

# FEW CHILDREN GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

## FAMILY FOLLOW-UP SHEETS

God is love .....	2
God is faithful.....	4
God is patient .....	6
God is powerful.....	8
God is good .....	10
God is self-controlled .....	12
God is peace .....	14
God is trustworthy .....	16
God is kind .....	18
God is truth .....	20
God is gentle .....	22
God is joyful.....	24

Families that enjoy craft activities could work together to create a 'God is...' collage, patchwork, embroidery or something similar over the period, adding the twelve characteristics as they are covered.

# God is love

We discovered that Jesus taught that we should love everyone. People watched Jesus doing things and spreading God's love wherever he went. They told their friends about him, and their friends came to watch Jesus and to listen to him.

We can spread the love of Jesus too.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Matthew 5:43–48 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 262).
- Our Bible verse is: 'Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God' (1 John 4:7, NIV).
- Our theme colour is red.

Making a strawberry jelly for tea or adding cherry tomatoes or red-coated small cheeses to lunchboxes can act as a reminder to behave in a loving way, as will looking out for the colour red as you are out and about—on flowers, berries, cars, postboxes and so on.

## Play

Stick a paper plate on to a lolly stick for each person. On one side draw a happy face and on the other side a sad face. Hold up the happy faces and, in turn, name a person who is easy to love. Hold up the sad faces and think of a person who is sometimes hard to love. Imagine sitting in the crowd on the hillside, listening to Jesus encourage us to love even those we don't want to love. How we need God's love to help us!

Add 'love' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Give each person a few words from the Bible verse to say in sequence. When the family is able to do that, fill a cup with water and slowly pour it into a bowl while the verse is being said. Can you get through the verse before the water runs out? Try again, pouring more slowly. We run out of our own love so quickly. We need more of God's love. We can praise him that he never, ever runs out of love and he will give us more when we ask him.

Write the verse, or random words from it, using magnetic letters, to remind everyone of the verse when they use the fridge. Younger children can spell out LOVE using magnetic fridge letters, alphabet bricks or letters shaped out of playdough.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be loving, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Jonathan: a loving best friend to David. Find the story in your Bible (1 Samuel 18:1–4; 19:1–10, 20) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 122).
- Moses' family: risked their own lives to save the life of baby Moses. Find the story in your Bible (Exodus 1:22—2:9) or a children's Bible storybook, such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 42.
- Thomas Barnardo: in Victorian times he discovered children begging and sleeping rough and began a work that still continues, helping abused, neglected and vulnerable children (see [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)).
- C.T. Studd, the founder of WEC: with a vision to 'love God, and love your neighbour'. Find the story on the WEC website or in *Ten Boys Who Used Their Talents* by Irene Howat (Christian Focus Publications, 2008).
- WEC: an organisation that seeks to bring the gospel to unevangelised peoples and demonstrate the compassion of Christ in a needy world. Their vision is still that of their founder: 'Love God, and love your neighbour'. You can download free children's resources from their website, [www.wec-int.org.uk](http://www.wec-int.org.uk).

When you're out and about, look out for people's loving actions, such as mothers shopping for the family's food, someone pushing a wheelchair, a teacher helping a child who has fallen, a child refusing to join in unkindness to someone and so on. Share these with the rest of the family.

Ask: 'What can we do as a family, or as individuals, to spread God's love to others, even to those who are unkind to us or upset us?' Draw small red hearts around the rim of your play activity paper plates, on the happy side, and write your ideas around the face. Keep the paper plates where they can be seen regularly as a reminder to check how everyone is doing.

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has shown his love to the family. Say sorry to God for particular times when we have not shown his love to others. Ask for God's help to spread his love in the ways we have identified.

# God is faithful

We discovered God's promise to send someone very special to show and tell exactly what God is like. People wrote down carefully what God said about this person. Hundreds of years later, when Jesus came, he was exactly as God said he would be. Jesus grew up in a small town where everybody knew him. They knew his parents and his brothers and sisters. They thought Jesus was just an ordinary boy, but Jesus wasn't ordinary. Jesus is God's Son, the very special person that God had promised to send.

We can keep faithful to God's word too.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 4:16–21 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 259).
- Our Bible verse is: 'For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does' (Psalm 33:4, NIV).
- Our theme colour is orange.

Having orange juice or marmalade at breakfast time, or adding satsumas or small cartons of orange juice to lunch boxes, can act as a reminder to be faithful to God's word, as can looking out for the colour orange as you are out and about (on vegetables, flowers, animals, fish and so on).

## Play

Make a wordsearch including the word 'faithful' as many times as possible—forwards, backwards, up, down, diagonal and so on. Use orange highlighters to find the words. For younger children, make some simple dot-to-dot pictures to be joined up with orange pens.

Add 'faithful' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Make up a simple tune to sing the words of the Bible verse. If anyone plays a musical instrument, they could practise an accompaniment, or use pots and pans as drums and containers of rice or pasta as shakers. When you eat together, sing the verse at the end of the meal. Hide magnetic letters of the word 'faithful' around the house for children to find and then place them on the fridge as a reminder for everyone.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be faithful, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Ezra: he read God's law to the people. Find the story in your Bible (Nehemiah 8—9) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 238).
- Josiah: he rediscovered the scrolls containing God's law and had them read to the people. Find the story in your Bible: 2 Kings 22—23 or a children's Bible story book such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 203.
- William Tyndale: against the wishes of the church, he translated the Bible into English so that everyone could read it for themselves. Find the story on [www.tyndale.org](http://www.tyndale.org); in *William Tyndale* (Torchlighers DVD) or in *Ten Boys Who Made a Difference* by Irene Howat (Christian Focus Publications, 2010).
- Wycliffe Bible Translators: an organisation dedicated to translating the Bible into every language. Search for the story of Cameron Townsend, and download free children's resources from the website [www.wycliffe.org.uk](http://www.wycliffe.org.uk). Find resources for older children on [www.wynetuk.org](http://www.wynetuk.org).

When you're out and about, if opportunities arise, talk about people who break the law by making fake designer gear, trainers, watches, DVDs and so on. Explain that these are not faithful copies.

Ask: How can we as a family, or as individuals, be faithful to God's word? Set a bowl of oranges on a table. Write out your ideas with an orange felt pen and tuck them into the bowl. Each time an orange is eaten, check on the ideas to see how they are working out.

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has shown his faithfulness to the family. Say sorry to God for particular times when we have not been faithful to God's word. Ask for God's help to follow through the ideas for being faithful to his word.

# God is patient

We heard about when Jesus was getting ready to leave his friends. He knew he was going to die: it was nearly time for Jesus to go back to God in heaven. It was part of God's plan for Jesus to die, and soon soldiers would come to take him away. Jesus and his friends had just eaten their last meal together and he wanted to keep his friends very close for this last little time.

We can learn to be patient, like Jesus.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Mark 14:26–42 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 304).
- Our Bible verse is: 'The Lord isn't slow about keeping his promise, as some people think he is. In fact, God is patient' (2 Peter 3:9a, CEV).
- Our theme colour is yellow.

Keeping a daily count of yellow cars, having a weather chart showing how much sun is seen each day or planning a day when everyone wears as much yellow as possible are all ways to remind everyone to be more patient.

## Play

Fold a sheet of paper in half and paint a simple butterfly body and head, centre left of the crease. Paint in one feeler, top left. Paint two yellow wings, attached to the body on the left-hand side of the paper. Carefully fold the paper in half and press down firmly. Open out the paper and allow the paint to dry. When dry, the butterfly can be cut out and placed in a prominent position as a reminder of God's patience.

Show children how to play Patience or Solitaire on the computer or with a pack of cards.

Make real custard together instead of instant custard. Most of us want things done quickly and easily, but patience can produce something much better.

Add 'patient' to 'God is...' on your collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Explore online images from the Book of Kells, a book of the four Gospels patiently produced and beautifully illustrated by monks around AD800. Write and decorate the Bible verse in this style.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have learnt to be patient, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Exiles in Babylon: they waited patiently for God to keep his promise of a return to Jerusalem. Find the story in your Bible (Ezra 1—2) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 225).
- Jacob: worked for Laban for 14 years so that he could marry Rachel. Find the story in your Bible: Genesis 29:1–30 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 25.
- Joni Eareckson Tada: paralysed in a diving accident, Joni's very human story exudes patience and trust in God and can be found in *Ten Girls Who Changed the World*, Irene Howat (Christian Focus 4Kids, 2008).
- Gladys Aylward: sure of her call to China, Gladys learned to be patient and await God's timing. Find her story on Torchlighters *Heroes of the Faith* DVD.

When you're out and about, be aware of opportunities for patience, such as taking turns, waiting for a free petrol pump, queuing in the supermarket, challenging children, hurrying a conversation and so on. Share attitudes and responses with the family.

Ask: What can we do as a family, or as individuals, to become more patient and to encourage each other? If you have made the paper butterflies, ideas can be written across the wings. Alternatively, use yellow sticky notes and write ideas on them, sticking them on the fridge.

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has shown patience with the family. Say sorry to God for particular times when we have not been patient. Ask for God's help to become more patient.

# God is powerful

We discovered that Jesus showed God's amazing power. Wherever Jesus went, people followed. One day, Jesus had been talking to crowds by the lake for hours and by the evening he was very tired. If Jesus went to a friend's house, people would follow. Then Jesus had a great idea. Some of his friends were fishermen, with a boat. If they crossed the lake in the boat, then people wouldn't be able to follow. Best of all, Jesus could have a sleep in the boat. So that's what they did, but on the way something amazing happened.

We can discover God's power at work in us.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Mark 4:35–41 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 270).
- Our Bible verse is: 'You alone work miracles, and you have let nations see your mighty power' (Psalm 77:14, CEV).
- Our theme colour is purple.

Eating some purple fruits or vegetables, such as black grapes, plums, purple sprouting broccoli or aubergines, or crushing some lavender into paper bags and placing them inside a pillowcase, can act as reminders of God's power.

## Play

Try this experiment to show the pushing power of air. Put a large plastic freezer bag, without holes, flat on a table with the top third (the open end) hanging over the edge. Place a large book on the rest of the bag on the table and have someone sit on it. Make a mouthpiece with the open end of the bag and blow into it. Keep blowing hard. What a surprise!

Experience God's power on a windy day with a Frisbee or kite, or experiment with making parachutes, using carrier bags, string and matchboxes. Use the internet to find photos of wind turbines: visit [www.yes2wind.com](http://www.yes2wind.com) to find out more about them. Are there any turbines in your area to go and look at?

Remembering Jesus' power over the wind and waves, use bath time or a paddling pool to test items that can sink or float. What happens if you put a small lump of playdough in the water? What happens if you flatten out the playdough? Make paper boats to float on large waves.

Add 'powerful' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Each day, draw on purple paper and cut out a few letters of the words of the Bible verse. When all the letters have been cut out, everyone can help put the words together in the right order and fix them to a door with sticky tack. Purple is the colour of kingly power. God is the great king and has all power.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have depended on God's power. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- David: a young man who was determined that God should be known as the greatest. Find the story in your Bible (1 Samuel 17:1–50) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 120).
- Joseph: through good times and bad, God's power shone through his life. Find the story in your Bible: Genesis 41:47—45:28 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, Nos. 34–39.
- Brother Andrew: a man who depended on God's power in dangerous circumstances, serving persecuted Christians across the world. Find his story in *God's Smuggler* by John and Elizabeth Sherrill (Hodder & Stoughton, 2008) or in *Ten Boys Who Changed the World* by Irene Howat. See also [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org) for Kidzone resources.



- Smith Wigglesworth: an ordinary person who was filled with God's extraordinary power to heal. Find his story in *A Life Ablaze with the Power of God* by William Hacking (Harrison House, 2009).

When you're out and about, see and appreciate God's power in creating stars and galaxies. Plan a visit to a planetarium or a late-night trip to an open space to look at the night sky.

Ask: How can God's power be shown in our life together as a family or as individuals? Fix family photos in and around the Bible verse on the door and keep in mind God's power to help change circumstances.

## Pray

Thank God for any particular ways in which he has given his power to help change situations. Say sorry if there have been times when we have forgotten to ask for his power to help. Ask God for opportunities to show his power in our lives.

# God is good

We discovered that Jesus showed God's goodness. In biblical times, people became ill just as we do, but they didn't have doctors or medicines like ours to help make them better. Leprosy is an infectious disease that can easily be cured now, but then it was a dreadful illness. If you caught it, you were sent away from your home and work and family and friends. You had to live with others who had leprosy, beg for food and ring a bell to warn people you were nearby.

We can show God's goodness to people who are ill.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 17:11–19 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 284).
- Our Bible verse is: 'You are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation' (Psalm 145:9, CEV).
- Our theme colour is blue.

Using blue bubble bath or shower gel can act as reminders that we are surrounded by and immersed in God's goodness.

## Play

Fill a pastry case with blueberries. Sprinkle with a little sugar. Make meringue and pile it on top of the blueberries. Brown the meringue in the oven or under a grill. See and taste God's goodness!

Play a game of 'Operation', remembering to thank God for his goodness to us.

Gather blue card and craft materials to make 'get well' cards. Keep until needed.

Add 'good' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

When you eat together, sing the Bible verse rhyme below from Psalm 145:9. Try to sing it as a round to the tune 'Row, row, row the boat'.

*Know, know God is good,  
The Bible tells us so!  
He takes care of all he's made,  
That's so good to know!*

Use magnetic letters to write the word 'goodness' on the fridge as a family reminder of God's goodness.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be good like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Peter and John took the opportunity to heal a lame man. Find the story in your Bible (Acts 3:1–10) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 320).
- Naaman's servant told her master about God's prophet. Find the story in your Bible: 2 Kings 5:1–15 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, Nos. 178 and 179.
- Paul Brant: a doctor who spent his life caring for leprosy patients. Find his story in *Ten Boys Who Used Their Talents* by Irene Howat.
- Leprosy Mission: an organisation relieving and supporting those with leprosy today. See [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk).
- Mercy Ships: a Christian organisation bringing medicine and surgery to people in need. See [www.mercyships.org.uk](http://www.mercyships.org.uk).

When you're out and about, look for people who are showing God's goodness to others. We are all made in God's image and bear his likeness, whether we are people of faith or not. At appointments with the medical profession—doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, dentists and so on—remember God's goodness expressed through people, and pray for them.

Make a note of acts of goodness observed at school, college or work. Share them with the rest of the family. Make a vertical blue stripe on a sheet of paper for each act of goodness. How long will it take to fill the paper?

Ask: How can we show God's goodness to others, either as a family or as individuals? Write your ideas horizontally across your sheet of vertical lines.

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has shown his goodness to the family. Say sorry for particular times when we have not been willing to show his goodness to others. Ask for God's help to show more of his goodness.

# God is self-controlled

We discovered a time when Jesus needed to be self-controlled. Jesus came to carry out God's big plan to save people from their sins. As part of God's plan, Jesus was baptised in the river Jordan by his cousin, John. Afterwards, Jesus went away into the desert to think quietly and to ask God about the next part of his plan.

We can try to manage our lives in God's best ways.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 4: 1–13 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 256).
- Our Bible verse is: 'I treasure your word above all else; it keeps me from sinning against you' (Psalm 119:11, CEV).
- Our theme colour is black.

Buying or picking blackberries to make a blackberry and apple crumble, tucking a few black grapes into lunchboxes, or adding black olives to a favourite pizza can act as a reminder to be self-controlled.

## Play

Research volcanoes and think about how they illustrate a destructive force that is like lack of self-control.

Children are constantly developing new motor skills, learning to control their bodies: colouring a picture within the lines, writing neatly, balancing on a bike, accurately kicking a ball, and so on. Praise achievement and use it as a reminder that we can control our minds and behaviour, too.

Play a game of Snap. As you play, take the opportunity to talk about cheating, sulking or giving up, and point out that when we are tempted to do those things, at that moment we can choose what we will do next and take time to make a right choice. That's called self-control.

Add 'self-control' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Make 15 circles from red, orange and green paper. Write one word of the Bible verse plus reference on each of them. Together, stick the words in the correct order on a sheet of black paper. Talk about STOP! WAIT! GO!

Use magnetic letters to write the word 'self-control' on the fridge, as a family reminder to make right choices when tempted to do wrong.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have shown self-control, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- David showed self-control when tempted to kill King Saul. Find the story in your Bible (1 Samuel 26) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 126).
- Paul left his friends and went steadfastly into an uncertain future. Find the story in your Bible: Acts 21:1–15 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 349.
- Early-day Salvationists did not retaliate when faced with opposition and danger. Find the story at [www2.salvationarmy.org.uk/history](http://www2.salvationarmy.org.uk/history) (history/opposition and persecution).
- Oxford Martyrs were self-controlled even in death. As they burnt to death, Hugh Latimer said to Nicholas Ridley, 'We shall this day light such a candle in England as I trust by God's grace shall never be put out.' Find the story at [http://oxford.openguides.org/wiki/Oxford\\_Martyrs](http://oxford.openguides.org/wiki/Oxford_Martyrs).

Ask: 'What can we do as a family, or as individuals, to become more self-controlled?' Discuss particular areas of temptation—for example, losing temper, lying, watching or playing some TV, DVD or computer games. Talk about what might replace those TV programmes or games if we choose not to watch or play them. The black screen of the switched-off TV or computer can be a sign of self-control being exercised.

Jesus used scripture verses to say 'No' to the devil. Make a family search for short, helpful verses, such as Proverbs 25:28.

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has helped anyone in the family to become more self-controlled. Say sorry to God for particular times when self-control has not been exercised. Ask for God's help in named times of temptation.

# God is peace

We heard of a time when Jesus was a peacemaker. Soon Jesus would be arrested and killed as part of God's big plan. Jesus had been praying in a garden while his friends slept, asking God to make him strong to face the pain that was coming.

We can be peacemakers, like Jesus.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 22:47–54 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 305).
- Our Bible verse is: 'I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give' (John 14:27, CEV).
- Our theme colour is light blue.

In spring time, finding a bluebell wood to lie down in, smelling and breathing in God's peace, is a great way to remember those you know who need God's peace in their lives. Plant some forget-me-not seeds in your garden or windowbox to help you think and pray for them.

## Play

Make time to play computer, board or card games together as a family. Competitive games, sharing and turn-taking often present opportunities for peacemaking. Try to be 'peace-aware' and to practise peacemaking. For younger children, make a reward chart to encourage peacemaking efforts. Older children, too, will appreciate helpful comments and a special treat to look forward to.

Find images of the UN flag to print or copy. Note the olive branches on either side of the world, as a symbol of peace around the world. Fix a flag to everyone's bedroom door and write peacemaking ideas on them.

Add 'peace' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

At meal times, tap out and say aloud the Bible verse together. Remind the family what a wonderful gift peacemaking is among friends, families and countries.

Use magnetic letters to write the verse or just the word 'peace' on the fridge as a family reminder of God's peacemaking abilities.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be peaceful, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Abram: a man who would not fight and kept the peace in his family. Find the story in your Bible (Genesis 13) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 12).
- Jacob and Esau: brothers who fell out and, after long years, were reconciled. Find the story in your Bible: Genesis 33:1–15 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 28.
- Elisabeth Elliot: Elisabeth went in peace to live with the tribe that had murdered her husband. Find her story in *Ten Girls Who Made History* by Irene Howat (Christian Focus Publications, 2007).
- Network of Christian Peace Organisations: [www.ncpo.org.uk](http://www.ncpo.org.uk).
- United Nations: [www.un.org/en/peacekeeping](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping).

When you're out and about, look at the ways people treat each other in their words and actions, and how these can escalate to a breakdown of peace. Pray for any difficult situations you observe and ask God to bring his peace and restoration. Share them with the rest of the family and discuss how and when the people concerned might have stepped back or resolved their differences.

Ask: What can we do as a family, or as individuals, to bring God's peace? Look for opportunities in your immediate family, locally and globally to pray and find practical applications for peacemaking.

## Pray

Thank God for his peace and for being able to bring his peace to others. Say sorry to God for particular times when peace has been broken or trouble deliberately caused. Look at any current relationship issues or difficulties and ask God for peacemaking skills to help make restoration.

# God is trustworthy

We discovered that Jesus told us not to worry about anything because God is trustworthy. As Jesus looked at the crowd of people all around him, he could see that they were worried about all kinds of things.

We can trust God with everything in life.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Matthew 6:25–34 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 264).
- Our Bible verse is: 'Lord All-Powerful, you are God. You have promised me some very good things, and you can be trusted to do what you promise' (2 Samuel 7:28, CEV).
- Our theme colour is brown.

Using multigrain or seeded bread or rolls for lunchboxes, counting brown birds in the garden or making a chocolate cake or cookies can act as a reminder that God is trustworthy.

## Play

Use a bird book to help identify visitors to your garden or local park. Make a birdtable or hang a feeder on a tree or from a balcony or window.

In spring or summer, plant night-scented stock seeds in a tub by the front or back door. When they are grown, their evening perfume can remind everyone that we don't have to worry but can trust God for our needs.

Add 'trustworthy' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Choose a simple ringtone from a mobile phone and write some words to fit it, about trusting God. Have everyone change their ringtone to that one. Whenever it rings, you can remember that God is trustworthy.

Write out the Bible verse on several pieces of brown paper, three or four words on each piece. Tuck them into shoes. As the family go in and out of the house, in whatever mood or state, God's words go with them and he is trustworthy.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have shown God's trustworthiness. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Hannah: trusted God to answer her prayers for a baby. Find the story in your Bible (1 Samuel 1:1–20) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 107).
- Noah trusted God and followed his instructions exactly. Find the story in your Bible: Genesis 6—9 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, Nos. 6–8.
- George Müller: a man who founded an orphanage and discovered God to be completely trustworthy. Find his story in *Ten Boys Who Changed the World* by Irene Howat, or [www.mullers.org](http://www.mullers.org).
- John Bunyan: imprisoned for his faith, John found God to be trustworthy. Find his story on Torchlighters *Heroes of the Faith* DVD.

When you're out and about, find a really muddy place. Put on boots and squelch through the mud, remembering that brown is the colour for God's trustworthiness. Find out about bird reserves (see [www.rspb.org.uk/reserves](http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves)) and plan a special visit to marvel at the diversity of bird-life sustained by God, especially in spring and autumn as birds migrate.



Ask: What can we do as a family or as individuals to learn to trust God more? Look for areas where worry is strong and trust is weak. Read together a biography of a Christian who trusted God in difficult circumstances.

## Pray

Name some ways in which God cares for the family, and affirm trust in him. Say sorry to God for particular times when trust has not been given. Determine together to trust God in any particularly challenging situations. Ask God for his help.

# God is kind

We heard of a time when Jesus was kind when people were hungry. Wherever Jesus went, people followed him. They wanted to see and hear the amazing things he said and did, and sometimes they forgot how long they had been out and how far they were from home.

We can show God's kindness to those in need.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in John 6:1–15 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 275).
- Our Bible verse is: 'I will tell about the kind deeds the Lord has done. They deserve praise!' (Isaiah 63:7, CEV).
- Our theme colour is green.

Using spinach lasagne sheets to make lasagne, adding cooked spinach to the filling and serving with a green salad can act as a reminder to be kind to others, as will playing a game of football on the grass or wearing the colour green for a day.

## Play

Find a box with a lid. Decorate it with pictures of food cut from magazines, labels from food products or drawings by the family. Write or draw on slips of green paper ways that God has shown his kindness to the family, and keep them in the box, adding to them as another kindness is shown or remembered.

Invite friends round to retell the story of Jesus feeding the crowd with the boy's lunch. Decide who is playing the different characters and practise the story with simple, exaggerated actions, without speech. You can add music if you wish. Share some food together as part of the story.

Add 'kind' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Write out the Bible verse by hand or on a computer and print it out. Stick it on the lid of the box.

Use playdough to fashion the letters KIND and display them where everyone will see them during the week.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be kind, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Boaz and Ruth: Boaz and Ruth showed great kindness. Find the story in your Bible (Ruth 2) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 104).
- David was kind to Jonathan's disabled son. Find the story in your Bible: 2 Samuel 9 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 136.
- Florence Nightingale: a determined woman who showed God's kindness through her nursing abilities. Find her story in *Ten Girls Who Made History* by Irene Howat.
- Tearfund: an organisation bringing help, kindness and relief to people in desperate circumstances across the world. Check out their current programmes and downloadable resources on [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org).
- Water Aid: an organisation concerned to bring clean water to the many peoples who still don't have it. The website [www.wateraid.org.uk](http://www.wateraid.org.uk) includes a game resource for children.

When you're out and about, check on elderly neighbours or relatives who would welcome some kindly help in their home or garden, or with shopping or dog walking. Look for opportunities to be kinder to people whose services we use in shops, call centres, waste collection, postal delivery, school crossing patrols and so on. Share these ideas with the family and encourage each other to acts of kindness.

Ask: What can we do in our family, either together or as individuals, to be kind to each other and to other people? Write, draw or find pictures that represent your ideas and put them in your decorated box. Make plans, dates and times to carry out your ideas. Regularly review how you are doing.

## Pray

Thank God for specific things he has kindly given the family. Say sorry to God for particular times when we have forgotten to be kind. Ask for God's help to be kind in specific ways.

# God is truth

We discovered that Jesus got angry with people who weren't truthful. The temple in Jerusalem was a beautiful place where people came to bring their best gifts to God and to worship him.

We can try to live a truthful life with God.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 19:45–48 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 297).
- Our Bible verse is: 'Teach me to follow you, and I will obey your truth' (Psalm 86:11a, CEV).
- Our theme colour is silver or grey.

Look for silvery snail or slug trails on paths and pavements. Everywhere they go, they leave a slimy, silvery trail. When we don't tell the truth, we leave a trail, too, slimy and slippery for others to get caught up in. Better to be truthful, and leave no trail. Use grey, cloudy days or sparkling silver frost as a reminder to be more truthful.

## Play

Games such as 'battleships', 'pick up sticks', memory games and so on give opportunities to choose truthfulness or lying. Consider God's perspective and develop strategies to deal with the unfairness that lying causes when it happens.

As you watch TV or films or sports together, look out for people telling the truth or lying and cheating. Talk about their reasons for doing so, and the consequences.

Add 'truth' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Walk up the stairs, saying one word of the Bible verse and reference on each stair. If you have no stairs, march together on the spot.

Use magnetic letters to write the word 'truth' on the fridge as a family reminder that God is all truth, and wants us to be truthful.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have endeavoured to be truthful, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Peter and John: told the truth that Jesus had risen from death. Find the story in your Bible (Acts 4:1–22) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 321).
- Daniel told the truth to Belshazzar. Find the story in your Bible: Daniel 5 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 219.
- John Bunyan was imprisoned for teaching, preaching and writing the truth. Find the story in *Ten Boys Who Used Their Talents* by Irene Howat.
- Brother Andrew carried God's truth behind the Iron Curtain and founded Open Doors (see [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)).
- Richard Wurmbrand was imprisoned for preaching the truth. Find his story on Torchlighters *Heroes of the Faith* DVD.
- CARE communicates God's truth through family support, research, guidance and parliamentary campaigning (see [www.care.org.uk](http://www.care.org.uk)).

When you're out and about look for opportunities to be truthful and that moment of decision before telling the truth, or not. Share the challenges with the rest of the family.

Ask: What can we do in our family, either together or as individuals, to live a truthful life with God? At family meal times, encourage each other to tell truthfully of successes and failures.

## Pray

Thank God that he is truth, unchanging. Say sorry to God for particular times when we have been untruthful. Ask for God's help to be more truthful.

# God is gentle

We discovered that Jesus showed God's gentleness to someone who was hurting badly. The town of Nain had a wall around it, with gates for people and animals to pass through. At night, the gates were shut to keep out robbers and enemies, and no one could go in or out. Jesus and his friends came to Nain and were just about to go in through the gate when they had to stop to let a crowd of people squeeze out from inside the town.

We can show God's gentleness too.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 7:11–17 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 267).
- Our Bible verse is: 'Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart' (Matthew 11:29, NIV).
- Our theme colour is pink.

Making a salad dressing with tomato ketchup and mayonnaise mixed together, slowly and gently eating pomegranate seeds together with cocktail sticks, or looking out for pink-ribbed tomato seeds to grow, are all great reminders of God's gentleness.

## Play

Have a tug of war to test the gentle strength of rolls of good-quality kitchen paper.

Make cupcakes with pink icing. Before any food colouring is added, separate the icing into four small bowls. Add varying drops of colour to create shades from almost red to the barest hint of pink.

If you have a buzz wire game, play it together. We have to be gentle and keep a very steady hand to play this game.

Add 'gentle' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Using thin pink card, bubble-write either all the individual letters or the words of the Bible verse and cut them out. Muddle them up and then put the words in order. Muddle them up again for someone else to have a turn later.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be gentle, like God. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Mary gently washed Jesus' feet with her hair. Find the story in your Bible (John 12:1–8) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 295).
- Elijah gently healed and restored the widow's son. Find the story in your Bible: 1 Kings 17:17–24 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 164.
- Cicely Saunders: founder of the modern hospice movement (see [www.stchristophers.org.uk](http://www.stchristophers.org.uk)).
- Mary Slessor: Scottish missionary to Nigeria. Find her story in *Ten Girls Who Changed the World* by Irene Howat or see [www.maryslessor.org](http://www.maryslessor.org).
- Halo Trust: clearing minefields needs gentleness and a steady hand. It also needs great courage, determination and a strong mind (see [www.halotrust.org](http://www.halotrust.org)).

When you're out and about, look for examples of people being gentle to others, such as a busy mother with small children or a young person gently respecting someone elderly. Share good and bad examples with the family.

Ask: Who do we learn our patterns of speech, our attitudes and actions from? Who are we influenced by? Is it Jesus? Is home the first or last place where gentleness is exhibited? What can we do in our family, either together or as individuals, to show God's gentleness?

## Pray

Thank God for any specific ways in which he has shown gentleness to the family. Say sorry to God for any particular times when we have not shown his gentleness to others. Ask for God's help to be gentle in the ways we have identified.

# God is joyful

We discovered that Jesus told people how much joy God has for everyone. People loved to listen to Jesus and he often told them stories to help them understand about God. Jesus told this story to show how God is filled with joy for the people he loves.

We can share God's joy.

- Our 'Learn from Jesus' Bible story can be found in Luke 15:1–7 or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 281).
- Our Bible verse is: 'The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing' (Zephaniah 3:17, NIV).
- Our theme colour is white.

Finding a field of sheep to watch, looking out for sheep trials in your area, making the best mashed potato with grated white Cheshire cheese or being the first to shout, 'Joy!' whenever you see a white van on the road will all help to remind everyone that God is joyful.

## Play

Make your own bubble mix or buy pots. Whose bubbles can float the highest? Who can blow the biggest bubble? Who can make the most bubbles in one minute? Alternatively, use drinking straws in a bubble bath to blow up a bubble storm.

Make popcorn and enjoy the explosion of joy. Watch the funniest DVD you can find and eat the popcorn together. Add 'joyful' to your 'God is...' collage or patchwork.

## Praise

Make a mobile of the Bible verse. Using white paper, draw six wide spirals. Write the six sections of the verse on them, then cut out the spirals. Cover a wire coat hanger with white tissues. Use white thread and a hole punch to hang the six parts of the verse at varying heights. Hang the mobile where everyone can see it, and read the verse aloud at bedtime.

Use magnetic letters to spell out 'joy' on the fridge. Smile every time you open the fridge.

## Plan

Over history, lots of people have been inspired to be share God's joy. We discovered the story marked. You could look at other stories together.

- Moses and Miriam praised God for his deliverance with great joy. Find the story in your Bible (Exodus 15:1–2, 19–21) or a children's Bible storybook (*Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 51).
- Angels brought news of great joy to the shepherds. Find the story in your Bible: Luke 2:8–20 or a children's Bible storybook such as *Barnabas Children's Bible*, No. 248.
- Johann Sebastian Bach: through good times and bad, he found God's joy in music. Find his story in *Ten Boys Who Used Their Talents* by Irene Howat.
- Big Ministries, Ishmael or other people travelling around churches, teaching and partying with God's joy. See [www.bigministries.co.uk](http://www.bigministries.co.uk) and [www.ishmael.org.uk](http://www.ishmael.org.uk).

When you're out and about, look for people sharing joyful times together. Share these with the rest of the family.



Ask: What can we do as a family, either together or as individuals, to be more aware of God's joy and to share in it? Encourage everyone to find a quiet place for a few minutes, just to sit and wonder about God's joy in you. Try to imagine God singing over you with great delight and joy. How would that sound? Make space to share what everyone thought.

## Pray

Thank God for his amazing and constant joy over each family member. Name each person in turn, asking God to bless them with his joy. Ask God to help you be more aware of his joy in yourselves, and in each other.