**Come Follow Me: Parenting During the Coronavirus**

During the last few months, the coronavirus has created different circumstances for all of us. We’ve all heard so many messages on the TV news, shows, and commercials. The messages tell us all about the coronavirus and how to keep COVID-19 at bay: wash your hands frequently, no gathering in groups of more than 9 people, and social distancing by keeping 6 feet apart from one another. Along with these guidelines, we have been told that we are not alone; all of us are in this together. We have been given ways to address psychological stress and coping with that stress. These messages help manage the physical and mental aspects, which are important. But what about our spiritual health? Since we are not able to gather together in worship and Bible study and Sunday school, how do we manage the most important aspect of our lives: our relationship with Jesus?

Instead of busy schedules, we now have open schedules. Home, school, and work are mixed. It can be chaotic and confusing at times, but what an opportunity to learn, play, and grow with your children! We might not always realize it, but our children from young to old watch us and need us now more than ever. This particular time can be a gift. I encourage you to make the most of it by connecting with your kids in new, meaningful ways.

I don’t know about you, but when COVID-19 first ramped up, two weeks at home with my family sounded like an exciting and cozy way to spend time with them. But now that the timeline has been extended, it can seem like an overwhelming challenge. However, as I reflected, I wondered, “where is the focus?” Is the focus on what used to be in the busy life schedules that all of us had? Is it the desire to get back to an active lifestyle? Throughout all of this, perhaps the Lord is trying to get my attention.

Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” John 8:12 ESV

When I think about this verse, another verse also comes to mind: Jesus is the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6). Am I using this time on my family’s spiritual health? If Jesus is the light of the world and the only way to eternal life, how does that fit during this change right now? The amazing thing is that God works growth in the faith He has given us especially in hard times like this – even for our kids! The Lord calls and equips parents to be the primary faith-influencers of their children. Use this time not only to follow safe coronavirus practices but also to hear and answer the call to follow the Lord in guiding your children in the faith. Indeed, in this you are never alone (See Matthew 28:20).

Whether you are a parent, guardian, or grandparent, during this time of change please join me in this challenge: In your own family, try to connect with the Lord and each other each week. I’ve noticed people sharing videos online doing different activities. What are some spiritual activities you would want to share?

Over the next few weeks – as part of this challenge – I will send different activities each week:

1. Review and complete the activity as a family.
2. After doing the activity, contact me and share how the challenge went for you and your family. You can write about it, share photos, and even videos of your family completing the activity. I would love to hear your thoughts about the challenges and activities! 😊
3. If you have other ideas, let me know, and I can add them in.

Please join my family and me and “come follow” our Lord as we take up this spiritual challenge.

In His Service,

Carry Ramel

Youth and Sunday School Ministries Coordinator

And (Jesus) said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19 ESV