



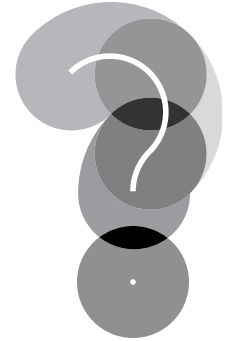
Practicing the Practice

at Home



WHAT IS FOLLOW JESUS ABOUT?

In many ways, children are primed to follow Jesus. Think of all the people they follow on a daily basis: teachers, coaches, parents, caregivers, and more! They are used to the idea of having someone to look to, someone who can help them learn new skills, keep them safe, and help them grow. Our job as families is to help them learn to follow Jesus, whom they cannot physically see. In this unit, we will explore what it means to follow Jesus at home and in community as we learn to see through God's "lens of love" and to invite others to join us on the journey!



FAMILY GATHERING TIME

Supplies: Bible storybook, such as Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Flyaway Books, 2018)

Worship God with a family gathering time. Read Bible stories about Jesus and talk about ways that you can be more like him. Pray together. Talk together about ways you have seen God's love in the world that day.

A FOLLOWING SONG

Supplies: internet-connected device

Sing a song about following. Watch the YouTube video "Follow Me (with motions and lyrics) by KidSpring" (bit.ly/FMFollowSong, 1:24). Practice following the motions shown in the bottom corner of the video. Talk about how difficult or easy it is to follow this leader's directions. Invite family members to make up their own motions for the family to follow.

WALKING A PATH

Visit a labyrinth or take a walk in the woods, in a park, or even around the block. Invite family members to walk the path while listening for God to lead them.

SENDING NOTES OR PEN PALS

Supplies: notecards, paper, markers or pens, envelopes, stamps

Write notes or draw pictures for friends, family, or church members who might be sick or lonely. Choose a nursing home or residential care facility in your area and ask if any residents might like a pen pal. As a family, or as individuals, send cards, notes, and drawings. Talk together about the ways that following Jesus leads us to love others.

SHARING FOOD

Supplies: ingredients to make cookies or a dinner, or garden produce

Sharing or providing food is a way of caring for others. Bake cookies for a neighbor. Prepare a meal for a family with a newborn or a sick or injured family member. If you have a vegetable garden, plant extras to share fresh produce.

PAYING ATTENTION

Encourage family members to think about ways they can show love and care to those around them. Practice noticing others at school, at work, in the grocery, at church, and in other places they live and play. Wonder together and then share ideas and commit to practice those skills through the week.

- ➔ Who do you notice who is lonely or left out and might need a friend?
- ➔ Where do you see examples of kindness and bravery that you can encourage?
- ➔ Who might need your help?

INVITING OTHERS TO "COME AND SEE"

Invite friends or neighbors to "come and see" what Jesus is up to in your lives. Perhaps there is an event at church that you might invite them to, or a service project they would enjoy being part of. How can you share your practice of following Jesus in such a way that they might be curious and interested in joining your journey?



LOVING NEIGHBORS NEAR AND FAR

Supplies: internet-connected device

Explore ways that your family can love your neighbors all over the world!

Watch one or more of these videos to learn more about organizations that help others, or choose another organization that your family or church likes to support.

- “Alton Brown Explains How Heifer Passes on the Gift” (bit.ly/FMHeifersGift, 2:19)
- “Clean Water for All God’s Children” (bit.ly/FMCleanWater, 1:24)
- “Habitat. We Build.” (bit.ly/FMWeBuild, 2:12)

Consider organizing a fundraiser in your own neighborhood or town to help others. Some ideas might be opening a lemonade stand, offering to do chores for people, pet-sitting, and so on! How can you share the gifts of your time, talent, and energy to help neighbors near and far?

LOVING SELF

Jesus’ second great commandment is to “love your neighbor as you love yourself” and part of following Jesus is having the mind, body, and spirit to do that. As Jesus took time away from the crowds, we can listen to our own needs to recharge. We can care for the bodies that God has given us by making sure we get enough sleep, make healthy choices of food, and spend some time outdoors enjoying God’s world each day. As a family, identify some ways that you can love yourselves better, then make a plan to put them in practice!

STORYTIME

Read *Red, Red, Red* by Valeri Gorbachev (Philomel, 2007) or watch the YouTube video “Red Red Red” (bit.ly/FMRedRedRed, 7:24). Talk about why each of the characters decided to follow Turtle.

- ➔ What did they think they were going to see? Were they right?
- ➔ How did they feel when they saw what Turtle was hurrying to see?



PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for your invitation. Help us to follow faithfully this day, and to invite others to follow your call. Amen.

Read John 1:35–51 and wonder together:

- ➔ What do you think the disciples thought they were going to see when Jesus invited them to “come and see”?
- ➔ How you would have felt and what you would have done if Jesus had invited you?

FOLLOW THE LEADER GAME

Play Follow the Leader together in your house, in your yard, or on a neighborhood walk. Invite different family members to lead, and enjoy trying to follow! Notice the skills that you use in trying to follow someone’s lead. Wonder together how those skills help us to follow Jesus.

FOLLOWING WITH FEET

Supplies: construction paper, scissors, marker, tape or magnets

Each day, talk about ways that everyone in your family has tried to follow Jesus. Trace around everyone’s feet and cut out the shapes. Have each person write or draw pictures on the feet of the ways they follow Jesus. Decorate a bulletin board, your refrigerator, or another place you will see them and remind yourselves of all the ways you are learning to follow Jesus.

FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ➔ What do you think it means to follow someone? What are some examples of people who follow someone? How is that the same as or different from following Jesus?
- ➔ What are some ways our family can follow Jesus?
- ➔ Do you think the disciples were ever scared or worried about following Jesus? Why or why not?
- ➔ If you were a disciple and got to meet Jesus, what question(s) would you ask Jesus or what would you want to share with him?