

Living Together | Acts 2:42-47

Community! The thing that we have been craving for over a year.

We have created community in different, unique ways throughout the pandemic. And now as we are able to return to more in-person time, let's take some time to learn from the early church about what Christian Community looks like and create new community as we return to the church campus.

Following Pentecost, the disciples, and the new believers (those 3000 who were baptized on Pentecost) followed the worship traditions of the Jews, worshiping in the Temple, and prayers at regular intervals during the day. But a new pattern also developed of meeting in homes to eat together as Jesus had commanded them. The early Christians, as Jews, knew the law and followed it but also added to their time together in new community groups.

42 The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. 43 A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. 44 All the believers were united and shared everything. 45 They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. 46 Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. 47 They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 CEB

The community they created reflected Jesus' teachings. They remembered that Jesus had commanded them to remember Him when they ate the bread. They remembered how Jesus said, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Luke 3:11

Throughout this summer, we invite you to practice some of the ways that the early church created community. We are offering in-person, on campus gatherings and opportunities for you to do some of the same practices as the early church at home.

Some in-person options for community include:

1. Family Summer Sundays Under the tent | 9:45 a.m. | Sundays in June

Enrichment Center Porch and Lawn (between Cheek House and Enrichment Center)

As summer arrives and we're able to gather together again, the Education hour between morning worship services will provide an opportunity for families with children of all ages to fellowship in person. At 9:45 a.m., families with children and youth will gather behind the Cheek House on the Enrichment Center Porch and share songs and a short message. At 10:00, families with children will spend time reconnecting with friends and getting acquainted with new ones. This time is intentionally low-structure and designed for families of all ages. Please note that nursery is not currently provided during the Education hour so all ages are welcome to join together in the tent.

2. Very Playful Summer Events

These events (some are for families, and some are for children in specific age or grade ranges) are designed to be playful, fun and include lots of time for friendships to be rekindled or new friendships to form.

The whole list of these events can be found here! <https://childrens.fpcnashville.org/vbs/>

3. Mission Sunday | 3:00 p.m. | June 27

Join other FPC families as we sort food and get it ready for Second Harvest Food Bank to distribute to those in need. Stay afterwards to worship God at The Porch.

At Home Options | Listed Below by Age Level:

These activities were chosen to reflect the practices of the early believers: learning, fellowship, shared meals, and prayers. (Acts 2:42.)

Choose those that interest your family, work in the time frame you have, or do them all throughout the month. One option is to sit as a family and decide which activities you want to do and put them on your family calendar, so time is reserved to build family community.

Learning Together: Create a rhythm for your family worship/learning time.

- *Gather together:* light a candle to remind you that God is with you in your time together.
- *Read together:* Acts 2:42-47 from a Story Bible or easy to understand translation you own. Throughout the month, read from various Bible translations. This web site makes it easy! <https://www.biblestudytools.com/>
- If you prefer, you can listen to the story as read from Growing in God's Love, a story Bible, provided in the Children's Thursday E-Letter.
- Or watch it on Youtube here: [Acts 2:42-47](#)

Talk about the story:

- I wonder how our family has learned to get along?
- I wonder how our family breaks bread together?
- I wonder to what communities we belong? Talk about why your family belongs to those communities. What benefit is that community to you? What do you give to the community?
- I wonder what it sounds like when we praise God? I wonder how we praise God?
- I wonder how we show others that God loves them?
- I wonder who tells you about Jesus?

Close your worship time with prayer (consider asking a family member to pray). Change the light of your candle, catching the smoke in the snuffer. Lift the snuffer and offer the reminder that Jesus says "I am with you always and forever."

Suggested Family Activities

1. Participate in the FPC's food drive this month to share food with others.

When you go grocery shopping, invite your child to pick a can/box of their favorite food to put in the church food collection box for Second Harvest Food Bank. Tell your child that he/she is helping another child who doesn't have enough food to eat and that healthy food will help that child's brain and body to grow strong. (For young children: lesson learned from this mom: buy two of your child's favorite food, one to give away and one to eat. It avoids sad sobbing in the grocery store.)

2. Walk through your community leaving love notes or invitation to worship at FPC.

Before your walk invite family members to decorate small notes to be left on doorsteps. As you take your walk, family members can take turns leaving a note by the door of a neighbor's home. (See attached notecard template).

3. Choose one day to fix/get take-out a fancy dinner and eat in your dining room.

Ask everyone to get dressed up in a nice outfit. Spend time together during the meal letting each person talk about how they saw God working in their life that day/week. Be sure to include a meal grace thinking God for the fancy dinner.

You can call it Family Date night or Formal Fridays or Fancy Fridays, Together Thursdays, whatever works for your family. The idea is for family members to show hospitality to each other. Assign jobs...Dad cooks, sister sets the table, brother, and mom manage dirty dishes afterwards. Rotate the jobs and do it again another week.

4. Create manna bags

Manna bags are bags filled with helpful items that are shared with someone who does not have a house to live in. The bags could contain hygiene items and/or no-cook food.

Suggestions include: individual fruit cups in a plastic container, chewy (soft) granola bars, chewing gum, bottled water, Band-Aids, Chap-Stick, socks, washcloth, toothbrush and toothpaste. Take the extra step to include a hand-made card to share God's love.

Work as a family to package your items in a gallon Ziploc bag. Many of these items come in multiple packs. Take advantage of that to create several bags. Create an assembly line for family members to fill the bags. Put like items in a pile, and have family members move down the row, picking up one item from each pile to put in the bag.

Keep the Manna bags in your car and offer them to people you see who are in need or don't live in a home.

Suggested Activities for Older Children:

1. Create a blanket for a child in need.

Create a tie blanket. Purchase fleece from a discount store or fabric store.

Invite your family to sit together to tie the blanket. Directions are here.

<https://www.projectlinus.org/patterns/pdf/NoSewFB.pdf> This pattern calls for a simple one tie so children ages 6 and up can probably do this activity.

Take your children with you when you drop off the blanket. The Linus Project TN chapter coordinator information can be found here.

<https://www.projectlinus.org/volunteer/volunteer.php?StateKey=TN#tgt> with suggestions of places that need blankets

2. Food sharing

The people in our Acts story shared their food so that everyone had enough. As a family, take the Food Waste quiz from Society of Saint Andrew to learn more about what you can do to help feed hungry people in our area. <https://endhunger.org/food-waste-quiz/>

3. Pray together prayers of praise

Invite family members to pray sentence prayers of praise as your mealtime or bedtime prayer.

Invite your child to write praise prayers in their Gratitude Journal (received in the care package from FPC in April).

Extend the activity by helping your children create rhythm instruments to play. Oatmeal cartons or ice cream cartons make great drums. Rubber bands across a piece of cardboard create a guitar-like strumming/picking instrument. Pick a hymn or fun church song that everyone knows and sing it while playing your instruments. If a family member plays an instrument, they can lead the band.

- I wonder what it sounded like when the believers praised God in the Temple?
- I wonder for what you would like to praise God?

Worship Emphasis for Older Children:

The 10 Commandments. Review the commandments (Exodus 20). Working together, have your children paraphrase the 10 commandments into their own words? Work with them throughout the month so they know these important ways to live with one another and with our One True God.

Suggestions for child-friendly wording to help your child understand and remember these commandments are attached.

This web site has pictures of how to use your fingers to remember the commandments.

<http://www.myblessedhome.net/2009/11/fun-way-to-memorize-the-ten-commandments/>

Suggested Activities for Younger Children:

1. Handprint Love Notes

Trace your child's hand and let them decorate it with crayons or whatever other art materials you have around your home. Your child can leave their handprints as a love note for other members of the family at the dinner table or on their bed.

2. Dinner Time Blessing

Use the month of June to teach a dinner time blessing to your young child/family. Your family may have one you like to use or use one of these:

- a. Sung to tune of Frere Jacques
God our Father, (repeat)
Once again, (repeat)
We bow our heads and thank you (repeat)
Amen (repeat)
- b. Spoken Prayer
Thank you for the world so sweet
Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the birds that sing.
Thank you, God, for everything.

3. Jesus Loves Me

Use the megaphone received in the April care package from FPC. Invite your child to sing Jesus Loves Me (or any song of our faith) into the megaphone. They can share the good news through song.

Worship Emphasis for Younger Children:

Play rhythm instruments while you listen and sing to this child friendly YouTube song--
<https://youtu.be/8RV8KerchW4>

Praise God, Praise God,

Praise God in the morning, Praise God in the evening

Praise God Praise God, Praise God when the sun goes down.

Spiritual Practice:

Lectio Divina (“divine reading”) – an intentional, contemplative way to connect with God’s Word. This ancient spiritual practice involves listening to multiple readings of the same Scripture passage interspersed with short periods of silence. If possible, invite all family members to be readers.

You may choose to do this with your spouse or as a family.

First reading:

Slowly read the Scripture out loud while others listen for a word that “jumps out” to each of them.

Give each person an opportunity to share his/her word.

Wonder together about why that word is important to the story and to the family member who picked it.

Second reading:

Read the story again, listening for action verbs. Make a list as the story is read slowly.

Explore the question:

“How do these action verbs and this Scripture passage connect with my life? Allow a time of silence and then provide an opportunity for sharing responses to the question.

Third reading:

Invite members to think about the questions “What is this passage calling me to do?” or “Who is this passage calling me to be.” Read the story one more time and allow for a moment of silent reflection following the reading. Provide an opportunity for sharing responses.

Closing Prayer:

Ask a family member to close your time with prayer.

We LOVE Being
Your Neighbor

You're Invited

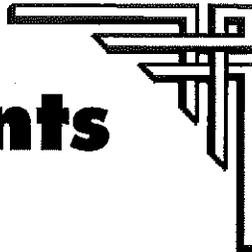
TO WORSHIP WITH US AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NASHVILLE

LOVE, YOUR NEIGHBORS,

WWW.FPCNASHVILLE.ORG



The Ten Commandments Paraphrased



1. Worship only God.
2. Place God first in life; no idols.
3. Use God's name with respect.
4. Give one day each week to God.
5. Respect and obey your parents.
6. Respect and care for all living things. Avoid violence.
7. Be faithful to your husband or wife. Keep your promises.
8. Do not take something that does not belong to you.
9. Always tell the truth.
10. Be content with what you have.

based on Exodus 20:1-17

