



CHURCH-WIDE FAST

DECLARING — GOD'S — GOODNESS

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.

PSALM 89:1

Petra Family,

Tracy and I are looking forward to joining with you in this time of prayer and fasting. This daily devotional will focus our hearts and prayers in a united way as we pray and intercede together. There is also a special section for our children to participate.

In the Bible we see that fasting was a normal part of a believer's walk with God. God honors this expression of humility and surrender before him. It is a posture of seeking God and listening.

Through fasting, God often brings direction or breakthrough in our lives or the life of a loved one we are fasting and praying for. Fasting increases our sensitivity to God and helps us draw close to him for spiritual renewal.

I encourage you to set some goals for your fast. What are you asking God to do in your life? Write it down and keep it before God during this fast. This fast is for you personally and for us as a church family. Thank you for joining in this fast in whatever way you can.

Pastors Brian and Tracy



SEVEN-DAY FAST PRAYER FOCUS

CHURCH-WIDE FASTING AND PRAYER
JANUARY 18-24, 2021
PETRA CHURCH

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KIDS' DEVOTIONS - PAGE 24

All materials for the children's daily activity
can be picked up at the Kids' Hub.

FASTING WEEK EVENTS

Eastgate House of Prayer

"The Goodness of God" - Dave Hess
Tuesday, January 19 - Oasis, 7 PM

Night of Worship

"Declaring God's Goodness"
Friday, January 22 - Sanctuary, 7 PM

Prayer Service

In-Person & via Zoom
Saturday, January 23 - Sanctuary, 8-9 PM

Morning Communion

Sunday, January 24 - Sanctuary, 9 and 11 AM

2021 THEME

DECLARING GOD'S GOODNESS

The vast majority of the news you see on TV, the conversational topics you hear among friends, and current events are negative and depressing. The year 2020 was exceptionally difficult. 2021 is a year to change that. This is THE year to declare the GOOD things happening in our lives! Psalms 89:1 is our theme verse for 2021, and for this week of fasting. It says:

*I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.*

Followers of Jesus have Good News to share! We have a hope that the world does not understand. We have a love that breaks down walls of pain and division. We have the GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL that changes hearts! There are friends and family who need to hear us declaring God's goodness from the rooftops!

Through this year's fast, we encourage you to seek God's heart for others and ask for loving boldness and truthful words from the Holy Spirit. Then, in radical faith and obedience, go tell it on the mountain, at the office, and around the dinner table with family!

FAST DEDICATION PRAYER

We dedicate this fast as a time for seeking you, Jesus. We pray for breakthrough in our church, our personal spiritual walk with you, our unity, our marriages, our children, our health, our finances, and our relationships. Help us, heal us, protect us, change us, guide us, and renew us by the grace of God. Holy Spirit, use this fast to bring revival to our hearts; mold us into the character of God; and increase our passion for you and harvest. May the fruit of this time increase our faith and obedience to you. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

DAILY PRAYER FOCUS

Along with the daily devotion, we are providing some prayer points for each day. This is a way for our congregation to agree together in prayer during the fast. This list is just a guide; please listen to God's heart when you take time to pray each day!

Monday – Community

- Unsaved
- Homeless, those in poverty
- People struggling with addiction

Tuesday – Families & Marriages

- Protection over marriages, reconciliation, and safety
- Parents – Wisdom and grace to raise children
- Salvation for family members

Wednesday – Personal Relationship with Jesus

- Grow deeper in love with Jesus, personal revival
- Truth, purity, and integrity in our personal lives
- Ears to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit

Thursday – Schools & Government

- Teachers, administration, school board
- Students – Elementary through High School
- The President, government leaders, & our country

Friday – Petra Church

- Elders, Pastors, & Ministry Leaders
- Staffing needs
- Unity

Saturday – Petra Missionaries

(See list toward the end of this booklet)

Sunday – Body of Christ & Persecuted Church Worldwide

ADULTS
FASTING DEVOTIONS

DAY ONE

DECLARING THE CROSS

The goodness of God comes to us through the cross. It is at the cross where God pours out his love. It is at the cross that we can receive God's love. The cross is the hinge of human history, the center of God's plan for us. The cross is the turning point for every human soul.

Declaring the cross is a privilege and honor, a challenge that fills us with humility and allows for our repentance and God's goodness to take root in our hearts and lives. Jesus says this in Luke 9:23-24:

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Declaring the cross is how we follow Jesus. Without the cross we cannot fellowship with him. When we declare the cross, we align ourselves with the Spirit of God. Hebrews 9:14 tells us how the blood of Christ enables us to serve the living God. When we declare the cross, we are aligning ourselves with God's redemptive plan. This plan stretches into every facet of our lives, for everything in us and around us needs redemption.

I want to highlight three specific things we are doing when we declare the cross:

Declaring Victory

It is in the cross that we have provision to be victorious in every situation! When we choose to surrender to God and die with Christ, we are also raised with Christ in resurrection victory. Paul says in Galatians 2:20: *It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.*

Declaring God's Purpose

The cross serves as a lens for every believer. When we see "through" the cross, the purposes of God come into focus. All of God's purposes for us flow through the cross. As we declare the cross in our relationships, decisions, careers, families, etc., we are surrendering to

God's purposes and trusting Him.

*The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

Psalm 138:8 (ESV)

Declaring our Inheritance

1 Peter 1:3-7 talks about being born again to a living hope through Jesus, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. As we declare the cross, we can take hold of that which is ours in Christ Jesus! What has God given to you as an inheritance? What does his word say about your inheritance? We don't have to wait for some of these things until after life on earth is over but can take hold of them now because of the cross!

What a hope we have because of the cross! Ephesians 2:4-6 & 13 says, *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. . . . But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

As we draw near to God by way of the cross, let us remember that Jesus went before us and knows our sorrows and understands our every struggle. He invites us to join him at the cross and to enter into the glory the Father has planned for each one of us.

■ JUSTIN SMUCKER

PRAY

Lord, give me the courage and strength to share what the cross means to me. Help me be obedient to your voice and in sharing your love with others. I pray for the people I know (name them) who need to know you as savior. May they see the love you have shown through the cross and through my life.

DAY TWO

DECLARING YOUR TESTIMONY

*"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.*

Isaiah 43:10a

The word "witness" may evoke various images in one's mind from testifying in a courtroom to giving testament to an important part of your faith. In the Bible, a witness is essentially someone who sees something important and can bear witness of it. In other words, he or she can tell others about it from first-hand experience. This simple word carries much responsibility though; consider that one of the ten commandments warns against bearing false witness, and that many uses of "witness" in the Bible occur in a legal setting from testifying before judges (Deut. 18:19-20) to buying something from another person (Ruth 4:9, Jer. 32:10).

The theme of witness and testifying can become a lens to understanding the storyline of scripture, particularly the role of God's people. Despite the weightiness, we see that God wants a group of witnesses – people who see and experience him – to represent him to the world and testify of him and his goodness.

In Exodus the people witness Yaweh as powerful king when he rescues them from slavery (Exod. 7-15). Later, when he speaks to Moses, he appoints this one nation to bear witness of what they've seen and experienced, calling them a "kingdom of priests." After Moses meets God face to face, he comes down and testifies about his experience. Moses even writes a song, so the people will never forget how God cared for and rescued them (Deut. 31-32). However, the Israelites quickly forget God's works, and so God raises up the prophets to witness and warn Israel as they appear blind to his good deeds. The prophets experience and see God as king as Moses did (Is. 6).

The New Testament also carries this pattern, and Jesus proclaims himself as servant and witness as spoken of by Isaiah. In fact, he claims the title of witness many times, designates himself as light of the nations, and heals physical and metaphorical blindness. He is the ultimate witness and declares God's kingdom is here, right now, through him. After Jesus's death and resurrection, his followers are then his witnesses and testify of him to the nations, just as God intended (Luke 24:44-49).

This pattern of testifying is meant to be carried forward. Your story is God's story; it is his life and power *at work in you*. In other words, when you testify of what he's done in your life, Christ's story and your story conjoin, and in that there is great power. To illustrate this, consider the passage in Revelation 12. The seventh trumpet has been blown, and John is witnessing a war in the heavenlies when he explains, *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony . . ."* (Rev. 12:10-11, emphasis added). The saints and angels conquer by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. Let that sink in. Your testimony exalts God, encourages believers, builds faith, evangelizes unbelievers, and, ultimately, overcomes all. So what has God done in your life, royal priest? Speak it out, and testify to the goodness of God.

■ JENNIFER HAAK

PRAY

Lord, thank you for changing my heart and changing my life. Lord, I ask for the courage to tell others the difference you have made in my life. Lord, use me and my story to call others into relationship with you. I give you praise for being a God of grace and love. And for being a God where mercy triumphs over judgement.

DAY THREE

DECLARING WHO GOD IS

Of all God's remarkable attributes, only two – his love and his holiness – fully describe his nature and character. God's love has touched and transformed each of us as we have surrendered our lives to him, but how can we even begin to comprehend its height, depth, and overarching vastness? Though we do not have adequate words or understanding, we know that God's love can “move mountains, stop the roaring seas, heal broken bones and wounded hearts, transform lives, and set free those held captive by sin and shame.”* God's love is powerful and altogether amazing!

As we enter Day 3 of our fast, let's consider a descriptive of God's love so we can be freshly encouraged to declare wholeheartedly who he is. Jesus' beloved disciple John uses the word “lavish” to describe the love of God in 1 John 3:1: *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* That word has always caught my eye. Who would not want to be the beneficiary of lavish – profuse, abundant, lush, splendid, generous, extravagant, exuberant – love? But the lavish nature of God's love is totally in line with his overwhelming generosity and grace:

*How abundant are the good things
that you have stored up for those who fear you,
that you bestow in the sight of all,
on those who take refuge in you.*

Psalms 31:19

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . .

Ephesians 3:20

*Quote in paragraph 1 from Bible Study Tools Staff, “Bible Verses about God's Love,” 8/12/2020, www.biblestudytools.com

When the majesty of God's love wells up from within us, it serves as a guide, a rock, and a source of power. Paul declared that Christ's love compels us. (2 Corinthians 5:14) Let's take hold of Christ's love today to sing, declare, and pronounce not only his goodness but "his Kingdom come" over every aspect of our lives.

■ JANICE BALDAUF

PRAY

Father, we are overwhelmed by your goodness and grace – your lavish love. Let the beauty and the power of that love rise up from within us today as we pray for our families, our church family, and others you have called us to. Give us hearts of compassion and the eyes to see people and circumstances as you see them. Quicken us by your Holy Spirit to love as you have loved us. Amen.

DAY FOUR

DECLARING TO THE NEXT GENERATION

*My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,
so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.*

Psalms 78:1-7

Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 4:9

While teaching our three-year-old Sunday School class, I explained to the students that we will take some time to pray for a mission team going to Guatemala. The students took turns praying, and when it was time for little Emma to pray, she asked Jesus to keep them from being afraid of falling. A bit baffled by this request, I shared it with one of the mission team members and she started to cry. She then explained to me that she is terrified of the buses traversing the mountain roads. It was obvious to her that the Holy Spirit was leading a little 3-year-old girl to intercede for the Lord's protection for the team.

Later, a godly 80-year-old gentleman explained to me that becoming like Christ is like a circle; the more you learn of Christ, you realize

there is so much more to know so the circle keeps getting bigger.

The Holy Spirit is at work in all age groups within his body. What an honor it is to pass on his truth to those coming behind us. From the youngest child to the elderly, we learn about our good God by the examples given us and the words we share with each other.

Fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers, coaches, etc. – Take the time to be the light of Jesus to someone. Remember that they have not seen what you have seen and experienced. Sing a little ditty to a child about what you are thankful for to God; break into a childish dance as you worship; interject God's goodness to a teen who is trying to find his/her way; encourage a neighbor with a listening ear or a plate of cookies. As we talk about the Lord in our everyday conversation, obeying his commands and fixing his Word in our hearts and our minds, we keep his Word alive and we light the fire of his passion in the hearts of young and old alike. Keeping Jesus first in all we do allows truth to flow when we may not even be trying to make it happen.

Deuteronomy 11:1-2, 7, 19, and 20 instruct us about God's commands:

Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm . . .

But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

■ JOANNE GOOD

PRAY

Lord, I praise and thank you for my family. I pray that each generation in my family will serve you and pass on their relationship with you. Lord, help us – the church – to honor and value each generation and the purpose you have for them.

DAY FIVE

DECLARING THROUGH LIFESTYLE

I heard an analogy about faith once that went something like this: Let's say you need to travel by plane for some reason but fear flying. You may have "faith" that the plane is engineered well enough to make the trip, that the pilot has the skill, that the air traffic controllers are doing their jobs, etc. But if you do not get on the plane, what good is that "faith?" In this case faith, without action, is dead. Faith here by itself doesn't actually accomplish anything.

I don't think this is the kind of faith we read about in the Bible. As James points out in James 2:17: *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* In this analogy, faith should be accompanied by action – specifically, getting on the plane!

You can find all kinds of faith in action throughout the scriptures. If we look to Gideon as a case study, we will see that he had faith that was accompanied by action. As Gideon was preparing for battle, God didn't want Israel to think that a victory was a result of its own military power, so he made them weaker. Judges 7:2 says:

The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, [saying] 'My own strength has saved me.' Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So 22,000 men left, while 10,000 remained.

This is CRAZY! Put yourself in Gideon's shoes for a minute . . . he is the least of the least (Judges 6:15). He is supposed to defeat an army that has oppressed Israel for the past seven years (Judges 6:1), and now God is cutting his army down to one-third of its size! Oh, and if you read on, he cuts it down further still, until he has just 300 men! If it were me, I would be getting worried at this point!

What is God doing?! It could be that he is trying to show Gideon and Israel (and us) that he could do with 300 what they (or we) could not

do with 30,000! Isn't it easy for us to look at “the numbers” and be completely overwhelmed, when all the while God is simply beckoning us to trust him?

Now, before you go thinking Gideon was a rock star, he actually wasn't keen on jumping into the jowls of Midian with 1/100th of his original army! When he first met the angel, he wasn't exactly an icon of faith in action. He had some serious hurdles in his trust, but God was very patient with him throughout the story. That's part of the beauty of it. Eventually he got to the point of faith-in-action in the face of overwhelming odds.

Maybe you also only have 1/100th left. Can you still trust God? Furthermore, do your actions mirror that trust? How much more does God have in store for us when we put that faith into action, face our fear, and step on the plane.

■ ROB KING

PRAY

Lord, my heart is to live a life that declares who you are. Please keep changing my heart and my character to better reflect Jesus to others. Lord, may my actions show faith in you. May my actions show your love to others! Thank you for your Holy Spirit who helps me live a lifestyle of trust in you.

DAY SIX

DECLARING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

*Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:22-23

The faithfulness of God is his trustworthiness, a commitment to keep his promises to his people. The picture we have of God from the beginning is not that he is a cold, distant deity who demands that his needs be met by his creatures, but a loving and relational God who creates all things out of his overflowing, dynamic love within the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The faithfulness of God is to be understood in light of this relational reality and foundation. God has always been and therefore will always be faithful to his people. (thegospelcoalition.org)

Faithfulness in the above passage is defined literally as firmness. It is also defined as security, steady, stability, and truth. These descriptions are a comfort to me in an ever-changing world, where truth and stability seem to be at a low. God is faithful to his children, and he cannot be anything less. In the midst of both difficulty and blessing, our great God will be faithful. He promises to work out all things for our good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

Thomas Chisholm wrote the hymn, "Great is thy Faithfulness," in 1923. The hymn still resonates today almost 100 years later. Chisholm's health was unstable, and he alternated between bouts of illness and gainful employment in which he did everything from journalism to insurance to evangelistic work. Through all the ups and downs, he discovered new blessings from God every morning. The hymn became popularized around the world by George Beverly Shea and choirs at the Billy Graham Crusades. Thomas didn't have an easy road, but it did not stop him from declaring the faithfulness of God.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changeth not, Thy compassions they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever will be.

In this New Year, may you experience the faithfulness of Father God firming up your path. May the light of the Son, Jesus, keep you secure, knowing you are his and that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. May the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth.

■ MARY WILSON

PRAY

Lord, I am so thankful for your faithfulness in my life and I praise you for being
Father God! Lord, help me to notice the way you are faithful to all your promises. I ask for the opportunities to declare to others that my God is a faithful God. Holy Spirit, give me the words at the right time as I talk to friends and family about Jesus and the promises in your Word.

DAY SEVEN

DECLARING WITH BOLDNESS

When I think of boldness and intentionality, my mind immediately goes to Peter and John in the Book of Acts. Having been transformed and encouraged by their encounters with Jesus, they now go out proclaiming him to the people, preaching his word and performing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, the “religious leaders” of the day came out to suppress their preaching and ministry. I am so impressed by Peter and John’s response to this persecution.

Acts 4:19-20 says, *BUT Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we CANNOT help speaking about what we have seen and heard”* (emphasis added). Oh, that we would have that type of boldness in the face of suppression! Verse 31 gives us the key to their boldness: *After they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

The world we live in is very much in need of followers of Jesus Christ whodemonstrate, with love, the greatness and goodness of the one and only true and living God. He is the God of love, mercy, holiness, forgiveness, life, and hope. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The One who gave his Son to die for our sins and give us life. Through Jesus, mankind finds meaning, purpose, and value, both for this life and the one to come.

Philippians 2:15 says: *we are children of God in a crooked and depraved generation, in which we are to shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life.* You, dear friend, have the answer to life’s questions. We all have heroes or things we love to talk about with great joy. When was the last time you spoke of your God and Savior Jesus Christ with that same exuberance? Acts 4:13: *When the people saw the courage of Peter and John, and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus!* May the world around us say the same about you and me. Spend time with Jesus and let his light shine through you!

PRAY

Holy Spirit, today I ask for a fresh filling of your power, love, and courage. Fill me with exactly what I need for each day. I pray for courage and love to declare the goodness of God with boldness and intentionality. Holy Spirit, fill me with the fruit of your Spirit so I speak the truth in love! I pray against the fear of rejection and doubt. Thank you for being with me every day!

CHILDREN
FASTING DEVOTIONS

Hello Families!

I know fasting can seem like a big unknown. And I know it can sound like something only adults do. But when kids participate in fasting, it begins to give them the tools they need to practice self-discipline and to put God first. Kids like their desserts, their TV shows, and their video games. By actively choosing to fast in one of these areas they learn that yes, they do have the ability to make smart choices. Take time to discuss the fast with your children. Talk about what it means to fast, and then let them decide what they might be willing to go without for the week. Even encourage them to ask Jesus what he wants them to give up. This makes it more personal for them, not just another thing mom or dad are telling them to do. You can even choose something as a family. This is beneficial, especially for younger children.

In this booklet we have included age-appropriate devotions and activities to walk through during the week. This will help them engage in what they are doing. Our theme this year is **Declaring God's Goodness**, based on Psalms 89:1. Our devotional activities will include readings from different sections of Scripture as well. We are making a megaphone together that represents telling everyone we know of the **Goodness of God**. You can pick up everything you need at the Kids' Hub.

We pray that as you go through these devotions and activities together, your family will experience the love and faithfulness of God in a new way.

Andrea Kauffman
Children's Pastor

DAY ONE

DECLARING THE CROSS

When we fast, it is important to start by focusing on God. It can be easy to focus on ourselves: our wants, our needs, and our problems. But when we turn our eyes to God, and focus on who he is, the small things in our life can start to disappear. Our theme this week is **Declaring God's Goodness**. We want to get to the point where we can say, no matter our circumstances, that **God is Always Good!**

Let's read Psalm 89 verse 1 together:

I will sing of the Lord's unfailing love forever! Young and old will hear of your faithfulness.

What a great verse! This is telling us that God's love never fails, and that is worth sharing! When we can put aside distractions and really focus on God's Goodness, we can't help but tell others about it. Now stop and think: what is the greatest symbol of God's Goodness to us? Did you think of the cross? What greater way to show goodness and love for someone than to die for them? And the best news is that Jesus came to die for everyone. That's why we need to share it! Some people have no idea how much they are loved. Now take a minute to pray and ask God what he would like you to fast from this week. It could be a type of food, desserts, screens, or anything that you really enjoy and spend time doing. During the week, when you want to watch something or have a treat, think about God's love for you instead and thank him for always being good!

■ **ANDREA KAUFFMAN**

ACTIVITY

Draw a cross somewhere on the outside of your megaphone. Then, flip it over to the back and draw or write the thing you have chosen to fast from this week. Take a moment to pray and ask God to help you in your fast, and to show you his goodness in a new way this week.

DECLARING YOUR TESTIMONY

Have you ever been in a very old church? One with wooden pews (benches) and big, stained-glass windows? They even smell like wood and smoke from the candles.

When I was a young girl, I went to an old church like that with my mom and siblings. My dad would only come to church on Christmas and Easter. Now that I'm a mom, I realize what a GOOD thing my mom did for my siblings and me each and every Sunday. Years later, I came to Petra Church and was saved in the front of the Sanctuary when I was 18 years old. I am declaring **God's Goodness** in my life by the way God was following me all of those years.

Read Matthew 28:19-20 to see what Jesus says about telling others about Jesus and declaring YOUR story.

■ EMILY BUCK

ACTIVITY

Can you think of someone you know who is not saved? Write their name on your megaphone and say a prayer for them. **"Dear Jesus, you are such a GOOD God. We pray that you reveal yourself to _____ and that _____ will come to know you as their savior."**

DAY THREE

DECLARING WHO GOD IS

LOVE.

We use the word love often, probably every day! It is used in a variety of ways. You can say, "I love you, Grandpa" or "I love reading" or even "I love eating ice cream." All these types of love have their own unique meaning. All of them are good, but the ultimate and best kind of love we can experience in our lives is the love of God. The Bible tells us in 1 John 4:16 that God IS love. What kind of love is he made of?

Let's read 1 John 4:9-12.

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to earth to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. His incredible love allows us to have a relationship with him and to spend eternity with him. Wow! Because God loves us, we are called to love each other. Jesus tells us *"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples"* (John 13:35). What a beautiful way to declare with our lives that God is love!

■ ERIKA SIFFORD

ACTIVITY

Think about some other words you could use to describe God. Discuss them with your family. Then take a few minutes to pray and declare these qualities out loud, praising God for who he is. After your prayer time, color the heart stickers and put them on your megaphone.

DAY FOUR

DECLARING TO THE NEXT GENERATION

Do you have a special memory of sitting on your grandma or grandpa's lap? Or maybe there is another special older person in your life; for example, a kids' church teacher. Maybe you remember their telling you a story from their childhood. Maybe about how they went to school in a one-room schoolhouse. And how they walked five miles to get there, because there were no school buses! Or about a time that they were frustrated because something was not going their way. Maybe it was a moment they felt sad, angry, or scared, sharing how God showed up and led them through the problem and how they worked through it. We, as kids, are so much richer from that wisdom being passed down to us. It is tried and true wisdom. What does that mean? These adults, who have lived many more years than us, have made mistakes and had their own challenges. It brings them great joy to be able to come alongside you as a child and help you through your own situation. They get it; they understand it.

What a blessing it is to have these people in our lives who want to **Declare God's Goodness** to us. They help us walk through life looking and searching for that. They show us by example through how they live their lives, or maybe by an encouraging word, reading a Bible story to us, and praying for us! The testimony God has deposited in their lives helps to shape your life, which in turn, enables you to influence the lives of those around us. Yes, even as kids you can declare God's Goodness to the next generation! You do not need many, many years of experience. What do I mean? Well, next time you are with a group of kids, whether in school, school at home with a younger sibling, in church, or maybe your neighborhood, YOU can help them find the good in a tough situation. Maybe they do not understand a math problem, but you do! You can show them how you do it. Maybe they have never tried it that way and now they understand better. You have just showed them God's Goodness. You can say to them, "Look! God is so good!" YOU are declaring to the next generation!

■ JENNY SENSENIG

ACTIVITY

Take some time to thank God for any older people who have taken the time to show you God's Goodness. Then, draw a picture of your family or some friends and ask God to help you show his Goodness to them!

DAY FIVE

DECLARING THROUGH HOW WE LIVE

Someone once said to me, “Do as I say, not as I do.” Hearing that told me that if I can say the right words, what I do and how I act doesn’t matter. Do you think that is how Jesus wants us to live? The more I thought about it, I realized it is not the way someone who loves God should live. We are taught to love God and love our neighbor – that our lives should reflect the fruit of the Spirit. Do you remember the fruits from when we learned them earlier this year? Take some time now to say them out loud . . . try and do it without looking! Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. Did you remember them? Good job! When we live a life that reflects Jesus, this is what people should see. We can’t just talk about God’s Goodness, we have to show it in how we live as well. James 2:17 says, *So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.* That is a strong verse! I sure don’t want my faith in God to be dead and useless! I want to be known as someone who loves God with all my heart, and I want my life to show that.

■ ANDREA KAUFFMAN

ACTIVITY

Take your word stickers and use them to decorate your megaphone. As you stick them on, think about how you can live out each of those things. Ask God to help you to be the type of kid who not only talks about God’s Goodness but also shows it in your daily life.

DAY SIX

DECLARING HIS FAITHFULNESS

Do you know what **faithful** means? Discuss that with your family.

Were you right? It means remaining loyal and constant.

Did your parents ever say they would play a game with you and then they forgot or became busy? (Grownups do this all the time.) They were not faithful to their promise in that moment. It's not that they don't want to play with you, it's that they became busy or had something else important to do. God is ALWAYS faithful and is always there when you need Him. He is never too busy, and he never has other things to do. He is loyal and constant and GOOD.

Find Psalm 36:5 in your bible. Close your eyes and have someone read the verse. It paints a beautiful picture of how BIG God's faithfulness is.

■ EMILY BUCK

ACTIVITY

On your megaphone, color the big words "GOD IS GOOD" with **blue** crayons as a reminder that God's faithfulness reaches the skies.

DAY SEVEN

DECLARING WITH BOLDNESS

Have you ever heard the phrase “dare to be different?” Usually that phrase is used when someone is being encouraged to try a new hair style, wear a unique outfit, or debut an interesting hobby. When I think about being different in terms of being a Christian, I think about chances to make choices that are different than the rest of the world. For example, when others choose to laugh at someone who is being teased, we can choose to stand up for and defend that person. When others choose to exclude somebody from an activity, we can find a way to include them. When we experience something sad and are told by those around us that there is no way to be happy, we can choose to seek joy in our relationship with Jesus.

Living your life in these ways will make you stand out and look different from the crowd, because the choices you are making are somewhat unexpected. As you get older and continue to make choices like these, people will notice. They might even ask you why you live your life the way you do. What a wonderful way to share the good news about Jesus! Live your life boldly and intentionally. Let’s dare to be different for Jesus!

Read the situations below with your family. Discuss how you might WANT to respond as well as the response that would intentionally and boldly show others that you love Jesus.

One of the bullies at school drops his backpack and everything spills out. No one is stopping to help because he is always so mean to everyone! What would you do?

You are riding your bike and get too close to your neighbor’s parked car. Your handlebar leaves a long scratch on the side of the car. No one saw this happen. What do you do?

■ ERIKA SIFFORD

ACTIVITY

After your discussion, add some finishing touches to your megaphone, cut it out, and assemble it. Go outside with your megaphone and shout “God is good!”

2021

PETRA MISSIONARIES

Long-Term and Associate Missionaries

- Mario and Jeanette Araya
- Lazaro "Nacho" and Merrilee Barrera and Family
- JC and Lois Ebersole
- Marta Estrada
- Bruce and Joyce Heckman
- Darryl and Joyce Henson
- Nicole Hurst
- Daniel and Jamie Jones and Family
- Arlen and Keturah King and Family
- Joe and Jeniece Kingman and Family
- Randy and Bonnie Martin
- Tina Moore
- Ben and Kayte Musselman and Family
- Brad and Lori Ortenzi
- Trevor and Leah and Family
- Barbara Stoltzfus
- Kenny and Steph Stoner and Family
- Alan and Carol Wert and Family
- Leslie and Suzanne Yoder
- Chris and April Zimmerman

PRAYING FOR SALVATION

If you're believing for the salvation of a family member or friend:

Father, I bring _____ before you now, asking that as I pray, the Holy Spirit would draw them to Jesus.

I Pray:

1. That God would lift the veil that prevents _____ from seeing truth.
2. For the Holy Spirit to bring conviction and protect him/her.
3. For godly people to be placed in his/her pathway each day, especially ones who speak truth and life.
4. I cast down anything that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, specifically: pride, rebellion . . . (anything you can think of).
5. In the Name of Jesus, I take down all known strongholds, thought patterns, opinions on religion, etc.
6. I bind Satan from taking _____ captive any longer and bind all wicked thoughts and lies Satan would try to place in his/her mind.
7. In Jesus' name, I place the armor of God on him/her.

* Don't forget to pray in the Spirit, releasing his power and life.

SALVATION PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. By faith, I open the door of my life and my heart to receive you as my Savior and my Lord. Please forgive me of my sins. Thank you for your grace and for giving me eternal life. Take control of the decisions of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.

NOTES





565 Airport Road
New Holland, PA 17557