



Growtogether

G R O W I N G I N F A I T H A N D L I F E

May Grow Together encourage and inspire the faith you share in your home and family. May the conversations and practices, the learning and quiet actions bring abundant joy, peace, and growing grace throughout this year.



SPACE for REFLECTION

What will be different about your 2022? As the new year begins, many of us will reflect on what was wonderful about last year and what we might like to change. We might start new habits, change some old ones, or simply step into the possibility and freshness of a new year.

Perhaps the freshness of 2022 has already lost its shine. Life has returned to busy, work, school and all the pieces that fill the spaces.

Reflecting on this year might bring feelings of both despair and hopefulness, but God is big enough to hold all of it!

Despite what we do, or don't do, we know God loves us and will continue to be with us in our homes and families.

During this term we walk through the season of Lent in the lead up to Easter. Take the time to consider ways you might support the faith of your family or home to centre everyone's hearts. It might be paring back something from your routines to create a 'gap'. It might be that you take up reading the Bible together once a week. Perhaps you will simply plan to eat a meal together with time to talk, share and pray.

May God give you moments of reflection throughout this term; time and space to breathe and listen for his small still voice. And may the Holy Spirit give you courage to carry out what you hear.

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

MATTHEW 11: 28-30

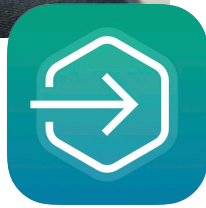


Supporting your faith resource

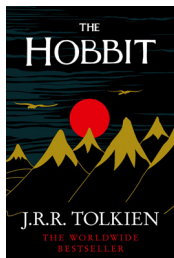


Lectio 365 for families

is an app-based devotion which helps families pray the Bible together every day.



Read together with your family



The Hobbit – J.R.R. Tolkien

"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit." And now you just have to go and read the rest yourself! A classic.

Parent resource for all ages

Talking Sex By the Book – by Patricia Weerakoon

This book combines secular research with biblical guidelines to answer all the many questions parents have about providing sex education to children of all ages. Topics include body development and image, sex and relationships, pornography, and gender. Activities are included for parents to work through together.



Grow Ministries resource

Talk Time Cards

Talk Time cards have been created to encourage faith conversations by bringing God into everyday life, providing meaningful sharing of memories, activities, events and experiences of faith.

Order yours at www.growministries.org.au



Putting it into Practice – one family's story



"I have found that faith conversations happen when I'm least expecting - and hoping. I can plan for a great devotional time and sometimes the conversation gets going, but not always. Often, it's the time when I'm alone with one of my children and they have the time and space to ask me a question, or probe at a statement that is seeking something more. The two times this occurs most regularly is in the car or at night, when I'm exhausted and ready for bed – and they are ready for a chat! I'm learning that faith really needs to be intentional (this is often the starting point) but it's the relational moments where the really pertinent conversations take place."



Grandparents

Often grandparents live far away from their grandchildren. Which means you can double grandparent power by not only supporting your own grandchildren's faith, but also the faith of other children in your congregation.

Whether you live close or not, the art of letter writing is a gift to be relished by writers and recipients alike. Often a letter doesn't need to say much at all. You could write about something you are doing, something God is doing in your life and include a short prayer for your grandchild. These same letters can also be adapted for other children and young people in your congregation!

The Lord is my shepherd,
I *lack nothing*.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, *he refreshes my soul*.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will *fear no evil*, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they *comfort me*.

You *prepare a table* before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your *goodness and love* will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

P S A L M 23



Stages of faith development – infants



The first year of your child's life is vital for healthy emotional and relational development. What occasionally seems like one long, sleepless fog punctuated by nappy changes and feeds is one of the most exciting periods in your child's life.

You are the first 'face of God' that your child experiences. Do what feels natural as you care for your baby and learn about this unique, new little person in your family. Apart from God you know your child better than anyone.

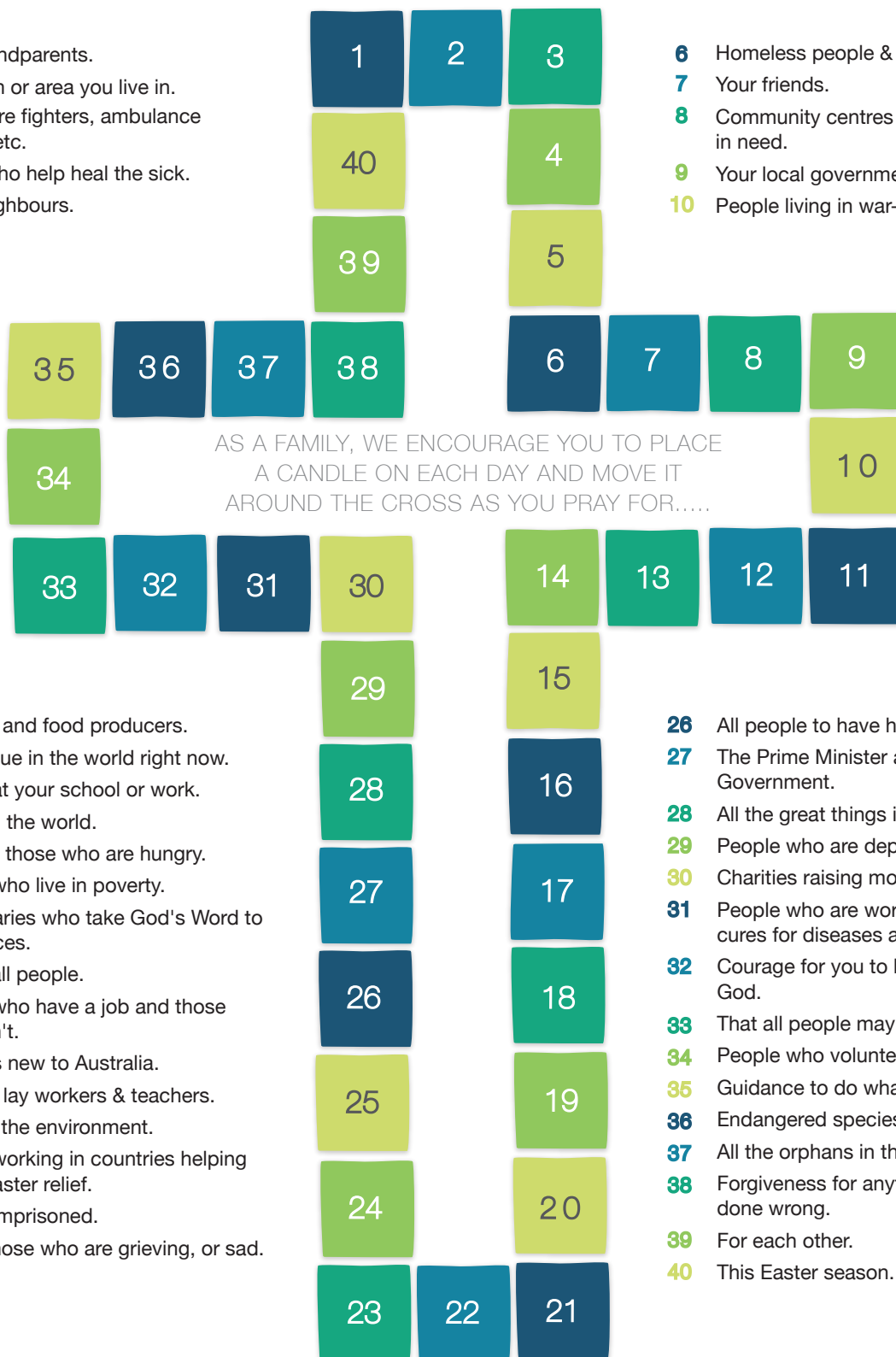
- Try to provide a safe, predictable environment so that your child will have a basis on which to develop a sense of trust and faith.
- Express your love to your infant as you hold them, talk to them or sing to them.
- Pray for your child daily.
- Read stories to your child as soon as possible.
- Let your child experience the outdoors with its varied sights and smells.
- Introduce your baby to your church community.

At Christmas we celebrate God's coming to earth as a human baby, to grow up in a human family - much like your own. It's amazing to think that God, who created the universe, also experienced every developmental milestone that our babies experience. This may help explain why, as an adult, he related so well to children and why he loves your baby in a special way.

PRAYER CROSS 40 DAYS OF PRAYER

- 1** Your grandparents.
- 2** The town or area you live in.
- 3** Police, fire fighters, ambulance officers etc.
- 4** Those who help heal the sick.
- 5** Your neighbours.

- 6** Homeless people & asylum seekers.
- 7** Your friends.
- 8** Community centres who help people in need.
- 9** Your local government.
- 10** People living in war-torn countries.



- 11** Farmers and food producers.
- 12** A big issue in the world right now.
- 13** People at your school or work.
- 14** Peace in the world.
- 15** Food for those who are hungry.
- 16** People who live in poverty.
- 17** Missionaries who take God's Word to new places.
- 18** Joy for all people.
- 19** People who have a job and those who don't.
- 20** Migrants new to Australia.
- 21** Pastors, lay workers & teachers.
- 22** Care for the environment.
- 23** People working in countries helping with disaster relief.
- 24** People imprisoned.
- 25** For all those who are grieving, or sad.

- 26** All people to have hope in the Lord.
- 27** The Prime Minister and the Australian Government.
- 28** All the great things in your day.
- 29** People who are depressed.
- 30** Charities raising money for good causes.
- 31** People who are working on finding cures for diseases and sicknesses.
- 32** Courage for you to help others know God.
- 33** That all people may know God's love.
- 34** People who volunteer.
- 35** Guidance to do what is right.
- 36** Endangered species of animals.
- 37** All the orphans in the world.
- 38** Forgiveness for anything you have done wrong.
- 39** For each other.
- 40** This Easter season.

