

# teach us

ABIDE REJOICE DENY PRAY

teach them to obey everything  
I have commanded you



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## WHAT IS THIS?

Welcome to the Teach Us journal! This is supplemental to the Teach Me journal, where we start thinking about teaching and applying the commands of God within our families.

Whether you have elementary kids, preschool kids, toddlers, or a mixture of all ages, this journal is for you. We will explore together how to explain these important commands of God to our specific-aged kids and provide some ideas and activities to help your family put these into practice.

Similar to the Teach Me Journal, each command will have its own section, and will take Scripture, questions, and activities to show you how to apply them to your family.

Our hope is this journal can spark great questions, form meaningful conversations, and create practical moments for your family, all while having a lot of fun (because it's still for kids, right?).

As parents and guardians, we are excited to partner with you as you disciple your kids and we hope Teach Us can be a practical tool for your family for years to come!

**abide**



Abide is a funny word. It's not one we use in everyday life.

Jesus teaches us "Abide in me, as I in you." Said another way, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you."

Remain in Jesus? What does that mean? How do we do that? These are important questions. As Christians, the people who believe and follow God, it is important that we understand and practice abiding in Jesus.

In this section we will explore how to remain in Jesus everyday and why it is important.

# age-specific

## ELEMENTARY

You might have heard someone say, “Please abide by the rules.” Which means follow the rules. But is that all abiding is? Following rules?

Think of abide this way: what would happen to a plant if it were pulled out of the ground? It would survive for a little while, but eventually it wouldn't be getting the food and energy it needs to keep growing.

To abide in Jesus means we are connected to Him. He is the person who guides our life. He keeps us on the right path and teaches us how to live the best life. If we remain in Jesus, He will remain in us.

## PRESCHOOL

Do you have a favorite blanket or a favorite stuffed animal? Sometimes it helps people feel safe to keep their favorite thing close to them. To abide in Jesus means to stay close to Him, like you might keep your favorite blanket or stuffed animal close to you.

When we stay close to Jesus, we learn from Him and He helps us feel safe. Jesus wants us to be close to Him and He wants us to trust Him.



# scripture

*For the next week, read this verse aloud to your family. After you read it, discuss these questions and see how your discussions develop over the week. We encourage you to spend the week working as a family to memorize this verse.*

“Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can’t bear fruit unless you remain joined to me.”

**JOHN 15:4 (NIRV)**

# reflection

**What do you do to remain joined with Jesus?**

**How does being joined with Jesus change your life?**

# remaining in Jesus

Did you know grapes grow on a vine?

Vines are plants that use their branches to move along the ground, fences, or anything else in their path. The vine gets its nutrients from the roots that are planted in the ground. The vine carries those nutrients to its branches so that the branches can produce grapes.

We all love good fruit! Specifically, a fresh off-the-vine grape.

Jesus in John 15:4 says, "Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me."

What do you think would happen if you cut off a branch from the vine?

It would stop producing grapes, would have no energy to grow, and it would eventually turn into a plain ol' stick.

To remain with Jesus means to always be connected to Him and remember that He is the source of truth and life. When we are connected to Him, we grow and produce good fruit like grapes. What are grapes in our lives? They are loving others, kind acts, patience with our siblings, and all the other ways we are like Jesus.

When life gets hard, we can always turn to Him because He is our source of comfort. Jesus wants you to stay close to Him, not so you can become big and strong, but so you will become more like Him.

As your family continues with this journal, remember to be branches attached to the vine. Think of ways you can remain close to God and remind each other that Jesus is our source.





# practical ideas

## READ

Before you eat a meal together, stop and read John 15:1-17. Share what you liked about this Scripture.

## WALK

Take a short family walk with no distractions. Before you start the walk, gather as a family and ask God to show each person one thing to be thankful for. Once you return, have each member of the family share what God showed them.

## PIZZA

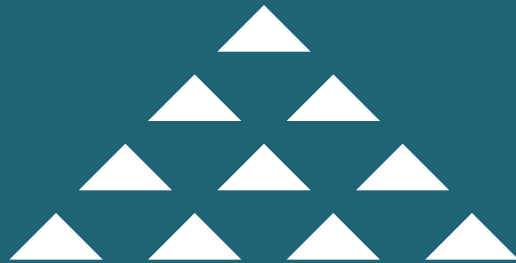
Make a fruit pizza as a family! As you make it, have someone read Galatians 5:22-23 and talk about how abiding in Jesus produces fruit of the Spirit. Then, enjoy your pizza as a family!

# rule of life

WE STAY CLOSE TO JESUS BECAUSE HE IS  
ALWAYS WITH US.



**rejoice**



Isn't it amazing that a command of God is to rejoice? When we think of commands, we often think about strict rules or things we shouldn't do. However, God's commands are different, He wants us to rejoice, be joyful, and celebrate being a part of His family! During this section we will look at what it looks like to rejoice, in every part of our lives, and what that can look like for your whole family.

# age-specific

## ELEMENTARY

To rejoice is to show joy. Joy is understanding the goodness of God. Joy is different than happiness, because happiness is an emotion that comes and goes based on what is going on around us. For example, if you lose your soccer game, you usually aren't very happy. However, you can still be joyful, because you can know that that, thanks to God, you have been created with a body that can run, kick, and play soccer! There is a lot of ways the goodness of God impacts our lives, and to rejoice is to live your life remembering that and acting out of joy.

## PRESCHOOL

To rejoice is to show joy! Joy is understanding that God is big and a part of everything in our lives. A lot of feelings can come and go, like being scared, sad or happy, but being joyful never has to go away. Sometimes we rejoice that God made our bodies by playing, running really fast, or giving a hug. Sometimes we rejoice with our words, by saying thank you to God for our families or friends. Sometimes we even rejoice by singing a song to God, which is one of the many ways we can worship!



# scripture

*For the next week, read this verse aloud to your family. After you read it, discuss these questions and see how your discussions develop over the week. We encourage you to spend the week working as a family to memorize these verses.*

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 (NIV)**

# reflection

**What stuck out to you about these verses?**

**What questions do you have about these verses?**

**What do these verses teach you about God?**

**How should we act now that we've heard these verses?**

# rejoicing

Can you imagine Mario going to Bowser's birthday party? It would be hard to celebrate someone who is always stealing your friends, trying to destroy you and take your kingdom. It would be difficult to want to celebrate someone you can't trust.

In Psalms 33: 21 it says, "in Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust His holy name." We can rejoice and celebrate Jesus because we can trust Him. Throughout the Bible we see how Jesus loved and cared for others, He even died on the cross so all of us could be saved! We can celebrate Jesus because we can remember all the amazing things, He has done for us, and we can remember He loves us so much.

However, life isn't always a party, and there will be times when it's difficult to want to celebrate. Sometimes things in life don't go like we want them to or things happen to our families or our friends that are really difficult.

When that happens, we can start to feel sad or frustrated or may even feel angry with Jesus. We wonder why this would happen.

The great news is we can trust Jesus with our questions and our emotions. We can tell Him we're angry and ask Him our questions. Rejoicing doesn't always mean having to be happy or celebrate, it's about showing joy. We can have joy that Jesus will always be with us and He will put people in our lives to help us when things are hard. In the book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul tells us to "rejoice always." So when life is a party and when life is really difficult, we can always find a way to rejoice.



# practical ideas

## PARTY

This will look different for every family—it could be a dance party, an ice cream party or a special activity. Use it as a time to celebrate your family. Share what you love most about your family, then thank God for the family He has given you. Families aren't perfect, and there are a lot of difficult things that happen, yet we can still find ways to rejoice in the families we are in and make memories celebrating what God has given.

## SPREAD JOY

Decide as a family who you are going to spread joy to—neighbors, family members, or friends. Then make cookies, pick up ice cream, build a treat basket, and make sure to add a card talking about why you are thankful to have them in your life. While delivering the gifts, talk as a family about how part of rejoicing is being in community with others! We are thankful for the community that God has placed us in, and we are thankful that we get to rejoice with others, because no one would want to go to a party by themselves!

## JAR

In your home, set out a glass jar with some paper and a pen or pencil. Then, encourage your family throughout the week to write down anything they are thankful for or anything they say during the week that they think is worth rejoicing. At the end of the week, spend time reading it together as a family!

# rule of life

WE CAN ALWAYS FIND A WAY TO REJOICE



**deny**





One of the commands that Jesus gives us is to deny ourselves. What does that mean? You might have heard this command said differently; don't put anything before God, put others' needs above your own, love God and love people. When Jesus tells us to deny ourselves, He is telling us to put aside our wants and needs and think of God and others first.

# age-specific

## ELEMENTARY

To deny means to fully live our lives for God. We all want something, whether it is a new toy, the latest and greatest technology, to have a lot of friends, maybe even to be a famous singer, actor, or athlete. None of these things are bad wants to have. However, we are to surrender these things to Jesus (that just means to make everything second to following Jesus). Being a follower of Jesus isn't always easy. Sometimes we have to make sacrifices for Jesus or for other people. We might not do the same things as some of our friends, and it may seem like we are missing out on certain activities or opportunities because we choose to follow God, but putting Jesus' and others' needs first will always be worth it.

## PRESCHOOL

Have you ever really wanted something? I mean really wanted something like a new toy or a cookie or to go play at the park? Now imagine putting Jesus before all of those things. To deny yourself means to put Jesus before everything that we want and love. Denying yourself means giving up something that means a lot to us for the good of Jesus or someone else.



# scripture

*For the next week, read this verse aloud to your family. After you read it, discuss these questions and see how your discussions develop over the week. We encourage you to spend the week working as a family to memorize these verses.*

Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves. None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others.

**PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4 (NIRV)**

# reflection

**What is something that you can do for others today?**

**How can we put Jesus or others first before ourselves?**

**Are there things that you put before Jesus?**

**Why can it be difficult for us to put others before ourselves?**

# put Jesus first

I am a big sports fan. Especially when it comes to football.

I love to watch my favorite sports team play and get really excited when they score a touchdown. I have jerseys of the players, cups, stuffed animals with the logo on them, signs and pictures of the team – it's fair to say I am a big fan.

I really don't like it when they are losing, especially when it is against a team that my friends or family root for. Then I tend to get a little competitive. With football though, sometimes my team plays on Sundays while we are at church, and I can get distracted by the game. I find myself looking for updates on the scores and wondering how the team is doing. If I find that we are winning, I might start bragging and celebrating even before the game is over. But is that really what I should be doing? Should I let myself be distracted instead of focusing on Jesus?

When I spend time being distracted, I could be missing out on an opportunity to talk to Jesus, worship Jesus, or be with others. When I choose to brag or gloat that my team is better than another team, I might have missed out on helping someone around me or I could end up hurting someone's feelings with my words.

The truth is, sometimes it means I'm being selfish. I can sometimes only think about what would make me happy instead of thinking what can make Jesus and others happy.

I put football as my number one on my important list when, really, it should have been maybe number ten on the list. I didn't need to look at the score, I could have just waited till after church to see who won.

Liking a sports team and getting really excited for when they play is not a bad thing. Liking anything and getting excited for things to happen isn't a bad thing. When I make it my number one priority, that's probably not what I should do. Loving Jesus and loving others should always be my number one.



# practical ideas

## ROUTINE

List some of the things you do or think about when you wake up: drink water, ask what time it is, get the goop out of your eyes, brush teeth, get dressed, eat breakfast, pet the family pet. These are normal ways to start your day. But what if we added a phrase to the beginning of our morning? Before you get out of bed, try saying, "Good morning, Jesus, today I am going to put you first." To practice, let's say it three times in slow motion. Did you do it? Now let's say it three times as fast as you can. Perfect! Now in the morning, let's remember to put Jesus first right when we wake up and see how it can change the way we do or think about things during our day.

## PLAY A GAME

Have you ever played Duck-Duck-Goose? What about Me second- Me second- You first. Everyone sits in a circle and as you go around the circle tapping people on the head instead of saying, "duck" says, "me second" and then when you finally tag a person to chase you instead of saying, "goose" says, "you first." This helps us remember to deny the things that only make us happy and remember to put others' needs above our own needs.

## CRAFTS

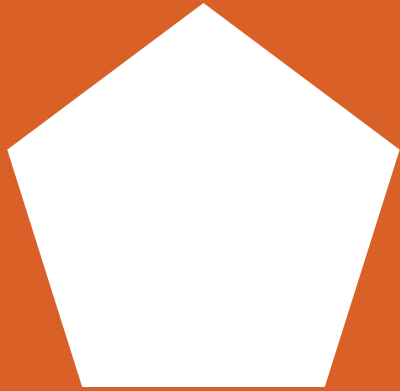
Create a picture by drawing and/or using other craft supplies you have around the house. Place all the items (stickers, crayons, pencils, etc.) in the center of the table. The group will get a practical lesson on letting others go first through this activity. Everyone will start with a blank page. The catch to this activity is that no one can just reach out and take an item to use – they have to ask to use it first. Reach out, take an item, then find someone in the group and offer it to them to use first. After someone else uses the item, then they are able to use it themselves. When they are done, they can put it back and choose another item from the center of the table and repeat the exercise of asking first.

# rule of life

WE PUT JESUS FIRST



**pray**



When we are told to pray, it isn't just something we use when we are in trouble or when we need something from God, though He wants us to come to Him with those things as well. Prayer is an avenue we use to build a relationship with Jesus. God wants to hear from us for everything. He wants us to trust Him with our whole lives, and prayer helps us bring everything to Him. In this section we will see how to pray and talk more about why we pray.

# age-specific

## ELEMENTARY

Prayer is more than just telling God what you want or what you need. Prayer is how we build a relationship with God. As He talks to us through His word and His Spirit, prayer is how we talk to God back. You wouldn't like it if your friends never talked to you, right? Or when they did, all they did was ask you for stuff? That would be terrible. Now think of God like this. He wants you to trust Him with everything in your life. He wants to know your heartaches, your joys, when you mess up, and when you do your best. He wants you to be open and honest as you talk to Him about what is going on in your life. When you pray, you are building a relationship or friendship with God.

## PRESCHOOL

Prayer is talking to God. God is trustworthy and wants to hear from us. He wants to know how your day went, how you are feeling, and what was hard to do. He wants to be your friend. And we talk to our friends. Prayer is our way of having a conversation with God. When we pray, we want to tell Jesus how great He is! We want to thank Him for giving us sunshine, and food, our friends and our families. We also want our lives to look like how He wants them, so we ask Him to help make us kind and more like Jesus. When we pray, we also want to tell Jesus about when we messed up, like we hit our sibling, or got mad that the snack wasn't our favorite. Then we ask Him to forgive us. And He does! We can pray when we are scared and want Him to help us. We can pray when we are going to have a yummy meal. We can pray all the time for everything. And Jesus wants to hear about everything.





# scripture

*For the next week read, this verse aloud to your family. After you read it, discuss these questions and see how your discussions develop over the week. We encourage you to spend the week working as a family to memorize this verse.*

At all times, pray by the power of the Spirit. Pray all kinds of prayers. Be watchful, so that you can pray. Always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

**EPHESIANS 6:18 (NIRV)**

# reflection

**What stuck out to you?**

**Is there anything that was confusing or that you have questions about?**

**Why did Jesus teach His disciples to pray?**

**Why would it be important for us to pray?**

# praying like Jesus

Once there was a man who had a big job. He had to save the whole world. There were bad people, and lost people, and it was His job to save them all. It was a heavy job. There were so many people, who were all going through all sorts of trouble, and He had to find a way to save them all. Now, the man could have given up, gotten mad, or just tried by Himself, but instead, He went off by Himself and talked to His father. He told Him about everything going on, how He was feeling, and asked for help.

Now this wasn't just a regular person, or a superhero, but this was Jesus. Jesus prayed and He prayed often. He would take time to be by Himself away from other people to spend time with God. Jesus was our example, a person whose actions we want to follow. He showed us how to pray so that we can build our relationship with God by praying just like how Jesus did with God.

"This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

We can pray these same words that Jesus did, or we can also learn from the structure of this prayer for our own prayers. First, remember who God is, His power and what He has done for us. Second, remember to ask Him to be a part of every part of your day, whether at school or home. God is the one who provides for us, so remember to ask for His guidance throughout your day. Third, if there is anything we need to repent, or ask for forgiveness, take time to do that. Finally, ask God to help you not sin throughout the day. We will constantly be at battle with the things we know we shouldn't do and the things we should do—ask God to help battle with you. Jesus knew all these steps were important when He was praying and that means they are important to us, too.



# practical ideas

## COUNTING BLESSINGS

Before your meal, before bed, or on your way to school, have your child take time to count their blessings. Have them list out all of the ways that God has blessed them. Then thank God in prayer for all of those things. Bonus, keep a written log of all the things to see how they change.

## PRAYER JOURNAL

Either buy a small journal from a store or create one by folding and stapling some loose paper together. Write their name on the cover. Then, during a set time have them (or help them) write down their prayers to God. Have the whole family do this at the same time so it is easier to remember.

## QUIET GAME

Challenge your family to spend 30 seconds being completely silent. While they are silent have them pray. See if your whole family can make it 30 seconds with your entire focus on praying. Up the time as your family gets more and more comfortable praying.

# rule of life

WE TALK TO GOD ABOUT EVERYTHING

