

**Build Life: Strengthening Faith and Family**  
**12 Weekly Devotions and Activities**  
**For Your Family**





## Introduction

The following 12 devotions and activities are designed to help you and your family build resiliency and develop bonds with one another all while growing in your own faith. The six Master Resiliency Themes are covered in the devotions and activities: Self Awareness, Optimism, Self-Regulation, Connection, Mental Agility, and Strength of Character. You and your family may want to create a routine in how you engage with devotions and share questions. You may choose a particular day or place to engage in the activity. Set some ground rules agreed upon by all members (Ex. No cell phones, no other electronics, respect each one another's opinions, give positive feedback). As you and your family explore the topic and start to talk about the tough questions, remember it is important each person in your family feel safe sharing. Positively reinforce feelings and efforts. You can chose to do the build activity where it is most comfortable for your family, i.e. during the questions or after the devotion. \*Prayers are italicized.

Optional content with activities, movies, and books are suggested. You are free to pick and choose what is right for your family. Your Religious Support Office has a professional staff ready to help if there are any questions you have, even if you just want another pair of ears for an idea you may have.

Incentives: We want to build community and journey with your these next 12 weeks. You can post pictures of your build and/or suggested activities via our closed FB page (Fort Campbell Build Life) or via IG. Posting all 12 weeks earns and incentive award.

Your kit contains all the building pieces you will need. If something is not there or something gets misplaced, please let us know so that we can adjust for the next family to enjoy.

Religious Support Office Numbers and Emails:

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The following list contains titles of children’s books to pair with each theme if you choose to use them:

<i><b>Self Awareness</b></i>	<i><b>Optimism</b></i>	<i><b>Self Regulation</b></i>	<i><b>Connection</b></i>	<i><b>Mental Agility</b></i>	<i><b>Strength of Character</b></i>
Verdi	Amazing Grace	Strega Nona	The Mitten Tree	The Name Jar	Madeline series
Seeds and Trees	Last Stop on Market Street	The Chocolate Touch	Corduroy	Brave Irene	Little Bear series
Blueberry Girl	The Little Engine That Could	The Very Hungry Caterpillar	The Giving Tree	Swimmy	The Three Questions-Jon Muth
Green Eggs and Ham	Spin	Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus	Owl Moon	If I Never Forever Endeavor	The Dandelion Seed



## **Beyond the What: Sharing and Teaching Scripture to Children**

**As you embark on this journey as parents, you have both the awesome opportunity and responsibility to share with your young ones Scripture and stories of faith. Depending on age, your children will react and interact with scripture in different ways. If you have any questions, you can always reach out to the RSO at any time.**

**The Bible is full of truth and applies to our lives in all ways. As adults we know our faith is experienced continually and ever deepening. Remember children do not experience what you experience. Here are some things to keep in mind:**

- Young children are quite concrete thinkers. They may have trouble with symbolism.**
- Egocentric: Young children think in terms of their own worlds and are not very good at taking someone else's point of view.**
- Present tense focused: It is hard for them to imagine long periods of time past or future. They don't always realize the Bible was written over a long period of time.**
- With young children, start with the "what" of Scripture. They should learn the stories.**
- It is only after knowing the stories that they can go beyond "what," and learn the "why."**
- Why is important. As children mature and know the "what" of Scripture, they are able to find the "why-" or importance.**
- The importance of Scripture is discovered. Be patient. Your child's faith is developed over many years.**
- Make connections between the Scripture you are reading and their lives.**
- Why is the Scripture important today? Ask and answer this question with your children.**
- Scripture is not read once and for all.... As we mature, grow and experience the Word is revealed and understood in new ways.**
- Share your questions and answers about faith with your children. If they never see you wrestle with important questions, they will not know it is natural.**



## Week 1- And So It Begins.... At Table- Connection (Rey Gustamente)

Coming together is important and the basis of the devotions for the next 12 weeks. As you come together, open your mind and your heart to your family and to your faith.

**REFLECTION:** Each of us has an experience of the table. A table can be small or large. A table may have 3 legs or more. Its top may be square, rectangle, round, or any other unique shape. We may find the table set for an elaborate meal, equipped for a meeting, or any way in between. We may find the table covered and highly decorated. We may find the table bare.

Each time we come to table something will definitely happen. We eat, work, and play at table. We may grab a quick meal, have an hour long meeting, grab a brief moment of rest, or spend an entire evening with a puzzle. At table we may be alone or with others. Each time we come to table we have a different set of expectations and depart with a variety of gifts.

We are fed. We are informed. We are rested or renewed.  
The table always offers us something once we are there.

### **DISCUSSION:**

What are some of your best experiences at table? (*first dates, productive meetings, family dinners, great cups of coffee....*)

Share times when your attitude and expectations influenced the experience. (*expectations that are positive, negative, reserved....*)

Name some gifts that you have received at table? Open one up. (*new foods, great insights, valuable lessons....*)

Preschool questions: What are somethings you do at a table? What are somethings you do as a family at a table? What are your favorite things to do at a table?

**REFLECT MORE (if you choose):** Hebrews 10: 24-25, Matthew 26, Romans 12:4-5



**THE BUILD:** Most of the time when we think of tables, it leads to our homes. Places where our families share. This week's build is a little house as you recall "table." Follow the build directions for Week 1.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, thank you for all we have received at **this** table- the conversation shared, the lessons learned, the wisdom offered and gained. Departures can be difficult, but let us focus on our return to the table. While we await our next gathering, bless each of us. Keep us safe and ready for new encounters that will build us into something more than we are now. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

\*Read *How My Parents Learned to Eat* and talk about how the importance of the table in that story.

\*Name all the things you do at your table. Which is the most fun? Do that this week.

\*Watch *Finding Nemo*.



## Week 2- Connection Takes Effort (Rey Gustamente)

The value of our lives is not determined by what we do for ourselves. The value of our lives is determined by what we do for others. – Simon Senek

### **REFLECTION:**

Building and maintaining relationship is a task in which all of us must engage. Whether it be integrating ourselves into a work group, making friends at school, or relating to particular members of our inner circles and families, each situation may require a variety of effort. If relationships are established, this task is accomplished with minimal effort. People who are present in our everyday, like family or close friends, require a consistent amount of our attention and time. Occasionally, when these persons require a bit more of us, it is typically easy for us to give more of ourselves because we are open to responding to their needs. We possess a genuine care for these relationships and their well-being is important to us. For these people we give freely and without reservation. Other relationships at school, work, or play may require very little of us because the relationships are casual and come with fewer expectations. Responding to the needs of those we care about is something that we do without thought or consideration of the effort required. It is, relatively, effortless. Even when it comes to casual relationships, we choose to respond appropriately and with minimal delay. Still, for many of us, we find it awkward, if not daunting, to request reciprocity. For a variety of reasons, to have an increased need of others may seem weak, selfish, or beneath our character. However, if we are to continue to be in relationship with others and if we hope to continue to be able to respond to their needs, how is it that we do not allow others to care for us?

### **DISCUSSION:**

Who are people whose needs (great/small) require very little effort of self to respond in your life?

Who are people whose needs require a great deal of effort of self to respond?

Who are some of my “go-to” people when I am in need?

How do we build relationships in which mutual support becomes a common practice? (How do we make sure our relationships are balanced? Do we take care of the people that take care of us? \*\*\*\*\* for younger children)

Preschool questions: Who are people that help us? Can you tell us about a time you needed help (who helped you)?

**REFLECT MORE (if you choose):** John 21, John 13: 34-35, Matthew 25: 40



**THE BUILD:** Often times, the most important people are the ones we live with. We rely on each other to care for one another. This week we build another home, an example of where connection is so important. Follow the instructions for the Week 2 build.



**CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Dear Father, thank you for those who taught us how to be good caregivers and those who care for us now. Let us be able to say, "How can I help?" and allow us to share those lessons with each other. Allow us to be willing to learn more. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

- \*Go out for ice cream as a family. Spend your time talking to one another (NO PHONES).
- \* Watch *The Grinch* (any version you like). Talk about the connection in the movie.
- \*Have a family game night.





## Week 3- Who you are matters? Strength of Character (Jolynda Strandberg)

Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. -Martin Luther King, Jr.

**REFLECTION:** There was once a little girl who had recently moved to a new school. She had no friends and wanted desperately to fit in with the other children. On her first day of school, two other girls welcomed her; she thought her prayers were answered and had made new friends. After a while, she noticed that the girls she made friends with didn't really treat others very nicely. They often made fun of others behind their backs. The new little girl started to feel her new friendships were not right. She struggled with whether she should remain friends with the girls or not.

One afternoon while driving home with her mother from school, her mom told her how proud she was of the way she treated others and made new friends. At that moment the little girl decided the right thing to do was to tell her new friends how she felt about the way they treated others. It was a risk.

The very next morning, she told her friends how she felt and explained that she didn't want to be part of making others feel bad and being disrespectful to them. Her new friends decided that indeed she was right. They didn't realize how their actions affected others. They decided to be more positive and started treating others the way they would want to be treated. By standing up for herself and others, the new little girl made a positive change in how her classmates were treated; she made many more friends.

**DISCUSSION:** Has there ever been a time in your life when the right thing to do was tough? What did you do?

When decisions are tough, where do you turn?

How do you know what the right thing to do is?

Preschool questions: How are you kind to others? How can we help someone who is not treated well feel better?



**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** Matthew 12: 25, Galatians 5: 22-23, Proverbs 28: 6.

**THE BUILD:**



Each person is unique and built for a purpose. This little creature may not be what you think of when you think of building a creature, but it is a creature none the less. Embrace your “right thing.” Follow the directions for the build labeled Week 3.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear God, help us to do what is right, even when it is sometimes difficult to know the right thing and more difficult to carry out. Give us strength to love others as you have loved us and to be a positive example to others.*

**IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

\*Read “The Three Questions” together or watch a reading via youtube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70m4KL3hYyc>

\*Share with your family how you found your purpose, or if you are still finding it, let them know.

\*Positively reinforce instances when members of your family show strength of character- compassion, integrity, honesty, resolve, etc:

\*Watch *Brave or Braveheart*. (Either version works if it is appropriate for all members of your family- Disney or Mel Gibson version)



## Week 4- Rising Up- Strength of Character (Jolynda Strandberg)

Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing. - Abraham Lincoln

**REFLECTION:** At some time in life all of us will experience disappointment. Life will not always turn out the way you plan or even want it to. When unexpected situations or disappointment comes in our lives, our reaction and character have a great deal to do with the manner in which we will meet those challenges.

A really powerful of example of someone overcoming challenges is the story of Bethany Hamilton. At age 13, Bethany- a surfer- was attacked by a shark and lost her left arm below the shoulder. After the attack, she taught herself to surf with one arm and became a professional surfer. Despite the tough challenges she faced, Bethany followed her dream. She overcame her challenges and today is an inspiration to many as she faced adversity head on. The strength of her character allowed her to rise above her challenge rather than fall below it.

Challenges will come to everyone. Our character strength will help us overcome our challenges; some may be more difficult than others. Often others help us when we face challenges: our family, friends, teachers, and others. Embracing places where we build our character and strength is also important: family, church, school.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Has there been a time when you faced a challenge and didn't feel you would be able to overcome it?

Do you find how you think of a challenge affects the outcome? Positive or negative?

How do you feel when you have to do something really important? Are you scared, excited?

Preschool questions: Have you ever tried something that was hard to do? What? What helped you try that tough thing?

**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** Romans 5: 3-5, Philippians 4: 6-7, Joshua 1: 9



**THE BUILD:** This week we will build a lion- an animal many of us associate with strength. The lion will help us remember the strength of our character helps us overcome challenges that we face. Follow the Week 4 building instructions.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Lord, help us to rely on You for our strength. Let us act, speak and be strong in times when we feel overwhelmed with the challenges we face. Amen.*

#### **IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

- \*Watch *How to Train Your Dragon* together.
- \*(Adults and Teens) *What Men Live By* by Leo Tolstoy.
- \* Play the game of **Life**. Talk about how quickly things change- surprises, for the better or for the worse.
- \*Read or watch (film) *Soul Surfer*- the Bethany Hamilton story.
- \*Watch *The Wizard of Oz*- Who was strong in the movie?



## Week 5- Games of the Mind- Self Regulation (Brian Merry)

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.  
(2 Timothy 1:7)

**REFLECTION:** We all need a way to compartmentalize our brains. We allow ourselves to be distracted through work, working out/physical activity, or even gaming. The intent is to distract us briefly so that we may have a new outlook on the situation, ability to be more objective and get us out of the “heat of the moment” situation.

Consider this Buddhist Koan (a koan is a statement or story in Zen Buddhism), Confined in a cage up against the wall, pressed against the barriers, if you linger in thought holding back your potential, you will remain mired in fear and frozen in inaction. If, on the other hand, you advance fearlessly and without hesitation, you manifest your power as a competent adept of the way, passing through entanglements and barriers without hindrance to time and season. A great peace is attained. How do you advance fearlessly and without hesitation?

Think about this...The cave of the blue dragon is ominous.  
Only the fearless dare to enter.  
It is here that the forest of patterns is clearly revealed.  
It is here that the one ripe pearl is hidden.

Fear exists in each of us. It is a part of the human condition. Fear can be healthy. It can prevent us from doing something that is dangerous or harmful. Fear can help us understand the world in which we live. Fear can also be unhealthy. Fear can paralyze us—create inaction in a moment when we need to act. We can be made to do things by others because of fear. The Bible speaks about fear in Philippians, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

### **DISCUSSION:**

Define Fear.

From where does fear arise?

What is the sensation when you feel afraid? (How do you feel when you are afraid? What happens? \*\*\*\* for younger kids)

What thoughts race through your mind when you are experience fear?

What is your pattern when you experience fear? Do you freeze up? Do you panic? Do you experience anger? Do you drive on and try to fix things?



How do you respond to fear?

Provide an example of when you experienced healthy fear?

Preschool questions: What things are scary to you? What makes you feel better when you are scared?

**REFLECTING MORE:** (if you choose): Genesis 15:1, John 6: 20, Luke 12: 4

### **THE BUILD:**

Race cars can be really fast! For some, this can be scary. Build your race car. Follow the directions for Week 5.



### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Heavenly Father, guard our minds in your love. Let us not fear the unknown, but embrace your gift of presence in this world. Help us to remain in you. Amen.*

### **IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

\*Watch *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* together as a family. Do new and innovative things scare you?

\*Try something new as a family that is exciting and challenging- a ropes course, swimming, zip lining, amusement park/rides, horseback riding.

\*Read *Sheila Rae the Brave* for little ones.

\*Read *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy for adults and mature teens.



## Week 6- Act/ React- Self Regulation (Brian Merry)

If the challenge we face doesn't scare us, then it's probably not that important.

–Simon Senek

### REFLECTION:

Read Mark 11:15-19

When Jesus got mad in the Temple, did he show an appropriate emotional response to the situation? Some people may say yes and some may say no. Sometimes, not reacting enough can be just as damaging. It is important that we prepare ourselves for situations when we might “lose our cool” and over react to a situation. How many times do we over react to a situation based on other influences in our lives? Spending time to talk through ones emotions is important as a family/group. How we respond to a situation really can help heal or hurt the relationship.

### Think about:

When have I not reacted appropriately to an event? What were the circumstances around the event? Did I overreact or underreact?

### DISCUSSION:

Has there been a time that you acted in a way you wish you hadn't? Explain.

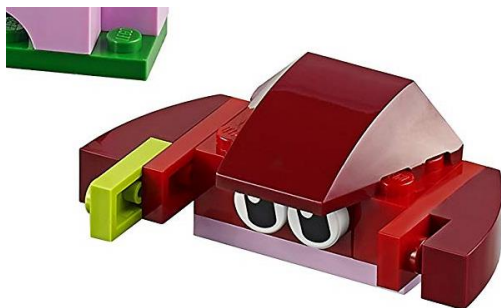
What helps you keep calm sometimes?

Is it hard for you to know the right ways to act?

What are some ways you figure out the right ways to act?

Preschool questions: What sorts of things make you upset? How do you act when you are upset?

**THE BUILD:** The little crab is prey for many of the ocean's residents. You wouldn't know that if you came upon one on a beach.....often quick to pinch and draw it's weapon (pinchers). Use the Week 6 build instructions to complete.





### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Dear Lord, help us to act in the ways that honor you. Help us to treat others always with love and kindness even when it is hard. Be with us this week as we grown in your spirit and in your love. Amen.*

### **IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

- \*Watch *Inside Out*. Was it important for Riley to sometimes be sad?
- \*Devise some coping mechanism to help you react with kindness when you rather react with anger.
- \*Be a calm influence in the family when someone else is having a tough moment.





## Week 7- Self Awareness (William Townsend)

Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway. - Mother Theresa

**REFLECTION:** One of the appreciations of being human is the awareness of self. Who else knows you better than yourself? Yet, we get in the way of being all that we can accomplish. What we want in life is a healthy self-awareness.

Yet, we wrestle with our inner self. To be honest, each of us can be downright arrogant, self-righteous and mistake driven. This is human nature. David, the shepherd boy turned king, took stock of himself and used it as an opportunity to correct inner spiritual unrest and draw closer to God. He readily admitted the need for change. Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit.” To pray this prayer forces introspection. Do it honestly and a sharper focus will follow.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Have there been times when you thought more of yourself than you should have?

How would you describe humility?

How does it make you feel when someone treats you unfairly? Maybe they think less of you or make assumptions about you that aren't true...

Preschool questions: Have you ever been treated unfairly? What happened? What do you feel when someone treats you unfairly?

**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** 2 Samuel 5, 1 Samuel 16, Acts 13:22

**THE BUILD:** When we think about David, we often think of a King. This week we will build a castle. Despite David's flaws, flaws we all have, God favored him. Follow the instructions for the Week 7 build.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Heavenly Father, create in us a heart to see ourselves as you do. Be with us as we discover each day more about You and Your love for each of us. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

- \*Watch *Dumbo* together as a family.
- \*Have a free build brick night. Do not use any instructions and allow everyone to create freely.

\* Make your favorite family meal together- everyone helps.



## Week 8- Self Awareness (William Townsend)

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. – Aristotle

**REFLECTION:** Being made uniquely in the image of our Creator is the bedrock of self-awareness. A healthy self-awareness glorifies God. We should often seek to understand how you are uniquely made. Our purpose, our presence in this world and our position in life simply amazes.

The apostle Paul knew his limitations yet knew his strengths. He would call himself the “chief of sinners” in I Timothy 1:15 yet also said, “I can do all things through Christ.” Philippians 4:13. His role model was Christ. This is balance. This is keeping your ego in check. This is maintaining reflection. And, it is self-awareness with a check in one’s spirit.

Strong people have a strong sense of self-worth and self-awareness; they don’t need the approval of others. When you know yourself, you are empowered to do great things for God. Knowing self exudes confidence and faithfulness.

**REFLECTING MORE** (if you choose): 1 Timothy 1 and Philippians 4.

### **DISCUSSION:**

What are some thing you do well? What are your strengths?

What are somethings you would like to do better?

How do you learn who you are?

Preschool questions: What are you good at? Do you enjoy doing the things you are good at?



**THE BUILD:** Everyone is unique with different strengths and different challenges. This week we are going to build a whale together. A whale is perfect at being a whale. They are great swimmers and fishers. What are you great at? Follow the instructions for Week 8 to build your whale.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear Heavenly Father, we are each on a journey to discovering who we are called to be. Help us to see our strengths at times when it is easier to see our challenges. May we also encourage those around us to embrace their strengths as they seek to discover Your plan for their lives. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

- \*Watch *Toy Story* together as a family. Who was your favorite character?
- \*Read *The Mixed Up Chameleon* by Eric Carle
- \*Encourage members of the family to use their gifts. Let them know how you appreciate their unique gifts.



## Week 9- Supporting Vision- Optimism (Lee Walton)

**REFLECTION:** What is the one essential ingredient for being an original in a day full of copies, fakes, and imposters? It is simple...Vision. But far too often we focus on the trouble in our lives and lose site of the vision. That is too bad! The result is predictable when we lose vision. We become intimidated and wind up defeated.

What is your challenge? Which giants make you feel like a grasshopper when you face them? What does your future resemble when you measure it on the basis of facts and figures? You don't want to surrender do you? You'd like to be optimistic wouldn't you? There is a way through, but you'll need one essential quality—Vision.

Vision is the ability to see God's presence, to perceive God's power and to focus on God's plan in spite of the obstacles

When you have vision it affects your attitude. Your attitude is optimistic rather than pessimistic. Your attitude stays positive rather than negative. Not foolishly positive as in a fantasy. So when a situation comes that cuts your feet out from under you, don't throw up your arms and panic. You don't give up instead, you say. "Lord, this is Your moment. This is where you take charge. You are leading me in this."

There is nothing more than having a strong belief in the power of God, having confidence in others around you who are in similar battles with you, and having confidence in yourself, through the power of God. Refusing to give in to temptation, cynicism and doubt, and refusing to quit. Not allowing yourself to become a jaded individual. Belief in one's self is terribly important.

Determination is hanging tough when the going gets rough. There are not magic wands to wave over your future and say, "All of a sudden everything is going to fall into place for you."

Vision requires determination, a constant focus on God who is watching and smiling. Even in a world that is negative and hostile. Even in a world where the majority tells us that we can't. Remember by trusting God YOU CAN! Have eyes of faith, get back in the game and play with great enthusiasm. Read the back of the book. WE WIN!

### **DISCUSSION:**

How optimistic do you feel you are?

What is optimism to you?



What things can affect your optimism?

Preschool questions: Do you feel good about life? Why?

**REFLECTING MORE** (if you choose): Joshua 1:9, Romans 8:28, and Phil 4:13

**THE BUILD:** Optimism is a powerful part of being able to handle life's challenges. *The Little Engine that Could* is a wonderful example of how thinking positive can affect one's ability to meet challenges. Follow the instructions for Week 9.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Father God, help us to see your hand in all situations. To know that while times may seem challenging, You are forever providing for our needs. We thank you for all the many ways you show us your immense love. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

\*Watch the movie *Elf* together. What do you think of Buddy's outlook?

\*Each night this week, each member of your family can share something they are grateful for that day.

\*Watch the movie *The King's Speech*. (adults and teens)



## **Week 10- Be an Optimist and Not a Pessimist- Optimism (Lee Walton)**

**REFLECTION:** Someone once said a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity and an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. So how do you turn pessimism into optimism? Most of us likely battle one or the other.

So which are you? Are you a pessimist or an optimist? Who do you prefer to be around, an optimist or a pessimist? What may be a better question is.....do people prefer to be around you at all?

I believe that Scriptures would have us all be optimists. The optimist's glass is half full, whereas the pessimist's is half empty. Perhaps one of the best passages emphasizing our responsibilities to be optimists is Romans 8:28. (Read)

Note in the passage that Paul isn't saying that all things are good. That is not reality in the fallen world where we live. No matter or faith, we'll go through some difficult experiences in this life before we go home to be with Jesus; however, the passage is teaching that God uses the bad in our lives for good. No matter how bad things get, the optimist believes that things will get better. Have you ever watched someone who just don't get it? There convinced that an optimist is always happy and never sad or discouraged. But that's not the case. An optimist is one who assesses a situation for what it is and if its negative, they find a way to see it in a positive light. They really do believe that all things work together for good and that good is just around the corner.

Other qualities of optimism include not quick to quit, life becomes difficult and optimist have a positive attitude and never give up. They try hard to be successful, they give their best and they adjust to change.

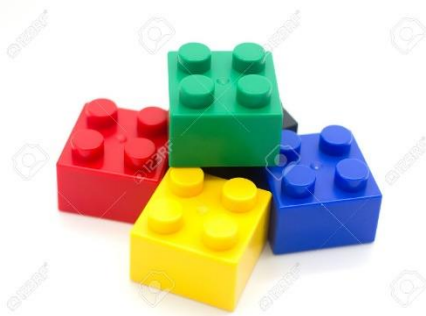
### **DISCUSSION:**

Do you feel it is tough to keep going when you face a challenge?

Are there any things that help you to follow through on things when they get tough?

Preschool questions: Have you ever tried to do something really hard? What? What happened in the end?

**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** Romans 8:28



**THE BUILD:** This week we will do something a little different for this family build. Sometimes in life things aren't always put together or they don't always fit. We might have a tough time sorting it out and making it work. This week you have no build instructions! Together build something fun and new. Take a picture and share your creation!

**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of being able to see things uniquely and new. Help us to remember that while some pieces of our life seem out of place, in time, You will reveal their place to us. Amen.*

#### **IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

- \*Watch *Mary Poppins* together. How do you feel about Mary's outlook?
- \*Do you have a happy place? A place you think of that makes you feel better, positive and settled?
- \*Affirmation Jar- Each member of the family can write affirmations for each other during the week, place them in the jar and share at family dinner on Sunday or any time that works best.





## **Week 11- First Things First- Mental Agility**

**(Carl Tillery)**

**REFLECTION:** One of the great things that we need to focus on is Mental Agility or in other words the ability to have situational awareness. All around us changes are happening at a fast and complex rate. Our attention is being drawn to everything that is happening around us.

A key to staying focused during this busy world is to remember that we should put first things first and everything else second. The key element to doing this is to practice what the ancient Greeks described as discipline mind not swayed by sudden impulse or flying to extremes.

Our lives are full of things that cause us to waste time and energy. These are considered sideways energy that is either a task or something that comes up that draws us away from the task at hand. When we don't stay focused we can be drawn in many directions that can lead us off course. In any building project we must start with the foundation so that what we build on it will last or be able to be sustained. Our families come to mind on this, the sense of family building together a solid foundation on spiritual truths.

A great spiritual truth that can keep us focused is found in in the life of Jesus. His teachings were done in such a way that he was always teaching important lessons about principles and values came across in the daily walk of life. He taught His Disciples in the classroom of life, (Luke 10:17-24) and letting them learn failure and success (Mark 9:14-29).

### **DISCUSSION:**

Are there times that I spend my time on things that do not deserve my time?

What sorts of things distract me?

How do I refocus my attention when I am distracted?

Preschool questions: Do you every do things you really like while you should be doing something else? Like.... If you are supposed to go to bed, do you rather watch your movie or play?

**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** Luke 10:17-24, Mark 9: 14-29



**THE BUILD:** This week we will build a windmill. When we see a windmill, nothing distracts it from its job. It keeps turning with power from the wind. Follow the directions for the Week 11 build.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Dear Lord, help us put first things first- You. Amen.*

#### **IDEAS FOR THE WEEK:**

\*Watch *Moana*. Would it have been easy for Moana to get distracted from her mission?

\*Make one small change in how you spend time not well spend. EX. Play less games online, watch less programming. Do something more important instead.

\*Our lives are full of busy-ness. Create a calm and free space in your home where there is no busy-ness.



## Week 12- Big Things- Mental Agility (Carl Tillery)

**REFLECTION:** In 1848 Dr John Geddie went to the New Hebrides islands, now known as Vanuatu to pioneer missionary work as Presbyterian minister. The islanders had become suspicious of outsiders due to the violence of ruthless traders; many native peoples were tricked into leaving the island or were kidnapped and put into slavery on plantations. Dr Geddie was given the task of establishing a church with the natives.

This task seemed overwhelming and dangerous for him. He faced many difficulties in learning their language and making mistakes that lead to misunderstandings with them. He worked diligently to get them to accept him as someone that was not there to hurt them. He faced disease, being threatened, and fires. But he still keep going forward with his task. For 24 years he had the mental agility to keep going against all the odds that he faced.

This kind of strength of mind came because he believed in something bigger than himself. 1 Corinthians 15:10 reminds us that it is Him that's works within us. We get tired, weary, hurt, discouraged, but with God's grace we can keep moving forward.

When Dr Geddie died in 1872 after serving for 24 years there. A table was placed in the church he started which stated;

“When He landed in 1848 there were no Christians.

When he left in 1872 there were no heathen.”

### **DISCUSSION:**

How do you feel when what you are doing is not working? Are you open to changing your approach?

What helps you pay attention to the important things?

Preschool questions: Are you sometimes frustrated when you try to do something, but it doesn't work? How does that make you feel, angry, sad?

**REFLECTING MORE (if you choose):** Psalms 119, Galatians 6: 9, Psalms 130:5



**THE BUILD:** This week we build a tractor. Something that makes farm work easier, is tough, and is reliable. Follow the directions for the Week 12 build.



**CLOSING PRAYER:** *Father, thank you for giving us strength to complete the tasks in our life. Help us to focus on You and rely on Your strength at times when we feel overwhelmed and distracted. Amen.*

**IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK:**

\*Watch the *Lego Movie*. Were there times in the movie the characters seemed overwhelmed by what they had to do and distracted?

\*Practice mindfulness this week. If you feel rushed and busy, take time to focus and be mindful of what you are doing.

\*Keep a prayer journal. Later come back to revisit those prayers. Were any answered? Were they answered in ways that were unexpected?



# Additional Resources

- Yale School of Divinity- <https://faith.yale.edu/adolescent-faith-flourishing/adolescent-faith-flourishing>
  - Lectures/research/staff insights about youth and adolescence.
- University of Notre Dame: Faith and Moral Development- <https://youthandreligion.nd.edu/related-resources/>
  - Additional reading
- Lifelong Faith- <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/curated-resources.html>
  - Curated resources for developing faith
- Fuller Youth Institute- <https://fulleryouthinstitute.org>
  - Site focused on information on youth and ministry