

Family Experience - Witness

Theme Builder Activities

To help get your kids engaged in today's discussion, start out with one of these ideas that have to do with this idea of keeping or marking a commitment. If you have a mix of the age groups, do a little of each.

- For Families with all ages: Play the card game "I Doubt It" (known also by other non-family-friendly names). The name of the game is saying something you don't mean without getting caught. For family friendly instructions on how to play, check out grandparents.com. After playing, talk about how today you are going to look at saying what you mean to God and keeping your promise.
- For Families with all ages: Discussion about keeping promises: Can you remember ever breaking a promise? What is a funny promise that you made to someone? Is it ever okay to break a promise? What are some ways people seal a promise (just say it, pinky swear, spit in your hand and shake, wedding vows/rings, etc.)?
- For Families with all ages: Have a good old-fashioned trust fall. Have your child stand with his or her back to you and have them fall back into your arms. Assure them that you will catch them and see if they can fall without reservation. You can up the thrill factor for your older kids by doing a "group catch" as your child falls from a bench. You should search for a video online of this version if you haven't seen it before so that you can do this safely. Talk about how they expected you to keep your word to catch them, and how it's important to keep your promises.

Transition: In our discussion today, we are going to see where the Israelites made a promise to God to change their lives – that's a big promise. And to remember that promise, they set up a special rock.

Teaching

- Read Joshua 24:25-27 together. Pick a version the youngest person in the family can understand.
- Watch the Teaching Video with Mike.

Discussion

Based on the age of your kids, choose from the discussion topics below to foster a good faith conversation with your children.

- Talk about the video by asking questions like: What did they learn? What questions do they have? What stood out to them? What inspired them? What challenged them?
- Make sure that your family understands what a covenant. Mike said that it is an agreement, or a promise, between two people.
- Referring to Day 22 in the daily reading, talk about Eastview's vision statement as a family.
 - A fearless church of Christ followers who ridiculous love and dangerous witness are irresistible.
 - Ask them what they think a fearless church is like.
 - Talk about what ridiculous love is and how you can show it as a family.

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- Discuss what they think of when they hear the term “dangerous witness.”
- Ask what it means for Eastview, and your family in particular, to be irresistible to those around you who don’t follow Jesus.
- Mike ended today’s video challenging us to bear witness to each other. Use one of the optional dedication ideas below in the Family Activities, or simply have a discussion asking each person in the family to share what his or her commitment to Jesus is.
- Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 and talk about how making a commitment this week is very serious to God. While he gives us his forgiveness when we mess up, he also wants us to take our decision to follow him very seriously. (Refer to Counting the Cost discussion from Week 2)
- Referring to Day 25 in the Daily Reading, ask your kids if they, like Israel, have ever wondered if “God has stopped loving them.” What makes them feel that way? What can we do if we ever start to wonder that? Read Romans 8:38-39 together to remind them that nothing can separate us from the love God.
- In the daily reading for Day 27, you wrote about your good fight. Share what you wrote with your family and ask them how they see their life as the “good fight.” Check out the optional family activity below on the persecuted church to take this discussion further.
- Discuss the idea of our life being a race as described in Daily Reading Day 28. Talk about the cloud of witnesses. Talk about how the arena is full, we have a race to win and Jesus is at the finish line rooting us on. See the family activities below for an idea to take this to the next level.

Life Application

- This week, we as a family, are making a commitment (to follow God or be a part of what God is doing here at Eastview) and are going to mark that commitment by dedicating a special Celebration Rock at church this Sunday. This means that we are saying that our family is going to be all about following God in this life.
- We can make that decision as a family, but it’s also important for you to make your own decision to follow Jesus.

Family Activities

- **Witness Rock Visit** – After the Witness Rock Celebration concludes this Sunday, or sometime during the following week, plan a visit with your family to have a personal time together. Take time to pray and make a specific family commitment. You can use Mike’s suggestion from the video and use verse 24 as your family’s prayer: “We will serve Jesus our God and obey him.” Take a picture of your family in front of the rock and plan to return each year to renew your commitment and take another picture. Over the years, you can have a collection of photos to remind you of your family’s commitment to be about God’s good work in this world.
- **Family Witness Rock** – At your home, set up a witness rock of your own to serve as a reminder of the commitment your family is making this week. It could be a pile of rocks as in Joshua 4 or one large rock as in Joshua 24. It could be a garden stone that you make from a kit (available at a hobby or art store) and carve into it a message and your names. Date it and have a simple

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dedication service where you make the Joshua 24:24 commitment Mike discussed in today's video: "We will serve Jesus our God and obey him."

- **Pray and Support the Persecuted Church** – Referring to Day 27 of your Daily Reading, talk about the fact that throughout the world there are many people who follow Jesus though it is very dangerous. More people die for their faith today than at any other point in history. Visit the websites of Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com) or Open Doors (www.opendoorsusa.org) to find resources to help your family learn about, pray for and support persecuted Christians around the world.
- **Watch a Race** – Take your family to a race (HS track meet, marathon or a local 5K but a large crowd will make a bigger point) along with this book and talk to your kids about the points made in the daily reading for Day 28. Talk about how the crowd is like the cloud of witnesses. Discuss how hard the runners are working to run their race and how that is like life. Talk about how Jesus is waiting for us at the finish line. If you can't make it to a race, you could substitute the race for a movie like McFarland USA or Cars.