus every day, we must be willing to lose everything as Jesus did.

This week, experiment with one or more of these ideas as a family to help you process and learn together about what it means to experience loss.

### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in LOSE

- **Talk about a recent loss.** Some families participating with this curriculum will have no problem talking about loss. Perhaps you just experienced the loss of a loved one, a broken relationship, or the loss of a job or a house. Talk about it and compare your feeling to how God must have felt when Jesus died or to how Jesus may have felt as he realized everyone had abandoned him. End by reading Psalm 131 together. Here's the whole thing:

My heart is not proud, LORD, my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.  
But I have calmed myself and quieted my ambitions.  
I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.  
Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

- **Practice breathing together.** Breathing is a natural pattern of gaining (inhaling) and losing (exhaling). Just as there is no way to gain the joy of Easter Sunday without experiencing the loss of Good Friday, there is no way to fill our lungs without first emptying them. Being aware of our breathing is a way of connecting our everyday lives to the story of crucifixion and resurrection. Choose one person in your family to be the "counter" while everyone else breathes along. [Say something like, "Inhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Exhale, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6."] After a few minutes, talk about what you noticed. How does your pace of breathing reflect your normal pace of life? What do you wish were different? You might want to incorporate a prayer practice from the DAILY GUIDE involving pacing our breathing alongside scripture in prayer.
- **Parents, talk about losses in your life.** Some kids haven't experienced much loss in their lifetime. This would be a good week to take time for parents to share their experiences of loss, suffering and pain with their kids.

- **Read the four accounts of Jesus' death.** As you read, notice how they are different from each other and discuss why each author may have wanted to emphasize different parts of their experience.
- **Encourage each other.** Loss is a part of life and of following Jesus, but it's not the end of the story. Maybe your family can repeat this phrase (or one like it) to each other all week to remind each other that even though life can be hard, we can still have hope:

"It's Friday, but Sunday's coming."

## IF YOU'RE DOING THIS SERIES DURING LENT...

- **Go to a Thursday Passover/Last Supper service as a family** or create your own reminder at home on this evening when Jesus shared his last meal with friends and talked about how his loss would usher in the new Kingdom. John 13-17 gives the most extensive account of the Last Supper and final words of Jesus to his friends, but you could read any Gospel account together.
- **Go to a Good Friday service as a family.** Add something to your experience like riding to and from the service in complete silence, fasting until after the service, or journaling and sharing your experience of the service.

# MADE NEW

## Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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### Ideas for Engaging Your Whole Family in being MADE NEW

Congratulations – you’ve finished this 8-week “Sticky Faith Every Day” series. Our hope has been that you’ve noticed much more about silence, rest, your brokenness, submitting to God, simplifying your life, lamenting pain in your life and this world, loss, and ultimately about NEW LIFE.

But this journey is not over. It’s just beginning. There are probably at least one or two changes you notice in your family’s life since you started this journey, but it’s also likely you sense how much further you still have to go. Be encouraged by Paul’s words to the church in Philippi when he says to “be certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” (*Philippians 1:6*)

As your family reflects on these past 8 weeks, consider these questions for discussion and commitment for new rhythms in your life:

- What surprised you about this series?
- What did you notice in each other these weeks? (e.g., You were more present during the Unplug week. You grew in patience so much these last 40 days. You were more emotional during this season. I noticed you didn’t watch as much TV.) Spend some time encouraging each other.
- What has God made new in your life and family these last 40 days?
- What ongoing spiritual practices and rhythms is God prompting you to continue in the future?
- If you experienced this series during Lent, talk about the traditions your family has throughout the year. You likely have some family Christmas and birthday traditions, but Lent and Easter traditions are much less common. Did you start any this year that you want to continue as a ritual for years to come? As you’ve completed Lent and Easter this year, are there any rituals or traditions you’d like to start next year?

Seal these 8 weeks of “noticing” with a note to each of your family members (or if the size of your family makes this daunting, every person can write a note to one family member). We’re sure there have been moments – days! – in the journey when you wanted to give up, felt discouraged, or wondered if God was making anything new in your life. If you’re feeling that way, your family probably is too. Take some time in the next couple of weeks to notice how God is making your family new. Write your family members a note so you can adequately express yourself and allow them to remember what you notice. Use this note only to encourage and bless your family members, not to challenge or criticize them. If you want to get really creative, purchase them a small, inexpensive item that symbolizes these changes and encourages them on the Philippians 1:6 path.

As God continues to work in your life until Christ returns, remember that God’s in the business of making things new. All the time. Every day. Be encouraged by these words from **1 John 3:1-3**:

“See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him. Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.”

May you know the depth of your Father's love for you and your family. And may you wait in eager expectation for the day when we are fully made new.