

1

STICKY FAITH EVERY DAY

Week 1: Notice

Family Ideas

NOTICE

Sticky Faith Every Day Family Ideas

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Random.

Chaotic.

Circumstantial.

Sound familiar? If you live with an adolescent in your home, chances are these words describe quite a bit of your daily life experience. Teenagers engage all kinds of vital life tasks in random, chaotic, and circumstantial ways. Like their friendships. And dating relationships. And homework. And probably their interactions with you.

But we aren't using the words random, chaotic, and circumstantial to describe any of those areas of life right now. **We're using them to describe what we've learned from research about the prayer life of teenagers.**

Research shows that faith practices are important to what we call *Sticky Faith*—faith that lasts beyond high school and into college and young adulthood.* Yet often teenagers aren't sure how to nurture their own spiritual growth. Our research at the Fuller Youth Institute has indicated that only about half of graduating youth group seniors pray once a day or read the Bible once a week. Beyond prayer and Scripture study, teenagers also don't seem have experience with a host of other timeless faith practices that could make a difference in their day to day lives.

As a follow up to the *Sticky Faith* research, we are exploring what disciplines best connect kids with God and nurture lasting faith, in particular those that help integrate faith practices with all of life. Out of that exploration we've created this resource as an entry point for youth workers and parents to invite young people to create new faith rhythms.

You might notice that we've tried to create ideas that get both you and your kids talking. Research shows that parents are one of—if not the—biggest influences on their kids' faith. Yes, even for teenagers. Further, our Sticky Faith research revealed that while it's important for parents to talk with their kids about the kids' faith, it's just as important for parents to *talk about their own faith journeys with their kids*. We're convinced you will all grow from these kinds of conversations.

The overall theme of this Every Day series is noticing God. Some people say "paying attention" is the core of the spiritual life. We think they're on to something. So this journey over the next weeks (for many of you, this 8 week journey might work well to use during the Lent season as preparation for Easter) is an invitation to notice. *Noticing* might mean you have to stop, listen, change up your steps a bit. It might mean trying some new things as a family. One way to think of these practices is that they are ways we learn to pay attention to and notice God and God's work in and around us.

Ideas to Engage Your Whole Family in Noticing God More

Below are some ideas and tips for you as you engage this journey together with your family. Please note that you won't be able to implement all of these ideas, so pick one or two you'd like to focus on and give them a try together!

- Many parents have noticed that the moment they pull out the printed family devotion is the moment the kids shut down. If you've experienced this, think about ways to have these conversations or try these activities without using this (or another) resource as a cue sheet. Your kids will appreciate your own words and your authentic presence more than anything we could write for you.
- Read Psalm 103: 6-14 together. Wonder together what it means that the writer uses such big language for God's love and for how dramatically God removes our sin. You might also ask: What does it mean that God is "slow to anger"? Do you think that describes our family, and why/why not? How do we need God to work in our family to make us all more like God in this area?
- Talk together about something your family might want to fast from as a family during this journey. If you do, be sure you choose as a *family*. Also consider how you can invite your kids to participate, but also give them permission not to participate. Remember that the point is creating ways we can notice God more during our everyday life.
- Acknowledge that certain sacrifices will likely mean something different to your kids than to you. For example, given the pervasive role digital technology plays in the lives of adolescents today (it's truly all they have ever known), living without the internet or their cell phone is comparable to an adult imagining life without electricity. So rather than fighting with your teenager over instituting a blanket "No media on Sundays" rule, invite them to work together with you toward something that's manageable as a practice everyone is willing to try together. In the end they might long for more time apart from their digital connectivity, but that desire will have to come from them, not you, in order to really be effective.
- Find a local or global outreach opportunity or cause to support as a family. If you're giving up something together that involves time and/or money, also decide together what you'll do with that time and/or money. Maybe you can channel money to help build a well in another community, or maybe you can visit pediatric cancer patients in your city at the local children's hospital. Do some research, incorporating your kids' web savvy, and try something new together.

- If you're doing this during Lent and you attend an Ash Wednesday service together, ask on the way to or from the service or over dinner, "Why do we wear the ashes on our bodies today?" and explore what it means to different members of your family. Be sure you answer this—and every—question yourself!
- This week the DAILY GUIDE invites your kids to read and re-read Psalm 25:1-7. Consider doing the same and sharing together about the impressions the passage has made on each of you at the end of the week.
- In the DAILY GUIDE we invite your kids to consider incorporating the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 into their daily and weekly rhythm of prayer. You might also want to do this in your family as a way to reinforce, wonder about, and be changed by this prayer. In fact, we encourage you to consider using the DAILY GUIDE yourself throughout this 8-week series!

Our hope is that this resource leads to new long-term rhythms for your family and for your children in their own life with God. Here's to nurturing Sticky Faith...Every Day!