

Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Prayer Guide

BUILDING THE VISION

“GIFT” Campaign

Gathering In Faith Together
Growing in Faith Together
Giving in Faith Together

Saint John's Ev. Lutheran Church

**Prayer does not fit us for the greater work;
Prayer is the greater work.”**
Oswald Chambers

**“A day without prayer is a day without
blessing, and a life without prayer
is a life without power.”**
Edwin Harvey

**“Beware in your prayers, above everything else,
of limiting God, not only by unbelief,
but by fancying that you know what He can do.
Expect unexpected things
‘above all that we ask or think.’”**
Andrew Murray

BUILDING THE VISION – The GIFT Campaign

Prayer and Devotional Guide
For Saint John's Lutheran Church

As Saint John's begins the GIFT Capital Fund Campaign, we do so with unwavering commitment to encourage people from all walks of life to become purpose driven followers of Jesus Christ. It is the desire of our church to fulfill God's will in our GIFT Campaign. He is our ultimate authority!

The prayer guide you hold in your hands is an essential element of the GIFT campaign. When God's people set aside time to pray and seek His face and apply His word to their lives, then God promises to listen and provide His abundant supply.

Whether you are single or married, young or old, a new believer or mature in the faith, this prayer and devotional guide will help you move forward in faith. You are invited to embark on a journey of daily discipleship designed to draw our entire church family closer together and closer to the Lord.

This booklet is built on the five purposes of the church, found in the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. These foundational purposes characterize a true believer of Jesus Christ. We realize that as we prepare for the GIFT Campaign to build a new Sanctuary, we are simultaneously investing our faith – forward into future generations.

Each daily devotion is divided into five parts: scripture reading, questioning, listening, application, and prayer.

Many of the ideas suggested in the APPLICATION portion of the devotion are geared toward making the scripture come alive for families with young children. If you are single or do not have children at home please know that you are given the freedom to be creative! Design your own method for applying each study to best fit your needs. We suggest that you read ahead and decide which APPLICATION ideas you want to try, adapt, or delete.

In the last section in this guide you will find the Family Conference Guide. At the conclusion of the GIFT campaign each family in our church is encouraged to hold a Family Conference to determine the financial commitment God wants you to make. Schedule a distraction-free time when you and your family can review, discuss, and pray according to the guidelines given in the final section of the booklet. God will reveal His will to every family that seeks Him.

Prayer Guide Format

Each daily devotion includes the following elements:

SCRIPTURE

It is often good to take turns reading. If you have children in your family, help the younger ones with difficult words, so they, too, can participate.

QUESTIONING

To avoid lecturing, ask leading questions that require more than a yes or no answer. We have provided one or two suggestions. Be creative and cause everyone to think about the scripture.

LISTENING

As the leader, this can be the hardest part. Wait for an answer. Avoid answering yourself. Rephrase and be patient. Listen carefully to discern the hearts of your family members in their answers. Expect God to speak through your family members.

APPLICATION

Discuss practical applications of the scripture. Allow everyone to talk about the things God is teaching them. If time permits, use the creative ideas suggested or think up your own.

PRAYER

End with a simple prayer asking God to make this spiritual truth real in your lives. Use this time to share prayer needs and pray for each other. Some days this family time will be very brief and some days it will be deeper and seem more meaningful. Don't worry about how it seems on the surface. God always uses His word in ways we cannot imagine. The important thing is to be faithful as you invest in your family and yourself.

DAY 1

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 5:3 – My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

QUESTIONING

What is your favorite thing to do in the morning? Why does God want us to pray to Him early each day?

LISTENING

Let comments about your favorite things give you insight about your personality. Think about prayer as talking to and hearing from God.

APPLICATION

Give a challenge to family members to begin each day with a brief, “Good Morning God” prayer. Thank God for the new day and ask for His help to live it for Him. As a family, commit to God to make every effort to meet together each week for the next 27 weeks.

PRAYER

Ask God to give each family member the desire to meet together for the next 27 days. Ask Him to order your family time and protect you from distractions. Ask God to honor the time you spend by increasing the love in your family.

DAY 2

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:6 – Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

QUESTIONING

Were you every really afraid or nervous about something? What happened? What does God tell us to do when we are afraid?

LISTENING

Fears tell us a lot about a person's personality. Listen for things that may be causing fears in your family. Assure them of your love and God's love and protection.

APPLICATION

After hearing the others, share one of your own anxious times. Give a testimony about God's answer to one of your prayers. Vulnerability builds trust.

PRAYER

This is a great day to share prayer needs with each other. Write down what you prayed for and later share God's answer. You might want to begin to keep a family prayer journal of your requests and God's provision.

DAY 3

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:9-13 – Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May our Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven.

Give us our food for today, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

QUESTIONING

Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray in these verses. Did He give us an order of how we should pray? What is it?

LISTENING

Help your family list the order of prayer given by Jesus:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Praise God | 5) Ask for forgiveness |
| 2) Ask for His will | 6) Ask for protection |
| 3) Ask for our needs | |
| 4) Forgive others | |

APPLICATION

Make up a list of six simple directions like, 'cross your arms and scratch your ear,' or 'jump up and down in a circle,' etc. Keep the list secret. Gather the family in a circle and have each person whisper the directions to the next. Then have the last person act them out. Compare the original directions to the person's actions. Point out how God wrote down His directions for prayer so we wouldn't confuse them.

PRAYER

Share family concerns and pray together using the order of the Lord's Prayer.

DAY 4

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

James 5:16 – Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

QUESTIONING

Why is it hard for people to admit they made a mistake? When you do something wrong, who can you tell about it?

LISTENING

Listen carefully for whom your spouse or children say they can talk to about their mistakes. Is it you?

APPLICATION

Share with your family a sin that you committed today (e.g., got angry with another driver on the way to work, etc.). Ask someone in your family to pray for you. When finished, ask if anyone else has something to confess (ask an older family member ahead of time to be thinking of something). If someone confesses something, stop and pray for him or her, asking God for power over that sin in the future.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for your great mercy and continual forgiveness. Help us remember your mercy when others confess their sins to us.

DAY 5

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 119:105 – Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever tried to find your way in the dark without a flashlight? Where were you? Camping? Walking through the house at night? What happened?

LISTENING

After listening to stories, give an example of when you had to walk in the dark. Tell how you felt.

APPLICATION

Give one family member a flashlight (if you have children, give it to the youngest) and turn all the lights off in the house. With all the family members following, let the person with the flashlight lead the family through the house from room to room. Come back to the living room and discuss how God's word is really like a light, guiding us in every decision we make for our lives.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for showing me the next step I need to take. Keep me from stumbling as I read your word, the Bible.

DAY 6

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 2:2 – You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk...

QUESTIONING

What do babies do when they are hungry? What do you do?

LISTENING

Give time to talk about how babies are selfish and cry out for food. God wants us to desire His word so much that we are selfish and cry out for it.

APPLICATION

Get out photo albums and show what each person looked like as an infant, toddler, etc. Discuss how we were first fed on milk, then soft foods, and then meat, and relate those terms to our growth spiritually.

PRAYER

Father God, give me a hunger for your word. As I read your word, cause me to grow up into the fullness of Christ.

DAY 7

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 4:12 – For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.

QUESTIONING

See below

LISTENING

See below

APPLICATION

Get a piece of fruit with a seed in the center like a peach or plum. Ask, “Am I holding a peach or a peach tree?” After listening to the answers, explain that the peach is actually hiding another peach tree inside. Let one member of the family cut the fruit in half to reveal the seed. The seed holds the potential for a whole new peach tree to grow. People are like the peach because often the part we see hides the person’s inner thoughts and intentions. God’s word is like the knife cutting through the outer person to reveal our heart. God’s word helps the inner person grow up to the fullness of Christ.

PRAYER

Lord, I thank you that your word reveals my inner thoughts and intentions. Make my desires like your desires and my heart like your heart.

DAY 8

OBEDIENCE

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 30:16 – I have commanded you today to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, laws, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and become a great nation, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever noticed that each person has his or her own distinctive way of walking? Have you ever tried to imitate someone else's 'walk'?

LISTENING

Listen for traits of people family members tried to emulate. Share a story of when you noticed a funny walker or tried to walk like somebody else.

APPLICATION

Take a walk around your neighborhood or, better yet, drive to a favorite place and begin the family time there. Talk about how good God is to create the beauty we see in nature. Discuss how important it is to recognize God's divine hand in every area of our lives, whether we're making a decision or noticing what He has created.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord that you long to lead us every moment of every day. Help us to hear your voice speaking to us and help us obey your Word and walk in your way.

DAY 9

OBEDIENCE

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 119:34 – Give me understanding and I will obey your law; I will put it into practice with all my heart.

QUESTIONING

Has God's Word ever given you understanding about a certain matter? What troubles can we avoid if we obey God's Word?

LISTENING

Let the group talk about what 'keeping' God's word means to them. Explain that we often 'keep' things we value or want to keep safe. God's word is like that and when we obey it we can avoid the pain of sin.

APPLICATION

Hide a Bible somewhere in the house and play the 'hot or cold' game. You're hot when you get close to the Bible and cold the farther away you are. When the Bible is found, discuss how it is important to keep God's instruction in our hearts, and obey its teaching. Obedience keeps our relationship with God from becoming cold or lukewarm. We want to always be hot for the Lord.

PRAYER

Lord, give us a willing heart to treasure and obey your word.

DAY 10

OBEDIENCE

SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 15:22 – What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better...

QUESTIONING

What brings a smile to your face? Which of the following do you think makes God happy; spending time with Him and really listening to Him, or, working hard to please Him?

LISTENING

Use the explanations of pleasing God to discern the hearts of your family. Explain that God's definition of love is obedience [1 John 5:3].

APPLICATION

Tell this parable. Once upon a time a King told his servant to bring him 12 peanut m&m's. His servant brought him only 6. And they were plain m&m's, not peanut. The King asked the servant why he had not carried out his clear command. The servant replied, "I happened to find 6 m&m's between the cushions of my couch as I was cleaning, and while they weren't peanut, I though plain would be just as good." At this the King dismissed the unfaithful servant and found another to take his place.

In conclusion ask: "What good is a disobedient servant to a King?" "How do you think the King of Kings [Jesus] feels when we disobey Him or replace His desires with our own?"

PRAYER

Lord help us to realize that it makes you happy when we obey you. Lord. Strengthen my commitment to obey your word.

DAY 11

WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 57:7 – My heart is confident in you, O God; no wonder I can sing your praises!

QUESTIONING

Can you think of a time when your actions gave away the condition of your heart? Was it good or bad?

LISTENING

Discern character qualities as each family member shares. Share your own experience of how your heart attitude was revealed by your actions.

APPLICATION

Let each person cut out a heart-shaped piece of paper and write this scripture on it. Have them tape the scripture to the bathroom mirror or in their rooms as a reminder to fix their hearts on God. A fixed heart is a heart that is focused on the Lord. There is nothing that can pull it away from worshipping the Lord. A fixed heart is a heart free to worship the Lord at all times. Sing a praise song together.

PRAYER

Lord God, make my heart like yours. Fix my heart upon you as I confess all my sin to you. Make my heart free to worship you.

DAY 12

WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 13:15 – With Jesus' help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name.

QUESTIONING

What is a sacrifice? Have you ever given up something you really liked to someone else? How did you feel when you did it?

LISTENING

Be open to the simplest explanation. Share a time when you gave up something special for someone else.

APPLICATION

Have each person draw an I.O.U. on a piece of paper shaped like a dollar. Have each of them write out a chore and give it to someone else in the family to be redeemed whenever the person wants. Explain that these chores will be their sacrifices. They may not feel like doing them at the time, but when they do they will soon feel the joy of giving. Worship can also begin as a sacrifice when we don't feel like it, but will always end with joy. Sing a praise song together.

PRAYER

God, we offer a sacrifice of praise to you. We give thanks to you for your love, protection, and provision.

DAY 13

WORSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 34:1 – I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

QUESTIONING

How can a person ‘bless’ God? How can we bless Him at all times?

LISTENING

After discussion, explain that whenever we give credit to God we ‘bless’ Him. We can praise Him continually as we go through the day by constantly acknowledging His works in our lives.

APPLICATION

Have each person think of at least one thing that God did in his or her life that day. Encourage everyone to see God’s hand in everything that happens tomorrow.

PRAYER

God, I recognize that you are in control of everything that happens in my life. Remind me throughout the day tomorrow of your goodness and faithfulness. Help me see your hand in every circumstance.

DAY 14

FELLOWSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 10:24 & 25 – Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

QUESTIONING

Is it more exciting to watch a ball game in person or on TV? Why?

LISTENING

After listening to comments, explain that the excitement we feel is due to the crowd and the cheering we do together. In the same way, a follower of Jesus must be in fellowship with other Christians to receive encouragement and strength.

APPLICATION

Using stick matches, build a ‘tepee’ in an aluminum pie pan or other fireproof container. Light them and slowly remove one match from the bunch. Let it go out, then put it back into the pile and see how it reignites. Discuss how a person loses his or her ‘fire,’ or love of Jesus, when he or she is separated from other Christians.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for all the loving and joyful people in my church. Help me give and receive the gift of encouragement as I speak to other Christians.

DAY 15

FELLOWSHIP

SCRIPTURE

1 John 1:7 – But if we are living in the light of God’s presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to be blind? Have you ever tried to walk in the dark? For example, on a camping trip without a flashlight? What happened? What are some things that would be difficult?

LISTENING

After listening to some ideas, share one of your own.

APPLICATION

Everyone goes into a dark room without windows. Beforehand, prepare a note card with a message that says, “Let’s go have ice cream after our family time!” Pass the card around in the dark and ask if anyone can read the important message on the card. Have one person turn on a flashlight and read the card. Explain that Jesus is our light that allows all Christians to have joyful fellowship. If we walk with Him we will keep away from darkness (sin) and stay in the light (righteousness).

PRAYER

Jesus, thank you that you are my light. You lead me into righteousness and expose all sin in my life. Thank you for your precious blood that cleanses me from all my sin and makes me righteous in the sight of God.

DAY 16

FELLOWSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:32 – And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

QUESTIONING

How is this human knot like unforgiveness? What happens when people hold on to their anger and hurt? Is there a simple way to get out of this knot of unforgiveness?

LISTENING

After hearing the answers, explain that ‘letting go’ means forgiving completely. We remember how much God has forgiven us and how little we have to forgive others in comparison.

APPLICATION

Before reading the scripture, have everyone stand in a tight circle. Direct them to form a human knot by holding the hands of two different people across the circle. Tell them that the one hand represents hurt. Instruct everyone to attempt to get out of the human knot without letting go of each other’s hands. After two minutes, have everyone freeze while you read Ephesians 4:32. Then ask the questions.

PRAYER

God, thank you for your mercy that is new every morning. Give me a heart of mercy and forgiveness toward others.

DAY 17

FELLOWSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Philippians 2:2,3 – Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other; loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.

QUESTIONING

How can you tell when a person is important? Do people treat an important person differently from everyone else? Would you like to be important?

LISTENING

After some discussion, point out some 'important' people; for example, the president, pro athletes, business owners, etc.

APPLICATION

Have your family sit in a circle and ask everyone to tell something they admire about the person on their right. You should take the lead. Then do the same with the person on the left.

PRAYER

Lord, help me to see the value in each of my family members. Help me recognize the special talents and qualities you have given each one.

DAY 18

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SCRIPTURE

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

QUESTIONING

What does it mean to perish? Do you know anyone who has perished?

LISTENING

Let your family share remembrances of loved ones or friends who have died. Talk about the fact that those who were trusting Jesus are with Jesus. Be sensitive to those in your family who may not have asked Jesus to save them from their sins.

APPLICATION

Make a cross out of masking tape, two yard sticks, string, etc. and place it on the floor with the horizontal stick joining two pieces of paper marked with the words 'death' and 'life.' Have family members stand on one side of the cross and walk across from 'death' to 'life.' Explain that God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins so we could live eternally with our heavenly Father.

PRAYER

If you sense the Holy Spirit drawing members of your family to Jesus, ask them if they want to cross over from 'death' to 'life.' Share the simple gospel of Jesus with them and help them pray.

Here is how you can receive Christ:

1. Admit your need. (I am a sinner.)
2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
4. Through prayer, invite Jesus to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit.

DAY 19

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SCRIPTURE

Romans 1:16 – For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes – Jews first and also Gentiles.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever seen someone make fun of Christians? How did you feel? Did you want to speak out? Did you?

LISTENING

Let family members share their experiences without commenting negatively. Share one of your own experiences. Be candid about your response.

APPLICATION

Pass out note cards and ask each family member to write the name of one friend who is not a follower of Jesus. Ask if they will commit to pray for those friends each day and tape the note cards in a prominent place as a reminder (refrigerator, bathroom mirror etc.). Then say that God will give them an opportunity to share the truth of Jesus Christ with those friends if they ask Him.

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for saving me by the shed blood of Jesus. I know you love my friend, _____. Give me a special moment to share the good news about Jesus with my friend. Give me boldness and love so I may speak clearly and with passion.

DAY 20

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SCRIPTURE

John 14:6 – Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever been lost? How did it happen? How did you feel? Did you wish you had a map or someone to show you the way?

LISTENING

This is a great time to be vulnerable and share a time when you were lost and afraid. Guys are even allowed to admit they asked for directions!

APPLICATION

Let the head of the family be ‘Jesus’ and play ‘Follow the Leader.’ Lead the family through rooms, tight spots, inside and outside, explaining that there is no other way to get to the treasure (eternal life) except by following Jesus. At the end of the walk, have a special treat (candy, coins, etc.) in one particular spot where everyone may see it while on the walk. They must continue to follow the leader and cannot get to the treasure without first following Jesus all the way to the end.

PRAYER

God, thank you for giving us the one and only way to come to you through Jesus Christ. Open our eyes to see lost people all around that need the ‘map’ to find their way to you. Give us courage and strength share Jesus, ‘the way, the truth, and, the life’ with them.

DAY 21

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:8,9 – God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

QUESTIONING

What was the best gift you ever received?

LISTENING

Listen for insights into the personalities of family members as they share. Share a story of a favorite gift you received as a child.

APPLICATION

Wrap a small treat in gift paper for each family member. Examples might be a favorite candy, a candle, a dollar, chewing gum, etc. Ask them all in turn if they trust you to give them a good gift without getting anything in return. Then have them open the gift and emphasize that salvation is God's free gift to us.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the free gift of salvation. Remind me each day to honor that gift by being generous with others. Give me the boldness to share your gift of salvation with the people you have placed in my life.

DAY 22

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:17 - ... those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

QUESTIONING

Where do butterflies come from?

LISTENING

If you have children, encourage the other family members to let the youngest speak first.

APPLICATION

Before the family gathers, find an illustration of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Use an encyclopedia or Internet pictures. Explain that when we ask Jesus to save us we change like the caterpillar into the butterfly. The caterpillar goes into its cocoon and transforms. The caterpillar can only crawl, but the butterfly can fly. Jesus sets us free from sin. Instead of crawling along doing sinful things, Jesus gives us the power to fly above the sinful life and live victorious as we seek to trust Him.

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for transforming me. Thank you that I am a new creation and everything in my life has become new. Thank you for the power to live free from sin.

DAY 23

STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 16:2 – On every Sunday, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once.

QUESTIONING

Have you ever saved a long time for something very special that you desired? How did you feel when you reached your goal?

LISTENING

Listen for personality traits as family members share their desires.

APPLICATION

Make a family bank out of an oatmeal box, a jar, or another container. Every time a family member does an act of kindness, whether in word or in deed, put a coin in the bank in his or her honor. They may place their own coins in as an act of unselfish giving. Tell them that through their unselfish giving and acts of kindness, we will help build a new church and tell others about Jesus. Make this family bank part of your offering toward the new church building.

PRAYER

God, we recognize that everything we have comes from you and we treasure the kind words and actions of our family members more than any possession we own. We plan to honor you by giving to build a building for your church whenever we recognize your loving character in our family.

DAY 24

STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:38 – If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving – large or small – it will be used to measure what is given back to you.”

QUESTIONING

Can you remember a time when you surprised someone with a gift?

LISTENING

Enjoy sharing stories of surprise gift-giving.

APPLICATION

Place a large bowl in the middle of the kitchen table. Have each person take a measuring cup and fill it with rice, beans, wheat, or anything you have. Let them fill the large bowl until it reaches the top, and then shake it down so they can continue to fill it again. Do this until it overflows onto the table. Explain that this bowl represents our lives and the overflow represents God’s generosity.

PRAYER

Lord, we recognize that we can never give more than you. Thank you for your promise to bless us as we give generously to others.

DAY 25

STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE

Luke 12:33, 34 – Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven have no holes in them. Your treasure will be safe – no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

QUESTIONING

Can you think of the thing that you ‘treasure’ the most? Do you spend most of your time and money on that thing?

LISTENING

Listen for insights into the hearts of your family. Be honest about where you spend your time and money. Explain that where we spend our money says a lot about what we value the most.

APPLICATION

Have your family members choose something from their rooms that they would like to donate to Goodwill, or another charitable organization. Make sure each item is something in good working order, and discuss how someone of their same age would enjoy receiving a toy, piece of clothing, etc. Discuss the importance of being generous without expecting anything in return.

PRAYER

Where is my treasure, Lord? Show me what I value the most. Turn my heart toward you and make my desires match yours.

DAY 26

STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE

1 John 3:17 – But if anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help – how can God’s love be in that person?

QUESTIONING

Have you ever seen someone in need but passed by? Why didn’t you stop to help?

LISTENING

List reasons why we often don’t help others: too busy, don’t want to intrude, afraid of rejection, etc.

APPLICATION

Have the family members think of a neighbor who might have a need. Go to that house as a family and offer to sweep their sidewalk, give them a home-made goodie, or a glass of lemonade and ask them if they have anything they would like you to pray about, (e.g., a sick family member, someone out of a job, etc.)

PRAYER

Expand our capacity to give, Lord. Make us aware of needs all around us. Give us creativity to know how to give to others.

DAY 27

STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 9:6, 7 – Remember this – a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully.

QUESTIONING

What happens when a seed is planted in the ground?

LISTENING

After discussion by family members, explain that a single seed planted in the ground can produce many seeds. God's principle of planting multiplies the original gift.

APPLICATION

Have the family sit in a circle. Recall all the fun times you have had over the last 27 days and the many truths God has revealed to each family member. Consider the bounty of family relationships you have been able to "reap" because of the time you have "planted" together. Now talk about what investment God might lead your family to make for His glory. Let God speak through each family member and give you unity in your decision.

PRAYER

Lord, clearly show us how you want our family to contribute to our new church building. Make us unified in purpose and place the joy of giving in our hearts.

Family Conference Guide

Purpose: To determine what God is leading our family to give to the “GIFT” Campaign.

PREPARATION:

1. Participate in daily devotions given in this prayer guide so that God has the opportunity to prepare every family member.
2. Set an appointed time for the conference (free of distraction) for the family to meet, pray, study, and discuss what your commitment will be. The conference will likely take 30-60 minutes, depending on the age of the children.
3. Instruct each family member to begin thinking of sacrifices that God wants that person and the entire family to make in order to give.

DATES

Hold your Family Conference sometime between _____ and _____. Commitment Sunday is Sunday, _____.

LEADER

Preferably the head of household, with all family members present.

SUGGESTED STEPS:

1. Leader prays, inviting God’s presence and leadership in the conference and asking God to give a spirit of love, unity, and generosity.
2. As a family, read and discuss the Bible passages listed on the next page. Write down God’s principles for giving in the space provided.

Proverbs 3:9-10

Proverbs 11:24-25

II Corinthians 9:6-12

3. Ask family members to recall other principles they remember about giving and sacrifice from the daily devotions the family has been studying. Write those down also.

4. Ask family members to talk about sacrifices they and the family could make in order to give through The Great Investment campaign now and over the next three years.

“Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.”

D.L. Moody

“There is no way that Christians, in a private capacity, can do so much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer.”

Jonathan Edwards

“Work as if you were to live a hundred years. Pray as if you were to die tomorrow.”

Benjamin Franklin