

Family Togetherness Week of Prayer
September 3 - 9, 2023

2023 Resource Book

KEYS TO HEALTHY MINDS

Flourishing Families

Adventist Family Ministries

SABBATH CHOOSE HOPE

Key Verse

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace. Rom 15:13 NKJV

Make up some actions to this verse, with your family, and practice it until you can teach it to someone else. With whom will you share this hopeful blessing?

Exploring HOPE

From the very beginning of earth's history, God shared the good news of a hopeful future where sin would be eradicated forever. God gave hope to all His children – Sarah and Abraham hoped for a son, Moses hoped to lead the Children of Israel to the promised land, every generation hoped for a Messiah, and now we all look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ. These are big hopes to remind us that God is in control, and He is making everything new. We also have smaller hopes in our lives, things we want to do, and special times we are looking forward to. God knew that we always need something to look forward to, so He gave us a weekly celebration in the form of Sabbath, and He gave the Children of Israel lots of festivals and feasts to enjoy.

When we lose hope, we soon become sad and discouraged, and we lose our sense of wonder, peace, and gratitude. When we have hope, it gives our lives purpose, and when we have a purpose for our life, it fills us with hope. Make sure your family always has something to look forward to with hope, and a special ministry that gives them purpose.

Zack

Finds Hope

(Luke 19)

Zacchaeus was hungry for something, but it wasn't food. He was hungry for friends, for love, and for something else...but he couldn't describe it. It was like a big hole in his heart.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. It was a good job if you wanted money, but not if you wanted friends. Nobody liked Zacchaeus. He knew there must be a better way to live, but he didn't know how to find it.

One day there was a buzz of excitement in the town. Jesus was coming! Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus from the people who passed through the town. People retold His amazing stories, described His astonishing miracles, and shared how kind and loving He was, even to Samaritans, lepers, women, and, best of all, tax-collectors...

Hope sparkled in Zacchaeus' heart! Maybe he could see Jesus, or even speak to Him! He imagined what Jesus would say to him if they met, and how Jesus would be kind to him too...Life would be so much better!

Zacchaeus made his way to the main street. The crowd was already thick, and he was too short to see over their heads. Then he noticed a tree with strong branches shading the dusty road. He tucked up his robes and climbed onto a sturdy branch.

The noise and commotion grew louder as Jesus came near. There were cheers and shouts of praise when Jesus stopped to heal a crumpled old person, or a child with an injured leg. Then Zacchaeus held his breath. Jesus was walking right under his tree! He could see him, He could even touch him, but he didn't dare...He just wanted to see His face...Suddenly Jesus stopped, right underneath his branch. He looked up and saw Zacchaeus and smiled! 'Hey Zack! There you are! I've been looking for you! I'm coming to your house for dinner! Come on down and get ready!' Jesus reached up to help Zacchaeus jump out of the tree. Then Jesus gave him a big hug and said, 'We'll be there for dinner, and I'll be bringing 12 friends!'

Zacchaeus laughed and sang as he ran home to prepare dinner! This was the happiest day of his life! He knew Jesus loved him and that filled the empty, aching hole in his heart! Because of Jesus' love for him he knew he could turn his life around! He could start by being kind to people and to give money to help others rather than grabbing it for himself! He could look for all the people who felt lonely and rejected, like him, and invite them over for dinner. Together they could find ways to help the poorer people in the city...

Zacchaeus realized what had been missing in his empty life – it was kindness, and peace, and joy, and wonder, and gratitude, and helping others. And now Jesus had given him a loving purpose for his life, he also had hope.

Hope Prayer

- Praise God for the important gift of hope that He gives us.
- Thank Him for the hope of Jesus' soon return that inspires our faith.
- Take turns sharing one of your hopes and pray for them.
- Pray for a person who is struggling to be hopeful and ask God to show you how you can strengthen their hope.

Experiencing Hope Activities

Flourish! - Choose well - think well - live well - grow well!

Seeds of Hope

- Find an attractive pot and write a message of hope on it, or a Bible verse about hope.
- Fill the pot with soil or compost. Plant some fast growing flower seeds or bulbs.

- Gift it to someone who needs some encouragement.
- If it is difficult to write a message on the pot, make a sign with a hopeful message, attach it to a plant stick, and place in the pot.
- Then it's the finder's turn to do something kind.

Hopeful Sabbaths

Sabbaths are special days that we look forward to with hope.

- God gave us weekly Sabbaths to give us hope and joy, and times of wonder, kindness, peace, and gratitude.
- Make a list together of some of the things you would like to do on Sabbath, to help you look forward to them even more than you do already.
- What could you do as a family to bless other families on Sabbath, and give them hope? (Help make special food, plan special worships together, go on wonder walks, start a mission project that helps people in your community, etc.)

Hopes and Dreams

- Cut out large stars from white or yellow paper. Stars in the sky guide people in the right direction.
- Give each person several stars and ask them to write one of their hopes on each of the stars.
- Look at your hopeful stars and think about different ways in which you can encourage and help each other towards your different dreams.
- Gather your stars together and pray for your hopes.
- Thank God for the gift of hope.

Flourish Activity Calendar

- Create a calendar for the month ahead.
- Choose some of the activities that were listed on the different days of this prayer guide and choose when you will do them in the future.
- Add other activities that fill you with love, joy, peace, hope, wonder, and gratitude.
- Now you have something to look forward to and give you hope!