

IMMOVABLE



spiritual disciplines

- *meditation & study*
- *prayer & confession*
- *service & worship*
- *simplicity & giving*
- *fasting & sabbath*
- *silence & solitude*



simplicity & giving

In an ever-changing world and society, raising children can feel overwhelming, but thankfully, we serve an unchanging and immovable God that has already taught us how to be close to Him! We have put together a set of activities that you can use throughout your normal routines with your children to teach them about how we can be close with God in a busy world. We are challenging you to commit to one activity/week and see how it transforms your family's faith into something that is truly ***immovable!***



When spending time with your children and God...

- ...always make it a positive experience
- ...associate “God Moments” with “good times”
- ...the heart is more important than the discipline itself
- ...be sensitive to how your child responds
- ...try not to let this time be associated with boredom or forcing
- ...listen to the Holy Spirit’s guidance inside of you
- ...giving them choices gives them a feeling of “ownership” (prompt decks, decorating book covers, illustrating, etc)
- ...if it is enjoyable, it can become a habit that they can start at a young age and continue throughout their lives
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Keys to Practicing Service:

- We can train our minds and hearts away from our constant appetites and the idea that more equals happiness, comfort, and convenience
- Simplicity is finding the freedom, joy, and gut-level satisfaction from lives untethered by excess and chaos
- Simplicity is not just financial and physical, also refers to lifestyle, time management and relationships
- Simplicity MUST be modeled to your children...you cannot have them practice this discipline separately from you
- Simplicity is letting go of things in this world, so that you can make more time for God



Bible Verses to Study about Simplicity

- “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21
- “Yet true godliness with contentment is great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.” 1 Timothy 6:6-8



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1. Focus away from toys

Go outside and use the great outdoors as entertainment. Play in the snow, make a fort, chase fireflies, dig for worms, run after butterflies, have a scavenger hunt, collect leaves for rubbings...the possibilities are endless. As you do these things, talk to your children about God's wonderful creations. Teach children that the outside is always available to us and there is always something to do outside. Remind them to be thankful to our glorious God for providing that for us.

2. Gratitude Tree

Children are more content when they are grateful for the blessings that are already around them. Using materials that you probably already have around your house, your family can make a Gratitude Tree to visualize these blessings. You can use a jar, yarn or string, construction paper, and leafless branches from a tree to put into the jar. Cut construction paper in the shapes of leaves. You could have each family member have their own specific color. Stand the branches in the jar to resemble a tree. Each day, have every member of the family write something on their leaf that they are grateful for, then hang the leaf on one of the branches. Keep adding leaves until your tree gets full. Return often to see and read all of the blessings as a reminder of how great God is.



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3. Give an experience

When it is time to choose a gift for someone in the family, choose to give an experience and make memories, instead of buying physical and material objects. Instead of your children opening one present after another on Christmas, give just a toy or two, and give the gift of a long weekend for the family at a water park in January. If the gift is for one child's birthday, let your other children be involved in the planning. You could give museum, zoo, sporting event, concert or theater tickets, a train ride, a camping trip, sign-up for a class (pottery, painting, karate, dance, drama), a coupon book of outings for time together in the upcoming year, or a trip to a place that they have read about.

4. Remove Chaos

Create less noise by turning off the tv or music in the house while you are having dinner or working around the house. Spend that time in conversation with your children, without the chaotic background noise. Make a grocery list and stick to it without buying all of the extras (Do we really need five different salad dressings?). Allow your children to each add one thing to the list and stick with that. Keep your schedules to the minimum. Our children's busyness should not be our badge of honor as parents. Extra-curricular activities are replacing what used to be family time. Fast food in the car hurrying from one place to the next is replacing family dinners around the table. If your schedule is chaotic, talk with your children and prioritize your activities to see what can be eliminated to find more time for God and family.

5. In with the new, out with the old

Your child should see that when clothes get outgrown, they are donated to another family or to Goodwill, etc. To keep from having excess, when your children get new toys or clothing, have them give an equal amount away. Before 2 shirts go in, 2 shirts come out. Set a firm capacity on your belongings. Before Christmas, if you know that a lot of toys may be coming into your home, spend time with your children going through their rooms to clean out their less used toys and donate them. Anything donated before Christmas may be a blessing to someone else on Christmas morning.

6. Need vs. Want

Giving children perspective on their lives helps them to have a grateful heart. Teaching them the difference between needs and wants from a young age, and continuing this as they mature, helps them to have a perspective on how little we actually need to live and how much excess we actually have. For young children, put a group of items in front of them, making sure that you have a mixture of needs and wants. Discuss the difference between a need and a want. Have your children sort them into a needs group and a wants group. For older children, give them sticky notes and a pencil and have them go into a room in your home and put a “need” or a “want” sticky note on each item. After, you can show your child a picture online of a home from a less fortunate place, where the inside of the house has almost nothing, if your child is developmentally ready for that. This also shows your child a need for giving, by showing how we have so much and many have so little. If your child is much older, you can explain how we give so that many can have their needs met. Less excess for us means more for us to give so that others can have their basic needs.



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Keys to Practicing Giving:

- Shift your focus on generosity from something we need to do to someone we get to be
- Start simple and often to create a habit and way of life for your children
- Giving is not always monetary, we can also give small acts of compassion and kindness
- Children learn by watching their most influential role model: YOU



Bible Verses to Study about Simplicity

- “You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35
- “Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” 2 Corinthians 9:7



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1. Giving love coupon book

Have your children make a coupon book for a gift to give to family members. This teaches children that they can be generous without money. They can be giving with their time, their ideas, and with the way they regard others. Brainstorm ideas of what your child can give of himself or herself or do for the receiver. Ideas could include one hug, one foot massage, one night of dinner dishes washed, one morning of breakfast in bed, etc.

2. Three little piggy banks

If your children get an allowance, give 3 piggy banks for each child. One is for Spending, one is for Saving, and one is for Giving. Decide on an amount that your children will give each time and put that amount into the Giving Piggy Bank. At a certain amount or after a desired time, your children can use that money to give to the cause agreed upon.

3. Give a Goat

Let your children see and feel how fulfilling it is to give a necessity item for a family or community. When you have no idea what to get Grandpa for Christmas, give a goat in his name and provide milk and cheese for a family. When your child's Giving Piggy Bank reaches \$25, buy two chickens for a family who really needs the eggs and can breed the chickens, so the gift can grow and multiply to create income, be shared with neighbors, and may ultimately create a better life for a whole village. Through an organization such as World Vision, you can purchase chickens, goats, alpacas, cows, and much more. You and your children can view the pages of their Gift Catalog to choose in which way you would like to help. The colorful photos in the catalog will help your children to visualize what and to who they are giving it to, and they come with an explanation of the need for the gift. There are items for as low as \$10, with plenty of \$20 and \$25 gifts in the catalog. You can also go to worldvisiongifts.org.

4. Homemade Gifts

Young children love giving and love creating. Crafts are a wonderful way for kids to express themselves and to foster the internal feeling that comes along with giving. Everyone loves receiving a homemade gift from a child, especially when you can see the happiness in the eyes of the giver. There are so many homemade gifts that can be made...painted rocks, picture frames, candle holders, bookmarks, bath bombs, I Love You because...cards (held together with a keyring), personalized keychains, etc. These can be very inexpensive to make and instills the love of giving in a child at a very young age.

5. A New Tradition

To instill in your children the feeling of giving, let them get excited over sharing that feeling on their birthdays. Instead of them just receiving on their day, make their day even more special by offering them the chance to give. Try giving your children a set amount of money (\$10, \$15, \$20) and allow them to spend that money on anyone they choose. They can spend it all on one person or divide it up among many people. Your children will get intrinsic rewards from giving and feel that it is truly better to give than to receive.

6. Gracious Giving

Let your children know that giving can start in the home and without money. We can help our kids make a habit of being generous with small acts of kindness and compassion to show love to one another. You can use the list of sibling random acts of kindness to get ideas (next page). Record their “giving” on the Gracious Giving chart. If you choose not to use this with siblings, you can still use the Gracious Giving chart to record any acts of kindness that your child performs for a friend, classmate, neighbor, family member or stranger. Encouraging your children to do these small acts of kindness and compassion help them to share God’s love with others and to live the way Jesus taught us to live.

Sibling Random Acts of Kindness

- Read a story to your sibling
- Help your sibling tidy their room
 - Let your sibling go first
 - Make our sibling's bed
- Say please and thank you to each other
- Play a favorite game with your sibling
- Complete one of your sibling's chores
 - Help with your sibling's homework
 - Put your sibling's toys away
 - Complete a puzzle together
 - Hug your sibling
 - Be patient with your sibling
- Give your sibling a heartfelt compliment
- Let your sibling make an important decision
 - Draw or color your sibling a special picture
 - Take your sibling exploring in the backyard
- Tell your sibling three reasons why they are special
 - Do a craft together
 - Talk out a problem together
- Tell your sibling a few jokes to make them giggle
 - Make a snack for your sibling
- Listen while your sibling tells you a story, or about their day, or anything they'd like to tell you