

# SHINE

families  
talk

## Walking and Talking

Read the story of the disciples on the Emmaus Road from Luke 24:13–35 or from *The Peace Table*, pages 284–285.

Talking about our feelings is a good way to connect with each other and learn to understand each other. As you read the story, notice and name the emotions the disciples might have been feeling. There are a lot of different possible feelings in this story! How many can you name?

After the disciples realized that it was Jesus who had been with them, they said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us as Jesus was talking to us?” It seems like they had a special feeling that they only recognized later. What do you think that felt like? Have you ever had a special feeling that Jesus was with you? Can you tell each other about times like that?

SHINE  
everywhere

# Picture Book Corner

*Stitched Together* tells the story of a child's longing to be included in a quilting circle's special anniversary quilt. Some of the quilters' memories go back a long time. At first, the child wonders what she can contribute to the project. Then she realizes something exciting. Working with her grandmother, the child creates a quilt square that makes the whole project more memorable for everyone.



Photo by Aimee Reid. Original version of paper quilt squares, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Canada

## Our Story Quilt

Your family can create your own quilt story. Choose a theme for your quilt. It might be the story of your family, things you are thankful for, family vacations, or your connections to church and God. Cut paper into squares. These will be the blocks of your quilt. Decorate the squares following your theme and talk together about why you drew what you did. Find a place to post your squares on a wall to make your "quilt." Have fun arranging the squares into pleasing patterns.

## Quilt Connections

Find *Stitched Together* at [www.ShineCurriculum.com/KidsBooks](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/KidsBooks).

Learn more about the "Stitched Together" project and see the full "quilt" at [www.MennoMedia.org/stitched-together](http://www.MennoMedia.org/stitched-together). You can upload your squares to that quilt too!

Use the QR code to watch a video in which Aimee Reid and Natalie Frisk introduce their books, *Stitched Together* and *A Light to Share*.



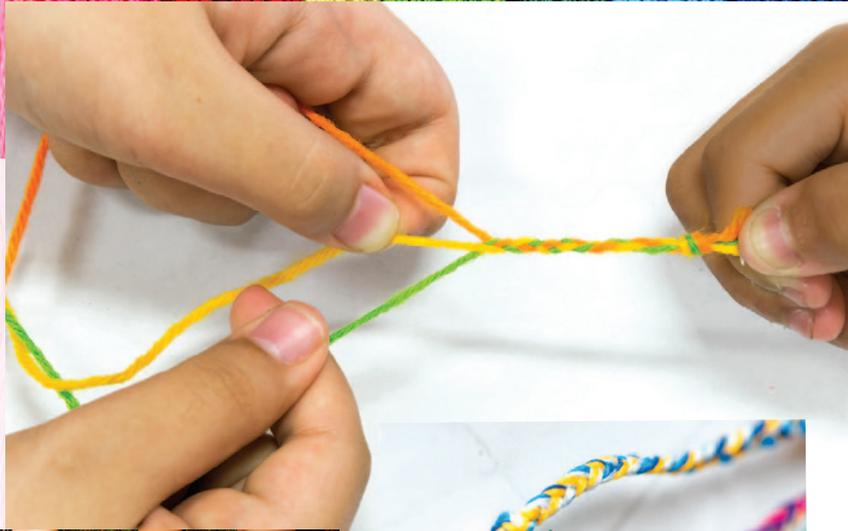
# Tied Together

Gather yarn or thread of three to six different colors. Each person can choose a few colors that represent the various parts of their lives. What color would you choose for family? Friends? Faith? What colors would you choose for hobbies, school, or work? Each person can gather a few strands, line them up on a table, and tape the ends down.

Twist the cords in a spiral to form a bracelet or weave them together. For example, if you have used six strands, you could separate them into three groups of two and braid them. Once the bracelet is long enough to wrap around your wrist with room for tying a knot, you can cut the strands.

While you work, talk about why you chose the colors you did. If you like, you can wear the bracelets for the month.

For a video that shows three different fun ways to weave the strands together to make bracelets, scan the QR code.



## Rose, Thorn, and Leaf

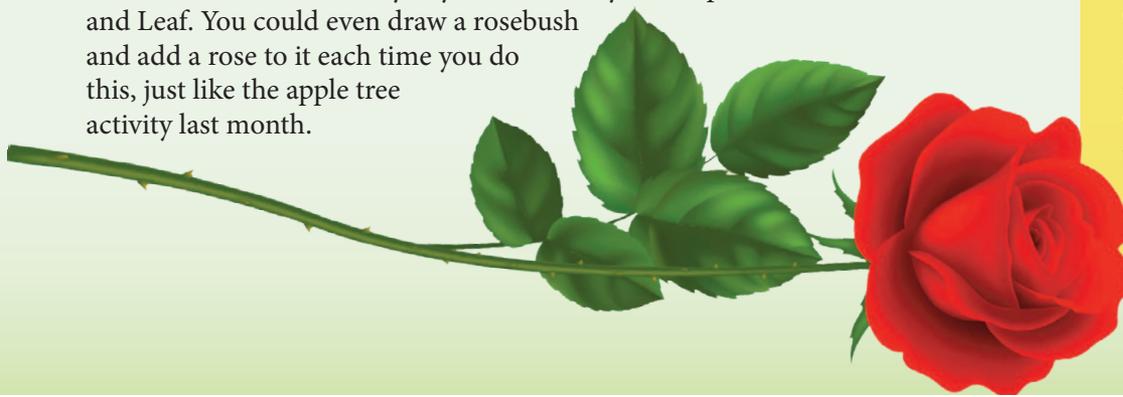


Here is a simple daily practice that encourages conversation. Take turns listening and talking:

- What is a **rose** (or highlight) from your day?
- What is a **thorn** (or difficulty) from your day?
- What is a **leaf** (a way you are growing or learning) from your day?

When you are listening, listen to understand the person talking. Offer affirmation such as “Wow! What a great moment that was!” or sympathy such as “That sounds challenging!”

When can you take a few moments to do this? In the car? During supper? At bedtime? See how many days this month you can practice Rose, Thorn, and Leaf. You could even draw a rosebush and add a rose to it each time you do this, just like the apple tree activity last month.



### Everyday Blessings

As you practice talking and listening with Rose, Leaf, and Thorn, add a blessing to close your conversation. Experiment to find the words that work best for your family. The next page shows some simple blessings to try. Cut it off and hang it up where you will see it over the coming month.

# Everyday Blessing

## Instructions:

**Hands together:** Take turns placing your hands in the middle of the table so you create a pile of hands. Say together, "May the hand of God guide and protect us. Amen."

**Huddled up:** Stand in a huddle with your arms around each other's backs. Say together, "May God surround us and strengthen us. Amen."

**Cross prayers:** Make the sign of the cross on someone's forehead or hand when you are about to be parted from one another. Say, "May the peace of Christ be with you. Amen."

**Arms raised:** Hold hands while in a circle. Raise your arms up. Say, "God's love shelters us. Amen."



May the hand of God guide and protect us. Amen.



May the peace of Christ be with you. Amen.



May God surround us and strengthen us. Amen.



God's love shelters us. Amen.

Dear Families,

This month we learn about the first of Six Practices that Grow Faith at Home: “Talk together.” The Six Practices are research-based practices from the book *Families at the Center of Faith Formation*, which reports on many different studies about how families nurture faith at home.



Illustration by Elisa Chavarri

I like to start with Talk because we talk to each other all the time, and talking about our faith in Jesus is the easiest and most natural way to share our faith and values. Talking is also a great way to learn to know and understand one another. This is important because “family warmth” is the biggest asset a family has for their goal of passing faith to the next generation.

“God is love and whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them” (1 John 4:16b NIV). God’s love can be expressed in our words—and in our listening—to one another. Families convey warmth, affection, and respect for one another in how they talk with each other.

In this issue you will find several different ways you can talk together to build family warmth and express God’s love. Look for the one that fits your family best and start there.

We know how busy life can be, so each month we’ll introduce at least one practice that takes no extra time. Look for the Snap icon in each issue for that practice. This month, it’s the Rose, Thorn, and Leaf practice: a conversation you can have while you are doing things you already do, such as riding in the car or getting ready for bed. The Everyday Blessings on the reverse of this page can also be done very briefly during your busy day.



Speaking of blessings, I leave you with this:  
May your home be filled with the love of God!

Shana Peachey Boshart  
Shine Everywhere Project Facilitator

God is love  
and whoever lives  
in love lives in God,  
and God in them.

—1 John 4:16b (NIV)



## Parent Tip

Meredith Miller is a pastor and parent who writes to parents about how to talk about faith with their children. Check out her book, *Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From* (Worthy Books, 2023). Follow her on Instagram or Substack @meredithannemiller.

# ***Stones of Blessing***

This is an activity for which you can put out supplies, introduce it to the family, and then allow people to do as they are inspired to do. Place some stones on a plate, as many as you think you'll need for your family members. Look for stones with a flat surface. They can be collected outdoors or bought from a store that sells craft items. Put out markers to write or draw on the stones.

This month, as you pay attention to the important aspects of one another's lives, think of a special word of blessing for each person. For example, a child might see the hard work of a parent and think of the word *fun* as a wish for that parent. A teen might see the struggle of a younger sibling to fit in at middle school and choose the word *belonging*. A parent might recognize an important accomplishment of a young adult and choose the word *strength*.

Write the word or draw a picture on the stone. Share it with the person you want to bless, along with a note or a few words of explanation. You may want to leave the finished stones on the plate and enjoy watching the blessings grow, or give the stones to people to carry with them.



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