

*Family Devotional – Idol of Consumerism
“The Christmas List”*

Big Idea: Giving Beats Getting!

1. **Ice Breaker:** Lay out fancy paper with Christmas decorations/borders on it. Have a pen or pencil laid out next to the sheet. Tell each family member that tonight each of us will fill out our “Official Christmas List.” Each person’s list will be posted on the refrigerator or bulletin board until Christmas. Give them a time limit. Act as a scribe for younger children. At the end of the allotted time, collect each list and read it to the family. Most of the time, everyone lists the items they want to GET rather than the items that they want to GIVE. If everyone does this, just read the lists and wait to make a comment until after you read and discuss the text. If someone writes a GIVING list, then talk about the mindset difference between the consumers and contributors.

2. **Read the Text:** Acts 20:32-35

Questions from the Passage:

- What does covet mean? Why is it wrong to covet? What have you coveted this week? What are you most likely to covet? Do commercials make you covet things? Do you think that Jesus is pleased or displeased with commercials that make you covet toys and games and clothes and other things? Why is Jesus displeased with them? How should you feel about them?
- Why did Paul work so hard? Whom did he help with the money that he made?
- Jesus says “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
 - Do you believe that?
 - How will you be more blessed if you give everyone a gift at Christmas but no one gives you anything?
 - How will you be more blessed if you give away toys to poor children rather than get more for yourself?
 - Have you ever given something to a poor person? How did it feel to do that?
 - What’s something that you can do this week to “give rather than receive”?
 - How can you start a Christmas tradition that honors Jesus’ words about giving rather than receiving?

3. **Memorize:** “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

4. **Final Activity:** Look at your Christmas List... do you want everyone who sees that to think of you as a taker rather than a giver? Let’s all tear down our old lists that show our old attitude of selfishness. Make a new Christmas List... of what you want to GIVE!!!! Celebrate the contribution that your family will make together this year!!!

Family Devotional – Idol of Individualism

Scripture: 1 Co 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Purpose: To show how we need each other and can't be independent of one another.

Things needed: 3 people, a cup of water, a blindfold

1. Choose 1 person to be the “eyes”, another to be the “hands and feet”, and another to be the “mouth”.

2. All 3 people sit on one side of the room.

3. Blindfold the “hands and feet”.

4. Place the cup of water somewhere on the other side of the room where the “hands and feet” don't know exactly where it is.

5. Have the “eyes” and “mouth” sit facing each other. Be sure that whoever is the “mouth” has their back facing the cup of water (so they can't see it), and whoever is the “eyes” sits facing the cup of water (so they can see it).

The only person that can talk is the “mouth” (of course). Every other part of the body is silent.

6. Now it gets fun...the “eyes” tell the “mouth” what to say by making hand gestures only (no lip-synching!). The “mouth” tells the “hands and feet” to get up, go get the cup of water, and bring it back to the “mouth” so it can take a drink.

Swap positions and repeat as much as you like.

Some Questions (obviously, you can come up with more of your own too):

**What would happen if the “hands and feet” were independent and tried to get the water without the “mouth” telling them where to go?

**What if the “mouth” decided to be independent and tell the “hands and feet” what to do without getting directions from the “eyes”?

**What would happen if the “eyes” chose to be independent and...closed their eyes?

**How can you be independent of others? What can you do to change?

Big Idea:

Each of us are an important part of the body of Christ, and we're all dependent on each other to survive.

Family Devotional - Idol of Instant Gratification

Preparation: Prepare your favorite family dessert/ treat.
The treat should be placed in the middle of the table or area where you will be doing your devotional but ***not touched*** by anyone.
The kids will be asking and even distracted by it, but that is part of the lesson so help them to hold off.

Sing some songs together – Keeping the treats in view

Question: Why is everyone so eager to get the treats?

Question: Why do we want them now instead of waiting for them?

There was a man in the bible that didn't have very much patience as well. His name was Saul

Read 1 Samuel 13:8-14

Paraphrase and simplify depending on the age of your children

Question: What was Saul supposed to be doing? Waiting on Samuel.

Question: Why wasn't he willing to wait for him? He thought his enemies were going to attack

Question: What does Saul's lack of patience show us about his heart?
He lacked faith
He didn't trust that God was going to meet his needs

Question: What ended up happening to Saul as a result of his impatience?

Question: What are some things you don't like to wait for?
New things, gifts, treats

Question: What can impatience bring you to do?
Disobey, deceive, not trust

Question: How can you be different than Saul was in handling the wait?
Pray. Ask God for help.

What did we learn tonight?

To learn to wait on Him
He desires that we be patient
To not insist on having what we want now
Trusting God is the most important thing even if it is difficult

Now...let's have our treat!!

Family Devotional - Idol of Success

Privately read the following scriptures in preparation for leading the devotional:

Leviticus 18:21 "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 16:21 "You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols."

Ezekiel 23:37 "For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them.

Ezekiel 23:39 "On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did in my house."

--- Devotional ---

Something to consider...

We would not physically sacrifice our kids by killing them and placing them on an altar, but in the pursuit of success do we sacrifice our families?

Start by gathering the family. Ask each person to give Dad or Mom a hug..

But instead of hugging them, push them away and tell them you're busy and you don't have time. You have to do something for your job or school that you think will make you more successful.

Q: How does that make you feel?

Read 1st Jn 2:15-17

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

Q: Do you chase success? If so, how? How can you change?

Discuss how when we chase success we cannot love God because we become too busy to love one another.

Now have everyone hug each other and take the time to play a game or spend time some other time together. Remember, no media!

Family Devotional – Idol of Comfort

Scripture: Lk 9:23 “Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.””

Purpose: To show that self-denial and discomfort can have great benefits.

Things needed: Comfortable couch, blanket, telephone book or other heavy object, ice cubes, some storytelling skills

Have everyone relax on the soft, comfy couch and let them snuggle up in the warm blanket. Let everyone close their eyes and breathe deeply, except for the storyteller.

Storyteller makes up a story about a family who loves to lay on the couch and be comfortable (just make something up, but get them feeling good about being on the couch and relaxing).

One day there's a neighbor who needs help. He runs a puppy farm and all of his little cute puppies just got out and are lost all over the neighborhood. (hey, if you can think of something better – go for it!)

In order to get them back he needs a volunteer to get off the couch (ask for one).

The neighbor explains that in order to get the puppies back, the volunteer has to stand up with their arms straight out in front of them with their palms up and elbows locked. Kinda like Frankenstein, but with your palms up in the air.

Then, they have to put the telephone book in one hand, and hold the block of ice in their fist with the other. For every 10 seconds they do this, one puppy finds it's way home (awwww.....sniffle, sniffle).

The volunteer does this while everyone watches and counts down: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, etc... and repeats.

How many puppies can the volunteer help save? Take turns and see who can save the most.

**Yes, I know it's a bit cheesy, but it's fun and makes the point! :-)

Discussion Questions:

Q: How did you feel to leave the comfort of the couch to go do something uncomfortable?

Q: WHY did you choose to do the uncomfortable thing instead of continuing to lay on the comfy couch?

Read Lk 9:23 Talk about how uncomfortable it is to deny yourself. Talk about some of the reasons why it's good to be uncomfortable and deny ourselves as we follow Jesus. How does it benefit others?

Q: Are you choosing comfort anywhere in your life when you should be choosing sacrifice instead?

Q: How can you change? Who will it help?