

home | front

M O N T H L Y

ENVIRONMENT

servicing

Asks the question, "What needs to be done?"

FAMILY FOOD TIME p. 4 & 5
GAME TIME p. 6
STORYTELLING p. 7
WORSHIP p. 10
PRAYER p. 12
BLESSING p. 14

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

Serving approaches the world with a heart that asks, "What needs to be done?" and is willing to do it. But, if I'm honest, I often tend to ask, "What do I need done?" before I am willing to look around and see what needs to be done for others.

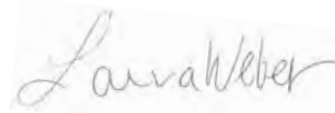
I want to serve, I really do. But, my humanity usually wants to make sure my needs are met first. If I have leftover time and resources, then I'm happy to give them to others. Can't I serve myself and still serve the way Jesus has asked me to? I'm continually realizing that those two things might not always work together.

When I sit with the words of Jesus, my heart can't help but be hit by the continual call to sacrifice everything to follow Him. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34). This journey of choosing Him and of allowing my heart to see and respond to everything around me is going to be a sacrifice. It's going to cost me. I can't serve myself and Jesus ... I'm going to have to choose.

So I'll choose Jesus. I'll choose to continue to ask Him to give me a heart that is willing to sacrifice and

is more able each day to look at the world around me and ask, "What needs to be done?"

I hope this issue of HomeFront Monthly encourages your family to choose to lay down your own lives for the sake of following Jesus and be willing to say, "Yes," when He shows you what needs to be done. ☺



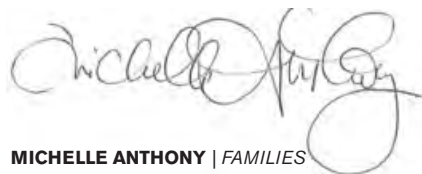
LAURA WEBER | EDITOR
the Tru Team | Costa Mesa, CA

ENVIRONMENT SERVING

This environment encourages a posture of the heart that asks the question, “What needs to be done?” It allows the Holy Spirit to cultivate a sensitivity to others and reminds each of us that we are called to a cause that is bigger than one individual life. It helps fulfill the mandate that, as Christ followers, we are to view our lives as living sacrifices we generously give away!

“What needs to be done?” What if you, I, and our kids walked into every situation with every person, no matter what, and simply asked this question of ourselves? Somebody’s crying: What needs to be done? Does she need to be left alone? Does she need to be hugged? Does she need to talk to someone? Does she need to be prayed for?

Out of my own selfishness, I don’t always want to answer that question the way I know the Holy Spirit wants me to. But when we hear it and respond to it, this becomes a very rich environment for us to lead an other-centered life. What might it look like if we started pursuing this posture with our children from an early age ... teaching them to just walk into any situation asking, “What needs to be done?” Wow, we’d live in a different world! 🙏



MICHELLE ANTHONY | FAMILIES
ROCKHARBOR Church | 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 you commit these verses to memory.

ELEMENTARY VERSE

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
Philippians 2:3–4

PRES/KINDER VERSE

“Serve one another in love.”
Galatians 5:13b

FAMILY FOOD TIME

DINNER ACTIVITY

Dinner Service

My two boys are two years apart. Like most siblings, some days they play well together and other days they just don't. On one of their harder days, I decided to make them serve lunch to one another. Each boy (seven and nine at the time) was asked to make his brother's meal. It had to be something that the other one would like, and they had to clean up whatever mess they made in creating the meal.

What an amazing transformation in their attitudes. One minute they were yelling and fighting and the next minute, they were genuinely asking, "What would you like for lunch?" AJ went first and created a delicious ham, cheese, and mayo sandwich for his brother. He added fruit, chips, and a drink and carried it to his brother's room on a tray. Once Matthew finished eating, he came into the kitchen and created a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, cereal bar, and milk for his brother and brought it to his room. They were both so thrilled with the activity that they asked if they could do it again for dinner.

This month, choose a meal (or several meals) and assign each person in your family a different family member to prepare and serve a meal to. Or, if your children are younger, pair up! Kids can make dinner for Mom and Dad or maybe Mom and Brother can make dinner for Dad and Sister. Just get creative and have fun serving one another! 🍷

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.

FAMILY FOOD TIME

RECIPE

Chicken Bake was an all-time favorite dish growing up and continues to be a favorite in my household even now. It is a super simple dish that takes minutes to prepare, but is simple enough that everyone in your household can help with the preparation. And it is extremely delicious!

Continuing our conversation this month about serving, preparing dinner is a wonderful way your children can serve their family, friends, or guests. As you are preparing the meal with your children, talk to them about the importance of serving and how Jesus came to the earth to serve us, not to be served. As Christians, we are to imitate Christ in all we do, including serving. What great skills you are teaching your children by serving and cooking! Time in the kitchen becomes a memory for you and them. They will feel blessed when they see the dinner they prepared being enjoyed by the people they love. ☺

Chicken Bake (SERVES 3-5)

Prep Time: 15 min. *Bake Time:* 35-45 min.

- Boneless/skinless chicken tenders (enough for your family)
- 2 cans of cream of mushroom soup
- Slices of Swiss cheese (one piece for each chicken tender)
- 1 bag of croutons or stuffing
- 1 stick of butter

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Place the chicken in a greased 9" x 13" baking pan. Top each chicken tender with a slice of cheese. Pour cream of mushroom soup over all. Top with the uncooked croutons or stuffing. Melt the butter and pour over topping. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through. Enjoy!



GAME TIME

YOUNGER KIDS

What Needs to Be Done?

Getting small children to think of others and not be so “me focused” is a difficult task for most parents. Since young children learn best by doing and having fun, try this game with your kids to introduce the concept of serving.

Take a walk around your home with your children. As you walk, ask them to answer the question, “What needs to be done?” As your children point things out to you, choose some tasks to do together. Who will they be serving by doing the tasks? Is it their brother or sister? Or maybe it is Mommy or Daddy. While you are doing the tasks, think of some ways to make each specific task fun and unique.

Explain to your children that you are going to play music, and when they hear it they should start doing the task (e.g., dusting, vacuuming, sweeping). Tell them that when you pause the music, they should freeze. Repeat over and over until the task

is complete. You know your children better than anyone, so make it unique for them. When you have finished the tasks, remind them about who they served by doing the tasks, and about how that person might feel. Talk about how serving God makes God feel too. Repeat this process when you are outside of your home, and pretty soon your little ones will be pointing out serving opportunities everywhere you go. Have fun with this, and enjoy serving alongside your children. ☺

GAME TIME

OLDER KIDS

Cookie Ding Dong Ditch

My friend Michelle recently told me about a game she played with her kids when they were younger. This is a game I would have loved to play as a kid. However, I grew up in Lake Tahoe, so I didn’t have many neighbors. But if I had, this game would have been the best.

- As a family, creatively choose a few neighbors to “Cookie Ding Dong Ditch.” Maybe choose neighbors you don’t know yet. This is a great opportunity to serve your neighbors!
- Whip up your favorite batch of cookies. Wrap them up and finish it off with a note. You may consider writing a verse, a short prayer, or a word of encouragement on the note.

- Quietly sneak over to your neighbors’ houses, leave the cookies on their doorsteps, ring their bells, and run like crazy!
- When you get home after Cookie Ding Dong Ditch, discuss what the experience was like. What was it like to serve your neighbors? Are there any other ways you may be able to serve them in the future? ☺



STORYTELLING

FINDING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY

My husband and I had been married for a few years before we started talking about when we wanted to have a baby. But the more we talked about it, the more loudly we heard God telling us there was more to the situation than we were seeing. As we talked and talked about what we thought our family would be like, something felt off.

At this same time, we have been on a journey of approaching our world with the question, "What needs to be done?" We want to be about the things God is about. We want our hearts to break over the things that break His heart. And we want to be willing to say, "Yes," when He shows us the things that need to be done.

So in the midst of both of these conversations, we started to notice some things in the world around us. The county we live in is pretty diverse; it is one of the wealthiest in the country, yet also has an incredible amount of poverty and need. The foster care system in our area is overflowing with kids who need homes. We started noticing exactly how much Jesus talks in Scripture about caring for the widows, the orphans, and the poor.

**"THE FAMILY WE
WERE TRYING
TO START
HAD ALREADY
BEEN CREATED
BY GOD."**

And then one day it all seemed to click and God's voice became clear to us: Children all around us need a home and parents. The family we were trying to start had already been created by God. We realized that our child was already alive. He or she was already out there in the world waiting for us to find him or her to be welcomed in our home. The answer to, "What needs to be done?" for us is to give a child (our child) a home, a family, and love.

Everything changed that day. We urgently began to pursue adoption. Knowing that we have a child God has chosen for us and that this child isn't home yet, has created such a longing and an ache in my heart. I haven't met my child yet, but I am sure I am created to be this child's mom. The love I have for someone I have not met is deeper than I ever thought possible. This child is already a part of our family—is already mine—although he or she doesn't know it yet. Because of this, I desperately want my child home with our family!

I can't wait for the day I get to look my beautiful child in the face and say, "Do you know how badly we wanted you? We loved you so much that we sought you out. We searched for you. And we were willing to obey God to get you home. You are my child."

So much joy has come for us in discovering more and more about the unique role we have to play in God's story. When we look around at our world and ask, "What needs to be done?" God has made it increasingly clear to us that our unique call is to love and care for the orphans.

Every one of us has been created to give an answer to the question, "What needs to be done?" We all have distinct hearts, resources, and eyes for the world that are all our own. What is your family's call? What act of service has He created each of you to do as you play a part in His big story of redemption and love? 🌟

GOD'S WORD

ONE ANOTHER

Asking, "What needs to be done?" is such a powerful question because each of us has a different perspective or circumstance that will affect how we answer.

Five very different people can look at the same situation and ask, "What needs to be done?" and give five very different answers. Each of us brings something different or unique to the table. Imagine if we were all asking that question on a regular basis. It's almost unfathomable to think about what God could accomplish through so many of His people reaching out to serve with what they have.



HEAR IT

Read 2 Kings 4:8–10. Elisha was a prophet God used in a very powerful way. In this passage, the woman who has been blessed with material possessions sees Elisha's need for food and shelter and uses what she's been given to provide for him. In essence, she asked, "What needs to be done?" and responded by giving what God blessed her with. What has God given you that you can use to serve others: material possessions, talents, skills, time? Make a list!

Now, read 2 Kings 4:11–17 with your family. God sets the example over and over again in His Word, and He constantly provides for those in need. What are some other examples of God providing for people in need in the Bible? How have you seen God provide for your needs (or the needs of those around you)?

DO IT

We've already seen that the Bible is full of examples of God providing for those in need. We also know God wants us to become more like Him. Using the list you created earlier, come up with some unique and practical ways you and your family can perform acts of service to meet the needs of the world.

CHALLENGE

Take time at least once a day for the next two weeks to ask the question, "What needs to be done?" Try asking the question in different situations and locations every day. Use some of the other activities in this month's HomeFront Monthly to create unique responses to the unmet needs you encounter. 🙏

TRADITIONS

FAMILY MISSIONS

The environment of SERVING has us ask, “What needs to be done?” But sometimes, before we can begin to ask what needs to be done for others, we need to simply get to know who they are. We are often in a much better position to serve someone when we are in relationship with them.

What would it look like to start a tradition in your family of simply getting to know the names of the people in your immediate neighborhood? Once you get to know them, you can better know how to serve them.

In the weeks to come, create a map. Allow your kids to draw each house, how the roads connect, and what your neighborhood looks like.

Family Mission #1

Do you know the names of everyone in your neighborhood? If you don't, this is a great place to begin. Start by spending the next few weeks finding out your neighbors' names. Do they have kids? How old are they? Where are they from? How long have they lived in the neighborhood?



“AS YOU GET TO
KNOW YOUR
NEIGHBORS
AND *GROW IN*
RELATIONSHIP
WITH THEM, YOU
WILL BE IN A
PRIME POSITION
TO PARTNER WITH
GOD AS HE SHOWS
YOU WHAT NEEDS
TO BE DONE.”

Family Mission #2

Now that you know the names of everyone in your neighborhood, you are better able to move on to the second step. What would it look like to choose one of these neighbors and invite them over for dinner or a family game night? Invite them to your house for the purpose of hearing their story and what they're about, knowing where they're from, and listening for what they might need. As you listen, look for how God might be working in their lives. Do they know God? Are they open to Him? What physical and emotional needs do they have? How might your family help meet some of those needs?

What might it look like for your family to get into a tradition of inviting families from your neighborhood to your house for the purpose of getting to know them and getting involved in their lives? Service is a lifelong posture of the heart. As you get to know your neighbors and grow in relationship with them, you will be in a prime position to partner with God as He shows you what needs to be done. ☺

WORSHIP

PUSH THROUGH

In the Create section of this issue, you are given directions to make a Serve Kit. Once you have put one together, use it as an act of worship. Set aside one to two hours for your family time to partake in this worship experience. This might be a new experience for you, but make sure to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you worship together.

During your time together:

Ask, "What needs to be done?"

Read, Philippians 2:1–11

Pray, "God, we ask You to open our eyes to see afresh where there are needs around us. Let our family's actions speak the truth of Your love, let those who see us know You better."

Drive or walk, around your neighborhood and community, looking for who and how you can serve today. Remember, keep asking, "What needs to be done?"

Serve: What did you see on your drive? Was there anyone in need? Did you see a place where you could serve?

Change: Did you have expectations before entering this worship experience? How were your expectations met? How was your outlook on this time together changed when you had finished? Is there a way you can replicate this type of worship experience on a regular basis?

Remind your family that you are going through your neighborhood with God. It is His Spirit who will show you what needs to be done, and you can rely on Him to guide your steps! Embrace whatever it is He brings your way, and join Him in what He is already doing. ☺

WE OFTEN THINK OF WORSHIP AS ONLY SINGING BUT **WE CAN WORSHIP GOD IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS: PRAYER, SILENCE, ART, DANCE, GIVING, SHARING, AND THANKSGIVING**, JUST TO NAME A FEW. MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR FAMILY WORSHIP TIME, BUT PREPARE YOURSELF TO HOLD THESE PLANS LOOSELY IF THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS YOU IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION.

MARRIAGE

LOVE LANGUAGE

The servant's heart asks the question, "What needs to be done?" However, for many of us, asking this question is not merely a posture of the heart; rather it becomes a glaring reminder of the busyness of our lives and our daily schedules.

The answer to this question becomes a never ending list of things that are screaming for our attention. Unfortunately, it is our marriages that often suffer the most under this kind of pressure. In the midst of raising children, managing careers, and dealing with financial pressures, many of us find ourselves neglecting the very person we chose to spend our life with.

In Gary Chapman's book, *The Five Love Languages*, he points out that every person experiences and gives love in different ways. There are certain things that make us feel loved and valued, and those things can be different for each person. This can be an interesting experiment for couples because Chapman explains that, by nature, we offer love and service to others in the manner we would wish for it to be given to us ... and we do so without even thinking about it. However, your mate may have an entirely different way of expressing love and serving than you.

For example, if my husband wants to show his love to me, he will usually do a very sacrificial act of service around the house or in the yard. As much as I appreciate his hard work, I don't usually have



"THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT MAKE US FEEL LOVED AND VALUED, AND THOSE THINGS CAN BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH PERSON."

an overwhelming sense of his love for me from this act ... at least not as much as I do when he sends me a thoughtful text or leaves me a love note on the nightstand when he is gone on a business trip. His words of affirmation penetrate deeply and make me understand his love for me. One aspect of serving our spouses is making sure they feel loved and appreciated in their particular love language.

CONSIDER WHAT LOVE LANGUAGE YOUR MATE SPEAKS

- Acts of service
- Words of affirmation
- Gifts
- Quality time
- Physical touch

This month as you consider, "What needs to be done?", perhaps it will mean serving your mate in ways that will make him or her feel like the most loved spouse in the world! 🍷

PRAYER

THANK GOD FIRST

Sometimes, to have a heart of service, we must first shift our focus. During my junior year of college, my friends and I caught ourselves griping and complaining. A lot. About everything.

We were all Christians, had a relationship with God, and said our polite little prayers:

Dear God. Thank you for (blank). Will you please (blank)? Thank you. Amen.

Finally, realizing we desperately wanted and needed to rearrange our thinking, we began intentionally thanking God for every big and little blessing imaginable. It turned into a beloved prayer game. We started to find that saying thanks was a beautiful kind of prayer!

Try it! Go through the alphabet and take turns naming a blessing that starts with each letter and write it down!

Your list might look something like this:

- A:** "God, I am so thankful that **Aunty M.** called me today."
- B:** "I'm so glad we had **butter** to make cookies tonight."
- C:** "Lord, thank you that my **car** started this morning."
- D:** "Jesus, thank you for being my **Deliverer.**"

Once you've gone through the alphabet (or part of it, or maybe just one letter multiple times), you have your own prayer of praise. Help your children understand that God is the Giver of all things (1 Corinthians 8:6), and we can never say thank You enough to Him—even if we went through the alphabet hundreds of times. Saying thank You to Him is a special way to pray.

So go through your prayer of praise again and ask your children, "What can we do with these blessings to bless someone else? What can be done for God's kingdom with what He has given us? How can we show Jesus to the world through what He has taught us?"

"BE JOYFUL ALWAYS; PRAY CONTINUALLY; GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18

Maybe you need to call Aunty M. Maybe your neighbor needs a friend or a batch of cookies. Maybe someone needs a ride or help moving, and you have a car that runs. Or maybe you need to pray for an addicted brother who needs the Deliverer.

My friends and I needed to shift our focus. We chose to shift from focusing on our daily problems to our daily blessings. When we recognized all God has done, we are thinking of Him first before whining about our lives. Over time, choosing to be grateful and acknowledge God develops very thankful hearts. And a thankful heart focused on the King puts us in a prime position to serve Him and His kingdom.

So cut out the griping. Thank God first. Thank Him always. And let Him lead you to whatever needs to be done. ☺

CREATE

SERVE KIT

What if you could be ready at a moment's notice to meet a need your family sees? Take some time this month and collect items as a family that would be helpful as you look for and meet others' needs. When you have brainstormed a list of items, you're ready to create your own "Serve Kit."

This will be useful in your everyday life while driving around, as you pick up or drop off kids, run errands, and more. When you see a need, you will have the tools and supplies to make a difference in someone's day.

Step 1: Pick out some kind of bin or box that will fit in your family car.

Step 2: Decorate the box.

Step 3: Hunt for items to fill the box. First look around your home to see what items you already have. You will be surprised at what creative things you find.

A Serve Kit could include but is not limited to the following:

1. Bottled water—to pass out to people
2. Granola bars—to pass out to people who might ask for food
3. Gift cards—to local fast food restaurants or grocery stores
4. Trash bags—to pick up trash around your local park or community
5. Jump rope—for kids where you are serving to play with
6. Storybook—for kids where you are serving to read
7. Bible—read the Word of God or give it to someone who does not have one (be willing to give it away!)

Step 4: Pack the box and place it in the car.

Step 5: Always be asking the question, "What needs to be done?" 🗣️



CREATE IS A
TIME TO ENGAGE
YOUR FAMILY IN A
**COLLABORATIVE
RESPONSE** TO
HEARING GOD'S
TRUTH.

BLESSING

Asking the question, “What needs to be done?” can begin to feel like another thing on our long to-do lists if we don’t approach it with the right heart. But the amazing thing about service is that we don’t have to do it on our own. God’s Spirit will show us what needs to be done; He will help us, and He will guide us. Our job is simply to partner with Him in the healing and redemption He is already doing in the world.

BLESSING

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8

This month, as you bless your children, remind them that God calls us to walk with Him and love Him. It is out of a close relationship with Him that we begin to truly see what needs to be done around us. So before asking what we can do, let’s always start with, “God, I want to walk with you.”

Each month you will see a different blessing in HomeFront Monthly. This will be your blessing for the entire month. 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 shoulders 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. ☺



home|front

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