

Crossing Kids

Family Vacation Devotional!

“Vacationing Together for the Glory of God”



“Family vacations are FAMILY vacations. Ultimately family vacations are about being together as a family, deepening relationships with each other, conversing together, laughing together and encouraging each other. What a family does together is much more important than where a family goes together. And it’s possible to have a low-budget vacation that is truly wealthy in what matters, developing close relationships as a family, and creating memories that make a difference, all for the glory of God.”

-C.J. Mahaney

Wouldn’t it be exciting for your family to grow closer to one another *and* closer to God on this summer’s family vacation? Crossing Kids is excited to offer this devotional booklet as a tool to help your family spend time with God and each other this summer. Use these devotions in a way that best fits your family’s schedule: while on the road, waiting in the airport, in the hotel room each night before bed, or even at a rest stop! We’ve included many activities and ideas for you to use on the road or at home. We pray that your family will know this year’s vacation is a gift from God and enjoy it for His glory.

Crossing Kids Staff

Making Memories

Without looking at a calendar, do you remember what you did one month ago today? How about what you ate for supper one week ago? Probably not. But you most likely remember where you went on your last vacation or trip, what you did, and maybe even some of the restaurants where you dined. Vacations create memories that can last for a long time — sometimes an entire lifetime.

Discuss: What kind of memories do you think you'll make on this vacation?

Remembrance is one of the strongest messages in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. God wanted his people to remember what he did for them in the past. He wanted them to remember that he had saved them from difficult situations, that he had been faithful to them since the beginning of time, and that he had given them special blessings even while they traveled from place to place. As they recalled his goodness, God's people would know that they could go into every day with confidence, knowing their Lord would be with them.

Read I Corinthians II:23-25. Just before Jesus was taken away to be crucified, he met with his disciples and shared a very special meal with them. As he gave them the bread and as they drank from the cup, he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He wanted his disciples to remember what he had done—and what he would continue to do—for them. When we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, it strengthens us as we head into a new day, situation, or adventure.

Discuss: What memories has God created in your life in the last twenty-four hours, the last week, or on your last vacation?

Bible Verse: "I will remember the deeds of the Lord." -Psalm 77:11

Prayer: Lord, I have great memories of your blessings in my life. Help me to never forget or take those memories for granted as I begin each new day. Give each of us joyful memories as we head into this vacation. Amen.

Activity: Make a memory book of pictures from past vacations. Spend time talking about how God has blessed you on past trips and remember his faithfulness. Pray that He will bless your vacation this summer and that your family will remember to give Him thanks for it. Decide how you will make a memory book for this year's vacation. (For an idea for younger children, go to: <http://www.nickjr.com/printables/doras-travel-journal.jhtml>.) Discuss one thing each person would like to do while on vacation. Make a list and try to accomplish these ideas.

We're Going to Be Spending a Lot of Time Together

On vacations, families spend more time together than they usually do during a typical day or week. During a regular week, family members are running around doing their own thing—going here and there and everywhere! But now you're on vacation. Look at those around you and say, "We're going to be spending a lot of time together!" Okay, let's be honest. When we spend this much time with someone, some stressful times are likely. Others may do things that get on our nerves. We don't always want to do the same things. Arguments might start. We may even wish we had more time alone. But there's good news!

Read: Philippians 2:1-11

Discuss:

- How does Christ show his love?
- Remember that you're not perfect and your family's not perfect.
- Pray for patience. Ask others (and God) for forgiveness when you've acted selfishly.
- Try to treat others the way you want them to treat you.
- Remember that our Savior wants family members to be blessings to each other. We're each unique—a special creation.
- Spend some time laughing together (*with*, not *at*, each other!)
- Respect each other and love each other as Jesus loves you.
- Thank God for each person around you. Try looking at each other as a special gift God has given you.

Remember that we're all sinners and in need God's forgiveness. And while we're all in this together, God is ultimately in control and in charge! Enjoy the trip . . . and those around you!

Bible verse: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." – Ephesians 4:2-3

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for being patient with me. I will always need your love and forgiveness. Help me to learn to be patient and loving with everyone around me. I love you, Jesus. Amen.

Activity: Write down each person's name in your family on a separate piece of paper and put them in a hat. Draw one family member's name at a time. Have everyone else in the family say what he or she loves about that family member. List as many unique and wonderful qualities about each person as possible. You might want to create a list to put in your scrapbook.

How Much Longer?

On almost every trip, someone asks, “How much longer?” or “Are we there yet?” Has anyone said that yet while you’ve been traveling? We want to get to our destination, but we don’t want it to take too long. We want to see and do all of the things we’ve been waiting for! Sometimes it’s hard to be patient. It’s hard to wait.

That doesn’t happen only on vacations. It’s tough to wait until it’s time to open presents on Christmas. We want to know how much longer until a program starts on TV. It’s hard to be patient when we’re hungry and supper isn’t ready. And when we really have to go to the bathroom, we might yell, “How much longer?” We’re used to having things in a hurry, and we don’t like waiting.

God, however, is very patient with us. He wants us to trust him, to pray to him, and to go to him for help each day. He could become very impatient and angry when we ignore him or when we put other things ahead of him, but instead he is patient with us. Love is patient.

Read I Corinthians 13:4 out loud and insert your names for love. God’s patient love changes the way we live and love. Pray that God would make that true of who you are

Discuss: How has his love changed your life?

God’s patient love is always there for us. We don’t have to wait for his goodness. His gifts of hope and forgiveness through Jesus are always present. Sometimes it might *feel* like God isn’t around, but he *is* always with us. He is patient with us and will always love us —we’ll never have to wait for his love!

Bible Verse: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance - 2 Peter 3:9

Prayer: Thank you, God, for being patient with me, for loving me, and for always being near me. I don’t know how much longer it will be until I can thank you in heaven, but I’ll be patient in waiting for that perfect day. Amen.

Activity: Hold your breath over a bridge game – see who can hold their breath the longest! Also, see license plate game on page 9! It is a great way to pass the time in the car!

Vacation Pictures

Vacations and cameras go hand-in-hand. With some digital cameras you can take hundreds of pictures and see each one right after taking it. There are so many exciting things to see in this amazing world. Whether you are traveling to grandma's house, the zoo, the beach, another country, or just staying home, there are amazing things to see and take pictures of. Just think...God, the Creator of all, made every single thing your eyes can see! Everything you will see on your vacation points to the glory of God!

Read Genesis 1.

Discuss: Discuss how God made His world and what things we will see on our vacation that God made. What are some of your favorite things that God has created? (Mountains, trees, ocean, animals, people?) How do all of these things point to the glory of God?

Bible Verse: "Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him."
– Colossians 1:15-16

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for making such a beautiful world. Thank you for giving us a chance to see more of your creation and enjoy all the work of your hands. Help us to remember to give glory to You for all you have made. You are an awesome God! Amen.

Activity: Purchase disposable cameras for each person in your family. Have each person take pictures on the trip and make their own collage or memory when you return home. You could also spend time drawing or painting pictures of God's creation and everything you saw on your trip. Another idea: collect items from nature on your trip (seashells, pinecones, rocks, leaves, etc.) to make a scrapbook or other project to remind you of our glorious Creator.

Will We Eat Soon? I'm Getting Hungry!

Are you hungry? Well, where would you like to eat? Vacations often mean eating out, and our options are plentiful! If you've driven to a vacation spot, there's a good chance that you've made several stops at fast-food restaurants. If you're camping, you'll almost certainly be eating out—eating outside! God is so good in making sure we have food to eat in our various circumstances. Sometimes it might not be a lot, but he still provides it for us.

Read: Numbers 11. God put many stories in the Bible about hungry people. When the Lord led his people out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, he fed them with manna from heaven. But the people complained and wanted meat too, so God provided them with quail to eat.

Read 1 Kings 17. In Elijah's time, there was a great famine in the land, but God had ravens bring him bread and meat every morning and night. Sometime later, Elijah stayed in a house that was just about to run out of food, but God performed a miracle and made sure that the jar of flour and a jug of oil would never run out.

Discuss: Can you think of other times God provided food for his people?

Do you know the story of the time Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus the women and children with them, using just five small loaves of barley bread and two fish? You can read about it in John 6:1–15. Jesus fed everyone, yet they had so much food left over. What a miracle! Hungry? Jesus hears when your stomach growls and wants to help. He knows what we need and has plenty of answers for us. Let's give thanks to the Lord!

Bible Verse: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 118:1).

Prayer: Dear Jesus, please forgive us for the times we take for granted that we have plenty of food to eat. Thank you for all you provide. We know we'd have nothing without you. Help us to see your miracles and always give thanks to you! Amen.

Activity: Have the entire family pretend to be restaurant critics for a newspaper and rate the new food you try. Have each family member order something different and share each dish. Rate the food, atmosphere, and service on a scale of one to five stars. Another idea: Order an extra meal or get leftovers in a box and give to a homeless person you might see when you leave.

Where Are We Going to Sleep Tonight?

Do you have trouble sleeping when you're on vacation? Mattresses (or sleeping bags), nighttime sounds, and new surroundings are all different from what you're used to. While vacations should be a time to relax, we sometimes find it hard to get comfortable. It's a blessing to have a place to sleep though, and it's easy to take that for granted. Night after night we lie down, often forgetting to thank God for nice beds, pillows, sheets, nightlights, and maybe even stuffed animals!

Discuss: Have you ever thought about where Jesus slept as he traveled around from town to town?

Read Matthew 8:19-20. Jesus once said that many times during his ministry he didn't have a place to lay his head—no comfy pillow or mattress to sleep on. Jesus didn't say this so people would feel sorry for him. He said it after a man told him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'" Jesus wanted to let the man know that following him wasn't easy. Even the animals had regular beds in which to sleep, but Jesus didn't have a home to live in because he traveled around ministering to people and teaching them.

As you go to sleep tonight, think about what Jesus' life on earth must have been like—even his first bed was on a pile of itchy hay in a manger. And then thank him for all the blessings you have throughout every day *and night*.

Bible Verse: He who watches over you will not slumber - Psalm 121:3

Prayer: Dear Jesus, while you lived on the earth, you may not have had a comfy bed. But I can sleep peacefully tonight because I know that you never sleep. As God in heaven, you always have your eye on me, wherever I am—day and night. I pray in your name. Amen.

Activity: Have a good old fashion pillow fight. Laugh and have fun together! Sing songs together before bed or make up a family nighttime song or chant!

What I Did on My Summer Vacation

Discuss: Stop right now and share with your family or travel group some of the highlights from your vacation that you would write about. It's good to think about the memories we made on our vacation—both the good and the not so good. What did God do on my vacation?

When you consider all the things God did with you and for you on your vacation, you probably want to thank and praise him. Before you thank God, read and remember this invitation his Son, Jesus, gives as we travel with him every day:

Read Matthew 11:28-30.

Praise God the Father for vacations, families, and blessings! Praise him for his forgiveness, love, and salvation! Praise God the Son for his invitation to rest with him every day. Praise God the Holy Spirit for giving you faith so that one day, when you arrive in heaven, you'll hear Jesus say to you, "Welcome home!"

Bible Verse: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." – Matthew 11:28

Prayer: How can we thank and praise you enough, God—Father, Son, and Spirit? Your love carried us through our vacation, and it will bring us through whatever we have to deal with in the days ahead. Thank you for everything you did on this vacation. We look forward to traveling with you every day. We love you. Amen.

Activity: Find an object(s) that you can take home to help you remember this vacation. Write a note and attach it to the object that says "Summer Vacation 2008". Create a memory book of all the activities you did from this devotion. Make a list of all the ways God was with you during your vacation.

Other Vacationing Ideas

Vacationing from A to Z: Plan activities for each letter in the alphabet. For the letter A, ride in an airplane, make an apple pie, or visit an aquarium, for the letter B, play a family game of basketball. For the letter C, visit a church in another city. Kids can color a picture for each activity that goes with a letter. Spend time thanking God for each activity and for giving your family time to enjoy it!

Get in the Game: Buy a new board game and play every night on vacation. Ideas: Clue, Boggle, Uno Attack.

Table Talk: Purchase Around the Table Family Talk – Daily Conversation Starters. 314-374-4878 or danielsbt@charter.net – Draw a question at meals for everyone to answer.

Scavenger Hunt: Make a list of and look for local items from where you are staying.

Car Games: Turn off the radio and DVD player and have some fun together!

I Spy: Pick out an object that everyone can see. Then give them a clue by saying, "I spy something ..." (Say its shape, color or size) The other players ask questions about what you see and you only answer with "yes" or "no". The first player who guesses right becomes the new spy.

20 Questions: One player is chosen to be the answerer. That person chooses a subject but does not reveal this to the others. All other players are questioners. They each take turns asking a question which can be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." The answerer answers each question in turn. Sample questions could be: "Is it in this room?" or "Is it bigger than a breadbox?" If a questioner guesses the correct answer, that questioner wins and becomes the answerer for the next round. If 20 questions are asked without a correct guess, then the answerer has stumped the questioners and gets to be the answerer for another round.

Books on CD: There is a great selection at the local library!

A to Z: Find words beginning with "A", on signs around you. Have the players take turns, after "A", go to "B", and so on. Can you get to "Z" and finish the alphabet? Alternate the starting person at the start of a new game, so that everyone gets a chance with the challenging letters. (For younger players you may want to skip the difficult letters.)

Go to http://www.activitiesforkids.com/travel/travel_hints.htm for more vacation game ideas!

License Plate Game

Check the box beside a state's name when you see a license plate from that state. Then lead your family in a brief general prayer for the people of the state or choose a more specific prayer request, such as for government leaders, pastors, unemployed workers, unbelievers, teachers, medical personnel, children, churches, the homeless, or the dying. Write down what you prayed for the people in that state.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska | <input type="checkbox"/> Louisiana | <input type="checkbox"/> North Dakota |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arizona | <input type="checkbox"/> Maine | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado | <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut | <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhode Island |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delaware | <input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi | <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida | <input type="checkbox"/> Missouri | <input type="checkbox"/> South Dakota |
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