



- Session 3 -

## **Faith Practices in the Home**

# Select Learning

# FACILITATOR GUIDE

## Welcome, Introductions and Opening Prayer

### Gathering Table

*Include as many of the Prayer Prompts & Props as you are able to locate. Also encourage the person leading prayers to incorporate one or more of the items in the prayers.*

### Introduce the Video – Guests Marilyn Sharpe and Liz Otteson

*In these or similar words introduce the theme. The questions are a way of preparing minds and hearts for the video content.*

In Session 3, the focus is on how we live out faith in the home through the use of specific resources and simple faith practices that families can weave into everyday life. A smorgasbord of practices are laid out before you from which to choose. As you watch this segment, consider:

- What are the faith practices that are already part of your life at home?
- What gets in the way?
- Why is it important to practice our faith?

### Watch the video

#### Discussion - Faith Practices in the Home

I. Marilyn shared the story of her grandson, Hayden, telling the adults in his family that Jesus was the only perfect person who has ever lived, that He had come so we wouldn't need to be perfect. This time a child opened God's story for the adults in a powerful, fresh, new way. *Invite participants to reflect on and share their responses to the following questions:*

- What is one message of faith you have heard from a child?
- How did this experience impact you?
- How did this child come to know the Gospel, the good news of Jesus?

II. Liz, parent of Sylvia (age 7) and Harry (age 4) shared how and why her family opens Scripture together. *Invite participants to reflect on the questions Liz was asked:*

- Why is it important for adults to share Bible stories with the children they love?
- What gets in the way? When do busy families have time to share faith?

**III. Marilyn demonstrated a variety of faith practices and resources. As time permits, lead the group through the accompanying list of “Faith Practices for the Home.” When you have completed your discussion, invite participants to:**

- Circle items on the handout that your household already practices or may have at sometime in the past. Star a few you would like to begin again or try-out.
- Using items easily accessible in your home, what additional ideas do you have for Prayer Props and Prompts? *List these on newsprint or a white board for all to see.*
- Name other ages groups or settings where Prayer Prompts and Props could be utilized.

### **Closing**

*Thank everyone for participating. Invite people to the next session and give a short preview. Be available for questions following the session. Close with prayer using a Prayer Prompt.*

### **Make It My Own - Take It Home**

*Review the background information for this section in the Intro to Unit 1. Share the information in your own words. This is the time to review and plan for next steps:*

1. **Celebrate:** Name those practices from this session that you are already doing at home. Name those areas where your congregation is equipping households for faith practice.
2. **Tweak:** How could every mealtime at church or home be a time for faith practice?
3. **Add:** What have you heard that is new to you? What is one new faith practice you want to add to your personal life or introduce to your household?

### **Extend the Conversation**

Martin Luther said, “There is more than enough in our baptism to practice our entire life.” What do you think he meant?

Marilyn shares four categories for faith practices. *Link these to the presentation by Dick Hardel in Session 1. Ask, “Do any of these sound familiar?” Yes, we are hearing about them again – they must be important! (Refer to the Four-Key handout.) Ask, “How does your congregation model and equip families for faith practice?”*

1. Caring Conversations
2. Family Devotions
3. Rituals and Traditions
4. Acts of Service

**Accompanying this Session:** • Participant Guide • Faith Practices for the Home  
• Four Key Faith Practices • Bibliography & Resources

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE

### Prepare to Watch the Video – Guests: Marilyn Sharpe and Liz Otteson

- What are the faith practices that are already a part of your household?
- What gets in the way?
- Why is it important to practice our faith?

### Discussion - Faith Practices in the Home

I. Marilyn Sharpe shares the story of her grandson, Hayden, telling the adults in his family that Jesus was the only perfect person who has ever lived, that He had come so we wouldn't need to be perfect. This time, a child opened God's story for the adults in a powerful, fresh, new way. *Reflect on and share your response to the following questions:*

- What is one message of faith you have heard from a child?
- How did this experience impact you?
- How did this child come to know the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus?

II. Liz Otteson, parent of Sylvia (age 7) and Harry (age 4) shared how and why her family opens Scripture together. *Reflect on the questions Liz was asked:*

- Why is it important for adults to share Bible stories with the children they love?
- What gets in the way? When do busy families have time to share faith?

III. Marilyn demonstrated a variety of faith practices and resources. Read through the list of *Faith Practices for the Home* printed on the accompanying handout:

- Circle items on your handout that your household already practices or may have sometime in the past. Star a few that you want to begin again or try-out.
- Using ordinary items easily available in your home, what are your additional ideas for Prayer Prompts and Props?
- Name other ages groups or settings where Prayer Prompts and Props could be utilized.

### Make It My Own – Take It Home

This is your time to review and plan for next steps:

1. **Celebrate:** Name those practices from this session that you are already doing at home. Name those areas where your congregation is equipping households for faith practice.

2. **Tweak:** How could every mealtime at church be a time for faith practice?
3. **Add:** What have you heard that is new to you? What is one new faith practice you want to add to your own life or introduce to your household?

## **Closing**

### **Extend the Conversation**

- Martin Luther said, “There is more than enough in our baptism to practice our entire life.” What do you think he meant?
- Marilyn shares four categories of faith practice. (See additional handout with expanded explanation of the Four Key Faith Practices. Dick Hardel also refers to these in Session One.) Spend time reading and discussing:
  1. Caring Conversations
  2. Rituals and Traditions
  3. Family Devotions
  4. Acts of Service

Which faith practice could you add or strengthen in your household? How does your congregation model faith practices every time you gather?

### **Accompanying this Session:**

- Faith Practices for the Home (Includes Prayer Prompts and Props)
- Four Key Faith Practices for Nurturing Faith
- Bibliography & Resources

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, REFERENCES and RESOURCES

*Four Key Faith Practices* is a signature phrase of Dr. David Anderson and Vibrant Faith Ministry. [http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/vibrant\\_faith\\_frame.html](http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/vibrant_faith_frame.html)

### Resources suggested by Marilyn Sharpe

Lynn, David and Kathy Lynn, *HomeGrown Faith*. Nashville: World Publishing, 2005.

Muller, Wayne. *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives*. New York: Bantam Books, 1999.

Otteson, Liz. "Framed in Faith: Our Family Planner." 2009. Available from Liz at [lizotteson@mac.com](mailto:lizotteson@mac.com)

### Children's Bibles Referenced in Session 3.

Anderson, Debby. *Jesus Is with Me*. Colorado Springs: Faith Kids/Cook, 1988.

Beck, Susan E. *God Loves Me Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.

Brolsma, Jodi (ed). *Pray & Play Bible For Young Children*. Loveland: Group, 1977.

Davidson, Alice Joyce. *Miriam & the Baby Moses*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.

Lloyd-Jones, Sally. *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

[21 contributors]. *Spark Story Bible*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009.

### Devotional Books Referenced in Session 3.

Cory, Diane. *Gotta Have God: Cool Devotions for Boys*. San Diego: Legacy Press, 2009.

[40 teen authors] *Stand Your Ground Devotions for Teens by Teens*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2001.

Haack, Kelly. *Family Faith Walks: On-the-Go Faith Activities*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2002.

Klammer, Lynn I. *God and Me!: Devotions for Girls*. San Diego: Legacy Press, 2008.

## Faith Practices for the Home

### Read Scripture

Read together from an age appropriate Bible. Talk about the story with those in your household, sharing:

- What happened and to whom?
- Are we in this story?
- What does God want us to do?

### Age-appropriate Devotional Book

- Where might you find or purchase a resource for devotions?
- What will you look for in selecting one. When will you use it?

### Sing Songs of Faith

- What songs do you or your children or grandchildren like to sing?
- Where might you find, learn or hear new songs?

### Light a candle

- Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." How are you a light for others?
- When and where might you or your household light a candle?

### Prayer Prompts & Props

- *Christmas Cards* - Pray for the people in the photo on the card.
- *Highlighter* - Share the highlights of your day.
- *Map* - Pray for people, places, or events on the map.
- *Bandaid Prayer* - Put on a bandaid. Name a hurt in the world and pray for it.
- *Tea Light Candles* - Name one person who has been the light of Christ for you and one person for whom you have been the light of Christ.
- *Packet of Seeds* - What new thing is God beginning to grow in you?
- *Newspaper* - On your sheet of newspaper, name one thing that would delight God, one thing that would sadden God, and one thing God is calling you to do.
- *Tape* - With tape on a finger, name one thing that "sticks" your family together.
- *White Out* - What do you want God and others to forgive and "white out" in your life?
- *Birthday candles* - Each person inserts a candle into the cake, naming one quality of the birthday person for which they give God thanks.
- *Empty gift bag* - If God gave you one wish, what would you ask for? Why?

### Create Time for Sabbath

If you created time for resting in the presence of God, what would you put in the Sabbath basket? Name those things you will stop doing during this time.

### Make the Sign of the Cross on a Beloved Forehead

Using thumb or finger, make the sign of the cross and say "*First Name & Middle Name*, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."

## **FOUR KEY PRACTICES FOR NURTURING FAITH** in Households & Congregations

### **CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Caring conversations are the floor under all of our close relationships and are the way we model and transmit Christian values and faith to the next generation. Listening deeply, respectfully and with great care, in addition to speaking with love and gentleness helps children and people of all ages experience the love of God. Responding to the daily concerns of our children and youth gives us their trust and the credibility to invite them to express God's love to others.

### **FAMILY DEVOTIONS**

#### *NAMING GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE*

Turn up the "God language" under our caring conversations and you have family devotions. Adults need to learn the Christian message and know the Biblical narrative, finding themselves in God's story and God in their story in order to pass on faith to their children and to other adults. Sometimes, devotions use Scripture, a devotional text and prayer at a set time in a set place each day. Often, it grows out of spontaneous conversation and wondering aloud how God might be present in the sunset or news or family happenings and what God might be calling us to do, to speak or serve in response. Our Christian faith shapes the whole of our lives and involves a lifetime of study, reflection and prayer.

### **RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

We already have a multitude of daily rituals and traditions. How do we wake one another up, say goodbye for the day, welcome one another home and say good night? How do we celebrate birthdays and holidays? What stories and recipes and activities and values shape our identity as a family? Name God in the midst of these daily or seasonally repeated experiences and suffuse family life with God's presence. How might we pray for one another when leaving for the day, when facing a hard decision, when dealing with stress? Intentional faith practices communicate we belong to God. They make it clear who we are and whose we are. Our rituals and traditions reflect our family values, beliefs and promote how faith shapes us individually and as a family for generations.

### **ACTS of SERVICE**

Why would we do service as a family? Isn't it enough to serve others as an individual? Learning that "faith is caught and taught", we understand that together as family, linking generations, we serve in response for what God has already done for us. Together, we have a chance to talk about what we have done, why we have done it, and what we have learned. This is the way to make service a joyous opportunity to love God back, to say "thank you", to be the light of Christ for others. Adults serving along side and close-up with children and youth creates the practice of faith-full living.

*Credit to Dr. David Anderson for naming the Four Key approach to faith practices.*