

# SERVE, PLAY AND PRAY THIS FALL!

## Serve Together

Host a yard sale and give the proceeds to a church fund, missionary, or charity.

Donate to a local missions store. If you prefer to skip the yard sale, you can still spend time together as a family gathering clothes, housewares, and toys to donate. Make plans to stop by for a treat on the way home.

Treat an elderly or disabled friend to a yard cleanup day. Rake leaves, trim shrubs or pull weeds. Yard work offers service opportunities for all ages. Want to go a step further? Leave a bucket of mums or another fall floral arrangement to brighten their porch.

Bake pumpkin bread together. Wrap up the loaf and attach a small note with Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see that the LORD is good," written on it. Brighten the day of a lonely neighbor or friend by hand-delivering it with a smile.

## Play Together

As a family, brainstorm twelve activities that won't require a great deal of prep or money. Write each one on a slip of paper and put it in a jar. Draw one slip (or more!) every week and decide the best day to carry it out. Some ideas might be:

Take a nature walk to engage your senses. What catches your eyes? How does a particular leaf feel? (Steer clear of poison ivy, of course!) How does the air smell in a forest? What do you hear? (Silence counts!) As you walk, gather color-coated leaves, rocks, acorns, and evergreen branches to decorate your mantle or tabletop when you return home.

Go on a picnic. Choose a lovely location. Maybe it's beside a creek, on a mountain, in a park, or your own backyard. Let the children help plan the menu and prepare it for the picnic. Or plan to pick up a bucket of chicken. Don't forget a blanket/tablecloth, utensils, napkins, and bug spray.

Game night! Whoever chooses this slip of paper gets to choose which game the family plays. Turn off the TV and turn on the laughter.

Popcorn & Puzzles. Create a designated table to work on a puzzle throughout the fall season. On the nights this slip of paper is drawn, plan to serve popcorn and lemonade or any family favorite food/drink.

## Pray Together

Teaching our children that meaningful prayer can be both simple and enjoyable is a gift they will carry throughout their adulthood. Here are a few ways to get the creative juices flowing when praying as a family:

Walk & Pray. Before you set out, as a family, discuss various ways to pray for your neighbors, such as God's blessings, God's healing, for them to draw closer to God, for wisdom as a family, etc. Perhaps there are neighbors who need specific prayer. Share how God is the only One who truly knows what each person or family needs but that He honors our desire to pray for them. Then take a walk around your neighborhood. You can either pray quietly as you pass by neighbors' homes or silently while keeping your eyes open. This helps children to learn that while closing our eyes during prayer helps us to concentrate it's also okay and biblical to pray with our eyes open too.

Journal as a family. Purchase or create journals for every person in the family. Set aside a few minutes each night to journal together. Consider lighting gas logs or candles while you write. Younger children will enjoy coloring during their time. Setting aside fifteen minutes each night (or weeknights/weekends only) will help to develop a pattern that is sure to bless your children for many years to come.

Create a prayer board. Hang a designated "Prayer Request Chalkboard" in an accessible place in your home. When prayer requests arise, write them on the board and pray for them after dinner.