

Nurturing Faith Ideas

September – December, 2016

Here you will find weekly suggestions and activities from the Presbytery's Nurture Committee to link worship and home and to nurture faith development in the family. These are intended for all ages and all family types – with children or grandchildren or families with no children. Add one to your bulletin each week or put in your monthly newsletter. They could also be sent out via email or added to a Facebook page.

September

September 4: At times, we worry and fret about things that are just not important in the scheme of life. What are some of the things that you worry about? Who might you share your worries with? Pray, by yourself or with others, that God will help you not focus on your worries but to focus on God and love God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

September 11: In our lectionary reading this week, Luke 15:1-10, the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." Jesus told them a story about a lost sheep that was found. What have you lost that you later found? Give thanks to God for lost and found things and people.

September 18: Luke 16:13 tells us we cannot serve two masters, meaning we cannot be faithful to God and worship something else. Whom do you worship and make most important in your life, God or something else? Find a way to show your faithfulness to God this week.

September 25: In Luke 16:19-20, we find the story of a rich man, who was well dressed and ate well, and the story of a poor man who was covered with sores and wished that he could eat the rich man's leftovers. Most of us have plenty to eat and nice clothes to wear, while others do not. Go through your closets and find something nice you will share with those in need and something good to eat. Take them where someone in need can get them.

October

October 2: Read Luke 17:5-10. Often, children feel little and "not enough." Jesus says to them that they are "enough" just as *the tiny mustard seed is enough*. Remember that this is not the mustard seed parable in which the tiny seed grows into the big bush. This is the mustard seed that, even though it is tiny, is "enough." Remember this week and give thanks, that no matter your size or your age, you are a child of God, and you are "enough."

October 9: Read Jeremiah 29:1-7. Jeremiah insists that God's people living in exile look around, get to know the people and place where they are living, and contribute to its wellbeing. This week, look around and notice what is going on with other people in your family, neighborhood, class, team.... Pray for these people and do something this week that might make someone's life better.

October 16: Read 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5. Consider your Bible, the sacred writings of Christians and the Christian Church. Does it look well-used or brand new? How has it become a part of you? If the book fell apart completely, would you have most, or at least some of it, hidden inside you? This week, read Psalm 91:1-6 and 14-16 three times each day and memorize it to hide it inside you.

October 23: Read Joel 2:23-32. Identify dreams as possibilities and ideas about what could be. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech illustrates the importance of a dream in shaping life for both individuals and communities. According to Joel, such dreams are gifts from God and therefore should be valued and worked with. What is a dream that you have for your own life and for the life of the world?

October 30: Psalm 119 is an acrostic, that is, an alphabet poem. Each line in each section starts with a word beginning with the same letter. Write your own alphabet psalm praising God this week.

November

November 6: November 1 was All Saints Day – a day to remember all who have died. Remember a special loved one by saying a special prayer, visiting a cemetery, and/or doing a favorite activity that they enjoyed.

November 13: We are headed into the two busiest months of the year. Rest doesn't come naturally for many of us, but every busy family needs a break. Find time in the next couple months to pause. It's an ideal time to regroup, reconnect and recharge.

November 20: Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. Take time at your family dinner to ask everyone there to share something for which they are thankful.

November 27: Look for a program to buy Christmas gifts for a needy child – in your community or across the world. Then, do so.

December

December 4: Go see Christmas Lights. Take time to talk about Jesus – the light of the world – bringing the light into the darkness of the world.

December 11: Have a time of fellowship with family or friends by organizing a cookie swap or cookie decorating party. Make a special plate (or two) for someone who is not able to make their own cookies and then deliver them.

December 18: Choose an activity that will help babies, such as donating to a crisis pregnancy center, praying for babies in danger or even just spending time with a special baby in your lives.

December 25: How will you celebrate Jesus' birthday this year? Jesus taught us that when we help those in need, we are helping him. Find a way to give a Christmas gift to someone who is particularly in need this year.