



Elf on the Shelf  
Jesus Style  
Biblical Virtues

By Stephanie Farley

# Elf on the Shelf Jesus Style

## An Advent Tradition

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Teaching Biblical Virtues during the Christmas Season

By Stephanie Farley  
[www.MendedByMercy.com](http://www.MendedByMercy.com)

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All Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version, unless otherwise noted.

# Introduction

In 2012, I discovered the Elf on the Shelf: the cute little guy that is typically used to spy on your child's every move and then reports back to Santa. I wanted to do the Elf on the Shelf with my then 2 year old, but how could I incorporate the fun of Christmas with the Truth of Christmas? That's how Elf on the Shelf Jesus Style was born.

Some may say it's taboo as a Christian to incorporate some of the secular ideas with the truth of Christmas, but I remember the joy that Santa and his elves brought to the Christmas season. I remember sitting on Santa's knee and waking up to presents under the tree from the cheery man himself. Santa had a very distinct and memorable handwriting. I now use that same handwriting from Santa with my own kids! As a young girl, I remember my parents telling me, my brother and my cousins that they had seen Santa's sleigh in the night sky. We all ran outside looking for that sleigh. When we came back in, Santa was there! Of course, it was my grandfather, but we had no idea! After getting to sit on his knee, Santa told us to go outside and watch for his sleigh in the sky. When we came back in, my grandfather had reappeared, but we were so taken in by Santa making us a personal visit that no one noticed he had "disappeared" in the first place!

Was I devastated when I found out the truth about Santa? Not at all. I was in awe that my parents had worked so hard to bring fun and magic to Christmas! I never felt lied to. I felt loved that my parents worked so hard to make Christmas magical, and I am doing the same thing with my children.

Elf on the Shelf Jesus Style combines the magic of Christmas with the Truth of Christmas. The first year that I did this, I posted what I did on my blog unsure if anyone would even see it. Then it went viral! 300k page views, an interview for the local paper and a snippet in ABC news! I was so ecstatic! Unfortunately, Elf on the Shelf Jesus Style received quite a bit of persecution from commenters on my blog, but God never said that our faith would be easy. I pray that my responses to the not so nice comments were able to shine light into lives of those readers.

I continue to receive such amazing feedback and emails telling me how people are using this in their Sunday school, their homes and their preschools. Because of this awesome feedback, I decided to take it a little further and really create something tangible that you can use. I prayed about it and God gave me a very clear vision of what I was to do. That is how Elf on the Shelf Jesus Style: Teaching Biblical Virtues was created.

Each virtue in this book has been prayed over, and I feel that this book is exactly what God wanted it to be: a tool that parents can use to instill a love for Jesus. I pray that this is a tool you can use to not only teach your children about biblical virtues, but also something that aids you in character development in your child and brings you and your children closer to our Savior!

In His Love,

Stephanie

## How to use this ebook

This advent activity is designed to be super easy for the busy parent! Each day, you will explore one of the 25 biblical virtues with your child(ren). Each day has a prompt for discussion, a scripture to focus on and an activity. Most of the activities require very little prep time, but I would recommend reading the next day's activities the night before as you are setting up your Elf (or stuffie of your choice) for your child to find the next morning. I have included pictures of my elf for each day, but please feel free to be creative! Throughout this book, you will see images of the printables that go with the corresponding day. All of the printables I have created for you are located at the end of this book in full page format so you can easily access and print them.

During December, you can find me sharing our Elf's activities via social media. Connect and share your Elf pictures using #ElfontheshelfJesusStyle

*Facebook:* <https://www.facebook.com/MendedbyMercy>

*Twitter:* <https://twitter.com/mendedbymercy>

*Google+:* <https://plus.google.com/+StephanieFarley/posts>

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## Day 1: Introduce your Elf

The Christmas season is here!!!

When I was a child, the magic of Santa thrived! We visited him to tell him our hearts desires; we left milk and cookies for him and carrots for his reindeer; we were thrilled when we woke up the next morning to see a note from Santa and that he and his reindeer had enjoyed their snack; we loved seeing his name on the gifts under the tree. I have such great Christmas memories!

When I grew older and learned the truth about Santa, I had fun keeping the secret so that my little brother could continue to enjoy the magic. Even though we know the truth, to this day, we still get gifts from Santa on Christmas day. The magic of Santa lives on!

My husband and I want our children to enjoy the magical part of Christmas that is Santa. More importantly though, we want them to understand the true meaning behind Christmas.

I truly feel that God has blessed me with this advent activity. It is not from me. It is from Him. Allow Him to work through you this holiday season and let's teach our children about our Mighty Savior!

How do we show kindness, generosity, honesty and compassion? What do our lives look like when Jesus is living in our hearts? We are going to explore this and much more with our elf!


Each morning, your elf will be found doing something that will teach your little one what it looks like to have Jesus in our hearts. I have a lot of fun activities planned for this advent season, and I know you and your children will love it!

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, your elf will arrive at your house. You can do this in any way you like. The first year we did this, our elf arrived in a wrapped package on the doorstep. Last year, our elf was sitting on a reindeer in front of the fireplace with a gift. Whatever way your elf makes his/her debut, you will want to include a letter, explaining what your elf is there to do. I have created a letter that you can print and write your child's name in.

Please feel free to use this as an example and create your own too. There is so much freedom in this advent tradition! You can make it to fit your family and your children!

**See the appendix or click here to download the pdf *Letter from Santa* and fill in your child(ren)'s name.**

Dear



I know you are excited about the Christmas season. I am too!! My elves are working hard to prepare for Christmas Day.

Speaking of elves, I have sent one of my dearest friends to help you prepare for Christmas. It is a lot of fun to look at Christmas lights, sing Christmas songs, set up the Christmas tree, go shopping and get gifts.

But there are some very important things that I want you to remember about Christmas:

- \*It is better to give than to receive.
- \*God loves you so much!
- \*When you have Jesus in your heart, others can see it through your actions.
- \*We have Christmas to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus.

Your elf friend will help you to learn and remember these very important things about Christmas. Together, you can show others Jesus' love by singing songs about Him, giving to others in need that don't have as much as you, and being nice to others.


It is our job to show God's love to others through our gifts, nice words and loving actions.

Every night your elf friend will come visit me and I will send him back with a new activity that you can do together to help you learn and remember the true meaning behind Christmas. Each morning, look for your new friend. He will be in your home waiting for you to find him so you can do the activity together!

Please take care of my friend and together, you will learn about our awesome Savior, Jesus Christ. You will learn about how God sent his only Son to live with us, and in us.

Have a blessed Christmas season!

With much love,  
*Santa Claus*





## Day 2: Generosity

The first biblical virtue we are going to focus on is generosity! It is so much more rewarding to give than to receive. Giving to others and sharing are two words that don't always exist in the world of toddlers. You know that all too familiar word "MINE!" Children must be taught how to share and how to give and why it is important.

### **Discussion**

What does the word generosity mean?

It means to be willing to give more of what you have to those in need. It means going the extra mile and showing kindness to others. Jesus said it is better to give than to receive. There is something that happens in our hearts when we act generously. Joy fills our hearts. That joy is the Holy Spirit telling us that He is pleased and that it makes Him happy when we are generous.

Read the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12. Talk about the choice that the rich man made. Was it a generous one? What actions could he have taken to be generous?

### **Scripture**

*The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40*

*Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35*

### **Activity**

Talk to your child about ways they can be generous. Come up with some ideas to show generosity to others and make a list.



Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Bake cookies and take them to some friends
- Make Christmas cards to take and hand out at a nursing home
- Participate in an Angel Tree
- Gather up old toys and donate them to kids in need
- Buy a new toy and donate to Toys for Tots
- Participate in Operation Christmas Child
- Donate to a local food drive

Whatever activity you choose, be sure to talk about how being generous is pleasing to the Lord. He commands us to help those in need and to have a heart for those with less. It is great to do generous acts such as those above, but be sure to talk about ways your child can be generous on a daily basis too (ex: sharing toys with friends). Being generous makes our hearts happy, and it makes the Lord happy too!

## Day 3: Honesty

Have you ever caught your kiddo in a lie? Oh, we have. Every kid goes through it! Children must be taught to be truthful!

### **Discussion**

Ask your child what honesty means.

Honesty means telling the truth, no matter what, even if there is a consequence. An honest person always tells the truth, does what he/she says they are going to do, and never lies, cheats or steals.

Explain to your child that when you lie, it always comes back to hurt you. It makes you live in fear as you wait to find out when the lie will be exposed.

Read Acts 5: 1-4 with your child. Talk about what Ananias did and how God knows when we lie.

Discuss with your child what “living free” looks and feels like after reading the scriptures. When you are honest, you live free because you do not have to live in fear of the lies coming back and exposing you. It is much a better choice to be honest and never live in that fear. Even a small lie can grow out of control and quickly. (Watch Veggie Tale’s Larry Boy and the Fib if you want to dive into this concept further!)

### **Scripture**

*The Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in men who are truthful. Proverbs 12:22*

*I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on Your laws . . . I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free. Psalm 119:30, 32*



### **Activity: Make a Belt of Truth**

Today, we are going to make a piece of the armor of God to help us remember that God can help us stay strong, and because He lives in us, we can tell the truth!

Read the following scripture with your child:

#### *The Armor of God*

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

*<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

For this activity, you will need a:

- A belt
- Aluminum foil
- Cardstock

Help your child wrap their belt in aluminum foil. Make a cross out of cardstock and glue or tape it to the aluminum foil on the belt. Explain to your child how we can wear the belt of truth and always tell the truth! God loves it when we are honest!

## Day 4: Kindness

*Dear Children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:18*

### **Discussion**

It is important to speak with kindness, but it is even more impactful when our actions show kindness. Jesus showed kindness in every action He took. Read the story of the paralyzed man in Luke 5: 17-26. Talk to your children about the paralyzed man's friends and how they showed kindness to this man. Explain that the houses back then had flat roofs. There was a stair access to the roof and these friends had to carry this man up the stairs. There they had to take apart the mud and straw mixture that made up the roof, in order to lower their friend down in front of Jesus.

Jesus was impressed with the paralytic man's friends' kindness. His friends had faith in Jesus. They believed with all their heart that Jesus could heal their friend, and He did. Jesus rewarded their kindness. He also brought honor to God, not himself. When we show kindness to others, we should not be looking for the praise of others. We are doing it to honor God.

Talk to your children about what kindness looks like. What are ways we can show kindness to our family, our friends and those around us? Have them come up with specific examples. If your child is old enough, have them write them down and carry out these actions. If they are younger, write them out for your child and carry out these actions together!

### **Scripture**

*Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31*



*If we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. 1 John 4:12*

### **Activity**

The men and women of our military show us a great kindness by protecting our country. Many of them are overseas and unable to be with their families for the holidays. It is a sacrifice they make to show kindness to our nation. One way we can return kindness to these amazing men and women is to send them some holiday cheer! Contact your local American Red Cross and inquire about their Holiday Mail for Heroes program. Today, sign cards or make cards to take to your local Red Cross to be sent to these heroes. If your local American Red Cross is not doing this, then make these cards today and take them to a local VA hospital to thank the veterans for their kindness to our nation. If you don't have a VA hospital near you, then make cards for neighbors and friends that are veterans and thank them for showing kindness by serving our nation!

# Day 5: Faithfulness

What does faithfulness mean? It means to hold true to what you say, or “sticking” to what you say. God has promised to always love us, and the bible has a lot to say about His faithfulness to us! One of the greatest ways He showed his faithfulness to us was by sending his only Son to die on the Cross, so that we can have eternal life with Him in Heaven.

## **Discussion**

There are many stories in the bible that demonstrate God’s faithfulness. Today, read the story of Noah with your children in your favorite children’s bible. Talk about how Noah was faithful to God by building the ark. Then discuss how God placed a rainbow in the sky, after the great flood, as a promise to never flood the earth again. God has remained faithful to His word and has not sent another great flood! God’s promises can be trusted! He is a faithful God!

Discuss how we can be faithful in our own lives: a faithful friend, a faithful follower of Christ and a faithful child or parent. What actions can we take to be faithful to those we love and to God?

## **Scripture**

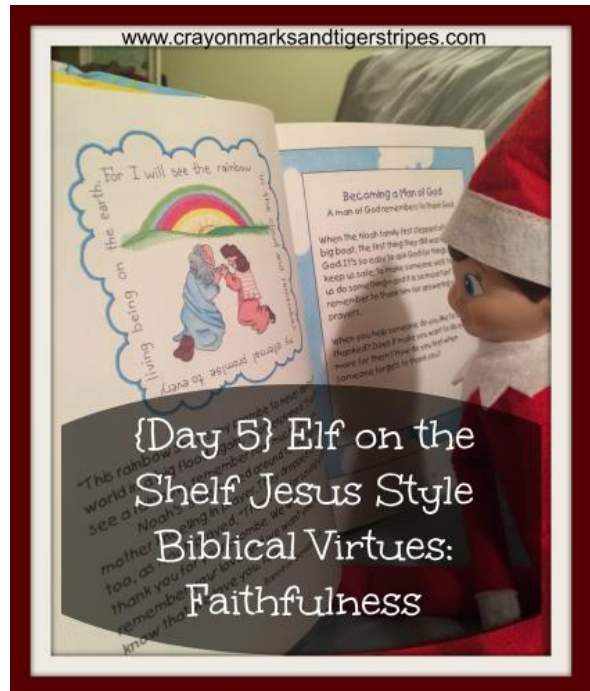
*The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made.*

*Psalm 145:13*

## **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Construction paper



- Paint
- Paintbrushes

This one is another messy one, but oh so much fun! Using either their hands or paintbrushes, help your children paint a picture of a rainbow. This is a great time to work on colors as well with your toddlers. As you paint, talk again about how we can show faithfulness in our own lives. After the picture dries, hang it up somewhere your child will see it often and use it as a reminder that God is faithful!



## Day 6: Courage

### **Discussion**

What is courage? Ask your child what they think courage means. Courage means being brave, strong and trusting in the Lord, even when you feel afraid.

Read Matthew 14: 22-33, the story of Jesus walking on the water. Ask your child:

- Why were the disciples afraid?
- What did Jesus say to the disciples?
- What happened to Peter when he stepped out onto the water with Jesus?
- Why did he start to sink?

The disciples were scared because they were stuck in a scary storm, but they were also scared because they saw someone walking on the water. They didn't know Jesus could do this. They were afraid because they didn't know who it was. Then, Jesus told them to take courage! Jesus asked Peter to walk on the water with Him, but as soon as Peter took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. Ask your child why they think Peter began to sink. He was afraid.

When we become afraid, it is easy to take our eyes off of Jesus, but God tells us to not fear!

Talk to your child about a time when they felt afraid. What can we do when we are scared? We can remember Joshua 1:9. For my toddler, we have shortened this verse and we say it together when he is afraid:

**God is with me. I will not be afraid.**



Help your children memorize this verse so that they can use it when they are scared. Tell them that when they feel scared, they can remember this verse and pray to God to help them overcome their fear.

### **Scripture**

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you need:

- A dark room
- A flashlight

Go into a dark room and explain to your child that a life without Jesus is dark, just like the darkness in the room. It is scary because we can't see. Thankfully, we have Jesus, and Jesus is the light of the world! Have your child turn on the flashlight and talk about how it lights up the room. Because there is light, we no longer have to fear the darkness. Discuss with your child how anytime we are scared, we can remember that God is with us, always, and we don't have to be afraid!

## Day 7: Self-control

Self-control is a hard one for any age. Even adults struggle with this concept. No matter what age your child is, self-control is a biblical virtue that must not only be taught, but modeled!

### **Discussion**

Ask your child what self-control means. Self-control is when we choose to act in ways that are pleasing to God. Making good choices, even when we are frustrated or unhappy, is practicing self-control. We can ask God to help us have self-control by praying when we feel like we may lose it.

Ask your child if they can remember a time where they didn't have self-control. Use examples from their life or your own life to show what self-control looks like.

### **Scripture**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23*

Here is [the Fruit of the Spirit Printable Coloring Sheet](#) featured in the picture above.

### **Activity**

This is a messy one so you may want to do it over a sink or outside. For this activity, you will need:

- An unopened soda bottle

Have your child shake up the soda bottle. Explain to him/her that when we don't have self-control, our emotions can get really shaken up and we can lose control. When we



lose control, we may have a temper tantrum, say mean things and hurt others. Ask them to tell you things that make them feel all “shook up” or upset.

Over a sink or outside, open the lid to the soda bottle and watch the fizz make a mess! Explain to your child that when we lose self-control, it makes a mess and hurts others. We also disappoint God when we lose control.

Thankfully, we have Jesus who can help us have self-control, but we are human and we will make mistakes and lose control occasionally. As you and your child clean up the mess, talk about how Jesus died on the cross to “clean up our messes.”

When we feel like we are about to lose control, we can pray and ask God to help us bear the fruit of the spirit. We can ask Him to help us make good choices and to practice self-control.

## Day 8: Joy

How would you describe joy? Do you ever get an overwhelming feeling of happiness? That's joy. But joy and happiness are different. Happiness can be taken away when disappointment enters the picture. Joy is a choice; an attitude that you choose to have no matter the circumstance.

Sometimes it is hard to find joy in the hard times. Sometimes it is hard to find joy when things aren't going our way. Remember, joy is a choice!

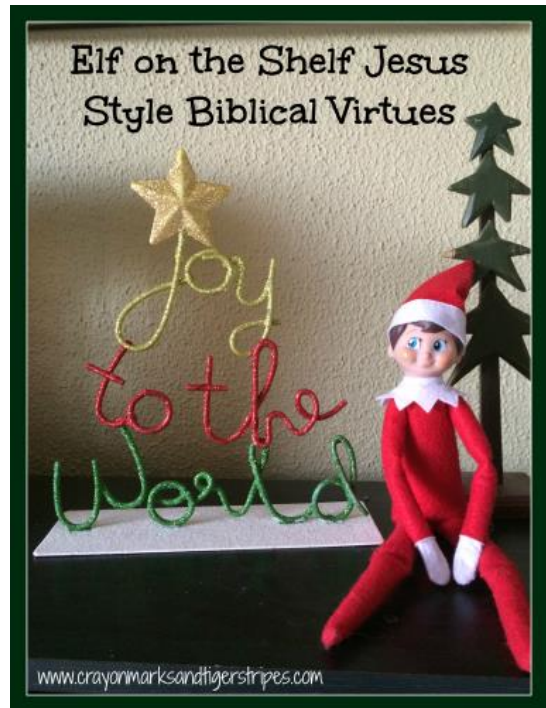
### **Discussion**

Paraphrase or read the story of Jesus' death (Luke 23:13-56) with your child. At first, Jesus friends and family were very sad about what happened to Jesus. It's okay to be sad. Jesus tells us in the bible that we will have trouble, but that He has already overcome the world (John 16:33). Since He has overcome the world, we can find Hope in Him and try to replace the sadness with joy.

Continue reading the story of the resurrection (Luke 24: 1-12). The angel tells Mary and the women at the tomb that Jesus is not dead anymore! Oh, how their hearts must have leapt for joy!!

Ask your child:

- Why were the women so sad?
- What happen to Jesus that made them so sad?
- What did the angel tell the women about Jesus?
- Was He in the tomb?



- How do you think the women felt, especially Mary, when they found out Jesus was alive?

Talk about how happy and joyful Mary must have felt. It must have been amazing to witness someone overcome death, especially someone whom they loved so much! Talk about how the disciples reacted when Jesus came to them. At first they were scared, but once they realized it really was Jesus, their hearts were overjoyed!

### **Scripture**

*Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy! Psalm 47:1*

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our Salvation. Psalm 95:1*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Christian music
- Some awesome dance moves! (It's okay if you are dance challenged like me. Your children won't care!)

One of the things that brings me joy is worshiping our Lord through music, especially with my little boy! I love music and so does my son. Read the scriptures for today. Talk about how we can express our joy to the Lord through music.

Turn on some worship music and have a dance party!! Clap to the Lord! Sing to the Lord! You will probably find yourself and your kids laughing and playing and being silly. It will be a fun! That really happy feeling is joy! You will definitely bring joy to your child if you have a dance party with them!

## Day 9: Patience

Patience is not an easy “virtue.” We all struggle with this at times. When you are a toddler, patience certainly is not in your vocabulary. I have explained patience as “waiting nicely” to my son. Does that mean he can actually put actions with those words?

Haha...that’s funny! Ahem...

### **Discussion**

Ask your child what patience means. Explain to them that patience means waiting calmly and nicely for something. It also means not over-reacting when a friend or family member makes you upset. Talk about how God is patient with us. We often make bad choices, but God loves us anyway. He does not over-react to our disobedience. He sent Jesus to die for our sins, and He loves us unconditionally. God is extremely patient with us!

Ask your child:

- Can you remember a time that you felt upset because you had to wait?
- Did being impatient help your situation?
- If you were impatient while waiting for something, did complaining about it make the time go faster? What could you do differently?
- What actions could you take to show you are being patient?

Take time to praise your child when they are patient. Simply pointing out this good behavior is a great way to get your kid to realize what patience looks like.

### **Scripture**

*Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city. Proverbs 16:32*



## ***Activity***

For this activity, you will need:

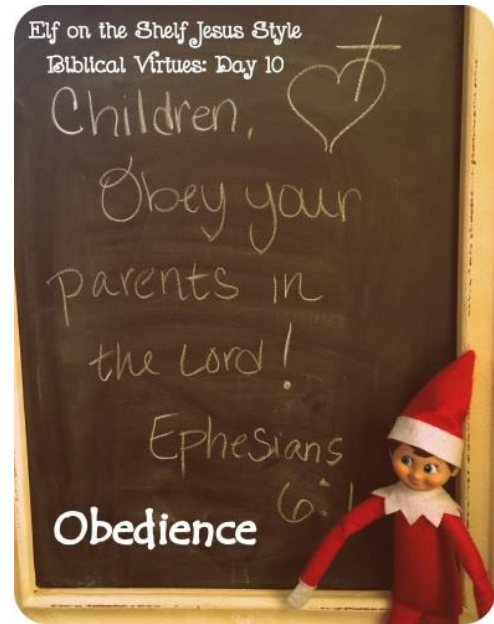
- a board game that requires at least 2+ players

Toddlers and young children get really excited to play games with mom and dad. They get even more excited when it is their turn! While you are playing the game, praise your child for being patient while they wait for their turn.



## Day 10: Obedience

Whoever came up with the “terrible twos” clearly never had children. At 2, defiance emerges as they crave this new found independence, but at 3, they can talk back. They can argue although they don’t often win! They can be more vocal about their defiance. We have survived this age with our son, but there were days I wasn’t sure we would. Being a parent is the best experience ever, but sometimes oh so hard!



When you are three, learning obedience is hard. It’s hard when you want what you want, when you want it. Even we adults have that problem too sometimes.

### **Discussion**

What does the word obey mean? I have had this discussion with my toddler many times. Sometimes multiple times a week! Toddlers need a lot of reminding. Read the story of Adam and Eve and the fall of man. Ask your child the following questions:

- What did God tell Adam and Eve to leave alone?
- Did they obey God?
- What was their consequence?
- Do you always obey Mom and Dad?
- What happens when you do not obey?
- Do you think it pleases Mom, Dad or God when you disobey?

Just as Adam and Eve had a consequence for not listening, each disobedient action your child takes requires a consequence. I tell my son this: “when you disobey, you have to have a consequence so that next time, you will remember that what you did was a bad choice. The consequence will help you to remember to make a better choice next time.” Explain to your child that God gave mommies and daddies the responsibility to

teach their children how to obey, and that is why there are consequences. We have to give consequences to help them grow because we love them, just like God had to give Adam and Eve a consequence because He loved them.

### **Scripture**

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ephesians 6:1*

### **Activity**

For this activity you will need:

- Any sort of embellishments
- A jar or see through container
- Beads, marbles, or any other item that can be placed in the jar

We are going to make an obedience jar! Allow your children to decorate a jar with any sort of embellishments that you may have (pom poms, stickers etc). Place the jar in a location that your child will see it often. Each time your child is obedient, give them a marble or bead to place in their jar. If you so choose (and I do, because this works for my child!), you can also take out a bead when they are disobedient. When the jar becomes full, give them a reward.

# Day 11: Contentment

## **Discussion**

We live in a “me” culture. Our culture teaches us that we deserve it all and that we have a right to be happy. What exactly is it that will make us happy though? Our world tells us that we need to have all the newest and coolest gizmos and gadgets. We need to spend lots of money on making ourselves beautiful. We need the biggest and the best.

What does God say about contentment? The bible says that God is enough. Talk to you child about what the word ‘contentment’ means. It means to be happy with what you have and know that God will always provide.

What happens if we begin to be jealous of what others have? What happens when we throw a tantrum because we want something? What happens when we just want more and more? We aren’t happy. We are never content with what we have. But God wants us to be! There are always going to be people who have more than us, but we need to be thankful for what He has given us. We do not want to live like the people of this world, always craving more. Our hearts will never be content that way. Instead, we need to thank God every day for what He has given us.

Read the story of the Israelites in the desert in Exodus 15-16. God provided manna and quail, yet the Israelites still complained. They were not content. They whined and grumbled. They were instructed to only gather what they needed for the day with the promise that God would provide the next day as well. God wanted the Israelites to trust Him. But did they? No, some people gathered too much manna because they didn’t believe God would provide them food the next day. The extra food they gathered became yucky. God wanted to teach them to be content with what He provided them.



Ask your child the following questions as you read the story:

- Were the Israelites always happy? Were they content?
- What instructions did God give them about gathering the manna?
- Did they listen to God?
- What was their consequence?
- Are you content with what God has provided for you?
- Do you think it makes God happy when we are content with what He has given us?
- What can we thank God for today?

### **Scripture**

*I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:12-13*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you need:

- Construction paper
- Crayons/markers/colored pencils
- Stickers/embellishments

We are going to make a “gratitude journal.” Fold the paper over to form a booklet. Punch holes in it and tie them together with string or staple the pages together. On the front of the journal, allow your child to create a front page cover with their name and title “\_\_\_\_’s Gratitude Journal.” Each day, for the rest of the advent season, have your child write down what they are thankful for that day. If they are younger, you can ask them and write it for them, or allow them to draw pictures of what they are thankful for. Each day as you fill out the gratitude journal, pray with your child and thank God for the things that He has provided!

## Day 12: Compassion

We all have selfish tendencies. We are human. Our own selfishness brought upon the fall of man. As we grow in our faith, we learn how to be more like Jesus and push those selfish tendencies away. But our little ones still have those tendencies. Our culture teaches us that you need to put yourself first, but that is not what the Bible says. That is not what our Lord commands.



How do we teach our young ones to cast aside selfishness and instead clothe themselves in compassion?

*By example.* We model compassion. We teach our kids by showing how to empathize and what compassion **looks** like.

We must teach them to have a servant's heart.

### **Discussion**

What is compassion? Compassion is showing kindness to others and helping those in need. It means that when someone is sad or hurt, we help them. Compassion makes our hearts want to reach out to others and serve them. God wants us to be compassionate to others. Read the scriptures for today and reflect on them with your child. What is God telling us to do in these verses?

Read the following stories and discuss with your children the actions that Jesus took that showed compassion:

- Jesus feeds the 5000- Matthew 14: 13-21
- Jesus heals the blind and mute – Matthew 9: 27-31
- Jesus heals the man with the shriveled hand- Matthew 12: 9-12
- Jesus heals two blind beggars- Matthew 21: 20-34

We may not be able to heal people or feed 5000 people from 5 loaves of bread, but it is clear that one of the biggest parts of Jesus' ministry was showing compassion to others. Since we are to strive to be more Christ-like, then we too must show compassion to others. When we show compassion to others, something happens to our hearts. Our hearts are changed and filled with joy!

### **Scripture**

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32*

*Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 1 Peter 3:8*

### **Activity**

I have been sponsoring children through **Compassion International** since I was 14. As of 2015, I have been sponsoring for nearly 16 years!! It has been such a blessing to get to know my sponsor children, see them graduate from the program and develop relationships with these amazing kids across the world.

I want to instill a heart for missions in my child. Compassion International has created an online game called **Quest for Compassion**. Go to this site and explore four different countries with your child and learn about how different their lives are. Introduce them to what poverty looks like and what we can do to help those that live this way. Perhaps you want to sponsor a child? You could certainly bless a child through **sponsorship!** Your children could build a relationship with a sponsor child, and it would be an amazing experience for your family! The mission field doesn't necessarily have to be across the world though. The mission field can certainly be in your own hometown! Brainstorm ways with your child to show compassion to those living with less and take action!

# Day 13: Attentiveness

## Discussion

What does it mean to be attentive? Attentive means to listen and give all your attention to someone or something. It means paying attention. Paying careful attention requires us to focus.

In Luke 10: 38-42, read the story of Jesus' visit to Martha and Mary. Both Mary and Martha loved Jesus. However, only one of them was attentive to Jesus. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to Him while Martha was busy cleaning and making preparations. She was distracted. Martha was trying to serve Jesus, but all He wanted from her was her attentiveness. He wanted to spend time with Martha and Mary. He did not blame Martha for wanting everything to be in tip top shape for her King, but He did want her to set her priorities straight and put her attention on the thing that mattered most: Jesus.

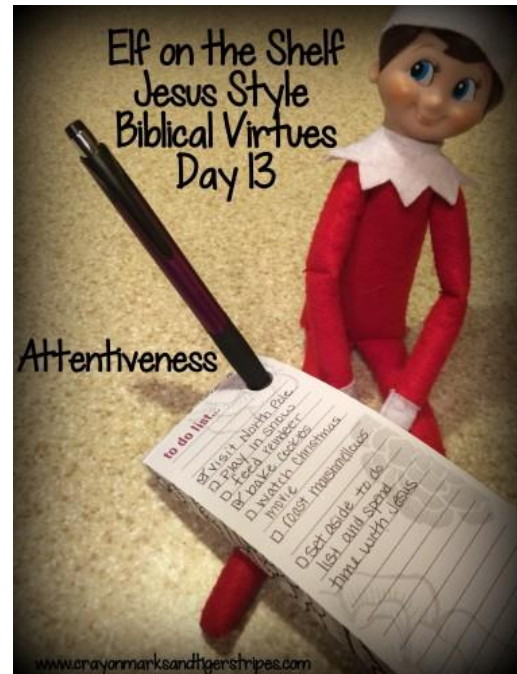
Discuss the following questions:

- Do we ever get so busy that we forget to put our attention on Jesus?
- If you are talking to someone or telling them a story and they don't pay attention and listen to you, how does it make you feel?
- When mom and dad tell you to do (or not do) something, do you pay attention to what they say? Do you listen to their words?

In what ways, can you show you are paying attention? (eye contact, listening ears, sitting still, asking questions when you don't understand something.)

## Scripture

*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. James 1:19*



### ***Activity***

It's game day!! Today, play a simple game like Simon Says, Mother May I, or Red Light Green Light. Play some music and dance and when the music stops, FREEZE! These games are designed to make your child listen for instructions. If you have any memory board games, play them! Have fun!



# Day 14: Respectful Communication



As adults, we know that our mouths can either bring about great things or great destruction. The words that come out of our mouths can either build others up or bring them down. Even the words we speak to ourselves can have a great impact on our daily attitude and our walk with Christ.

## ***Discussion***

Start the conversation by asking the following questions:

- Tell me about a time that someone said something not nice to you. How did it make you feel? Did it hurt your feelings?
- Have you ever said something that hurt someone else's feelings? How were you feeling when you spoke not nicely? Were you mad? How did you feel when you found out that you hurt a friend with your words?
- Would you rather listen to someone who is yelling at you or someone who is talking nicely?

When we want people to listen to us, we may think that getting louder and yelling will get others to listen to us. It doesn't work, does it? It usually makes others upset. Instead, we need to speak with a gentle and loving voice.

God knows all the words that come out of our mouth and He even knows when they are on our heart, even if we don't actually say them.

Our words can really hurt others. We can say I'm sorry when we hurt others, but the hurt can still remain. Words can't be undone once they are said. We have to be wise about the words we choose.

## **Scripture**

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14*

*He whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble. Proverbs 17:20*

## **Activity**

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29*

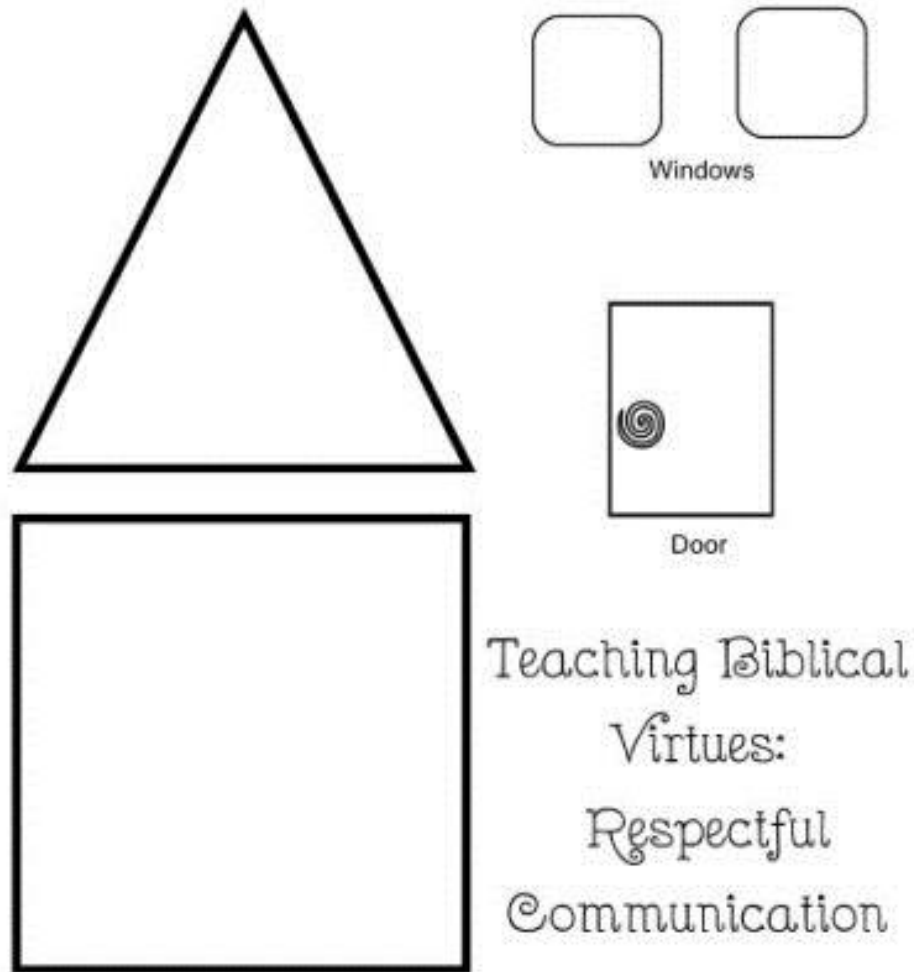
This is a GREAT verse to memorize with your children. Discuss what this verse means with your children because it is the basis for our activity!

For this activity, you will need:

- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

I have created this super simple, cute printable for you to use for this activity. See the appendix or click here to download the [Building up Others with your Words Printable](#).

## Building Up Others with your Words



MendedbyMercy.com

Have your child cut out the shapes. If your child is too young, cut the pieces out for them. Lay a piece of construction paper in front of your child and have the pieces to the house laid out to the side.

To earn a piece of the house, you will give your child a “not nice phrase” that they must turn into a “nice phrase.”

Feel free to come up with your own phrases. Here are some examples:

- Give me that toy NOW! → Please may have a turn with that toy when you are finished with it.
- Leave me alone! → Please stop doing that.
- MINE! → I am playing with this toy right now, but you can have a turn when I am done.
- Go away! → I am upset and need to be left alone, please.
- You are mean! → I do not like what you are saying or doing, please stop.

Your phrases and your child's answers may be different. This activity is designed to reinforce respectful communication and help your child come up with different ways to "talk nicely." As you do this project, remind your child that just as we are using "talking nicely and talking respectfully" to build our house, we use these same nice words to build other people up. Nice words make people happy and it pleases the Lord!!!

# Day 15: Forgiveness

## Discussion

Christ's death on the Cross is the ultimate example of forgiveness. In an adult bible or a children's bible (our favorite is the Jesus Storybook Bible), read the story of the crucifixion with your child (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, or John 19).

Chances are your child has heard this story more than once, but it is a story that we must revisit often! We all need the constant reminder that Jesus died for our sin so that we may have eternal life!!

After you have read the story, talk about why Jesus died for us. What was His purpose? What did Jesus say in His final breaths? He asked God to forgive us. Jesus knew that His purpose coming to walk among men was to die. Talk about how Jesus knew this, but He came to be with us anyway. He could have stopped it any moment because He is God's son, but He didn't. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is our Savior.

*It wasn't the nails that kept Jesus there. It was love.*

He loved us so much that He died, so that our sins could be forgiven.

As a Christian, we are to strive to be more Christ-like. We are to learn from the actions Jesus took. Thankfully, we do not have to die for our sins. Jesus did that for us so that our hearts can be clean and pure. Each time my child makes a bad choice, we pray with him and ask God for forgiveness. I have told my son that when he makes a bad choice it makes his heart dark because of sin. When he asks for Christ forgiveness, Jesus makes his heart bright and shiny again because Jesus is the light of the world. It



has been a very effective way to teach him about the forgiveness that Jesus gives us. (For more on this, read [How to Overcome Toddler Defiance](#)).

Ask your child to tell you about a time they were hurt by a friend or a family member. How did they react? Did they hurt the person back or did they forgive them? Talk about which choice is more Christ-like. Discuss how it is so important for us to try to be more like Jesus and to forgive those that hurt us.

### **Scripture**

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Two sticks from your yard
- Twine

This is a very simple activity, but a powerful one! Go outside with your child and find two sticks that can be used together to form a cross. Tell your children what the sticks will be used for. As you are looking for the sticks, talk to your child about how the “sticks” that were used to make the Cross for Jesus were a lot bigger and that Jesus had to carry His cross. Use the sticks to form a cross and have your child wrap the twine around the sticks to hold them in place. As you are working on binding the sticks together, tell your child that this Cross is a reminder to us that Jesus died on the Cross for us. He died to forgive us of our sins and the bad choices we make. It is also a reminder that we need to be like Jesus and forgive those that hurt us.

## Day 16: Endurance

### Discussion

We already discussed patience, which I have explained to my son as “waiting nicely.” Patience is more than that though. It also means to endure during hard times and to stay calm when something upsets you. Endurance is the ability to continue something, even if it’s hard.

God is very patient with us, even though dealing with our sin must be hard. Anytime we sin and make bad choices, God is patient with us and forgives us. He endures and loves humanity despite our flaws. Say a prayer with your child thanking God for His patience with us.

Read James 5:7-8.

*<sup>7</sup>Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup>You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.*

Ask your children the following questions:

- What does the land need to be able to grow?
- What would happen if the farmer harvested his crops early? What if he harvested before the rains came? Would he have anything to harvest?

Jesus is coming back for us someday, but we do not know the time. The bible tells us to wait patiently just like the farmer has to wait patiently for the rain. Sometimes he may even have to endure a drought. Talk to your child about a time you had to wait patiently or endure through a hard time. Ask your child to remember a time he/she had to wait patiently. Remind your child that in all situations, the Lord’s timing is ALWAYS perfect. We can endure and wait for his timing. We just need to be still and listen.



## **Scripture**

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2*

## **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Your favorite cookie recipe and your kitchen

Pick out your favorite cookie recipe and gather all your ingredients. Allow your child to be an active participant in the cookie making. Let them mix the ingredients and put the cookie dough on to the cookie sheet. Talk to your children about how we have to wait patiently for the cookies to cook. It will be hard to wait, but we can endure! We could eat the cookie dough, but it won't taste nearly as good as the baked cookie. Just like we have to wait for the perfect time to enjoy the cookie, we have to wait on the Lord's perfect timing in our lives. We see the tasty cookie dough, but we also see the final result: the tasty baked cookie. In our lives, God can see both the "cookie dough" and the bigger picture, even when we can't. This is why we have to trust in Him and wait patiently on the Lord!



# Day 17: Grace

## **Discussion**

Grace can be complicated to show sometimes, but it isn't complicated to understand. Grace simply means not getting what you deserve.

Give your child some examples of grace and see if they can come up with some of their own:

- We show grace by responding kindly to someone else's mean words.
- We show grace by forgiving others when they hurt us.
- We show grace by being nice to those that are not nice to us.

God showed us grace by sacrificing His one and only son so that we may be forgiven of our sins. We certainly do not deserve this! But God did it for us anyway because His love for us is a love that we can't comprehend.

We are sinners and sin separates us from God. Because Jesus died for us though, we don't have to be separated from our God. Jesus' death is grace in action. He died for us so that we may have eternal life *WITH* God. We certainly don't deserve this. We are living in a broken and fallen world, but God's grace gives us hope.

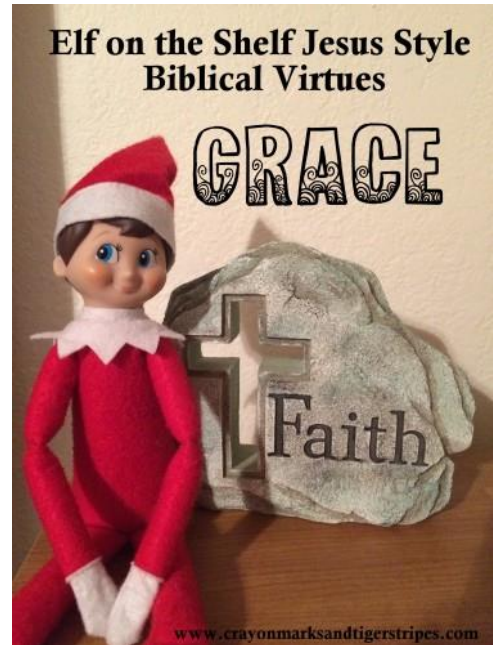
## **Scripture**

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8*

## **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Construction paper



- Scissors
- Markers
- Glue or stapler

Take a piece of construction paper and cut it into strips. Ask your child to name different sins: stealing, lying, cheating etc. If you have young children, help them identify sins in their own words: taking toys from sibling, arguing with mom and dad, temper tantrums. As you both come up with the sins, write them onto the strips of paper. After you have completed this part, make a paper chain with all of the strips of paper. Explain to your child that sin binds us and it keeps us from feeling free, just like the links of the chain are not free of each other. If this chain was a real chain, it would be heavy. The more sin in our lives, the heavier the chain is. Now take a pair of scissors and tell your child that the scissors represent Jesus. Have your child cut each link in half. As the links are cut, explain to your child that Jesus died on the Cross and died for *our* sins for *us*. We do not deserve this, but Christ did it anyway. That is grace. The paper chain will slowly become lighter and after all the “sins” are cut, you will no longer have a chain. Jesus has shown us grace and conquered sin!

# Day 18: Gentleness

## Discussion

The bible compares Jesus to a gentle shepherd. Explain to your children what a shepherd is and how they care for their sheep. Act it out with them! Pretend to be a shepherd while your children pretend to be your sheep.

Read John 10: 10-18.

Just like shepherds care for and lead their sheep, Jesus cares for and leads us. We are His sheep. He knows us, inside and out and better than we know ourselves. He laid down His life for us, making the ultimate sacrifice for us because He CHOSE us. He is a gentle and loving shepherd to his flock- to us. When we allow Him to lead us, He will guide us down a path of righteousness.

## Scripture

*Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:31*

## Activity

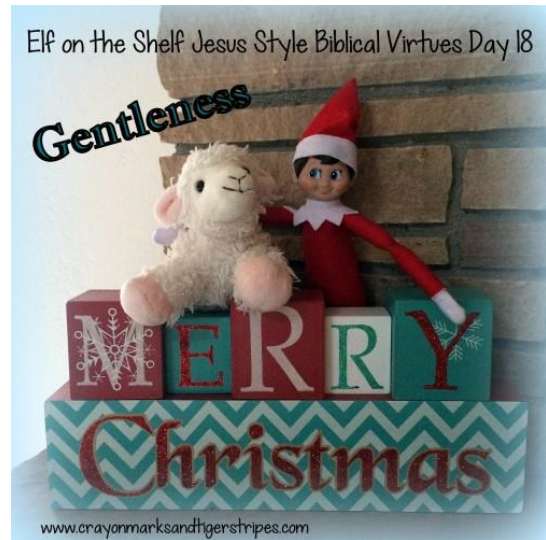
For this activity, you will need:

- [A picture of a lamb](#)
- Glue and cotton balls

Print off the picture of the lamb. Tell your children to glue the cotton balls on the lamb. Ask them how the cotton balls feel. Do they feel soft and gentle? On the picture of the lamb, write (or have your child write) the following prayer:

**Dear God, Jesus was so gentle! Please help me to be gentle like Him. Amen.**

Hang it in your home where you and your child will see it. Let it be a reminder that we are to be gentle like Jesus and that He is our shepherd.



## Day 19: Perseverance

### Discussion

Perseverance is a big word for little people, especially toddlers and very young children who get upset when things just aren't working for them. I know my toddler gets frustrated when he is trying to accomplish a task, but his little fingers just can't get it done. Explain to your child that perseverance simply means not giving up, even when it seems really, really hard.

Read the story of Daniel and the lion den in Daniel 6: 1-23. Ask your children the following questions:

- What rule did King Darius make?
- What did Daniel do? Was he disobeying the king or was he preserving in his faith? (Explain to your child that we are called to obey God and our parents and the law, but sometimes we have to stand up for our faith as Daniel did and in this case, disobeying the king's decree was how Daniel didn't give up on his faith.)
- What was Daniel's punishment?
- How did God reward Daniel's perseverance?

### Scripture

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13*

### Activity

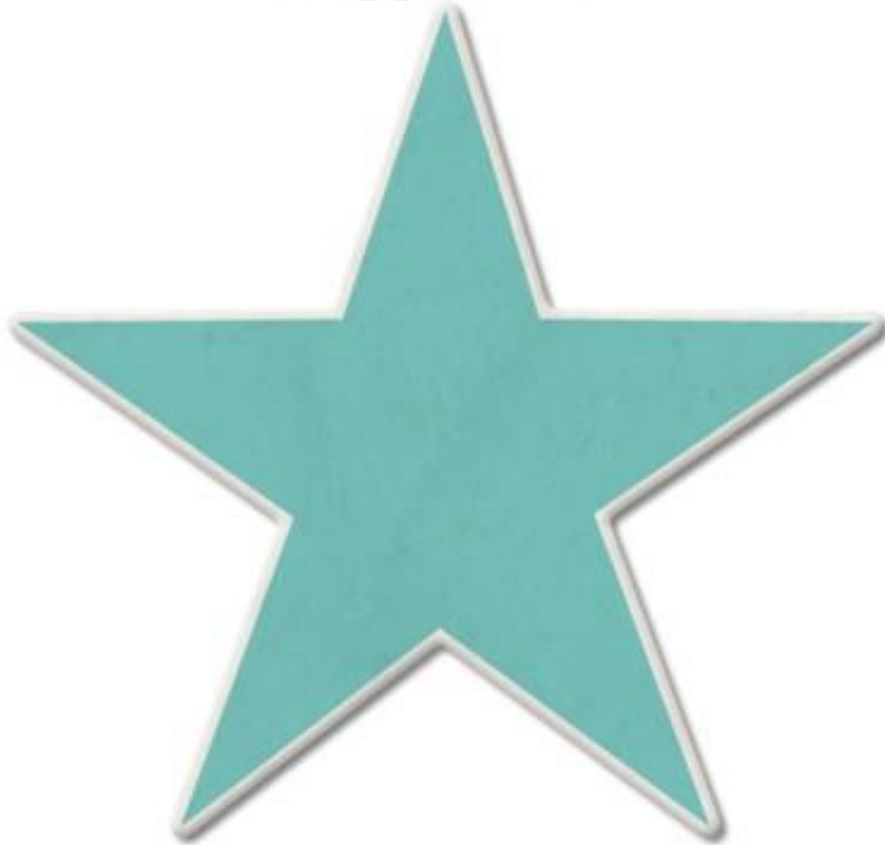
For this activity, talk to your child about their dreams and aspirations. For really young children, it may be something as simple as tying their shoes or getting dressed by themselves. For older children, allow them to dream big! Perhaps they want to be in the school play or master a talent such as piano! See the appendix and print off this free printable: [I can do all things through Christ](#).





I can do all things through Christ  
who strengthens me.

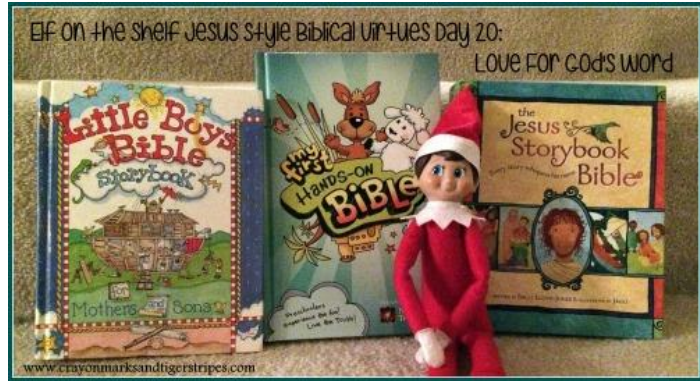
Philippians 4:13



Have your child write their dreams inside the star and hang it in a place for the whole family to see. Have each member of your family share their dreams with each other. Offer words of encouragement to your child and remind them that they can do all things through Christ!

## Day 20: Love for God's Word

We are going to start with a scripture today and this one is for you momma.



*<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6: 4-9*

As parents, we are called to teach our children about the Word of God, the love of God, and the grace of God. It is our job to instill in them a biblical worldview. How do we do this?

**Model to your children.** They need to see you spend time with the Lord. They need to see you reading the Bible and studying it. They need to hear you talk about what you read with them and with your spouse. It's not just a book that we read. It's the way we *live*.

**Read with them.** Read the bible with your children. Do a breakfast devotional or a bedtime story from a children's bible. Spend time with your children in the Word as often as you can. Read with enthusiasm and talk about it!

**Memorize scripture with them.** My son is in Awana and has a new verse each week that he has to memorize and recite. We work on it all week and when he goes to Awana, he is rewarded with a sticker in his book and badges for his “cubbie vest” for memorizing that week's scripture. It is so awesome to hear him memorize scripture and weeks later still be able to recite it. When you work on scripture with your children

though, don't just memorize it. Talk about it. Why is it important? What does it mean? Get some scripture music cd's and use these as a tool to memorize God's Word!

**Give your child a Bible.** There are some really great children's bibles out there. The Jesus Storybook Bible is our favorite. We also have several toddler bibles and interactive bibles. We mix it up by reading from the different bibles and this keeps my toddler's attention span! Use these in your devotional time with your children.

### **Scripture**

*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12*

### **Activity**

*He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure. Isaiah 33:6*

Hide your Elf along with a bible and tell your children they have to find the elf today. Create either a little "treasure map" or create some hints and send your child on a scavenger hunt leading them to your Elf and the bible. Talk to your children about how God's word is a treasure in our lives. The bible is full of stories, but these stories are relevant today because they are true and because God's word is the Living Word. Explain to your children that when we treasure something, it means that it is very important to us. We treasure God's word because it guides us on how to live our daily lives, how to be more Christ-like and it strengthens our relationship with Jesus.

# Day 21: Hope

## **Discussion**

Our culture defines hope as “wishful thinking,” but the biblical definition of hope is “full, unwavering confidence” in our Lord; the kind of confidence that overcomes even our deepest doubts.

Hope in the Lord is very rewarding!

It gives us:

**Strength-** When circumstances get tough, hope in the Lord can get us through it. We can draw strength from the Lord, knowing that He sees the bigger picture. With the Lord’s strength on our side, we can face any obstacle or circumstance and know that God will get us through it.

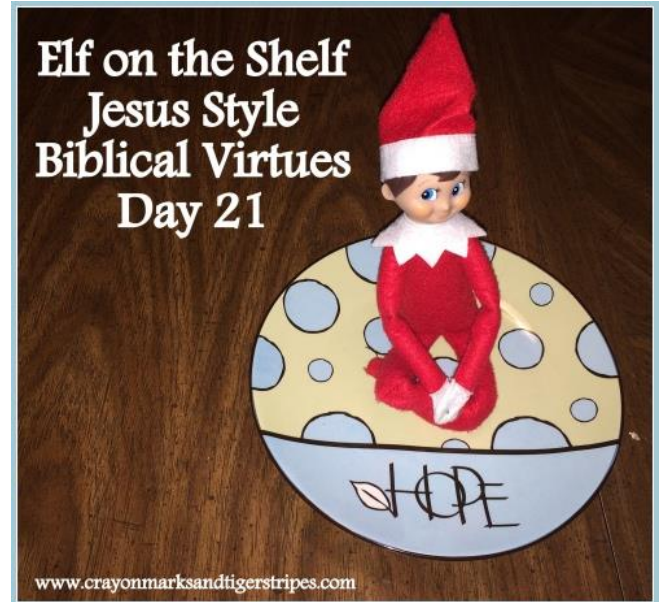
**Patience-** Hope in the Lord teaches us patience as we often have to wait on His timing. Society says we need an immediate fix, but often times God can be glorified in the wait. We can wait on the Lord and have full confidence that He knows what is best for us.

**Peace-** Hope in the Lord can give us peace that passes all understanding. The unwavering confidence that we have in the Lord, when we truly allow it to fill us, will give us an amazing peace, no matter the circumstance.

## **Scripture**

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11*

*And hope doesn’t disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. Romans 5:5*





## ***Activity***

Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 39-41. That is a lot of scripture so feel free to paraphrase for those short attention spans! As you read the story, have your children act it out. This will keep them engaged during the story.

Discuss how Joseph had hope in the Lord even though his situation seemed extremely difficult. His own brothers sold him into slavery. Do you think he felt betrayed by his own family? While he was a slave, Potiphar's wife told lies about Joseph and he was thrown into jail, even though he was innocent. But he still had hope in the Lord! Joseph was put in charge of the prisoners at the jail!

When Pharaoh had a dream that he didn't understand, he asked for Joseph to come interpret it. With God's help, Joseph told Pharaoh what his dream was about. Pharaoh was so pleased that he put Joseph in charge! Even though his circumstances seemed helpless at times, Joseph found hope in the Lord. He drew strength from that hope and he had peace in his situations because he trusted in the Lord.

## Day 22: Humility

### Discussion

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2*

The bible instructs us to be humble, but what exactly does that word mean? It means to not be proud and to not think of yourself as better than other people. When you are humble, you do not brag about yourself. A humble person admits they are a sinner. A prideful person will point out others sins while ignoring their own sins.

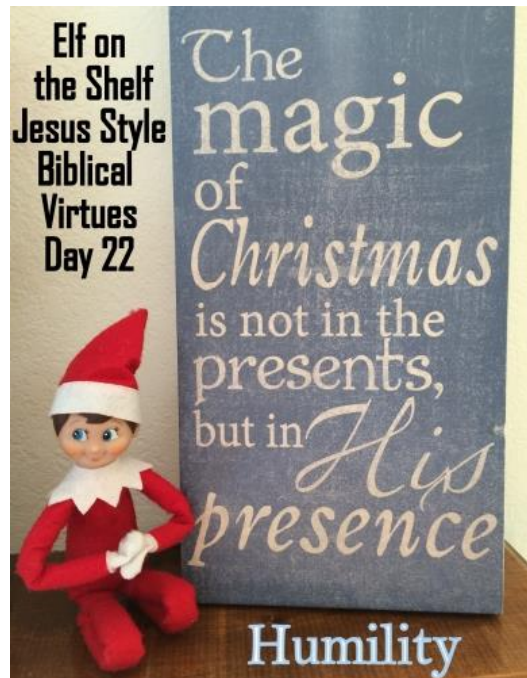
In what ways can we be humble?

**Admit to God you are a sinner.** When we admit our sins to Him, it is our way of saying “God, I am a sinner. I NEED you. I ask for forgiveness of my sins because you are the One and true God who can forgive me.”

**Follow God’s commands.** If we ignore God’s commands, it is like we are telling God that we know better than He does. By following His commands, we are putting our faith and trust in God’s all-knowing power.

**Serve others.** By serving others (and not looking to be praised for it), we are performing an act of “selfless love.” That means that we are putting aside our needs for the needs of others. Jesus’ life on earth was the greatest act of selfless love!

**Praise God for His awesome glory!** One of the best ways we can demonstrate humility is by remembering how awesome our God is. Remember that He is the one that formed the earth and everything in it. Everything belongs to Him. He blesses us with everything we have been given, but it still belongs to Him. Remember that we are imperfect people loved by a perfect God!



## **Scripture**

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3*

## **Activity**

There is this really great website called Kids of Integrity. It has been an inspiration to me as I have been working through preparing these virtues for you. I came across this science experiment on their site, and it is the perfect activity to demonstrate humility.

Head over to Kids of Integrity and do the **Practicing Repentance** activity. Be sure to do the discussion questions and explain the key concepts to your child. This is a really neat activity and a great visual of humility!

## Day 23: Thanksgiving



### **Discussion**

Thanksgiving isn't the only time we are to remember what we are thankful for. God always provides for us and because of this, we should always have grateful hearts. We should always praise God for all He has given us and continues to provide for us.

Read Exodus 17: 1-7.

Discuss the following questions with your child:

- What were the Israelites complaining about?
- Who did they complain to? Could Moses do anything about it? Who should the Israelites have been praying to for water?
- What did Moses hit to make water? Why do you think God had him do this?
- Do you think it pleases God when we complain?
- Instead of complaining, what should we do?

Sometimes we whine and complain, especially when things aren't going our way. Other times we whine and complain when we want something. That's when we have to ask ourselves: Do I *want* this or do I *need* this? Talk to your child about the difference between a want and a need.

Despite all the miracles that the Israelites had seen, they continued to doubt God's ability to provide for them. We should never doubt that God can provide for us. He always has and always will. Of course, it's according to His timing and His will, but He ALWAYS provides for us!

When you begin to feel like whining and complaining, praise God instead!! Praise Him for the many things that He has provided! Praise Him for the many things He has yet to provide!!

### **Scripture**

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men, for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107: 8-9*

*I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for Me? Jeremiah 32:27*

*Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Mark 10:27*

*And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- Scissors
- [Praising the Lord and Giving Thanks Free Printable](#)
- Construction paper
- Glue

Discuss the importance of a grateful heart. Read the scriptures in today's lesson and talk about each of them. For this activity, go to the appendix and print off the [Praising the Lord and Giving Thanks Free Printable](#).

Praising the Lord and  
Giving Thanks!!

Gracias!

TODAI!

MERCI!

GRAZIE!

Shukran!

**XIE XIE!**

Mahalo!

Salamat!

Danke!

Asante!

Domo!



[www.mendedbymercy.com](http://www.mendedbymercy.com)

On this printable, you will find the word “thank you” in many different languages. Have your children cut out each word. As they are cutting, explain to them that people all over the world speak different languages, but even though we may say it differently, we can all praise God and thank Him for His many blessings. Practice saying the words together. You may even want to get out a map and as you read each word, point out where that translation comes from.

As your child glues each word down on the construction paper, ask them to name something they are grateful for. Then together, praise God and thank Him for it!

*Here are the translations for the printable.*

**Gracias- Spanish**

**Dankie (Dahn-kee)- South Africa**

**Shukran (shoe-krahn)- Arabic**

**Salamat (sa-la-mat)- Filipino**

**Merci- French**

**Danke (Dahn-kah)- German**

**Mahalo (mah-hah-loh)- Hawaiian**

**Toda (toh-dah)- Hebrew**

**Grazie (gra-see)- Italian**

**Domo- Japanese**

**Xie Xie (syeh- syeh)- Mandarin**

**Asante (ah-sahn-teh)- Africa (Swahili)**

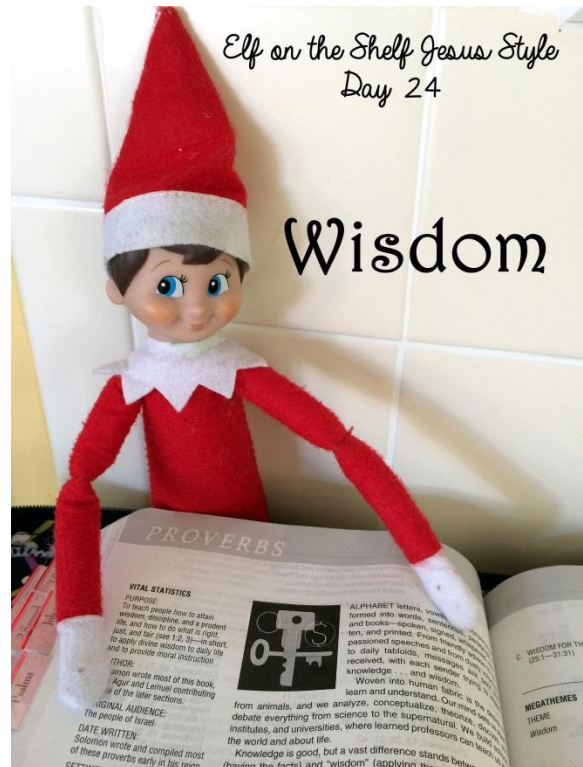
## Day 24: Wisdom

How exactly do you explain wisdom to a little person? That small word encompasses so much!

### **Discussion**

*Wisdom = good choices.*

That is something children can understand. Bad choices mean bad consequences. For little ones, this may mean a time out or a special toy being taken away. Good choices lead to rewards, a happy heart and more privileges. Young children know the difference between good choices and bad choices.



But what do we need to teach our kids about wisdom?

**Bad choices can lead to wisdom.** Sometimes our bad choices lead to wisdom. We learn from the experience. Give your child an example that will speak to them. For example, a child that is struggling with arguing gets a consequence of a time out. A child that touches a hot burner gets a consequence of a burned hand. The bad consequence is what leads us to choose to not make that same decision again. This leads to wisdom. Even though bad choices can lead to wisdom, it is still better to think through our decisions! We can also learn from other people's mistakes and avoid the consequences.

**Wisdom comes from God.** When we are making big decisions, we need to consult God about it! When we have problems or don't know what decision to make, we need to pray and ask God to guide us. God gave us the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. We can always consult the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom when we have to make a decision.



**We should seek wise, Godly counsel.** When we face a decision and don't know what to do, we should seek out Godly counsel. This means that we talk to someone who has a personal relationship with Christ and ask them for advice. For most of our young children, this will be a parent, family member or a close family friend. Encourage your children to talk with you when they face a tough decision.

### **Scripture**

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and knowledge. Proverbs 1:7*

*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:5*

*Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding. Proverbs 3:13*

### **Activity**

For this activity, you will need:

- [Wisdom Printable](#)
- Some kind of small snack (like a skittle, jellybean or marshmallow).

On the next page, you will find several different phrases. Some of them are wise. Others are not. Read them to your child and allow them to discern if the phrase is wise or foolish. For each wise phrase, have them place one piece of their small snack onto one of the stars in the word WISDOM from the Wisdom Printable. If the phrase is not wise and is foolish, then tell them to pout! It will be silly and may cause giggles! But being foolish makes us and others sad, plus they don't get a candy for the foolish phrase. I would pout too! After all the stars are covered with a tasty treat, the game is over and they can enjoy their snack! This teaches patience as well!

You can do this same activity by having them place the snack on all of the stars before the game begins. When a wise phrase is read, they can eat one of the snacks! When a foolish phrase is read, they again must pout .

## Wise and Foolish Phrases

1. I didn't clean my room when my mom told me to.
2. I am not sure what to do. I should ask my mom and dad to help me with this decision.
3. My friend pushed me so I am going to push them back.
4. My friend said sorry for pushing me, but I do not want to forgive them.
5. My friend said sorry for pushing me and I choose to forgive as Christ forgives us.
6. I snuck a cookie out of the kitchen, even when daddy said I couldn't have one until after dinner.
7. I am going to read my bible every morning before school.
8. I am going to share my toys with my friends that are coming over to play with me.
9. I memorized my memory verse for the week so that I can learn to hide God's word in my heart.
10. I prayed about a hard decision I had to make.
11. I slammed my bedroom door because I was mad.
12. I did my devotional this evening before bed.
13. I have a big decision to make. I need to pray to God to help me with this decision.
14. I left my dirty laundry on the floor, even though my parents expect me to put it in the laundry basket.
15. I obeyed my parents when they told me to clean my room.
16. I cleaned up my toys when I was finished playing with them.
17. I played a videogame when I should have been doing my homework.
18. I paid attention during bible story time in Sunday School.
19. I prayed before starting my day.
20. I didn't clean my room like I was told. Instead, I chose to play.
21. I called my friend a mean name.
22. Mom told me I had lost a privilege of playing on the iPad (computer/electronic device) because of a bad choice I had made. Dad didn't know this and offered to let me play on the iPad. I was honest and told him that mom said I couldn't.

23. Even though mom said to stay in my bed during rest time, I got up and played with my toys on the floor.
24. I did my schoolwork before I went outside to play
25. I did my chores before I went outside to play.
26. I got in a fight with my sibling and hit him/her.
27. I was gentle with my books from the library.
28. I touched something my mom told me not to and I broke it.
29. I use kind words when speaking to my friends.
30. I keep my hands to myself and I do not push or shove others.
31. I snuck a cookie off the counter, even though mom told me it was for after dinner.
32. I listen carefully and quietly when being read a bedtime story.

## Day 25: Salvation

As Christian parents, it is our hearts greatest and deepest desire for our children to come to know Christ as their Savior. In the time that God has given us these precious gifts, we plant seeds in their hearts, and we pray every day that those seeds will grow into a strong relationship with Christ.



It is only fitting that the last virtue of this advent activity is **SALVATION** because that is the reason Jesus was born. This is the reason God came to be with us! He is Emmanuel!

Begin this morning by reading the Christmas story with your children. **Luke 2: 1-20**

Discuss the following with your children about the most important virtue of all and the reason Jesus was born!

1. **God loves you more than you can possibly comprehend.** He created you. He knew you before you were even born. He knows what your life has in store, and He will greatly bless you. He promises to give you a prosperous future! (Jeremiah 29:11). Discuss ways that we know God loves us.
2. **We are all sinners.** After the great fall of man, it is human nature to sin. Sin is when we don't listen to God, or we make choices that do not fit with God's commands. Sin separates us from God. Talk about ways that we have sinned.
3. **God sent His son to prepare for us a way to our eternal home.** Even though we sin, God still loves us so much that He sent His only Son to die on the Cross for our sins so that we can have eternal life with Him in Heaven.
4. **Jesus died for our sin.** Talk about the crucifixion and how Jesus, who is also God, could have stopped His suffering, but He chose not to, because He *chose us*.

5. **Jesus can be the Lord of your life.** All you have to do confess your sins and ask Jesus to live in your heart. When your heart is ready to invite Jesus in, all you have to do is admit you are a sinner, believe that Jesus died for your sin and confess that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of your life.

# Thank you!!

First and foremost, I want to thank God for giving me the ideas for this advent tradition! I prayed that He would give me the right words, the right scriptures and activities for each virtue, and He certainly did! Our God is an awesome God! I want to thank each and every one of you for being a part of this advent activity! I pray that this activity has blessed you and your children tremendously. It has been fun preparing these devotionals for you! Have a very blessed Christmas and may God richly bless you in the coming year!

In His Love,

*Stephanie*

*Stephanie is the mom of two sweet little gingers, wife to Dr. Smarty pants and a daughter of the Risen King. She is a DIYer, a list lover, a homeschooling momma and a recovering perfectionist. By God's grace, she has overcome postpartum depression and negative body image. She writes at MendedbyMercy.com to encourage women to embrace imperfection and to grow in their faith.*

## Stay connected!!

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# Printables

Dear



I know you are excited about the Christmas season. I am too!! My elves are working hard to prepare for Christmas Day.

Speaking of elves, I have sent one of my dearest friends to help you prepare for Christmas. It is a lot of fun to look at Christmas lights, sing Christmas songs, set up the Christmas tree, go shopping and get gifts.

But there are some very important things that I want you to remember about Christmas:

\*It is better to give than to receive.

\*God loves you so much!

\*When you have Jesus in your heart, others can see it through your actions.

\*We have Christmas to celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus.

Your elf friend will help you to learn and remember these very important things about Christmas. Together, you can show others Jesus' love by singing songs about Him, giving to others in need that don't have as much as you, and being nice to others.

It is our job to show God's love to others through our gifts, nice words and loving actions.

Every night your elf friend will come visit me and I will send him back with a new activity that you can do together to help you learn and remember the true meaning behind Christmas. Each morning, look for your new friend. He will be in your home waiting for you to find him so you can do the activity together!

Please take care of my friend and together, you will learn about our awesome Savior, Jesus Christ. You will learn about how God sent his only Son to live with us, and in us.

Have a blessed Christmas season!

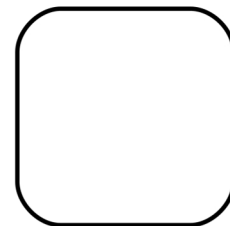
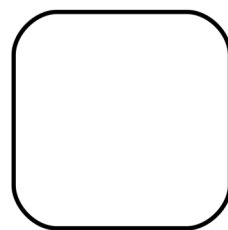
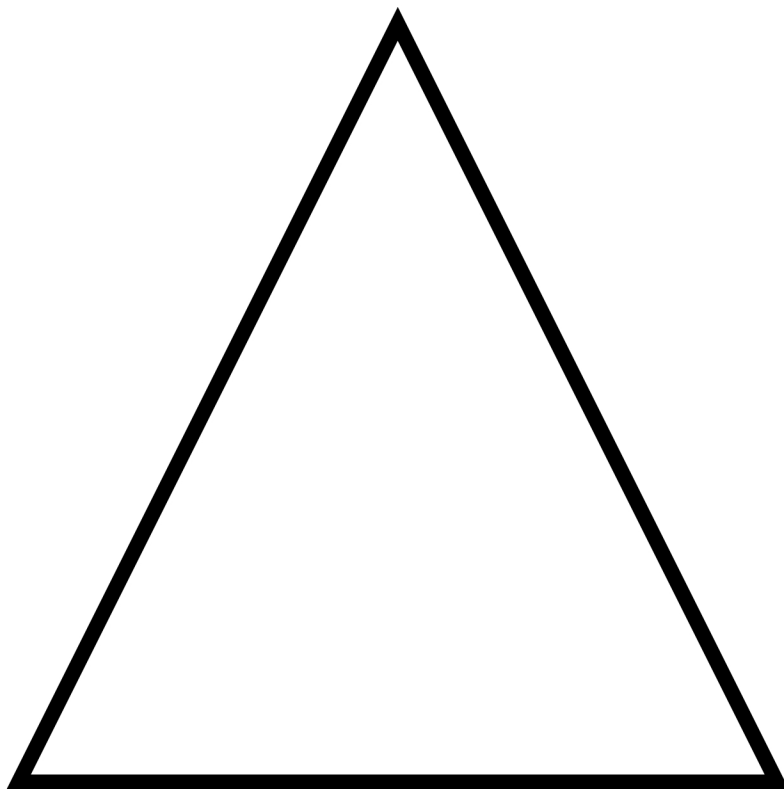
With much love,

*Santa Claus*

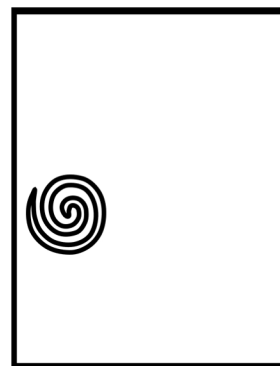




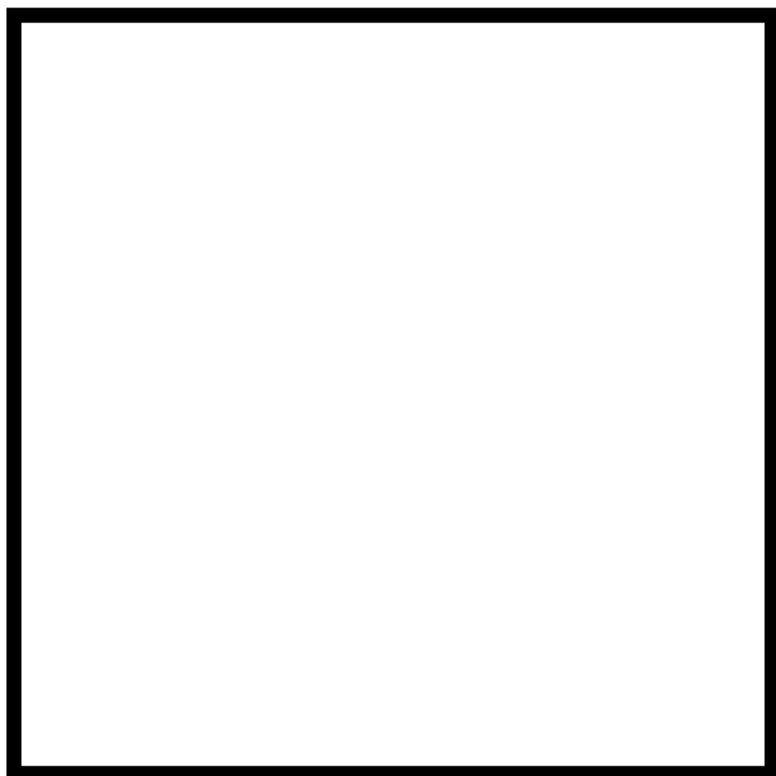
# Building Up Others with your Words



Windows



Door



Teaching Biblical  
Virtues:  
Respectful  
Communication



I can do all things through Christ  
who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13



Praising the Lord and  
Giving Thanks!!



Gracias!

Mahalo!

TODA!

MERCI!

Salamat!

Danke!

GRAZIE!

Asante!

Shukran!

Dankie!

Domo!

**XIE XIE!**

WISDOM