

CORNERSTONE KIDS!

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Psalm 46 (NIV)

God is our refuge and strength,
 an ever-present help in trouble.
 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
 and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
 though its waters roar and foam
 and the mountains quake with their surging.
 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of
 God,
 the holy place where the Most High dwells.
 God is within her, she will not fall;
 God will help her at break of day.
 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
 he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
 The Lord Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.
 Come and see what the Lord has done,
 the desolations he has brought on the earth.
 He makes wars cease
 to the ends of the earth.
 He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
 he burns the shields with fire.
 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
 I will be exalted among the nations,
 I will be exalted in the earth."
 The Lord Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Dear Children's Ministry families and supporters,

I've been drawn to Psalm 46 to again and again since I've become the Children's Coordinator here. What always draws me to it at first is the portion of verse 10 that is so well known: "Be still, and know that I am God." *Be still* can also be understood as *let go*. And that seems potentially easy in times of calm and peace. However, look at the entire chapter (printed on the side). This was not a psalm written in normal times. The world was falling down around them. Yet, there is God, making wholeness out of brokenness, bringing peace from the chaos.

This is our God, the one we trust as our firm foundation.

God sees the chaos and God leans in.
 Through what looks like destruction to us,
 God is making new things.

Through this COVID-19 process, I invite you to lean into the faithful truth that God is doing something here and is inviting you into this as well. Take time to be still, to let go. Then, listen to what God might be asking you to do - with your family, with your neighborhood, with your community. Is God asking you to use these weeks to take a much needed rest? To re-set rhythms in your home? To reach out and love your neighbor in some way?

In this special newsletter, I pulled together what I hope are useful resources for you as you take full lead of your children's spiritual formation for the near future.

This is a time of uncertainty, and also a time of hope. May you find God's hope and joy in the coming days.

In grace,
 Tammi

A WORSHIP SERVICE FOR FAMILIES

BASED ON CORNERSTONE'S CHILDREN'S & WORSHIP MODEL.

TIME: 20-30 MINUTES MAX - TAKE WHAT YOU'D LIKE

FROM THE LITURGY PRESENTED

Intro: Sing "King of Me" and/or "Lighthouse" by Rend Collective - let your kids teach you the motions! (5-10 minutes)

Stilling: Sit down. Sing "Be Still" with the motions to get ready for God's story. (Once again, your kids can lead this part) (1 minute)

Story: Watch a video on the Greatest Commandment (5-7 minutes)

Here is one that is a little silly (told by finger puppets).
Here is one that is exactly the Children & Worship story that they would hear on Sunday.

Wonder: Do some wondering questions. (2-3 minutes)
These are questions that don't have to have answers. Your child(ren) can ask the questions and you don't have to answer them. Saying something like "Hmm, I wonder that, too" encourages them to keep wondering. You also can ask a question and not have the answer. This does not have to be a discussion or teaching time. Your child(ren) probably know how this goes and can teach you if you don't know! The Children & Worship video above also has great wondering questions at the end of the video.

Response time: A time to respond to the story (7-15 minutes)

Option one: Individual

Grab some creating things (markers, papers, glue, scissors, play-doh, etc) and have everyone spread out and create a response to the story. On Sundays, this time is typically 7-10 minutes long, and we listen to songs from this playlist. When the allotted time for responding is up, come back together and give each other the opportunity to share what was created in this time.

Option two: Group response: Pick a way you want to respond as a family. Do you want to create a picture together of what love looks like lived out? Maybe write and perform a song together? Perhaps write cards to people who need encouragement or call a grandparent with encouraging words? Take 10-15 minutes to do this.

Return to the Story (3 minutes): Read the Greatest Commandment out of the Bible (Mark 12:28-34) , reminding your kids that this story comes from God's Word. We also light a candle during this time to remind us that Jesus, the light of the world, is with us.

Close in prayer (2-3 minutes): Do prayer requests if you want, and then close in prayer.

MISSION

To inspire, equip, and support families to live in transforming relationship with Jesus and together practice living out of God's love.

VISION

Jesus transforming the lives of our families

THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEAD TEAM IS...

Courtney Joyner
Jane Kayl
Nina Lu
Christie Murphy
& me, Tammi VanDrunen

PRACTICES FOR A PANDEMIC

BEYOND WASHING HANDS, GETTING REST, EATING HEALTHY, AND DRINKING ENOUGH WATER, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PRACTICE GOD'S FULLY ALIVE LIFE WITH YOUR FAMILY IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS?

BEING PEACE

Stress is a well-documented depressor of our immune systems. Also, our anxiety about world events can rub off on our children.

Our anxiety can show up in our adult lives as being less patient with our kids, being unable to make decisions quickly, or disappearing into some sort of media to hide from it all. Our kids can react by withdrawing or getting angrier or melting down faster than normal.

So, practice being a place of peace. Allow your kids to ask questions and answer them truthfully and age-appropriately. Be patient, be calm. Pray for the ability to do those things. :)

It's good to point out how all of these changes are helping out our neighbors and friends who are doctors and nurses and our friends whose bodies cannot handle sickness as well as their healthy bodies can. Help them know that these changes have a wonderful and loving purpose behind them!

Then, create structure, create play, and create senses of normalcy and/or fun in the midst of it all. *You've got this!*

STAY CONNECTED

We'd love to hear what's going on in your world - how your family is meeting God or struggling. While the CMLT and I will be reaching out regularly during this time, please feel free to also reach out to us.

Share stories over email or on our Cornerstone Facebook pages. Encourage each other and allow us to lean on each other during this time of physical separation.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Spiritual practices help us stay grounded in God's goodness and truth, which help combat the fear and anxiety that is all around us right now. Here are a few easy but effective spiritual practices for your family in the coming weeks:

Gratitude: Practice gratitude for what we have. (We still have laughter, learning, play, reading, creating! The sun still comes up! We have enough toilet paper!)

One prayer we teach in children's church is "God is great, God is good, thank you God for _____." Kids love to think of all the things to thank God for. Bonus: gratitude is proven to reduce stress and increase peace!

Play: Play is a critical spiritual practice for those of us who are do-ers. I invite you to stop the housework and the problem solving for a few hours in the next few weeks and focus on playing with your kids. Laugh, create, and wonder with them. Take time to get outside and see the promises of spring and marvel at God's good works. Make some fun memories in the midst of the surreal space of the coming weeks.

Sabbath: Rest! Almost literally, the world is coming to a standstill. You have permission to take a breath, read a book, write in a journal, create a piece of artwork... to just rest in the "good" that God has declared and lean into what Sabbath could look like for you.

Service: Reach out and care for your world. Send some extra money to the food bank and other non-profits who are courageously serving the most vulnerable in our city. Reach out to the older folks in our congregation and see if there is anything they need that you can provide. With your kids, write cards and send them to people who are sick or self-quarantining (or to the doctors, nurses, and others who continue to work for the good of our community!) What other creative ways can you think of to serve?