

# home|front

M O N T H L Y

ENVIRONMENT

## knowing

*God knows me, and  
I can know Him.*

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# How to Use this Resource

## It's as easy as 1 ... 2 ... 3 ...

**1** Start by deciding on a day and time that works well for your entire family. It can be an evening, afternoon, or morning. Just commit to building this time into your family's natural rhythm. It's usually best to build this time around a meal!

**2** Look through the HomeFront Monthly and see what stands out. Choose one or two experiences you would like to incorporate into your family times this week. Don't feel burdened to complete all the activities at once, but carefully select which ones will fit your family best. Each month of curriculum provides more than enough experiences to last you throughout the month.

**3** Remember to **HAVE FUN!** Strive to make each gathering unique to your own family as you enjoy spending time with God and each other.



## Editor's Note

**know** \ˈnɔʊ\ verb (1) to perceive directly ... (2) to be acquainted or familiar with ... (3) to recognize the nature of (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Ed., 1996*).

I love knowing the definitions of words. There's something about looking up a word in the dictionary that satisfies an innate curiosity to gain fuller knowledge and understanding. When I look up a word or find similar words in the thesaurus, I gain a piece of knowledge about that word that I did not have before.

When I saw we were in the environment of KNOWING, I thought, "I wonder what the dictionary has to say?" As I looked at the various definitions of the word, I was struck by what it means to be known. The words perceive, familiar, and recognize stood out to me. To know someone is to fully recognize and fully understand that person.

It is simply amazing that I can have a relationship with the Creator; I can be *acquainted* with Him. It is beyond comprehension that He is *familiar* with all my ways and that He *recognizes* me in the midst of millions and millions of people.

This is just a taste of what the environment of KNOWING is all about. In this edition of HomeFront Monthly, you and your family will have the opportunity to dive deeper into what it means to know and be known by our loving God! ☺

**DEBBIE GUINN** | EDITOR  
the Tru Team | Costa Mesa, CA

## ENVIRONMENT

# KNOWING

We live in a world that denies absolute Truth and yet God's Word offers just that. As we create an environment that upholds and displays God's Truth, we give children a foundation based on the knowledge of God, His Word, and a relationship with Him through Christ.

The environment of KNOWING stands in sharp contrast to what the world says is true. The world tells our kids that there is no God, and if there is, He is irrelevant. Schools and media tell our kids there is no creator and no absolute truth. But as parents, we are saying, "Yes, there is, and you can know Him ... you can know God the Father, and you can know His Son, Jesus, through His Spirit." There is absolute truth; His Word is Truth. His Word is the only capital "T" Truth. It trumps all experiences and all other truths that are actually counterfeits of the one Truth.

The heart behind this environment is to stand firm and be confident in our relationship with God through Jesus, and confident that His Word is a viable resource of Truth for transforming lives. We acknowledge that there is a sovereign God, whom I can know personally. He reveals Himself in general and specific ways so that all the world is without excuse for not knowing Him (Romans 1:20). ●



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Anthony".

**MICHELLE ANTHONY** | FAMILY MINISTRY ARCHITECT  
the Tru Team | Costa Mesa, CA

## VERSE OF THE MONTH

Memorizing Scripture can be an incredible practice to engage in as a family. But words in and of themselves will not necessarily transform us; it is God's Spirit in these words that transforms. We come to know God more when we are willing to open our hearts and receive His Holy Spirit through the words we memorize. Have fun with these verses and think of creative ways to invite your family to open up to God as they commit these verses to memory.

### ELEMENTARY VERSE

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

### PRES/KINDER VERSE

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6:3

# FAMILY FOOD TIME

**RECIPE** (FROM REALSIMPLE.COM)

This is a great recipe that is “real simple” to make and gets the whole family involved in the process!

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## Beef & Bok Choy Stir-Fry (SERVES 4)

*Prep Time:* 20 min. *Cook Time:* 30–40 min.

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### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup long-grain rice
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 pound flank steak, thinly sliced
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 4 heads baby bok choy, quartered
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tbsp. fresh ginger, grated

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### DIRECTIONS

- Cook the rice according to the package directions. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over high heat. Season the steak with ¼ teaspoon each of salt and pepper, and cook, turning often, until cooked through, about 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the steak to a plate.
- Wipe out the skillet. Add the bok choy, ¼ cup of water, and simmer, covered, until tender, about 2 to 3 minutes.
- Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and ginger together. Add to the bok choy in the skillet and bring to a boil. Return the steak to the skillet, with any accumulated juices, and cook, tossing until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve over rice. 🍴



# COOK WITH YOUR KIDS

IF YOU ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN FINDING TIME TO PREPARE MEALS AND SPENDING QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN, TRY COOKING WITH THEM. CHILDREN ENJOY HELPING IN THE KITCHEN AND OFTEN ARE MORE WILLING TO EAT FOODS THEY HELP PREPARE. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU GIVE KITCHEN TASKS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S AGE.

**2 YEAR OLDS:** CAN BRING INGREDIENTS FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER, WIPE TABLETOPS, TEAR LETTUCE OR GREENS, BREAK CAULIFLOWER, PLAY WITH UTENSILS.

**3 YEAR OLDS:** CAN DO ALL THAT 2 YEAR OLDS CAN, PLUS ... WRAP POTATOES IN FOIL FOR BAKING, POUR LIQUIDS, MIX INGREDIENTS, SHAKE LIQUIDS IN A COVERED CONTAINER, SPREAD SOFT SPREADS, PLACE THINGS IN THE TRASH.

**4 YEAR OLDS:** CAN DO ALL THAT 2 AND 3 YEAR OLDS CAN, PLUS ... FORM ROUND SHAPES WITH DOUGH, CUT PARSLEY OR GREEN ONIONS WITH DULL SCISSORS, MASH BANANAS WITH A FORK, SET THE TABLE.

**5 TO 6 YEAR OLDS:** CAN DO ALL THAT 2, 3, AND 4 YEAR OLDS CAN, PLUS ... MEASURE INGREDIENTS, CUT WITH A BLUNT KNIFE, USE AN EGGBEATER.

**ELEMENTARY AGE:** CAN DO ALL THAT THE PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN CAN, PLUS ... ASSEMBLE SANDWICHES, READ RECIPE DIRECTIONS, ROLL DOUGH, GRATE CHEESE, CRACK AND BEAT EGGS, AND MORE.

**MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL:** INVOLVE THEM IN MEAL PLANNING, SHOPPING, AND PREPARING THE MEAL FOR YOUR FAMILY NIGHT.

by Angelina Pavone

## FAMILY FOOD TIME

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU!

During dinner, try playing this simple game to get to know more about each other. Be sure to get everyone in the family involved.

Each child asks the adults five questions about their favorite things.

#### Example

1. What is my favorite book?
2. What is my favorite color?
3. What is my favorite flavor of ice cream?
4. What is my favorite TV show?
5. What is my favorite theme park?

Each adult asks the kids five questions about their favorite things while growing up.

#### Example

1. What was my favorite toy?
2. Who was my best friend?
3. What was my favorite TV show?
4. What was my favorite food?
5. Did I share my bedroom?

This is a fun activity that will give your family new insight into KNOWING each other this month while also learning about all the wonderful ways that God knows and cares about us. 🍷

by Traci Carpenter

# GAME TIME

## YOUNGER KIDS

### GUESS WHO?!

When I was a child, one of my favorite games to play with friends and family was “Guess Who?” The concept of the game is this: The players receive clues from their opponents and try to guess who they are describing.

It’s fun to put all the clues together and figure out which person they are trying to depict. If you don’t have the board game at home, a great way to modify this would be to write down the names of each family member on 3” x 5” cards and have a parent or older sibling pick a card and describe the person named. The kids then guess the family member being described.

As we describe our family members with all the little details that define them, we recognize that God knows so much more about us than any other human being ever could. He is the Father of all knowing—having known us before we were born, knowing the number of hairs on our head, and knowing the words we are going to speak before we even speak them. ☺



by Stacy Igarashi & Rae Lynn Lott

# GAME TIME

## OLDER KIDS

This can be a challenging game for family members—especially when you think your family knows *everything* about you.

Here’s how to play: Each family member writes down two truths and one lie about himself on a piece of paper. Then, as each person reads his three truths, the rest of the family must vote on which one of them is a lie. ☺

USE THIS  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO *CONNECT*  
AS A FAMILY  
AND TO GET  
TO KNOW ONE  
ANOTHER  
MORE.

# GOD'S WORD

In the book of Job, we read that in his later life Job shepherded fourteen thousand sheep ... (Job 42:12). On the day the temple was dedicated, Solomon offered one hundred and twenty thousand of his sheep ... as sacrifices (1 Kings 8:63).

David and Moses, the two great leaders of God's people in the Old Testament, were both shepherds. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah all drew analogies from sheep and shepherds. Throughout Biblical times, shepherding was a common way to make a living, so when Jesus talked to the Jewish people about sheep and shepherds, the analogy would be one they were very familiar with and they could easily relate to.

During certain times of the year, shepherds led their flocks away from the village to greener pastures. During these times, the sheep slept in temporary sheepfolds made of brush. When the sheep returned to the village (all of the shepherds in the community brought their sheep nightly into a common sheepfold), the shepherds built an enclosure made of rock walls, with an opening like a door. Theft was common in these communal sheepfolds, so a watchman guarded the flocks by lying across the opening of the door—preventing sheep from escape and theft.

In the morning, the shepherds called their sheep, and assembled their own flocks. Each shepherd had a distinct call or song to which only his sheep responded. So, even if a thief did enter the sheepfold by climbing over the wall, the sheep would never follow him; the sheep only followed the voice of their own shepherd.

## HEAR IT

I love reading John 10:1–18. Think about how God knows us and how we can know Him. Take a few minutes, as a family, to read through this passage. The love Jesus expresses for us, His sheep, in this passage is probably one of the most beautiful pictures I know of in the Bible where our relationship with God and His devotion to us are fully expressed! It clearly says that He knows us and we know Him, and we do so by hearing His voice and knowing that voice to be His. The passage goes so far as to describe that Jesus will, in fact, lay down



His life as a result of His love for His sheep, and He will shepherd those already in His flock. Jesus is also careful to show what He offers His sheep versus what the world offers. He offers life, whereas the world offers destruction and death.

## DO IT

The Traditions and Create sections of this HomeFront Monthly will walk you through practical ways to recognize how we are known by God and how we can know Him. Take time as a family this month to reflect on how amazing it is that we have a loving Father who does, in fact, know us. ☺

# STORYTELLING

The summer sun was making it particularly hot that day. Mom and Dad were away on vacation, and I had two glorious weeks, minus the heat wave, to spend with my grandparents. “Why don’t you put on your suit and go over to the Martello’s?”

I flew out of my chair and changed as quickly as I could. The Martellos had been best friends with my grandparents for years. Every summer they would have barbecues and pool parties while we would swim for hours and hours.

When I reached the house, Mrs. Martello opened the door before I even rang the bell. She greeted me warmly and invited me inside. As I entered, I noticed some things were different since my last visit. There was a wooden fish—with some weird-looking letters on the inside—hanging on the wall. On the kitchen counter, I noticed a ceramic loaf of bread with the words “daily bread.” “Francis? Why do you have a fish on your wall, and what do the letters inside mean?” I asked. She smiled, and for the next couple of hours we sat and talked about Jesus.

You see, I grew up in a very Catholic family and had heard about Jesus. I went to Mass with my grandparents, and marveled in the beauty that surrounded me. The candles, music, prayers, incense, holy water, crucifix, and stained-glass windows captivated me from a very young age. My soul understood that there was something sacred about all of these things, but my heart didn’t make the direct connection as to why. I would ask my grandmother endless questions throughout the service, and she patiently answered while trying to participate. But on this particular summer day, something inside of me clicked. I heard about a God who loved me and created me to be in a relationship with Him! Mrs. Martello read a verse from the book of Psalms that spoke of God knowing every hair on my head. God knew everything about me—everything—and loved me with a fierce and eternal love. This same God wanted me to know Him! That afternoon in Mrs. Francis Martello’s living room, I prayed and told Jesus that I wanted to know Him. I asked Him to be my God and my Savior. I was eight years old

“[ I SHOW] LOVE  
TO A *THOUSAND*  
*GENERATIONS* OF  
THOSE WHO LOVE  
ME AND KEEP MY  
COMMANDMENTS.”  
DEUTERONOMY 5:10

that summer, and I knew, even then, everything had changed, forever!

As I look back over the days, weeks, and months leading up to that afternoon, I can’t help but remember the countless conversations that took place between me and my parents, and me and my grandparents, about God. Their faith I knew, but I wondered about the unknown believers in my family line—those one hundred or more generations past—who had followed the Lord. Who were the faithful? What had been their prayers for the coming generations? To all those faithful followers, the mothers and fathers of my family, I say, “Thank you, thank you, thank you. And may the legacy I leave behind last one thousand generations as well.”

Parents, find a time to share with your children the story of when you discovered you were loved and known by God. 🙏

# PRAYER

2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us that God has breathed life into all of Scripture. How exciting to hear that not only do we worship a living God, but we also read a living Word!

For prayer this month, we encourage you to wonder: What Scripture has ministered to your family? What Truth does He have in the Word for your children? Maybe it's a word of encouragement, correction, or direction. Maybe it's a promise He wants to speak over your family, kids, or marriage. Maybe it's a Truth about Him that your heart needs to be reminded of.

This month, try using one of your family nights to prayerfully read Scripture together. Try doing the following exercise as a way of opening your family up to hearing from God through a specific passage of Scripture. This can be anything you want to read as a family. If you aren't sure where to start, try one of these: Psalm 23, Psalm 100, or Psalm 139:1–6.

Gather your family together and begin your time together by praying and asking the Lord to reveal Himself to each of you in the words you are about to hear. Read the passage out loud. Afterward, sit quietly for a few moments. Then read the passage through a second time. This time, tell everyone to listen for a word or a phrase that sticks out to them as you read. ☪

## WHAT SCRIPTURE HAS MINISTERED TO YOUR FAMILY?

# TRADITIONS

## THE “AFTER CHURCH” QUESTION

If you are like most parents, there are two main questions you ask your children after picking them up from church: “Did you have fun today?” and “What did you learn?”



Although there is nothing wrong with either of these questions, there might be a more spiritually forming question to start asking your children, which is: “What do you know to be true about God?”

By making this your new “after church” question, you not only find out what they have learned, but you also will help direct them back to their relationship with God and what they know to be true about Him.

As parents, we want to nurture and facilitate transformation in the lives of our kids. Learning how to ask the right questions is a key ingredient in the transformation process.

So this Sunday start a new family tradition and ask, “What do you know to be true about God?” ☪

by Stacy Igarashi

# WORSHIP

God is our Shepherd; God is the Creator; God is love; God is faithful; God is our Provider; God is everywhere; God is all powerful.

After reading John 10:1–18, ask your family to talk about what the Scripture says about who God is and who we are in Him. Make sure you have some sticky notes ready, or a large piece of paper, and lots of fun pens, markers, and crayons. Take this time as a family to list as many attributes of God as you can think of. In the Create section below, you have the opportunity to design a journal or composition notebook to record all the things your family knows about God and each other. This can be a great first page in that journal. When you are done with your list of who God is, stop and reflect on what you wrote. Look at all the things God is. Look at how big God is, how great He is, and how powerful He is. If He is all of these things, He can surely take care of each one of us. Then take time to pray and talk to God, thanking Him for the ways He makes Himself known to us. ☺



by Matt Barnes

# CREATE

In the Traditions section of this month's HomeFront, it suggests coming together every week to ask the "after church" question, "What do you know to be true about God?" Let's take it a step further and create something we can use to keep track of the answers.

First, get a family journal. This will be a place where any member of your family can write their responses in the form of "God statements." Decorate the journal as a family, and place it where everyone can access it. Encourage your kids to draw pictures in the journal of their "God statements." Encourage them to get creative!

Each month, during one of your family nights, take the time to look over the various "God statements" and share your insights. After a few months, consider visiting [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) and creating a word picture with all of the words you've written about who God is! ☺



by Roger Tarabasi

# MARRIAGE

One of the most important and basic needs of man is to be intimately known. We have so much encouragement from the Bible, which speaks of how God knows us intimately. I love the way it states in Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart ...” (Jeremiah 1:5). I also like the way John expresses this intimacy. He writes, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father ...” (John 10:14–15).

Because marriage is a metaphor of God and His church, it clearly demonstrates the importance of couples knowing and being known by each other. One way of knowing and being known is by intentionally spending time together. My wife, Becky, and I are One Year Bible readers. We get to know God more intimately as we spend time in the Bible daily. We are intentional about doing this. We also spend time each day building intimacy with each other by sharing our “highs” and “lows” for the day and then asking how we can pray for one another.

I encourage you to be intentional on a daily basis, both with God and with your husband or wife. Come up with a plan for knowing God more intimately, sharing your “highs” and “lows” of each day, and asking how you can pray for one another. ☺



# BLESSING

There is something incredibly safe and comforting about relationships where we are completely known, and still completely loved. As you read the blessing over each of your children, insert each of their names as a reminder that God knows them intimately.

## BLESSING

"O LORD, you have searched [insert name] and you know [her/him]. You know when [she/he] sits and when [she/he] rises; you perceive [her/his] thoughts from afar. You discern [her/his] going out and lying down; you are familiar with all [her/his] ways. Before a word is on [her/his] tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem [insert name] in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon [insert name] ... For you created [her/his] inmost being; you knit [her/him] together in [her/his] mother's womb. [Insert name] praises you because [she/he] is fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, [Insert name] knows that full well" (Psalm 139:1–5, 13–14).

As parents, you have the amazing opportunity to learn who your children are, inside and out, and to show them that you accept and love them fully. More than that though, you have the chance to point them to a heavenly Father who knows everything about them, who created them, and loves them deeply and extravagantly. They are able to know and love a Jesus who knew and loved them first. Use this month's blessing as a way to remind your children that God knows them fully. Pray that, as they become more and more aware of who created them, they will feel the freedom and safety to chase after a God who already knows all the details of their hearts.

Each month, you will see a different blessing in HomeFront Monthly. This will be your blessing for the entire month. Use this blessing, or consider praying and asking God to direct you to a specific blessing for each of your children. Take the time to speak this blessing into the lives of your children at different times throughout the month. You can do this on the way to school, before bed, or while you eat as a family. Just make sure you have your children's attention. Look them in their eyes and pray the blessing over them. Affirm your love for them by placing a hand on their shoulder or holding their hands. Remember, God's Spirit is at work; He will bless and care for the growing and tender hearts of your children. 🙏



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**Don't Forget the HomeFront Weekly:** A resource to get parents and kids talking about God's Word together.