

Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Upon This Rock: The Rock of Kindness

Is the world as nice a place as it used to be? If you were to ask others this question, what kind of answers do you think you would get? Many of us would say that it depends on the age of the person responding — that the older the person, the less likely it is that they find this world to be a nice place. Why is that?

You might think that with the advances we have had in transportation, technology, communication and medicine, people would also have advanced equally in being kind and nice to one another. Yet, many people would say that this is not the case. Where have all the nice people gone? Where is civility? Where is kindness?

Kindness, according to the Word of God, is a fruit of the Spirit, meaning that it resides within God's people — a result of faith, waiting to come forward. The challenge is to find ways for it to be revealed in a consistent manner, in genuine ways, in everyday as well as critical situations.

Kindness is often thought of as being meek or mild — perhaps even soft. That is a misunderstanding. True kindness is strong. It is the embodiment of strength in action, delivering a message of care by offering a word of support or lending a helping hand. Kindness is acting in a measured and appropriate manner toward others, which results in a better situation.

Kindness is one-way, directed toward another, without any expectation of the return of a similar kindness. We do it for someone else's good, the betterment of a group, to improve a situation or conditions around us — not for the attention

or notoriety it can bestow on us. Kindness gifts, directs, guides and welcomes. Kindness is shown in acts of care and compassion. Kindness does not give in, but it holds firm to principles, values and beliefs.

Jesus Christ modeled this in His earthly ministry as He performed acts of kindness in healing people of their diseases, providing them with basic necessities of life and teaching them the truths of God's kingdom. The ultimate act of kindness shown by Christ was the giving of His life

on the cross of Calvary for our

sins, hanging there in our place, feeling the pain and weight of our sin.

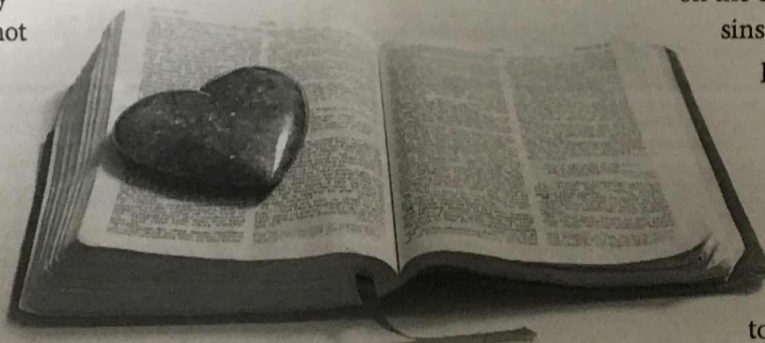
Even in the midst of His suffering, Jesus whispers words of kindness to the believing thief next

to Him, promising that he

would join Jesus in paradise. Those same words of kindness hold true for believers today. We will join Jesus in paradise when we breathe our last breath.

Kind parents know that their kindness is not always returned by young children — and that there are no guarantees that it will be returned when children get older. As parents, we follow the example of our kind Savior, who was patient and loving toward others, gave of His time, provided for physical needs, taught truth with diligence, practiced forgiveness, gave attention to physical concerns and wept with those who were grieving, always doing the will of His heavenly Father.

We all do parenting in a variety of ways. No matter what kind of parent you are, always try to be a kind one.



FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together in a comfortable place in the home for a time of family interaction and Bible study using the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Have the person in the family whose birthday is the closest to Valentine's Day share the opening prayer.

VALENTINE SHARING:

Ask the following questions as a way to open up a family discussion on the topic of giving valentines.

- 1) Who might you want to give a valentine to this year? Why?
- 2) Who are you hoping to receive a valentine from this year?
- 3) What's your ideal Valentine's Day gift to give or to receive?



FAMILY BIBLE SEARCH:

As a family, look up Ps. 103:2-10 and read what these verses have to say about the kindness of Christ, our Lord.



- List below some of the benefits we receive because of the kindness and love of God.
- Have family members share actual ways the kindness of God has been displayed in their lives.

FAMILY KINDNESS ACTIVITIES:

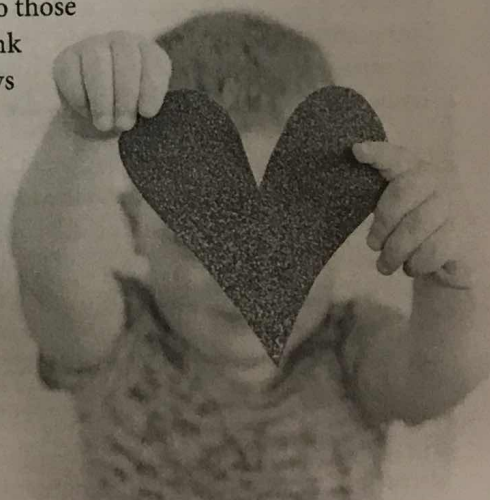
The month of February celebrates showing love, care and kindness toward others. Select one or more of the kindness activities listed below to do as a family.

- Make several pizzas in the shape of hearts and then deliver them to friends and family. If you want to really go over the top, cut the pepperoni pieces/other meats into the shape of hearts!
- Create a list of people to call on Feb. 14 to wish them a happy Valentine's Day. If they don't answer, leave them a fun family message.

- Make homemade cookies in the shape of hearts and then deliver a bag of them to family, neighbors and friends. Put fun Valentine's Day messages on the bag as well!
- Write letters or make personalized valentines for people in your life and put them in the mail so that they arrive on or near Feb. 14.
- Wish special people in your life a happy Valentine's Day in a personalized way by using various avenues of social media.
- Organize a Valentine's Day party at a home for seniors. Bring in several families to help with the fun. You can even have a panel discussion, asking various seniors to share stories of what it was like dating when they were young.
- Write prayers of thanksgiving to God for the various people your family loves.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have an adult or older sibling read the prayer below, section by section, with the rest of the family echoing each phrase.

Dear Jesus, thank You for the people in our lives who love us. Help us to love them and find ways to be kind to them. Help us to be kind to those we don't know. Thank You, Jesus, for always loving us so much that You went to the cross to die for us. Help us to share this good news with others. In Your name, we pray. Amen.



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