



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

CONNECTING FAMILIES TO GOD AND EACH OTHER



Grace and peace to you and your families. As we live into 2019, we begin a new month together.

During this month, in the United States, people often focus on Valentine's Day, hearts, and the celebration of love. My hope is that this month will be a time for your family to celebrate the **love** you have for one another, for God, and for your

neighbors.

This is a good time to talk about the many forms of love, growing in our understanding of God's love for us, our love for family and friends, and God's call for us to love our neighbors. As you celebrate **love** this month, find ways to show your **love** for family and neighbor.

I wonder: How will your family share God's love this month?

When you gather for your family time together; listen to one another as you share what it feels like to be loved, and to love others. Remember family time can take place daily, weekly, or monthly. It might happen during meal times, car times, or bedtimes. Use the ideas below to help guide your time together.

As we grow together I invite you to share your thoughts, prayers, wonderings, and experiences with #growingtogetherumc, or send an e-mail to: tcampen@riotexas.org. We would love to hear how you and your family are experiencing God together. There are also additional resources on the Rio Texas Family Faith Formation website too: riotexas.org/family.

Grace and Peace, Tanya

Did you know?

For some, Valentine's Day is a celebration in honor of St. Valentine. There are many legends and stories that try to capture the mystery behind this special day and the story of its patron saint. Over the years this celebration has become more secular than sacred. As we find ourselves surrounded by the signs of this holiday, we can embrace these moments as an opportunity to talk about and celebrate our Christian value of love for God and neighbor. For more information on this holiday, adults can visit:

<https://www.history.com/topics/valentines-day/history-of-valentines-day-2>

FEBRUARY 2019 – CELEBRATING LOVE

GROWING TOGETHER FAMILIES –ORDINARY TIME



Did you know?

This month, continues living in the season of **ordinary time**.

The color for this season is green.

Another name for this season is the “Green growing time.”

This is when we learn and grow- focusing on God

Look: Hearts

Hearts help us remember God’s love for us and God’s command for us to love others. When you see a heart, stop and take time to talk to God:

God, thank-you for loving me. Help me share your love with others by [fill in the blank]. Amen

Listen: The greatest commandment

Scripture: Read [Matthew 22:36-40](#) together. You might choose to read one verse a day or break this into several different sections, reading together throughout the month. Take turns reading, giving everyone who desires an opportunity to read.

Memory Verse Activity: There are many ways to learn Jesus’ important lesson found in Matthew 22:36-40.

You might choose to print a shortened version, placing Christ’s commandments on your bathroom mirror, in a lunchbox, or on your dinner table as a reminder to reflect on God’s call to love this month.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself.

You might also choose to learn a song to help you remember:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DIsEPE9gnk>

(song comes from Cokesbury VBS Camp Edge, 2009 soundtrack)

Book: [Love](#) by Matt de la Peña

Wonder

- I wonder what this Scripture/story tells us about God?
- I wonder what this Scripture/story tells us about us?
- I wonder what this Scripture/story tells us about love?
- I wonder what God is calling us to do?

Work

Celebrating Love: This month celebrate God’s love and the love in your family by leaving love notes for one other during the month:

Cut out paper hearts for each member of your family

Throughout the month write love notes to your family members. Younger members might choose to draw a picture.

For ideas on writing family love notes check out these links:

- <https://www.abundantmama.com/write-secret-family-love-notes/>
- <https://theartofsimple.net/8-ways-to-make-valentines-day-more-meaningful-for-your-family/>



Pray

God, thank-you for loving me. Help me share your love with others by [fill in the blank]. Amen

Bless

How to bless your family: Blessings help us connect with and affirm one another. It is an opportunity for God's people to remind each other that God is with us and that God loves us. Blessings look different from person to person and family to family. Find a time each day to bless the members of your family. This might be at meal times, bedtime, or at the start of the day. One way to offer a blessing is to make the shape of a cross on your family member's forehead or hand while saying words of your choice.

(Make a vertical line.) God loves you.

(Make a horizontal line.) God is with you.

(Look your family member in his/her eyes.) You are a blessing.

(Hug your family member.) I am grateful for you.



Loving Neighbor

This month take time to celebrate God's love by loving others. Take a moment to list people in your lives who are important to you and your family members. Take time to pray for each person by name. Send each person a love note. Let them know that your family is praying for them and hoping they feel God's love this month.

GROWING TOGETHER FAMILIES –ORDINARY TIME



- When you take time to pay attention and celebrate God’s love you might be surprised by what you experience. Take time to journal what you see, hear, and experience in these moments. Draw or take a picture if something catches your attention. All of these are ways to remember God’s love in your life too!
- When your family gathers, invite everyone to share how they experienced God’s love and how they shared God’s love that day/week/month.
- Have an exciting faith story to tell? Do you have a family faith practice you want to share? Let us know! E-mail your stories to: tcampen@riotexas.org and maybe your story will appear here in an upcoming issue of Growing Together: Families.



- Featured Resource: [Scrambled Starts by Jenny Youngman](#)
Do you long to teach your children to pray? How do you build a prayerful family when everyone is running in different directions? In Scrambled Starts, Youngman shares honestly from her family's journey as she tried to build prayer into their daily lives. This encouraging book for parents and families includes: prayers for mealtime and bedtime; prayers for specific occasions and ordinary times; prayers for all ages; scriptures to memorize; help for starting a family devotion time. Benefit from Youngman's experiences with her family, and discover how to make prayer the heart of your own family!
- Other Resources:
 - [Pockets \(A devotional magazine for children\)](#)



We wonder what you wonder about!

Submit your questions to: tcampen@riotexas.org and someone from our conference family will share their reflections in an upcoming issue of Growing Together Family.

This newsletter is written and produced by the office of Intergenerational Discipleship for the Rio Texas Conference. We invite you to share this resource in its entirety with anyone who might find the information helpful in their family faith formation process. Please credit the author when you share with others. You can contact the writer and curator for this resource, Rev. Dr. Tanya Campen, at tcampen@riotexas.org