

fully alive

The logo for 'fully alive' is a stylized green graphic. It features a central vertical stem that branches into two leaves at the top and three roots at the bottom. The word 'fully' is written in a cursive, lowercase font to the left of the stem, and the word 'alive' is written in a similar cursive, lowercase font to the right. The entire logo is rendered in a vibrant green color.

Thank You

Special thanks to our senior pastor Rich Nathan, our Marriage and Family pastor Ron Hitchcock, and our Vineyard Kids pastor April Murphy. This devotional was a group effort and we are truly blessed to offer it to your family. Thank you to Mike Szapack, Pam White, Debi Leake, and Abby Fahmi for their writing. Thank you to Maggie Baxter for editing and to Rudy Alexeeff for being our general editor. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Warmly,

VINEYARD KIDS STAFF

Fully Alive Family and Children's Devotional
Vineyard Columbus

Published 2016 by
Vineyard Columbus
6000 Cooper Rd
Westerville, Ohio 43081

vineyardcolumbus.org/ministries/vineyardkids
vineyardcolumbus.org/ministries/marriage-family-life

© Vineyard Columbus

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. TM Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc. TM

Contents

WELCOME	9
SPIRITUALLY ALIVE	11
Devotions	
PHYSICALLY ALIVE	17
Devotions	
RELATIONALLY ALIVE	23
Devotions	
EMOTIONALLY ALIVE	29
Devotions	
FINANCIALLY ALIVE	35
Devotions	
A WORLD FULLY ALIVE	41
Devotions	

Welcome

I am so honored that you have decided to participate in our 2017 discipleship campaign, Fully Alive. You know, we often go through life feeling like we're stuck in a rut or just going through the motions. We may gain success in one area of life like our finances but find that we are physically out of shape. We may be physically in shape but struggling spiritually and emotionally. People thrive when we experience health in all aspects of life. We are meant to be fully alive. This family devotional is meant to aid you and your children toward being fully alive spiritually, physically, emotionally, relationally, and financially; and when we are thriving in our personal life, we are empowered to make our world fully alive. Every weekend across all campuses the preaching for adults/teens and Large Group for children (Twos-5th Grade) will complement this material. My hope is that we have a more disciplined church of all ages at the end of these 6 weeks that impacts our community and our world.

Take some time to pray for your family. First, think about how you relate to one another. Then think about your family's physical life, emotional life, and financial life. Ask the Lord to highlight an area in your family's life that needs his blessing and favor. Pray that God would bring you and your children to a fuller life spiritually, physically, relationally, emotionally, and financially so that we will be better equipped to partner with Jesus as he makes the world Fully Alive! Sometimes it helps to write down what you think God is highlighting. My hope and prayer is that God would fill you with his Holy Spirit and help you see some real change over this season. May God bless you, may God draw you closer, and may your lives be Fully Alive!

With all affection,

RICH NATHAN

Senior Pastor Vineyard Columbus

Area(s) I our family can become more Fully Alive in the next six weeks..



WEEK ONE

Spiritually Alive

Day 1

READ - JOHN 4:13-14

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But anyone who drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give them will become a spring of water in them. It will flow up into eternal life."

SAY: Think of how many things we do with water. Let's list some of the ways we use it. We drink water, but we also use water every day for other things. We use it to do laundry; cook food; wash ourselves, our dogs and mom's car; for swimming; to make ice cubes; and so on. Water is very important to us.



Can you remember a time when you were really thirsty? When you are thirsty, what is it that your body needs? (Water.) Without water we would die. We need water to stay alive.

Look at the picture. What is the difference between the two plants? Why is one plant drooping? (It needs water.)

What will happen if no one waters it? (It will dry up and die.) A plant needs water to live just like we need water to live.

DO: Jesus says that if we drink the water he gives we will never be thirsty again. Get a glass of water and take a drink. Do you still feel thirsty? When you took a drink of water your thirst was quenched and you weren't thirsty anymore. It filled you up and you felt satisfied. All you have to do is ask Jesus to fill you with his Spirit. You will receive the life that is found only in Jesus.

Jesus wants you to feel Fully Alive!

PRAY: Jesus, thank you for the water we drink that helps us to live. Please fill our hearts with your Spirit so that we can be Fully Alive. Amen.

Day 2

READ - GALATIANS 5:25

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

SAY: When you play the game "Follow the Leader", one person is the leader. Then everyone else follows the leader by doing what they are doing and saying what they are saying. Our verse today says that we need to follow Jesus' leading. Where can we find out what Jesus did and what Jesus said? We can look in the Bible. Jesus' life story is told in the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. In Acts, the next book after John, Jesus' disciples, or followers, followed his example by doing the same kinds of things he did.

DO: Now, let's play a game of Follow the Leader for a couple of minutes. (Choose a leader or the parent can lead. Walk around the room or house in funny ways and have the others do it in the same way. For example, you could walk like a duck or crawl on your hands and knees.) What happens if we don't pay close attention to the leader? How do we follow Jesus? Just like in our game, we can follow Jesus by reading the Bible and doing what he did.

There are lots of scriptures in the Bible to help us follow Jesus in what we do and what we say. Let's read Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind." Let's make a list of the things we should do when we follow Jesus.

When we follow Jesus and ask him to help us live like him, we will feel Fully Alive!

PRAY: Jesus, please help us to follow you closely by living our lives like you. We want to feel Fully Alive! Amen.

Day 3

READ - PSALM 142:1-2

I call out to the Lord. I pray to him for mercy. I pour out my problem to him. I tell him about my trouble.

SAY: When we pray, we talk to God and we listen to Him. In today's verses, we see King David talking to God. Notice what he says in his prayer. He prays for mercy. This means to receive help from God. When we pray (talk) to God, we can tell him whatever is on our heart. Nothing is too big or too small to talk to God about. We can talk to God about anything and everything!

What are some things we can talk about when we pray? Things that:

- Make us happy
- We are thankful for
- We hope for
- Make us sad
- We complain about
- Make us scared
- Trouble us or the problems we face
- Make us angry
- We need help with

DO: There are many prayers included in the Bible. They serve as examples of how to pray and we can even pray them ourselves. King David wrote a lot prayers and we can too. Let's take some time now to write a prayer to God. We can use the list above to help us with what to write about. Then we will say our prayers out loud to God.

When we talk to God through prayer, we feel Fully Alive!

PRAY: Start by reading out loud the prayer you wrote, then end by saying: God, you made me and you know everything about me. Thank you for teaching me that I can talk to you anytime. Please help me to listen to you, too. Amen.

Day 4

READ - PSALM 32:5

Then I admitted my sin to you. I didn't cover up the wrong I had done. I said, "I will admit my lawless acts to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

SAY: When we start following Jesus, one of the first things we do is ask him to forgive us for our sins. It's one step toward being fully alive but it doesn't mean we will be perfect. The Bible tells real stories about people who loved God and followed him but still made mistakes.

When we sin our relationship with God suffers. Fortunately, when we confess any sinful behaviors our relationship with God thrives. Thankfully, God gives us a way to get close to him again! In today's verse, David shows us how. He tells God about his sins and asks for forgiveness. God forgives David and their relationship is great.

Let's read 1 John 1:9 out loud: "But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure." This verse tells us what we should do: confess our sins like David did. This means to tell on ourselves. If we tell God about our sin and sincerely ask him to forgive us, what does this verse say God will do? (He will forgive us and cleanse us from all the wrong things we've done.) God will wash our hearts clean, like taking a hot bath after playing in the mud.

DO: Take a pencil and piece of paper and write down a sin. (You could also use a chalkboard or dry erase board.) It could be something like lying or being unkind. Have each person in your family add to the list by writing down a sin of their own. Then each person can confess their sin to God and ask for his forgiveness. As you ask forgiveness, erase the words you've written. When you are done, show the clean page or board without anything written on it. That's what God does when he forgives us. He completely erases our sin and he doesn't see it anymore.

When God forgives us we feel Fully Alive!

PRAY: God, we thank you for forgiving all of our sins and loving us so much. We love you. Amen.

Day 5

READ - HEBREWS 10:24-25

Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching.

SAY: When we follow Jesus we become part of a family called the family of God. It's a great big family that is all over the world. Some of these family members are people we know in real life like those in our own family and the friends we see at church each week.

What does it mean to be part of the family of God? One thing it means is helping each other and looking out for each other just like in our family at home. In the family of God no one is better than another; we all need each other's help. All of us need Jesus to feel fully alive, and all of us try to follow him.

Since we are family, we want to help everyone to be spiritually alive and be more like Jesus. One way we can help is by encouraging our friends when we see them living their lives in the way Jesus wants us to. Saying to a friend at church, "Thank you for praying that my sick Grandma gets better," or, "I saw you introduce yourself and sit next to the new kid. That was so nice!" are ways that we can encourage each other to love and do the good works Jesus wants us to do.

DO: Let's practice encouraging one another right now. Everyone take turns saying something encouraging and kind to each person in your family. Parents can start by saying something like "I love how well you listened and participated in chores today" or "I saw the project you brought home from art class. You are so creative." Make your encouragement personal to each family member. If anyone is having trouble thinking of something positive to say about one of their siblings, gently point out a few of their positive characteristics.

When we encourage others to follow Jesus, we feel Fully Alive.

PRAY: God, help us to encourage each other with words of hope and kindness. Amen.



WEEK TWO

Physically Alive

Day 1

READ - PSALM 139:13-14

You created the deepest parts of my being. You put me together inside my mother's body. How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that. What you have done is wonderful. I know that very well.

SAY: Look at this painting by Leonardo da Vinci called the Mona Lisa; it is a masterpiece - a work of art that is nearly flawless. You can't help but admire it. A masterpiece is considered the greatest work of an artist's career or a work of outstanding creativity, skill, thoughtfulness, or workmanship. This means that the artist did their best and most careful work, not worrying about the cost or time spent to do it right. It was the absolute best they could have done.



If we had a masterpiece in our house, how would you treat it? Would you color on it or use it for a coaster? No; we would all take care of it and hang it somewhere it could be seen and admired by all.

Our bodies are God's masterpiece. Look at the palm of your hand and notice all the details in just that one small part of your body: the lines, the colors, and the way your skin stretches. That's just the beginning! If we are God's masterpiece, then how should we treat our bodies? We should care for them as we care for masterpieces.

DO: Trace your hand on a piece of paper. On each finger write one of the 5 ways you can take care of your body:

1. Get moving with exercise
2. Eat healthy foods
3. Cut down screen time
4. Get enough sleep and rest
5. Keep our bodies clean

As a family, determine which item on the list you would most like to improve. What is one change you can make to improve it? Committing to care for our bodies like this is one way to honor God.

PRAY: Jesus, thank you that you made me just the way I am. I know that I am your masterpiece because you made me with your best and most careful work. Please help me take good care of my body. Amen.

Day 2

READ - ROMANS 12:1

Brothers and sisters, God has shown you his mercy. So I am asking you to offer up your bodies to him while you are still alive. Your bodies are a holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God. When you offer your bodies to God, you are worshiping him in the right way.

SAY: Food helps us live. It gives us energy to do all that we do. Think about times when you are hungry. That's your body's way of telling you that you need the nourishment that food provides.

What we choose to eat makes a big difference. Listen to this joke: "What is the difference between broccoli and boogers? Kids don't eat broccoli." It's funny but also proves a point. Would you rather eat candy or vegetables? Would you rather eat fish or pizza? Salad or chips? Pop Tarts or scrambled eggs? Sometimes we choose foods that aren't healthy, and that's ok as a treat from time to time, but most of the time we should choose foods that are good for our bodies.

What we eat matters to God. We learned yesterday that we are to take care of our body because it is God's masterpiece. One way to do this is by eating healthy. Today's Bible passage says that taking care of our bodies is an act of worship. When we take care of our body it is one way we can praise God.

You might be wondering why we should eat our vegetables. Vegetables, fruits and grains have vitamins and other things in them that make our bodies strong. If we only eat candy, and other junk food, it will make our bodies sick and we won't have energy. We won't feel fully alive. This is why we should eat mostly fresh and whole things like carrots, green beans, apples, berries, fish, and rice. These things will help our bodies have the energy we need to grow, play, learn, and even serve God.

DO: Use this plate as an example. Cut pictures from magazines and paste them in the different categories, or make a list of the foods in these categories that your family eats. Notice that there isn't a space for sugary snacks and junk food. That means we should think of those foods as special treats, not something we eat on a regular basis.

Put together a simple menu plan of dinners for the next week that use as many healthy categories as possible for each meal and try to stick to it.

PRAY: God, I want to worship you by taking care of my body. Help me to eat the foods that are best for me so I can honor you. Amen.



Day 3

READ - MARK 6:30-32: *The apostles gathered around Jesus. They told him all they had done and taught. But many people were coming and going. So they did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said to his apostles, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place. You need to get some rest."*

SAY: Where's the best place you've ever taken a vacation; or where would you like to go? What do you like to do on vacation? Do you ever like to rest, take naps, or just sit around and hang out? Look at today's verse; we see that Jesus and the disciples were going on a vacation. The main reason they were leaving was to rest. Rest is very important and it is a gift from God.

We should make a plan to rest every day. Rest means not doing much physical activity. You could take a nap, read, do a puzzle, or play a board game with your family. The Bible even talks about the importance of taking one entire day each week to rest; this day is called a Sabbath.

Newborns: 0 - 3 months	14 - 17 hours per day
Infants: 4 - 11 months	12 - 15 hours per day
Toddlers: 1 - 2 years	11 - 14 hours per day
Preschoolers: 3 - 5 years	10 - 13 hours per day
School-Age: 6 - 13 years	9 - 11 hours per day
Teenagers: 14 - 17 years	8 - 10 hours per day
Adults: 18 - 64 years	7 - 9 hours per day
Older Adults: 65+ years	7 - 8 hours per day
Pregnant Women	May need a few more hours of sleep per night or a few short naps during the day

Sleep is probably the most important aspect of rest. Do you get enough sleep? Figure out how much sleep you got last night and compare it to the chart from the National Institutes of Health.

Part of being fully alive involves taking breaks to sleep and rest. It is important to take these breaks

because when we don't, we can break down. When we are tired due to lack of sleep, it is easier for us to get hurt and sick. Sleep and rest are gifts from God.

DO: What is one thing you can do to get more rest? What can you do to get more sleep? Here are some suggestions:

- Set a bedtime for each person in your family based on their age and what time they have to get up in the morning
- No screens (TV, computer, phone) in the last hour before bedtime
- Every day after school, spend 30 minutes in your room reading or drawing.
- If you need a snack after dinner, eat something healthy instead of candy or junk food.

PRAY: Thank you, Jesus, for rest and sleep to help us stay strong and be fully alive.

Day 4

READ - PROVERBS 14:30

A peaceful heart gives life to the body. But jealousy rots the bones.

DO: Find our heart rate or pulse by placing two fingers just under your jaw to the side of your neck to find your pulse. Count the beats for 15 seconds and multiply by 4 to figure out how many times your heart beats per minute (bpm). This is your resting heartbeat.

According to the American Heart Association, for children ages 6 to 15, the normal resting heart rate is between 70 and 100 bpm. For adults, a normal resting heart rate is between 60 and 100 bpm.

Now do as many jumping jacks as you can for one minute. Then, run in place for one minute. Check your pulse again. What do you notice? Your heart should be beating faster.

SAY: Our bodies are incredible. The heart pumps blood all through the body. It is controlled by our brain. Our brain tells the heart to pump and it automatically does so.

Our hearts can also give us clues about how peaceful we feel. Your resting heart rate is a peaceful feeling. But if your heart is beating fast not because of exercise but because you are scared, or anxious, you may not feel very peaceful. How would you define peace? Peace is a calm, quiet and safe feeling. Today's verse says that a peaceful heart helps us to feel fully alive and helps our body to be healthy.

When your heart is beating fast because you are scared and anxious, something you can do to help is focus on Jesus. One way to do this is to simply close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply - in and out. As you breathe think of a favorite verse or a story from the Bible and pray that God would calm you. Do this for about a minute each time you feel scared or anxious.

PRAY: God, thank you for putting your peace in my heart. Remind me you are there when I am feeling scared or anxious so that I can be at peace. Amen.

Day 5

READ - LUKE 2:52

Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.

SAY: We never stop growing as long as we are alive. Even our Lord and Savior, Jesus grew! He not only grew taller but he also grew wiser. This means different life experiences helped him become smarter about how to live life well. He grew in his understanding of things. The Bible tells us that Jesus was eager to learn. Think of how much you have learned. Do you remember when you learned to tie your shoes, ride a bike, count to 100, and learned to read or write?

Jesus also became more pleasing to God and to people. God was pleased that Jesus made him the most important thing about his life. Jesus also loved and honored others and they liked him for it.

DO: Is there a place where you record your child's growth? Perhaps, there is a place in your home where you mark on a wall or door frame, how tall each child is each year? Or do you have a record of how they have grown throughout the years? Look back and see how each child has grown. Measure how tall each child is and make a note of it. Do this a few times per year to see how much everyone is growing.

Think of all the other ways you are growing. Make a list of the things that you learned to do in the past year or note the changes that have happened. Jesus grew in those ways, too. Remember that as you grow up and grow wiser, you have many opportunities to please God and love people.

PRAY: God, I know I am growing, changing, and learning new things every day. As I grow, help me to be fully alive and to be more like Jesus. Amen.



WEEK THREE

Relationally Alive

Day 1

READ - ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10

Two people are better than one.

They can help each other in everything they do.

Suppose either of them falls down.

Then the one can help the other one up.

But suppose a person falls down and doesn't have anyone to help them up.

Then feel sorry for that person!

SAY: Can someone tell a story about a time when they fell down and got hurt? Did anyone help you? What did they do to help? What would it be like if no one was around to help you up? How do you think you would feel?

There will always be times when we need someone else. No one is supposed to be alone. If we were alone all the time, we could not be fully alive. The Bible says we are meant to be together and to help each other.

Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. In this story, Jesus makes it clear who our neighbor is and how we ought to treat people. Jesus said to treat others the way we want to be treated. When we fall down and get hurt, we want someone to be there to help us up. What do you think we should do when someone falls down and gets hurt? Help them get back up.

DO: What do you think it would feel like if you were hurt and no one could hear you calling out for help? How would it feel to finally hear someone respond, "I hear you and I'm going to help you"?

Everyone choose a partner for this activity. Take turns trying to stand on one leg. Now, hold on to your partner's shoulders as each of you stand on one leg at the same time. You should be able to hold yourself up better with someone to help you balance.

Jesus is the person who will always hear you when you call out for help. We want to follow Jesus by being a family that will help each other up whenever we fall down. Our family is committed to help each other without complaining or making fun of the person who falls.

PRAY: Jesus, when we fall help us to remember you will always be there to help us get up again. Help us to always help others when they fall. Amen.

Day 2

READ - JEREMIAH 32:38-39

They will be my people. And I will be their God. I will give them a single purpose in life. Then, they will always have respect for me. Then all will go well for them. And it will also go well for their children after them.

SAY: Today's scripture tells us that we belong to God and that he is our God. This relationship means that God is the most important person in our family. God wants us to make sure that our family always puts him in first place.

God wants us to be in the habit of turning to him when we are going through a tough time. When bad things happen or when we experience loss, the first thing he wants us to do is pray. In both happy times and sad times, God wants us to make an agreement with him that we will put him first.

DO: Together, write a family mission statement that you can put on a poster or print out in large letters.

Some tips:

- Your mission statement should be simple and only one line
- It should explain what it means to be part of your family and how you will honor God
- Have each of your family members sign it
- Place your poster somewhere in your home where everyone can see it every day

Here is an example:

The Smith Family

*We will be a family that values: Faith, Fun, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.
Signed by each family member.*

PRAY: Jesus, Help us to be committed to our family mission statement. Amen

Day 3

READ - EPHESIANS 5:13

But everything the light shines on can be seen. And everything that the light shines on becomes a light.

SAY: What are some of the things we like to do in the day time? What happens when the day becomes night? Do we do the same activities? No, darkness limits what we are able to do. The daylight allows us to play and do many things because we can see everything. If we go into a dark place like a windowless room or a cave, we must bring a light so we can see and not get hurt. Light is important because it allows us to see.

Every refrigerator has a light so that you can see the good food and avoid eating anything that has spoiled. The Bible works the same way. The Bible shines a light into our hearts and minds. We see things that are good about ourselves and things that we need to change.

DO: Choose one of these activities:

1. Clean out your refrigerator together. As you clean out the fridge, look for things that have gone bad or are outdated.
2. Hide two items in your refrigerator: one item that doesn't belong (like a toy or a roll of toilet paper) and a fun snack. Once the kids find both items, enjoy the snack together while you finish today's devotional.

We want to be a family that shines a light upon each other's lives. We want to talk about the good things that we see and help each other avoid any bad behaviors. Talk about some good things you see in each other. Take a few minutes to talk about behaviors that you changed and how things are better now. Be gentle and loving. You are not trying to embarrass someone. Being part of a family means that we trust each other and that we want to be relationally alive by shining a light on each other's lives.

PRAY: God, thank you that the Bible helps us to see the good in each other and that we can avoid any behaviors that cause conflicts or arguments. Help us to be gentle and responsive when we talk to each other about these things.

Day 4

READ - 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

SAY: In this verse, it says that you are part of the body of Christ, which is also called the church. Look at your own body. Notice how everyone in our family has a similar body with hands, feet, eyes, ears, heads, and inside we each have a heart and a brain. No matter what it does, every part of your body is important. They may be small, but even your fingernails have a job to do.

Just as each part of your body has a different job, every member of the body of Christ has a special job to do. Some people preach or sing on stage and some people pass out crackers at snack time in children's ministry, but each job is important. It's also important to be thankful for every person who belongs to the body of Christ, and for the job that they do.

DO: Get out your phone and talk about all the different things you can do with it:

- Call someone
- Text information
- Take pictures and share them with others
- Schedule appointments
- Watch movies and play games
- Search the Internet
- Use GPS

Just like our phones have many parts to make it work and do all sorts of different things, the body of Christ has many people to make it work in a variety of ways. By working together as the body of Christ we will feel fully alive. Everyone in the body of Christ is important no matter how young or old we are. It's important that we all do our part.

Take turns discussing your gifts and talents and how you work together as the body of Christ.

PRAY: God, thank you that you put us together as a family and that we each have a special job to do in the body of Christ.

Day 5

READ - MATTHEW 25:35-36

"I was hungry. And you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty. And you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger. And you invited me in. I needed clothes. And you gave them to me. I was sick. And you took care of me. I was in prison. And you came to visit me."

SAY: When you think of Jesus, how do you picture him? Do you see him hanging on the cross or dressed in a robe or teaching the multitudes? Is he calming the storm or healing a blind man or doing some other activity we read about in the Bible? Take some time to discuss.

This Scripture helps us to see Jesus as someone in need. It can be hard to imagine, but we need to see Jesus in lives of people that need him most. What this means is that we treat others who are in need the way we would treat Jesus. If we saw Jesus needing food or was thirsty or lonely or needing clothes or sick or in prison, what would we do? We would be kind and generous because we love him. Jesus wants us to treat others in the same way.

DO: Whenever we help a hungry person we are helping Jesus. Draw a picture of a person. Give your person a name and pretend they are homeless. What do you think this person would need to live every day? If you're struggling to come up with ideas, think about the things that you need every day and what helps you to feel fully alive. Add these things to your drawing. What can you offer a homeless person in our city? Next, go through your cabinets or go shopping for items to give to a shelter or food pantry to help a homeless person or family.

PRAY: God, thank you for allowing us to help others. Help us to see people as you see them. Show us how we can help them. Amen.



WEEK FOUR

Emotionally Alive

Day 1

READ - JOHN 11:33-36

Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad, and he was troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how much he loved him!"

SAY: Let's talk about crying. People cry when they are sad, but some people cry when they are happy, like at a wedding. Crying is a way to show we feel strongly about something. Also, babies cry to tell their parents they need something. This is how babies communicate because they haven't learned to talk yet. What do you think when you see someone crying? If you don't cry are you stronger than someone who does? What did people think when Jesus cried? Was he weak?

Crying isn't bad; it can be healthy. When we are upset, letting ourselves cry can make us feel better than trying not to cry. It can be awkward when someone around you is crying, but Jesus' friends didn't feel weird when he cried; they understood that he was crying because of an overwhelming feeling of sadness and love. Crying is sometimes a good response to something that is happening.

When someone cries, we do not always have to try to make them stop crying. Remember, crying has a lot of benefits. Sometimes the best thing we can do when someone is crying is to listen and let them cry. Putting your arm around their shoulder or giving a hug can be helpful too. This may be uncomfortable but this is one way we as a family can support each other in our emotions.

DO: What is one thing you could do for a crying person? As a family, make a promise to be kind to one another when someone is crying. Promise not to make fun of each other for crying, but to take care of each other with kindness instead. Sit with them silently or give them a hug while they are crying.

PRAY: God, help us to show love and kindness to others when they are sad.

Day 2

READ - GALATIANS 6:1-3

Brothers and sisters, what if someone is caught in a sin? Then you who live by the Spirit should correct that person. Do it in a gentle way. But be careful. You could be tempted too. Carry one another's heavy loads. If you do, you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are somebody when they are nobody, they are fooling themselves.

SAY: If you have ever caught a brother or sister or a friend doing something wrong, did you tell them to stop, or did you tell an adult first? Which way do you think is better? If you told them to stop doing something bad, how did it go? Did they listen? Even if they don't always listen, it's good to keep reminding one another to do the right thing because Jesus doesn't want us to try to live perfectly all on our own. We should help one another through hard things. If we try to do everything on our own, we will fail. It's important to help each other be like Jesus.

It may make you feel like a tattletale but the truth is that if someone is doing something that is sin and you talk to them about it and tell an adult, you are doing the right thing. In this way of helping someone to be like Jesus, we don't do so because we think we are better than them. We help because we love them and we know it is what Jesus would have us do. When we are part of the family of God we look out for each other like this.

If you're afraid of getting someone into trouble, try to think of the situation differently: gently correcting a sibling, friend, or parent when they sin is one way to encourage them to be more like Jesus.

DO: Let's role-play. Pretend you see someone in your family about to sin. What do you think they might do? Now what would you say to them before they did it? What would you say to them afterward? Try reversing roles.

PRAY: God, we want to be a family that helps others to be more like Jesus. It is hard to talk to someone when they are doing something wrong. Give us courage to be like you and show them how much you love them. Amen.

Day 3

READ - MARK 3:3-5

Jesus spoke to the man with the weak and twisted hand. "Stand up in front of everyone," he said. Then Jesus asked them, "What does the Law say we should do on the Sabbath day? Should we do good? Or should we do evil? Should we save life? Or should we kill?" But no one answered. Jesus looked around at them in anger. He was very upset because their hearts were stubborn. Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand had become as good as new.

SAY: In Jesus' day, people were supposed to rest on the Sabbath. This meant that they couldn't work; they couldn't even light a fire to cook over. To some people, it looked like Jesus was breaking the rules by healing someone on a Saturday; they thought he was working. But Jesus told them their rules were wrong and too hard, and that it was a good thing to do good on a rest day. Have you ever broken a rule because you thought it wasn't fair?

Jesus was angry that they didn't want him to do something good, and he did it anyway. When we get angry over something we think isn't fair, we want the unfair thing to be changed. This is not a wrong feeling! But we have to be careful with our anger because anger out of control is never good.

DO: Write down some unhelpful ways you and other people in your family act when they get angry. Now, together think of some different ways to act when you're angry that are more helpful or constructive. Instead of shouting or using fists, maybe you could speak in a calm voice when you need to express your anger. Or maybe you could get your feelings out on paper by drawing a picture. Put the list of helpful ways to express anger somewhere noticeable where everyone in the family can be reminded of them. Also, the next time someone gets angry, help them talk through how they are feeling and try to find a way to solve the problem.

PRAY: Lord, when we get angry, please help us to remember to use our anger to make things better instead of to hurt people. Most of all, help me to trust you.

Day 4

READ - ZEPHANIAH 3:17

"The Lord your God is with you.

He is the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you.

In his love he will no longer punish you.

Instead, he will sing for joy because of you."

SAY: What are some things we do when we are happy? We might dance or sing, jump up and down, even shout or laugh or clap our hands. Whenever someone has a birthday party everyone comes together and celebrates that person by giving them presents, cake, and singing to them. Birthday celebrations are fun days when the birthday boy or girl feels loved and happy. When a new person becomes a part of God's family, did you know that God celebrates in heaven by having a big party? Luke 15:10 says "There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin."

God is happy when we love him and follow him. He even gets happy just by looking at us or thinking about us. It's like when your parents see you do something good or simply think about how much they love you and how thankful they are for you. It makes them happy and sometimes it makes them want to celebrate. It's good to celebrate one another like this because this is what God does with us and it's one way he wants us to be emotionally alive.

DO: Have a celebration. Choose one thing you want to celebrate about each person in your family. Get out instruments if you play any. Play a song or find some music on the radio and have a dance party and have a yummy snack to celebrate. Like how you are happy with each other, God is happy with you.

PRAY: God, we want you to be happy with us. Help us to sense all the ways you delight and take joy in us and give us courage and strength to do things that please you. Amen.

Day 5

READ - LUKE 15:11-32

Read the whole Story of the Lost Son, in your Bible.

RE-READ THIS VERSE: LUKE 15:20

“So he got up and went to his father. While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

SAY: The younger son in this story wants forgiveness from his father but knows he doesn't deserve it. He imagines his best chance is to be treated like a servant instead of being a son. Have you ever done something bad and been afraid to tell your parents? The son doesn't believe that his father will forgive him. Can you imagine how he felt when his father actually did forgive him? Have you ever been surprised when someone forgives you?

The father forgives his son and welcomes him home as if he was returning from doing something important rather than running away. Even when we do something we think could never be forgiven, God shows us how much he loves us and forgives us when we return to him.

Forgiveness is not always easy, but we should always forgive like God forgives us. Remember yesterday's celebration? That is just like what the father in the story did for his son, but bigger. He had a party when his son returned to him, just because he could.

DO: Have one person stand on one side of a door while the rest of you stand on the other. Notice how you are cut off from one another. This story is about rejoicing when someone says they are sorry and want to be together again, reconciled with their family. The father is on one side of the barrier and the son is on the other side.

Now, open the door and give each other a hug. When we forgive, we get rid of the barrier between ourselves and other people and we are reunited. This is a time of celebration and a time to feel great joy. It's a moment to feel emotionally alive!

PRAY: God, thank you for forgiving our sins and rejoicing over us when we say *we are sorry and ask you to forgive us. Help us to forgive one another and rejoice when we reconcile.*



WEEK FIVE

Financially Alive

Day 1

READ - LUKE 12:15

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against wanting to have more and more things. Life is not made up of how much a person has."

Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus tells us that he will take care of our needs.

SAY: Jesus says in Matthew that being fully alive is about putting God's kingdom before stuff or money. Have you ever made a list of presents that you wanted someone to buy for your birthday or Christmas? The list usually gets pretty long. Rarely would we get everything on the list. Sometimes we get jealous of others when they have something we want, and that can make us mad. But Jesus shows us a better way.

It's okay to want things but we should not get upset when we don't get everything on our list. The Bible teaches us that Jesus will give us everything that we need. Jesus warns us to avoid wanting more and more things, because owning things will never make us fully alive.

DO: Make two lists, one with the things you are thankful for, and another with a list of things we want. Compare the lists. Will having everything on the second list make us happy?

In the coming days, ask your children if the things they see on commercials will make someone truly happy? Commercials only show the immediate gratification of having something new. But, every toy or game is soon lost or broken. Tell a story about buying something that you thought would make you happy and why your happiness didn't last. Things do not bring happiness. Only Jesus can make you Fully Alive.

PRAY: Jesus, help us to see the truth that lots of stuff will not make us happy. Help us not to be greedy. Help us to be thankful for you and all that you have given us. Amen.

Day 2

READ - PROVERBS 22:7

Rich people rule over those who are poor. Borrowers are slaves to lenders.

More on this topic: Jesus tells a parable about borrowing and lending money in the gospel of Matthew. Get out your bible and read it in Matthew 18:23-34.

SAY: Imagine you forgot your lunch at school and a friend loaned you \$2 to buy your lunch. The next day you offered to pay him back but he said that you owe him \$3? The extra \$1 is his fee for loaning you the money. You would say, "No way! Friends don't treat each other like this."

Adults often need to borrow money. We go to the bank to get money for a car or a house and then we have to pay interest on the money we borrowed. This is how banks make a profit. It's also something the Bible warns about. When we borrow and owe people money, we aren't as free to use our money the way God wants us to.

Instead of borrowing money, what else can a person do to get things they want or need? One way is saving money. When we save money, we put a little bit at a time into a piggy bank or bank account until we have enough money to buy the thing we want. Being patient is difficult but it allows us to have more in the end. God wants us to be in control of our finances by avoiding high interest and debt. This way we have more freedom to honor God with our money.

DO: If you have borrowed money or something like a toy from someone, make a plan for how you will repay them or return what you borrowed. Follow through with your plan as quickly as you can.

Also think of ways you can save money. Ask yourself, is it more important to eat out or to save the money for something that we really want or need? Saving money is an important habit that helps us to be fully alive.

PRAY: God, help us to be good stewards of the money you give us. Help us avoid interest and debt whenever possible. Amen.

Day 3

READ - ACTS 20:35

"In everything I did, I showed you that we must work hard and help the weak. We must remember the words of the Lord Jesus. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

SAY: Do you like giving gifts? Some people love making and giving gifts or donating their money to others. A person who is always generous to those in need is called a philanthropist. Philanthropists have discovered that giving to others is a greater blessing than buying things for themselves. A pastor named John Wesley once said "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." He knew the importance of generosity.

When people are greedy with their money and possessions; it means they have a hard time giving things away to people who need them. But if you know that being fully alive is not about how much you have, then it is easier to give when others have needs. We will be happier when we are generous with our money, possessions and even our time to help those in need.

DO: Look around the house for things you no longer need. Be sure that these things are in good condition. Sometimes God may even ask you to give away your very best: a favorite toy or money you've been saving for a new video game. When this happens, God sees your willingness to be faithful and bless others. Be sure to talk to someone about what you feel God is telling you to do. You should always pray before giving things away.

PRAY: Father, help us to be a family that is giving and generous. Help us love people more than things. Lead us to people who are in need so we can show them your love by being generous. Amen.

Day 4

READ - LUKE 21:1-4

As Jesus looked up, he saw rich people putting their gifts into the temple offering boxes. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus said. "That poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these other people gave a lot because they are rich. But even though she is poor, she put in everything. She had nothing left to live on."

SAY: Who is more generous: a rich person who gives some of their money, or someone who gives the only two cents they have? Why do you think this is the case? There are many people in the world who have very little, and yet they are willing to give sacrificially. Even though the poor widow in this story had almost no money left, she gave it away. Jesus said that she had given more than the rich people who gave only as much as they wanted.

Giving isn't necessarily about how much you give; it is mainly about the attitude you have when you are giving. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 it says, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn't give if you don't want to. You shouldn't give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver." If you are giving money to God at church for the wrong reasons, it doesn't make God happy. Sometimes we feel like we have to put money in the offering, and some people make a big show out of giving their money. That's not what God wants. When we give cheerfully, it is a way of saying thank you to God for what he has given us. This attitude pleases God. And when you give cheerfully, it will bless you, too.

DO: Brainstorm ways that everyone in your family can participate in being a generous giver. Also make an effort to participate in one of the Fully Alive service projects or sign up as a family to participate at one of our food pantries.

PRAY: Lord, help us to remember that when we give we are giving to you. Help us to be generous and to have good attitudes when we give our money, possessions, and time. Amen.

Day 5

READ - 1 JOHN 4:19

We love because he loved us first.

SAY: This week we've talked a lot about giving and being generous as an act of love. But where does this love come from? It doesn't come from us; it comes from God. God's love is so big that he loves the whole world. And his love never runs out! God shows us what love is and he teaches us how to love others.

Following Jesus fills us up with God's love. When we are filled with God's love, we will want to be generous and boldly talk about how God loves everyone. In order to love others this way, we need experience it ourselves. When Jesus died on the cross, it was his greatest and most generous act of love. Sin is doing things that go against God's plan for how to be fully alive. Sin steals life away from us. Everyone sins and needs to experience the love of Jesus. Without this fill-up of God's love, we simply don't have much to give to others.

DO: Have you asked Jesus to be your forever friend so he can fill you up with his neverending love? If you haven't and want to, it is as easy as ABC. A stands for Admitting to God you have sinned and Asking him to forgive you. B stands for Believing that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and has forgiven them. C stands for Choosing to follow Jesus, believing he is the only one who can help you to be fully alive.

If you already consider yourself a follower of Jesus, do you tell people about his love? Do you try to be a generous person? There are lots of people who don't know Jesus and aren't yet filled with his love. Think of one such person and take time this week to share God's love with them.

PRAY: Thank you God for Jesus' death and resurrection so that I can receive your love and be part of your family. Help me to show others how much you love them and give me the courage to say and do things that will point them toward your love.



WEEK SIX

A World Fully Alive

Day 1

READ - JOHN 14:16-17

I will ask the Father. And he will give you another friend to help you and to be with you forever. That friend is the Spirit of truth.

SAY: The Holy Spirit, along with God the Father and Jesus, is part of the trinity - God in three persons. Different parts of the trinity teach us different things about God and help us in different ways. The Holy Spirit has many jobs in our lives; one of them is to be our comforter and fill us with hope. This means that when we feel sad or scared the Holy Spirit will help us feel better and show us that God is on our team and will take of us.

It's important to remember that the Holy Spirit will never leave you. How does it feel to know that the Holy Spirit will always be with you? When you are afraid or sad the Holy Spirit is with you. The Holy Spirit will remind you that God is bigger than any challenge you face. Jesus knew very well that life is hard, and full of disappointment and sorrow. The Holy Spirit will help us to get through these tough times.

The last part of today's passage says that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. When we are going through a hard time, it is easy to get confused and believe lies. For example, a bully will say things about you that are not true. The Holy Spirit will point us back toward God's loving truth, often through the Bible, prayer, or an encouraging word from a parent or friend.

DO: Maybe you are going through a tough time. Take some time now as a family to talk about the comfort you need. Then invite the Holy Spirit to comfort you and speak truth to you. Pray the same for anyone else you know who is going through a hard time. By praying for people like this, we partner with God to see the world become fully alive.

PRAY: God, you know that life is not easy. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for being our comforter and leading us into your loving truth. Amen.

Day 2

READ - COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters. Work because you know that you will finally receive as a reward what the Lord wants you to have. You are slaves of the Lord Christ.

SAY: What's the hardest job or chore you've ever had to do? What made it so hard? Sometimes when we do these types of jobs or chores it can be easy to be grumpy about it. When you do a hard job or chore, how is your attitude? Have you ever tried to do a challenging job or chore with a cheerful attitude? This is hard because we usually don't want to do the job, especially if it's something like doing the dishes or cleaning your room, because it will have to be done again and again and again.

Is it possible to have a good attitude about our work? Today's scripture says to look at the situation differently than we normally do: it says to look at doing our work not for parents or teachers but for Jesus. He is the one we are really working for, so when we work we should try to honor him. If we kept that in mind, would it be easier to have a good attitude when doing chores, school work, etc.?

Hard work and doing things you don't want to do are a part of life. In the movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* the dwarves sing a song called *Whistle While You Work*. When we understand we are working for Jesus, we can "whistle while we work". Having a positive outlook like this honors God and helps the world to be fully alive.

DO: Help your parents complete a chore, like washing dishes, folding laundry, or vacuuming. Turn on some fun music while you work or hum a tune. Parents, let your child help you, and try not to get frustrated with them if they do something the wrong way. Thank them for helping with the chores.

Even peaceful completion of family chores is one way God wants to see the world become fully alive!

PRAY: Lord, help us not to worry or be grumpy about all of the work we have to do. Show us how to work joyfully and help others with their work when they are worried or frustrated.

Day 3

READ - REVELATION 21:5: *He who was sitting on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down. You can trust these words. They are true."* **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17:** *When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!*

SAY: Think of your most treasured things - your toys, games, electronics, clothes, car, house, etc. No matter how much we try to take care of them, we can count on one thing: they will get old and break and eventually have to be repaired or replaced.

Have you ever had a toy or a game that broke? This is because we live in a world where things break. When things break it reminds us that we don't live in a perfect world where things last forever and where everything always works exactly the right way.

Today's first verse says that in heaven, God makes all things new. Think of it: nothing will break down, not even our bodies. We've all been sick sometimes, or we've broken bones or gotten bumps or scrapes from playing. In heaven, we won't have pain anymore because everything will be new and we won't get sick or hurt anymore.

Here's something surprising about what God is doing: we don't have to wait until heaven to know what it's like for him to make all things new. We can experience some of it today!

The second verse says that when we follow Jesus, he will make us brand new. This doesn't mean we will never get sick or hurt; it means that we are being made more like Jesus in how we live and in how we help the world to become fully alive. In this world where things go wrong and things break, heaven begins in us when God makes us new. We experience what it means to be Fully Alive and we try to spread this hope in everything we do and everywhere we go.

DO: Make a list of things your family uses that have broken, been repaired, or been replaced. Thank God that heaven is a place where we will not have to worry about any of that and that we ourselves will be brand new.

Now, perhaps there is someone in your family who is sick or whose body doesn't work the way it should. Maybe God intends for that person to get a taste of the brand new today. Everyone gather around that person, lay your hands on them and pray in Jesus' name that the sickness or brokenness would be replaced with something new and good. Try to make praying for the sick and hurting like this a regular habit.

PRAY: Lord, we know that this world is in many ways not like heaven. When things don't work right and when we get sick, help us to remember that you are in the process of making all things new. Amen.

Day 4

READ - REVELATION 7:16-17

"Never again will they be hungry. Never again will they be thirsty. The sun will not beat down on them."

The heat of the desert will not harm them. The Lamb, who is at the center of the area around the throne, will be their shepherd.

'He will lead them to springs of living water.'

'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

SAY: Heaven is not a place where we float on clouds or sing and play harps all day. We will not be bored in heaven. There will be so much to do and to enjoy!

When we experience the best things here on earth we get a taste of heaven. Think about it when you woke up on Christmas morning and saw gifts under the tree; that feeling of excitement is what heaven is like every day. Heaven is the joy you feel when your family adopts a puppy or when you get to sleep over at your best friend's house. Imagine out loud some things you hope will be in heaven.

In this scripture, how does the writer describe heaven? Does anything surprise you? What is your favorite part? The writer here is talking about a vision - a dream God gives us when we are awake - of heaven when we will all be together with Jesus. Other parts of the Bible talk about heaven like a great big feast where we always have enough food to eat or a mansion with plenty of space for us all to live in. Still others talk about how we will spend all day singing songs about how great God is. Sounds like one big party!

Heaven is also a place where Jesus will wipe away all our tears, and there will be no more death, sadness or pain. All of that will be gone forever. Wow! Can you imagine a place where you will no longer be sad or in pain? Does heaven sound like a place where you would want to go?

DO: Nobody knows exactly what Heaven will be like, or what we will be able to do in Heaven. We do know that we will be with Jesus, and that means we will be filled with joy all the time. We will never be hungry or sad. We can imagine that some of the things we enjoy doing on earth we will also be able to do in Heaven. Answer these two questions:

1. What would you like to do in Heaven?
2. How do you think Heaven will be different from living on earth?

Then, draw a picture of what you think heaven will look like. You can do one big drawing together as a family or everyone can draw their own picture.

PRAY: Thank you, Jesus, for showing us a picture of heaven and reminding us that you will be there to wipe away our tears and bring us joy. Amen.

Day 5

READ -MATTHEW 15:30-31

Large crowds came to him. They brought blind people and those who could not walk. They also brought disabled people, those who could not speak, and many others. They laid them at his feet, and he healed them. The people were amazed. Those who could not speak were speaking. The disabled were made well. Those not able to walk were walking. Those who were blind could see. So the people praised the God of Israel.

SAY: In this passage, people are bringing their friends and family members to Jesus because they have heard that he can heal their bodies. What do the people do when Jesus heals them? They praise God, because they know that Jesus has done what was impossible for them to do on their own.

Did you know that God still heals people today? Jesus healed people regularly while he was with his disciples. He wants us to continue doing the same work today. He wants us to pray for people so that they will be healed too. This is part of God's plan to make the whole world fully alive.

You have to be brave to pray for the sick. Remember, being brave isn't about not being afraid. It's about doing what God wants you to do, even when you're scared.

When we pray for someone's healing, we may not know exactly what will happen, but it's our way of showing that we believe God can work through us to heal that person. God doesn't always heal people when we pray for them, but that doesn't mean we should give up or stop praying for people. We have to trust that God wants to heal people today and continue to pray, and when he does heal someone, we should give thanks and praise God just like the people did when Jesus healed the sick in this story.

DO: Earlier this week we prayed for each other; now let's talk about how we can pray for people outside of our family. Think of someone you know who needs healing, maybe a friend who got sick at school or someone who has a broken arm. Let's pray for their healing right now, and ask God to give us opportunities to pray for them in person like Jesus did. Praying for someone in person like this requires bravery. Ask God to make you brave.

We can also continue to pray for each other every time one of us is sick or hurt. This will help us practice and feel more comfortable praying for friends and other people outside our family.

Parent's if you want to learn more about praying for the sick, sign up for our Meeting God 301 class. Look for more information at vineyardcolumbus.org or in The MIX.

PRAY: Jesus, help us to be more like you and to pray for others to be healed. Thank you that you are making the world fully alive by continuing to heal people through your followers today. Amen.