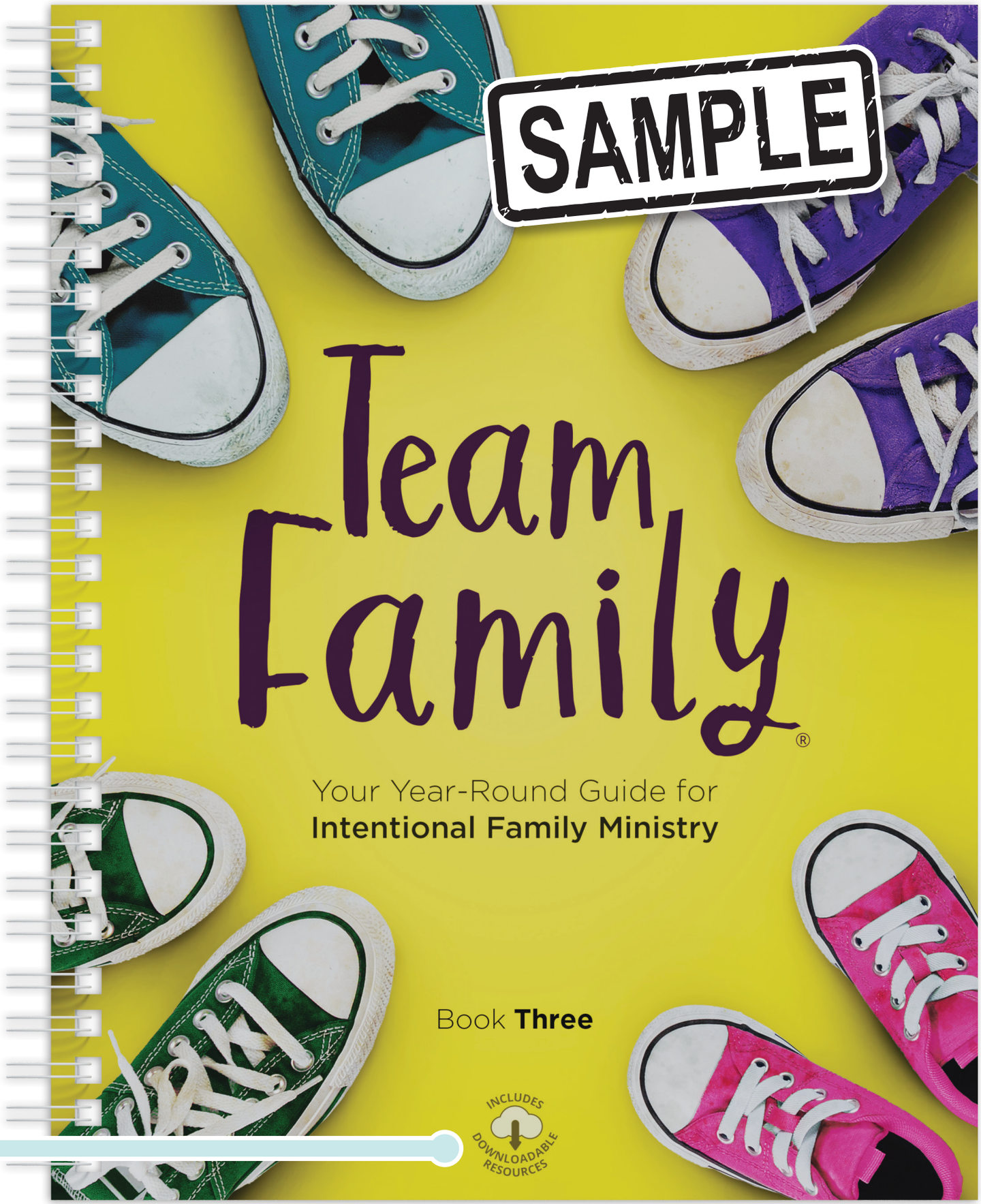


In addition to this book, you'll get access to loads of **downloadable resources** that make your job simple and effective.



Team Family®

Your Year-Round Guide for **Intentional Family Ministry**

Team Family doesn't replace your children's ministry curriculum or strategy—it adds to it! **The Bible content in *Team Family* was specifically chosen based on the natural rhythms and topics of family life during each season of the year.** It's pretty cool!



It's true! The most effective children's ministries are indeed *family ministries.*

As a church, you understand the importance of empowering parents to lead their families spiritually. But when it comes to actually making family ministry theory a reality—well, nothing seems to work. The take-home pages get lost, the emails remain unopened, and the key to unlocking family ministry that works remains a mystery.

We can help!

For years, Group has created experiences that help people grow in relationship with Jesus and each other. And now, we've created an annual guide to family ministry that goes beyond explaining *why* family ministry is important. *Team Family* will show you *how* to purposefully partner with parents of children ages birth through sixth grade to strengthen faith in families all year through. Whether you are a children's ministry leader, a pastor, or someone who loves to plan meaningful events, this book is for you!

This innovative and intentional resource is packed with fresh ideas that'll help you create a year-round family ministry strategy. This guide delivers:

- Intentionality around building community, nurturing faith, and creating strong relationships.
- Bible exploration for families that invites parents/caregivers to engage and grow alongside their kids.
- Fun! Families play, create, worship, and serve—all while growing closer to Jesus.
- Easy-to-implement ideas with low volunteer needs.
- Simplicity—it's easy to plug in any of the ideas to what you're already doing for families, or to start something new.
- Colorfully designed interior pages with additional places to customize with your own ideas, prayers, notes, and reminders.

Formatted around a calendar year of ministry, *Team Family* provides fabulous and fun family experiences each Christmas, Easter, summer, and fall. Do them all or pick and choose what best matches your ministry vision and schedule.

Each seasonal experience connects families to a key Bible verse and Bible point in fun and creative ways. So families aren't just playing together—they're growing closer to Jesus, too!

And we promise, you won't need oodles of volunteers to pull off the ideas in this book. Just a few key volunteers are all you need.

It's not too good to be true! We'll show you what to do.

Plus, find digital copies, publicity materials, graphics, and media files you'll need for each and every experience on Group's Team Family Digital Download Center. Simply follow the instructions on the sticker located inside this book and—ta-da!—digital resources await!

Looking for more digital ways to connect with families? Find social media image files at group.com/digital-download-center.

Check out the Christmas and Easter themes and Bible verses—relevant and meaningful to families' lives.

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Calm & Bright

Christmas

May God's peace be with you this Christmas.

We begin with Christmas, **but you can start at any season!** Simply skip ahead to the time of year closest to when you purchased *Team Family*.

This is a sample of what's provided each season for family worship services. These scripts give you creative ways to provide an interactive, intergenerational experience that people of all ages will enjoy!

Family Christmas Party

Make gingerbread houses with families at your church!



GET THE CHRISTMAS PARTY STARTED!

This party is an opportunity for families to find peace during the busy Christmas season. Plan to host this event during the month of December, being considerate of busy holiday schedules. Consider hosting it early in the month or during your midweek service.

SET UP

Determine where you will host this Christmas program. We recommend having families sit together at round tables with all their supplies ready to go.

If including everyone in your church family, consider helping singles and couples form "families" so they can easily join the fun, too!

Set up tables for your event with two families at each table. Cover tables with brightly colored plastic tablecloths for easy cleanup. Place two packets of graham crackers on each table—one for each family. Set up a separate "prep" table that will contain a tray of supplies for each table. Include paper plates on which people will make their houses, plus small containers to hold candies and gingerbread house ingredients.

Depending on the size and budget for your event, you could purchase ready-made gingerbread house kits. Or choose the tried-and-true graham crackers and frosting approach!

Designate a stage area in your party space where the host will stand and where you'll show the slides and videos. You could decorate the stage with the Journey to Bethlehem Insta-Theme Fabric Backdrop or the Calm & Bright Photo-Op Fabric Backdrop.

VOLUNTEERS

Minimal volunteers are needed for this event. You'll need a host, two Bible readers, plus a tech volunteer to run media and sound. Other help may be needed for setup and cleanup. Consider recruiting help to welcome and seat families as they arrive.

Check out these low volunteer needs!

SUPPLIES

General Supply List

- Bibles
- jingle bells
- additional snacks for fellowship time
- plastic tablecloths

Consider offering some healthy snacks or a meal to balance out the sugar rush. Serve food at the end of the program, allowing time for families to simply talk and relax.

Supplies for Each Family

- paper plate
- box of graham crackers
- container of cake frosting
- plastic knife
- small containers of assorted candies for decorating the houses. Ideas include:
  - M&M's
  - gumdrops
  - licorice
  - peppermints or small candy canes
  - mini marshmallows
  - small tubes of icing



MEDIA

You'll find the following media files in the Team Family Digital Download Center. Download and save them to a computer. Consider placing the files in your church's favorite presentation software for easy playing.

- Christmas Party Slides
- Music Video: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"
- Video: "Presence Over Presents"
- Music Video: "Silent Night"

Play your favorite upbeat instrumental Christmas music when families build gingerbread houses and chat throughout the program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

During this 50-minute family Christmas party, families will make gingerbread houses and invite Jesus to bring peace to their homes this Christmas.

- Welcome (3 minutes)
- Song: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (3.5 minutes)
- Bible Discovery (10 minutes)
- Gingerbread House Making (20 minutes)
- Song: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (again!) (3.5 minutes)
- Talk-About Video: "Presence Over Presents" (5 minutes)
- Song: "Silent Night" (2.5 minutes)
- Closing (3 minutes)
- Snacks and Fellowship

See how simple we make it! For every seasonal worship service, you get a complete script and easy planning details.

WELCOME!

The Host enters stage right, ringing jingle bells. He or she moves freely around the stage, interacting with the audience.

The Host uses jingle bells to get everyone's attention throughout the program. Find sleigh bells, borrow jingle bell bracelets from a pre-K classroom, or buy some bells from a craft store and string them together so they jingle all the way!

Host: Merry Christmas, everyone! My name is [name]**, and I will be your host for this family Christmas party.**

Since I'm your host, it's my job to keep things moving! So when you hear my Christmassy signal (ring the jingle bells)**, wrap up your crafting or conversation and get ready for what's next.** Hold up the bells. **Let's see if this thing works. Go ahead and talk among yourselves.** Pause.

Motion for guests to talk or sing. Then ring the bells to quiet everyone.

Host: Ah! Peace and quiet. Speaking of peace, we're having a peace party! Together let's explore what peace is *and* how Jesus gives people peace every day—*and* at Christmastime, too!

Christmas is a time to come together with family and friends to celebrate Jesus' birth. We might come together to bake Christmas cookies or watch a favorite Christmas movie.

Slide: **"Christmas Party Slide One"**

What's one of your favorite Christmas activities you do with your family?

Share a favorite family Christmas tradition from when you were a child. Then allow time for conversation at tables. After about two minutes, jingle the bells. Invite willing volunteers to share some of their answers with you. Be sure to repeat answers so everyone can hear.

Host: In just a few moments, we'll make gingerbread houses together! But first, let's warm up with a Christmas song. Let's stand and sing together!

Song: **"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**



BIBLE DISCOVERY

Host: Great singing! We just sang the words "peace on earth and mercy mild."

The Old Testament of the Bible was written in a language called Hebrew. The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. *Shalom* means whole or complete.

Hmmm. I wonder how peaceful the birth of Jesus really was. Let's read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible. I'd like your family to do something as we read. It'll help us get ready for gingerbread house making.

On your table is a container of graham crackers. You'll give everyone in your family one big graham cracker. But don't eat it! When we read about something not being peaceful, you'll break a graham cracker in half. By the end of the Christmas story, it just might be in pieces!



Throughout the year, each worship experience will naturally evoke feelings that go along with the season's theme.



Invite the oldest family member to distribute graham crackers. Ring the jingle bells to gather attention again.

Invite Reader One to come and read Luke 2:1-5 from a Bible.

Host: How do you think Mary might have felt having to leave her home and travel to Bethlehem? Does that sound peaceful? Welcome reactions and instruct everyone to break a graham cracker in half.



I don't think leaving my home and traveling while pregnant sounds very peaceful at all. Let's see what happened when they arrived in Bethlehem.

Invite Reader Two to read Luke 2:6-7.

Host: There was no room for Mary and Joseph, so they ended up where the animals stayed. Talk about this at your tables:

Slide: **"Christmas Party Slide Two"**

Do you think it was peaceful for Mary to have her baby near the animals? Why or why not?

Allow time for conversation, then instruct everyone to break the graham cracker again.

Host: Jesus' birth sounds anything but peaceful! In fact, looking at our graham crackers, they're more in pieces than peaceful. Get it?

In the English language, there are two words that sound the same but have different meanings.

Slide: **"Christmas Party Slide Three"**

***Piece*—P-I-E-C-E—is a little part of something bigger. You could have a piece of candy, a piece of pizza, or a puzzle piece. Just now, you broke graham crackers into pieces!**

***Peace*—P-E-A-C-E—is different. It's a calm feeling that comes when everything works out or comes together. As God's children, we feel calm because we trust that God can heal what's all torn up.**

Peace comes from God through Jesus. Think back to the song we sang again. We sang these words:

Slide: **"Christmas Party Slide Four"**

"Peace on earth and mercy mild. God and sinners reconciled."

Peace comes from God. *Reconciled* means our friendship with God is no longer in pieces. It's not torn up and ruined! Jesus came to earth to put friendship with God back together—forever! Thanks to Jesus, things that are broken can turn into something beautiful!

We need to do something with all these broken pieces of graham cracker. Let's make gingerbread houses!



GINGERBREAD HOUSE MAKING

Briefly show how to shape graham crackers into a house, using icing to hold them together. Encourage creativity, and remind kids not to eat all the candy—they need it to create!

Have families send one person to the "prep" table to get a supply tray. Allow 20 minutes of decorating and fellowship. Play Christmas music in the background as families create.

Follow-up is essential for keeping families engaged with your ministry. You'll find creative ideas for every season, including social media graphics you can download with your digital access code included inside every book!

Christmas Follow-Up

Once the Christmas season has ended, use these fun follow-up ideas to reconnect with families and guide them to look to Jesus for a calm and bright new year.



CHRISTMAS CALM

Send each family in your church a jar or cellophane bag filled with ingredients for a seasonally scented stovetop potpourri.

Print simple instruction cards, and attach them to the jars or bags with twine or ribbon. You can download instruction cards from the Team Family Digital Download Center.

Potpourri Ingredients:

- a few dried orange slices or peels
- about 8 dried cranberries
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 star anise
- 6 whole cloves
- 1 sprig of rosemary

Increase your support of families with *Team Family PowerPaks* (sold separately)! Created with busy families in mind, PowerPaks help families grow faith at home! They're the perfect way to invite or follow up with families for your *Team Family* events because they're focused on the same relevant themes found in this book!

Team Family® PowerPak

Calm & Bright



SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOW-UP

They've attended your event, had a blast at a Christmas party, and served your church and community with their children. Parents in your church and community are awesome! Now it's time to encourage their own friendships with God! These short messages help you encourage and disciple parents during the Christmas season and beyond.

No design skills required! We've already created four ready-to-go images for you to post on your favorite social media platform. Simply download the images from the Team Family Digital Download Center and include the message with your post.

Get four social media image files at group.com/digital-download-center.

FOLLOW UP @ HOME WITH TEAM FAMILY POWERPAKS!

Now that families have celebrated the calm and bright of Christmastime with you, invite families to keep celebrating through a fun, engaging, and totally doable *Team Family® PowerPak*.

These family ministry bags of goodies are loaded with exciting ways for families to connect with each other and Jesus. In each *Team Family PowerPak*, you'll get enough supplies to prepare packs for 10 families, including:

1. **Calm & Bright Family Devotions** provide four experiences to help families get into the Bible and creative prayer prompts to get families talking with Jesus.
2. **Connect Cards** feature four fun-tastic ideas that link families to Jesus and each other. Families may pick and choose their favorites or do all four—whatever and whenever works for them!
3. **Make-a-Masterpiece** gets families crafting and creating faith-filled memories.
4. **Calm & Bright for Grown-Ups** seeks to befriend and support parents and guardians as they guide their children through the seasons of life. This relevant and relatable piece will make parents and guardians feel seen, loved, and empowered to keep going!

Plus! Add a few simple seasonal "extras" for families to use as they experience PowerPak activities. These simple supplies will give families everything they need to enjoy a peaceful Christmas at home.

These PowerPaks are relevant, simple, and fun...plus, they're guaranteed to naturally fit into families' everyday lives.

LEARN MORE

Take a peek at what's included in the *Team Family PowerPaks* and purchase enough packs for the families in your children's ministry.

group.com/teamfamily



“Forgiven” is a word we say a lot at church. Through *Team Family*, you’ll help families explore forgiveness and meet a God who loves people no matter what. **And knowing God loves us means we’re safe to be ourselves.**



Easter

Rather than “forgive and forget,” let’s forgive and *remember* God’s love through Jesus!



Easter Family Event Ideas

Fun-filled activity ideas to add to (or create!) an Easter event for families at your church.

Whether you already host family events or have been eager to get some started, these ideas will help you create intentional ways to help families connect with each other and other families at your events. **It's the best way to create connections and help families develop a sense of belonging.** You'll find creative station ideas for every season in this book!





FORGIVEN

These activity ideas offer ways for families to explore God's forgiveness this Easter season. Pick and choose your favorites to add to your church's Easter traditions, or host an all-new, station-based event for families in your church.

SET UP

Activity stations can be set up at rectangular tables around your event space or in separate rooms of your church building. Families do not need to attend stations in a specific order. Encourage families to travel to all the stations. If one is full, they can move on to the next and come back. If you expect a crowd, consider setting up multiple tables with supplies at each station.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will be needed for setup and cleanup. Though stations are self-guided, we recommend recruiting a few volunteers to watch over stations, tidy and restock supplies, and direct families when needed. If you do have lots of willing helpers, assign one volunteer to each station. Invite them to use the What-To-Do Cards as scripts to lead families through experiences.





Not a lot of volunteers? No problem! **These "What-To-Do Cards" serve as directions for families.** Simply place them at each station and let grown-ups practice leading the way!

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE FIVE FORGIVENESS-FOCUSED ACTIVITY IDEAS!

Event Stations Overview

1 Disappearing Drawing

Families make drawings, then watch as their artwork seems to disappear!

2 Mosaic Masterpiece

Families make a mosaic heart craft to hang at home.

3 Instant Forgiveness

Families use soap to make pepper go away.

4 The Empty Egg

Families try to find the empty egg.

5 Clean Plate

Families snack and clean up a mess on their plates.









You won't need to spend hours of time figuring out how to decorate for your events with our striking Insta-Theme Fabric Backdrops (sold separately). **Plus, they can be used to decorate other spaces like hallways or classrooms after your events.**

Make snapping photos of families at your events simple with these theme-based Photo-Op Fabric Backdrops (sold separately).

With your digital access code provided in every book, you'll find loads of tools that make it easy to advertise, invite, and follow up for your *Team Family* events!



BACKDROP

Purchase the Easter Morning Insta-Theme Fabric Backdrop from group.com/teamfamily.

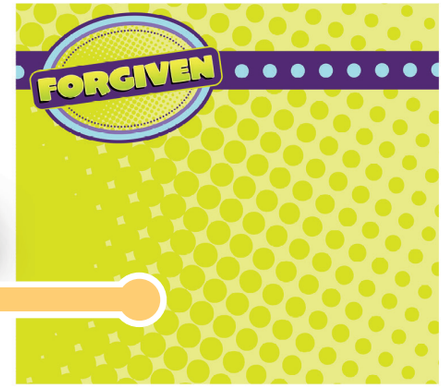
(Sold separately from group.com/teamfamily.)

Actual size 20' x 9'

DECORATING

These activities create an Easter event packed with sciency-fun "wows!" For this Easter event, consider decorating with colorful balloons and flowers. The Forgiven Photo-Op Fabric Backdrop and the Easter Morning Insta-Theme Fabric Backdrop will help create a bright and colorful space to celebrate forgiveness

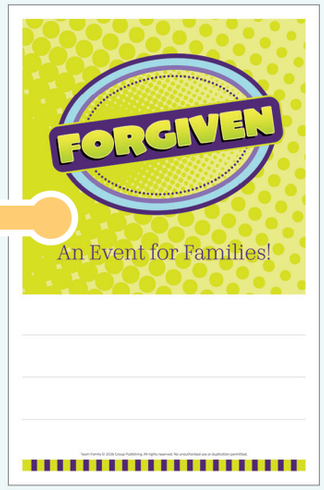




Actual size 10' x 9'

ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT

From posters in your church to social media graphics, advertising your event is easy with downloads from the Team Family Digital Download Center.





Need help spreading the word about your event? Check out posters and social media templates at group.com/digital-download-center.



Here's just one example of how the *Team Family* event stations are **fun, simple, and engaging for all!**

DISAPPEARING DRAWING

Families make drawings, then watch as their artwork seems to disappear!

Supplies

- What-To-Do Station Cards (available on the Team Family Digital Download Center)
- Bibles marked to Psalm 86:5
- quarter sheets of pastel-colored paper
- washable markers
- quart-size resealable bags
- large bowls or basins of water

GETTING READY

Set out all the supplies.

STATION EXPERIENCE

These easy-to-follow directions are available on the Team Family Digital Download Center. Look for "What-To-Do Station Cards." Print and place the directions on the table.

Read Psalm 86:5.

What's something you've been forgiven for?

Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, God forgives us! It's like our sins—the wrong things we do—disappear from God's view.

- Draw a picture on a piece of paper. Draw a pet, a party, a family portrait—anything!
- Seal the picture inside a bag.
- Dip the bag straight down into the water.
- When you look from above, it will look like the paper in the bag is blank. Your drawing is gone!

If you still see your drawing, try to look from a different angle!

When God forgives us, our sin doesn't just *appear* to be gone. It's gone for good! Take a moment to pray as a family and thank God for his forgiveness.

Pray: Dear God, thank you that you love us and forgive us. We love you, too! Amen.

Take drawings and bags with you. Try the experiment again at home!







Summer

Kids of all ages aspire to summertime superhero status. We want to be great! And celebrated! We'd like to be winners. This summer, help families want to become *humble* heroes, too. As they have fun in the sun, families will find awesome opportunities to let others shine.

Unlike Christmas and Easter, there isn't really a Christian holiday in the summertime. So we took this opportunity to choose a Bible verse that's especially relevant to families as they practice humility in all their summer activities. **This year, we chose Matthew 5:5.**

"God blesses those who are **humble**, for they will inherit the whole earth."

Matthew 5:5



Summer Outreach

Churches told us they want to reach more families in their community. **You'll find new ideas for every season inside this book.**

Doable outreach ideas to help families serve others this summer.



These activity ideas offer ways for families to humbly help others this summer. In this section, you'll find three outreach ideas. One serves your church family, one serves your community, and one serves globally!

These ideas are meant to be starting points. Don't feel like you must do them all or exactly as they're written. May they spark your creativity and inspire you to help families find meaningful ways to serve this season.



In each season you'll find ideas for serving your church family, your community, and people around the world. **Check out this way that families can reach out to people in their church!**

Serve Your Church Family

HIGH-FIVES FOR HUMBLE HELPERS

This summer, invite families to honor volunteers who serve their church family with a paper high-five!

You'll Need:

- table and colorful tablecloth
- Humble Heroes Photo-Op Fabric Backdrop *(optional)*
- "High-Fives for Helpers" handout (available on the Team Family Digital Download Center)
- colorful construction paper
- pencils
- child-safe scissors
- washable markers
- container or basket

What to Do:

1. Set up a "High-Fives for Helpers" station in your church building. Use a rectangular table and cover it with a plastic tablecloth or the Humble Heroes Photo-Op Fabric Backdrop. (You could also hang the backdrop behind the table.)
2. Print the "High-Fives for Helpers" handout, and place it on the table. It'll show families what to do.
3. Invite kids and their grown-ups to stop by the table before or after church.
4. Following the directions, they'll trace their hands on the construction paper, cut out their hand shapes, and write notes of appreciation and encouragement for volunteers in your church.
5. Have families place their "high-fives" in the basket or container, then distribute them to volunteers at your church.

You could provide a list of volunteers so family members can choose a specific person to write to. When making the list, be sure to think of "behind-the-scenes" volunteers, too—like office helpers, media production volunteers, communion preparers, parking volunteers, nursery workers, safety team members, coffee crew baristas, and care group leaders.



There are lots of things to think about when planning outreach events! We've given you a good start, while creating space and opportunities to customize ideas to your community's unique needs.

Serve Your Community

SERVICE DAY: SNACK DELIVERY!

Set aside a summer service morning where families gather at your church, then go out to deliver snacks and thank-you cards to local firefighters, police officers, nurses, and other humble heroes in your community.

You'll Need:

- a variety of prepackaged snacks or easy-to-eat fruit, such as jerky, mandarin oranges, popcorn, pretzels, and granola bars
- "Humble Heroes Thank-You Card" handout (available on the Team Family Digital Download Center) (at least 1 per family)
- envelopes to fit cards (about 5¾x8¾-inch) *(optional)*
- pens and colored pencils
- resealable gallon-size bags

What to Do:

1. Plan a family serving day. It could be on a Saturday morning, during a midweek evening, or after a weekend service.
2. Compile a list of places in your community where families will deliver snacks. Ideas include fire stations, police stations, hospitals, and libraries.
3. Prepurchase snacks. Set out snacks buffet-style on a table. Place resealable bags on the table so they're the first things families see.
4. Print copies of the "Humble Heroes Thank-You Card" (at least 1 per family).
5. Set out pens, colored pencils, and envelopes.
6. When families arrive, ask them to fill a bag with snacks. Then they'll sit together and sign a thank-you card. Have families take time to decorate the cards and add personal messages, then tuck the card inside the bag, too.
7. Assign a location to each family. Have them drive to that spot and deliver the snack on their way home.
8. Encourage families to pray for the humble heroes after they've dropped off the bags.



FAMILY DEVOTION

Lead this brief devotion with families as they gather for this serving day event.

Say: Welcome, kids and kids' grown-ups! This summer, we're exploring what it means to be humble. When we're humble, we put others first.

There are humble heroes putting others first in our community every day. People like firefighters, police officers, health care workers, and librarians!

How do these humble heroes help people?

Jesus said that humility is very important. Listen to what he said in Matthew 5:5.

Read aloud Matthew 5:5.

Say: "Inherit the whole earth" means to receive all sorts of good things. And today we'll give a few good snacks to these humble heroes.

Outline the plan for the day, giving instructions for packing snacks, writing cards, delivery, and prayer.

Pray: Dear God, thank you for summer serving days. And thanks for the humble heroes in our town who put others first. May they know that Jesus loves them, and may they enjoy some snacks today! Amen.

It's back-to-school time! **Ideas and activities in this season will help families gear up for a new year of school.** And they'll help church leaders kick off a great year of ministry!



Fall

This fall, show families "I'm here for you!" and remind them how much God cares, too.

Hey, leader—there's something in here for you, too! For every season, you'll find practical insights to help you understand families and their unique needs during each season of the year. Plus, there are spaces for planning, goal setting, reflecting, and praying for the families you serve and want to serve in the future.



"Give all your worries and **cares** to God, for he **cares** about you."

1 Peter 5:7

Care for Families



Why Families Need Care This Fall

How do family members show they care about each other? Perhaps they draw a picture, bake a cake, or give a big hug. When we care, we notice and love someone or something a lot. Care shows that we're here for others and they aren't all alone.

Being cared for is a core human need. Babies need diaper changes. Toddlers need cuddles and child safety locks. Preschool kids need caregivers to teach them their colors, numbers, and ABCs. Elementary kids need help with homework and packed lunches. Preteens need listening ears and rides to activities. Teens need gas money. College kids need home. Grown-ups need groceries. *Everyone* needs love and care!

Jesus spent his life in family and friendships, pouring out care *and* receiving care from others. Family members need each other, and they need their heavenly Father, too.

As families navigate all the changes that come with the fall season, 1 Peter 5:7 reminds them who's always got their back: "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

God cares. This fall, help families tune into all the ways God cares for people and empowers them to love and care for others.

Caring Considerations

When it comes to family ministry, are you mindful of family reality? These three considerations will help you effectively care for families this fall.

CONSIDER KIDS

Many parents find that their kids lose all ability to regulate emotions at home for the first few weeks of school. That's because they're using up all their regulation energy during the day. So find caring ways for church to feel safe and predictable for kids as they adjust to the new school year. Could kids "move up" to new Sunday school classes earlier in the summer? Could you avoid scheduling things that keep kids out late during the first month of the school year?

CONSIDER NEEDS

Kids in your community may need more than candy this fall. Could your church focus efforts on a coat or food drive this year? You're likely to have a bigger (and more caring) local impact if you create events that meet needs in the community rather than just doing the "fall church thing."

CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) shows up for many people in the fall. SAD symptoms can include lethargy and low mood, more anxiety, sleep problems, and even hopelessness and despair. It's important for church leaders to know about this tendency and watch for signs of SAD in their congregants and themselves. You can be a caring resource to help normalize that it's OK to seek extra support if the colder, darker months are difficult.

Find encouragement and helpful information **for each season!**

AGE-LEVEL INSIGHTS

Consider these age-level insights when you're assessing ways to show care this fall. You can help kids of all ages recognize what care feels like so they can help others experience it, too.

2S AND 3S

These youngsters' first teachers are their *care*givers. Babies and young kids learn that they're safe and valued through responsive care—smiles, silly faces, and having physical and emotional needs met. This care builds a foundation for close relationships in the future. *Receiving* care allows young children to then experiment *giving* care as they play, interact with siblings, and share with friends.

PRESCHOOL

Preschoolers will watch how you show care and can begin to reciprocate and replicate what they see you doing. Their self-awareness of how others' actions make them feel is growing, and they can start to turn that awareness outward. "I feel loved when a friend shares a toy with me. I can make friends feel loved when I share, too!" Remember to celebrate and affirm preschoolers when you see them caring for others.

ELEMENTARY

In the elementary years, many kids will experience situations where they don't feel cared for—not making the team, being left out of a social group, hearing unkind words from a peer. They need a safe and consistent place of care where they can process. The care you show to kids, especially when others haven't been so caring, can help them develop an inner voice that gently affirms, "God knows me and cares about me."



Care for Ministry Leaders

Why Ministry Leaders Need Care This Fall

Ministry leader, you are there for kids at your church. You recruit people to care for them each week. You clean and tidy their spaces in your church building. You plan and follow safety procedures. You understand excellent care helps children stay healthy and connected. Thank you.

Now who cares for you? You need Jesus' care and friendship no matter how old, smart, independent, or strong you are. You especially need support as you pour care into others (which is basically what ministry is). Caring for God's children requires a lot; there are too many tasks to do and things to remember. You won't be able to do this on your own. It's just too much.

It's a good thing God is here for you. And Jesus has a knack for caring for his friends through his other friends. When people offer to help, let them. When people give you care, receive it. This fall, depend on Jesus like your kids depend on you. When you do, you'll enjoy God's endless love and care for you.

When people offer to help, let them.



Ministry is all about relationships. **This page helps you pause, think about, and pray for the families you serve.**



Ministry Goals

Establish some goals for ministry to children and families this fall season. Ultimately, how can your church care for them in meaningful ways? Choose some from the list below, and write a few of your own.

- ○ Embrace pumpkin-spiced anything.
- ○ Take good care of yourself with healthy foods, healthy friendships, and healthy boundaries, too!
- ○ Restock nametag stickers and printer ink.
- ○ Recruit backup teachers or volunteers for each children's ministry classroom.
- ○ Show parents what you love about your church's children's ministry curriculum.
- ○ Create a list of kids' schoolteachers, and pray for them regularly. If you know them personally, send encouraging texts each week.
- ○ Have coffee with a friend or mentor once a week. Let that person listen to and care for you.
- ○
- ○
- ○

Now talk with God about the goals you've selected. Ask if there are other goals he'd like you to consider. Thank God for his care and guidance.

Fall Season at a Glance

Write in names and events to celebrate.

BIRTHDAYS

Dear God, thanks for these kids in our church who have birthdays this season:

September **October** **November**

May they trust in you, Lord, with all their heart and not lean on their own understanding. May they seek your will in all they do, and please show them the path to take. (from Proverbs 3:5-6)

ANNIVERSARIES

Dear God, thanks for these couples in our church who celebrate wedding anniversaries this season:

September **October** **November**

May they give all their worries and cares to you, God, because you care about them. (from 1 Peter 5:7)

EVENTS

Dear God, guide us as we plan these church events this season:

September **October** **November**

May I not worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. I'll tell you, God, what I need. Thank you for all you have done. (from Philippians 4:6)



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