



FAMILY NIGHT WEEK TWO

*DO THIS FAMILY NIGHT AFTER COMPLETING WEEK 2 OF THE DEVOTIONALS.
IDEALLY BETWEEN DAY 15 AND DAY 16.*

IDENTITY

DEAR PARENTS,

We are so overwhelmingly loved as God's children! Understanding this truth enables us to love others well. God is constantly inviting us into the "family business" of restoring and blessing others! And we're too often sidelined by our own insecurities or pride. We were chosen by God ON purpose and FOR a purpose. Our kids don't need to know "what they're going to be when they grow up" to understand that purpose. They need to learn how to love well: God, themselves and others, here and now! Those skills will prepare them to be men and women of integrity, ready for whatever God has in their futures!

++ Dinner Idea

Everyone has a role! We all have a role to fill in the family of God. Use this dinner preparation to give each family member a "role" to make their part of the meal. It's not always easy to work together. But when we all learn to do our part we can accomplish something better ... something great.

Dinner questions:

1. *Sooooooo how was that media fast? What did you discover about your habits or your heart?*
2. *Addiction to media is a complex and serious issue in our culture. Every family will have to figure out their own standards; there isn't a "right way." But how were you inspired to make any changes in your media use?*
3. *What stood out most about this week's daily devotionals?*
4. *As Christians, love should define us. What characteristics "define" each member of our family?*
5. *What would others outside of the family say about each one of us?*
6. *What about within the family? How are siblings defined by one another?*
7. *What changes could you start practicing in order to be more defined by love?*

++ Recite the Identity Memory Verse

1 John 4:16 // And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

FAMILY NIGHT ACTIVITY

++ Read to the Fam

We started *Compassion: 30 Days of Heartwork* with learning about letting go. Letting go of things leaves space. God wants to fill that space with love and truth about who you are and what He's called you to! That's why this past week has been all about Identity. If we don't know who we are, we can't love anyone well.

We're going to talk about a little something called "pride." Who knows what this word means? Pride can be really sneaky because it seems to make us feel big, strong or safe, but it's a trick. Only God's love makes us big, strong and safe.

Think of pride as a coin. *(If you've got one handy, grab it and show it to the kids as an object lesson.)* A coin is one thing, but it has two sides. With pride, one side of this coin is "judgment." That's when we think we're better than others. The other side of this coin is "insecurity." That's when we think everyone else is better than us. It's all pride.

Judgment is something that can creep in even when we don't know it! And it can really affect how we love others. Every time we ignore a person who is lonely, every time we see a need but tell ourselves why it wouldn't make sense to stop what we're doing and help, we may be making a judgment that the need is beneath us. When we focus on protecting and promoting ourselves, the natural result is to create two classes of people, those "who can make my life better" and those "who are of no use to me." This leads to judging others and can become ingrained in the way we think.

On the other side of the coin, the question, "Who am I to think I could do anything about the problems of the world?" can creep in. This insecurity keeps us quiet, thinking we are insignificant, and can also keep us from loving others!

Pride is like a box that might make us feel “safe” (as in, not vulnerable) but separates us from others and from true growth in life. Many of our family and friends are right there next to us in their own box, making it really easy to forget that there is a better way! There is a great big world out there, ready to be explored, if only we would step out of that box and choose freedom. Let’s start with believing “I’m not better than you and you’re not better than me. We are all in this together.”

Loving *yourself* the way God loves you is actually a great place to start. When we understand that we are beloved children with all of our needs met, this gives us the confidence to love others without judgment or insecurity! When we are not full of the love of God, we find all kinds of distractions to try to get our own needs met and become consumed with those rather than loving ourselves, God or others!

What could loving yourself look like at its best?

What could loving your community look like at its best?

Nobody’s perfect at this, we’re all just on our journey of being conformed into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29)! Great job working on this over the past week!

++Activity

Gather around a table with your artistic supplies. A paper and pencil for each family member will do, or for a memorable time, set up a painting station for each of your artists! Every young child is an artist, but for those of us who have lost our childlike passion for paints, feel free to keep it simple!

Ok, everyone close your eyes and picture this story as I read it. After we read it we’re all going to draw/paint a part of the story. *(This is a true story of a precious girl whose life intersected with a Heartwork student in a village on the Nile River in rural Africa.)*

Irene was a young girl who had contracted a bad disease from her mother and was then, sadly, rejected by her family. She came from a small village on the Nile River in rural Africa. The misty mountains in the distance and the vast plains with well-worn walking paths made for a lovely scene, but from Irene’s point of view there was so much missing. Hungry stomachs and broken hearts can turn even the most beautiful place into a bottomless pit. Irene was brought to a lovely home in the city that was built just to take care of kids with no moms or dads. But Irene couldn’t see the loveliness. It

*was like her eyes were blind to the new gifts all around her. She sat in the corner every day, crying. But her new guardians continued to love her well, and **love is where change always begins.***

Day after day, Irene sat and cried. She didn't speak, she didn't look people in the eye, she couldn't seem to escape in her mind from that village she had lived in, the longing and the rejection. And then one day, God brought a young student who had struggles of her own to Irene's home. Her name was Madison and she was visiting Africa, taking in the beauty and the pain, eager to serve. These girls had different skin, different clothes, but inside, they were very similar – they had hearts that had been wounded, and they needed God's love. Madison's own eyes had been blind to some of the blessings around her, but as she saw the needs of others, her eyes were opened. Her own heart that had been wounded and hardened began to break for Irene.

*One day Madison walked with Irene to the Nile River. They stood on a bridge and Madison shouted, "I am Irene and I am free!" over and over and over until Irene joined her, first in a small whisper, then a little louder, and then finally, screaming it at the top of her lungs like in Isaiah 58 (like we read in our very first Family Night). **And just like in that verse, God said to Irene's heart, "Here I am."***

That simple act of love changed the course of Irene's life. She returned to her home and told everyone how free God had made her! Irene slowly became more and more confident. She began to sing, dance, laugh, serve in her home by cooking and cleaning, play with the other kids and go to school. For both Madison and Irene, some of their darkness was turned into light that day on the bridge. And that light has continued to shine into their futures and their communities!

Now let's paint a picture (or several!) of Irene and Madison. Draw Irene in her hometown village, or in the city, on the bridge with Madison, or living life with her community after their encounter with God.

(As everyone finishes painting, talk about your pictures! Here are some questions you can talk through as you compare and share!)

1. What does the Isaiah 58 kind of darkness look like in your picture? How did that look in Irene's early life? (*rejected, intimidated, shy, hunger, disease, etc.*)
2. How can darkness look for people who aren't affected by material poverty, but soul poverty?
3. What does the Isaiah 58 kind of light look like in your picture? (*God's love for people, health, needs being met, joy, peace, etc.*)

Of course, there is *no wrong way* to draw this picture! God's desire is for His children in every type of neighborhood or village to thrive. The reality is that around the world and even here in our own city, there are **people who aren't thriving, whose lives are full of the darkness of poverty or sadness.** Let's pray for God's light to shine through us this month as we make sacrifices and think of others in a new way.

*Talk through any examples of poverty in your city, and how you are continuing to make sacrifices to fill your Heartwork jar for your sponsored child's Family Gift or a Safe Water Well. Of course, be careful not to overwhelm the kids, but it is important for them to know there are **other realities than their own.** This discussion and hands-on activity will help bring some life to those concepts, even for very young ones.*

Parents, it's time to share a testimony of some sort with your kids!

1. Explain to them when you came to understand your need for adoption by God and when you surrendered your life to Him.
2. Give examples of believing lies about yourself and how it impacted your life to begin to learn and live in truth.

These practical examples can bring freedom to kids who may be struggling with identity issues or may feel ashamed for believing some of the lies that so easily entangle us.

++ Video

Watch this video about Grace's journey toward self-love, acceptance and finding her worth in Christ, despite extremely challenging circumstances. // Find video at [Compassion.com/Week2/](https://www.compassion.com/Week2/).

What's Up This Week!

Introduce the upcoming topic, memory verse and challenge to your family! Make plans to take on the challenge, individually or as a family.

++ Theme

Our focus for this coming week will be COMPASSION. Yes, like Compassion International, but also like “concern for the suffering of others.” Jesus modeled compassion for us and has given us the example and the strength to “suffer with” those in need! Start your week by reflecting on this idea: ***Compassion sits, sees and stays when others walk away.***

++ Compassion Memory Verse

Isaiah 58:10 // If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

++ Family Challenge

This week’s empathy challenge is to take a day, a few days, or the whole week and only **eat beans and rice**. Parents, you can tweak this to whatever makes sense for your family, of course! We have found that this challenge becomes really powerful around bowl 6 or 7 of eating beans and rice, and the realization sets in that for millions of people around the world, this is just about all they eat in a normal week.

Pray with your people! AMEN! (You’re doing a great job!)