



BE CLOSE: Celebrate God’s Surprises!

FOLLOWING GOD’S FOOTPRINTS

How does God make footprints? He leads us by prompting us with directions, then shows us the results that happen as we obey. Each week pray together, asking God to show you someone that you can help, bless with prayer, and get to know better. Keep your eyes and ears open so you recognize when God is inviting you to take action to serve and pray for others out of your love for him. Trace around a shoe to create paper footprints. Cut them out and display them on your wall or floor with the date and name of who you were able to serve with practical and purposeful love and a short note about their prayer needs. Continue to pray for them and celebrate how God continues to show you his ‘footprints’ as he helps you build relationships with others.



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MOVE WITHOUT MOVING

In this month’s video with Shauna, she spoke about “putting on flesh and moving into the neighborhood.” Most of us confine our time to just one area of our town, rarely going into other parts of our larger community. Enlarge your understanding and love of where God has asked you to live “sent” by “moving into” an unfamiliar area. Not literally moving houses, but by choosing a place to eat, shop, or play in an area of your town that you don’t normally frequent. What did you enjoy? Who did you see and what did you notice? Who did you meet? Experience that area more than once, allowing your family to become comfortable with the people there. You are beginning to “move into the neighborhood!”



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LOVE DIFFERENTLY: Celebrate God's Surprises!

CELEBRATING CITY LEADERS

Kids can be great influencers in the adult world. If you could meet with the leaders of your city about situations in the news, what do you think God would have you ask them? Jesus loved and met with all kinds of people, including religious leaders and political leaders. Write a note of encouragement to one or more leaders in your city, requesting a time you could meet with them for a short interview to ask your questions. (Include your questions in your note.) While you are there, offer to pray for them. Plan when you will follow up with another encouraging note for the leader(s) you met.



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LOVE DIFFERENTLY: Celebrate God’s Surprises!

EXPLORING EMPATHY

Fear usually keeps us from getting to know those with special needs, yet the most frequent command God gives us in the Bible is “Fear not!”. These experiences will help you grasp what it may be like for others.

- Wear winter gloves. Try to tie your shoes, button your shirt, or pick up pennies. People with arthritis or joint problems experience difficulty like this, plus pain.
- Tie a piece of wood (about 1” diameter) the length of your leg or arm using bandanas or strips of cloth. Walk around doing normal tasks to experience the frustration a person would feel who wears braces for a lifetime.
- Watch this [short video](#) together for an idea of the sensory issues a person with autism may experience.

What surprised you about those experiences? Discuss as a family a way to show love to someone you know who has one of these conditions and then do it. Ask God to bring others into your life whom he has created in these special ways.



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REACH WIDE

HOW BIG IS YOUR WORLD?

By Nancy Tichy

Chapter 10: “Unwelcome Surprise”

“I didn’t get to say goodbye!” Jeremy stood in the doorway, fists clenched at his side. The adults in the room were silent and waited for his torrent of emotion to subside. “When Max wasn’t in first period algebra, I thought he was late again,” Jeremy continued. “Miss Parker just gave us her ‘no comment’ look when he didn’t show up, and went on with the lesson.”

“I’d say it was quite a surprise,” came from Cara as she entered the room. “I went to their apartment after school let out and it was locked. No sign of Miss Fozia and the twins anywhere, and I checked the park nearby where she used to take them on sunny days. So, what’s the deal?” she finished, plunking herself down on the couch next to Jeremy.

“We only learned about their moving this morning,” Mom began. “Dad took the call shortly after you left for school, and we met the agency director in his office later on. It’s really good news, though it called for some swift action. A wealthy attorney’s wife heard about the family and asked if the agency would move them to Phoenix where she and her husband wanted to help resettle them there. That is, they would take responsibility for all five, for Fozia and the kids.”

“The couple has rented a house in a quiet neighborhood and furnished it,” Dad picked up the story, “and enrolled the children in school. Fozia will continue her English classes online and has a part time job with the law firm. It turns out she was close to finishing a law degree before they fled to Lebanon.”

“So, you see,” Mom finished, “this means that they can stop running, finally. I know you will miss them, but before long, you will be hearing from Max or Fozia online. Don’t worry, we’ll stay connected.”

“Mom and I have already made plans for a road trip this summer. We’d love

to take you to visit the Grand Canyon – and Phoenix is just a few hours south of there,” Dad added. “Who knows what the Lord has ahead for us.”

Jeremy sat quietly for a long while and then stood up and stretched. “All that stress has given me an appetite,” he said as he headed toward the kitchen. “Maybe a peanut butter sandwich would help me recover my strength.” Cara smothered a laugh, Dad returned to his book and Mom just looked up, breathing a prayer of thanks.



REACH WIDE: Idea for Engagement

A SUPER SUMMER

Summer is a super time to discover what you do best and put it to use for people far from where you live. Spend some time listing the strengths each of you have in your family or class. Check with God together in prayer—how could you use those strengths to connect with a missionary or global ministry to serve them and those in their country long distance? God may lead you to conduct a bake sale, collect sponsors for a walk or for shooting hoops, roll bandages for a medical clinic, or supply the funds for Bible translation, or more. Be sure you include notes that will encourage those you are connecting with and may lead to a closer relationship with global friends.



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Take Your Best Shot by Austin Gutwein (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2009)