

September - B225-09-21

This year United Intergenerational Ministry Bulletin Inserts offer generations an understanding of health issues and healthy ways to help build healthy generations body and soul.

School Prayer Begins At Home

School Prayer

As school begins, we have an opportunity to help reinforce healthy school habits that build healthy bodies and souls for generations. First and foremost is the habit of beginning each school year and school day with prayer. Where students cannot pray out loud in school, encourage them to pray silently for help they need and also to thank the Lord for His help. Pray for and with your student(s) at home. Ask for wisdom and guidance for yourself and for them. In your home, make prayer a healthy habit during school days and every day.

Prayer Everywhere

It is the presence of prayer in our homes and lives that will strengthen our families and help bring prayer into every heart and home - at work, at school, in joy and sorrow, in need, for help, for healing, at all times, and in every place.

Keep Children Safe

At school students can face situations that are not healthy or safe. When prayer abounds in their homes, students will receive wisdom to know and God's power to do the things that help to keep them healthy at school. They will have His protection and His wisdom to help them be safe in unsafe situations at school.

Prayer Feeds the Soul

We keep our bodies healthy by feeding them healthy foods. We keep our souls healthy by feeding them prayers without ceasing as God directs us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. He also invites us to pray to Him in everything (Philippians 4:6. In Ephesians 6:18 He teaches us to pray at all times *in the Spirit*, and to keep alert and pray for all of our brothers and sister in the faith - *the saints*. Healthy souls fed by prayer, feed our bodies with a healthy faith and life.

To encourage prayer at school and home try:

- Encourage discussions and critical thinking about how prayer helps calm and center us in our faith and lives at school and at home.

- Ask questions about your student's daily experiences at school and listen to answers - both verbal and non-verbal. A shrug or downcast look may signal the need for further conversation that begins with prayer asking God for His wisdom. He will give it to you. (James 1:5)

- Get involved in school in some way: attend school activities, attend meetings for parents, get together with other school parents, invite your student's school friends over for a meal or movie, etc. You don't have to preach faith to share it. School friends will see Christ in you through what you say and do.

- Encourage and praise your student(s) for whatever they do by faith at school and at home (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Above all, "...love one another earnestly from a pure heart." 1 Peter 1:22.

- Introduce a different passage every day or week to open up discussions. Ephesians 4:32 can inspire discussion about kindness and compassion. But above all, be kind and compassionate to lead your students to be the same.

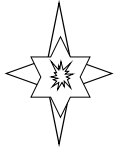
- Prayer is just the beginning of all the healthy habits for body and soul that can be established in you and your family through prayer. And the prayer that is instilled through you and your family, will be passed on to bless all of the people it touches for generations.

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Our Most Important Exercise

We all do exercises of one kind or another. But which is our most important exercise? God gives us the answer in His Word: *“For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come..”*

1 Timothy 4:8.

Both physical and spiritual exercise are healthy for our bodies and our souls. Both can help to reduce stress and, thereby, problems caused by stress. Physical exercise takes away weight that harms our bodies. Spiritual exercise takes away the weight of sin that harms souls. Physical and spiritual exercise are both healthy. But many consider them exercises that need to be done “whether we like it or not.” This certainly does not need to be the case.

One Key to Exercise

The most successful exercise is enjoyable exercise. So, make physical and spiritual exercise “enjoyable!”

Choose Enjoyable Exercise

Not all exercise requires the energy and strength of jogging, aerobics, or weight lifting. You can walk for exercise. Make it enjoyable. Walk with a friend!. Do any exercise to music you enjoy. If you like to garden, that’s exercise. Enjoy it!

Spiritual exercises like prayer, worship, and reading God’s Word actually give us great joy- *the joy of the Lord*. This is a joy that comes to live deep in our souls.. It is a joy in us people see and desire to have. We can share it with them by sharing Christ. We don’t have to do anything strenuous to receive it. God does it all!

Our Strength;

God’s Power

Talk to those who physically exercise every day. They will tell you they miss it if they don’t exercise. It makes them feel better and think better. Their work day seems easier. But, they will also tell you it takes self- determination.

The wonderful thing about spiritual exercise is that God is our strength (Exodus 15:2) There’s no physical running or swimming or yard work to do. We only have to pray and ask God to help us exercise. He will send His Holy Spirit to fill us with a desire for His Word, for prayer, and above all for Him.

The Benefits and Blessings of Exercise

In physical exercise, we do the work and receive benefits. With spiritual exercise, God does all the work and we receive all of the benefits and blessings, which are endless. John 1:16 describes them as *grace upon grace*.

Our Salvation!

As we exercise physically and spiritually, we grow stronger in our faith and lives on earth. However, all of the physical exercise on earth cannot give what we receive from spiritual exercise - and that is, salvation in heaven. This makes spiritual exercise our most important exercise.

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November - B227-11-21

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Hope With Thanksgiving

Luther's Hope

The saying, "Even if I knew that tomorrow would go to pieces, I would still plant a tree." is attributed to Martin Luther, who led the Protestant Reformation. Whether he said this or not, it gives a message of hope. Rather than feeling sorrow over things going to pieces, we need to plant a tree and keep living, and praise the Lord with great thanksgiving!

Our Hope

We have much to be thankful for in Christ, who is our hope in hopelessness,. The Bible says those who wait for Him *shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*" Isaiah 40:31. No matter what comes our way, Christ our hope will carry us through every day and season of the year.

Our Suffering

In life, there will be suffering, but Paul writes, "*we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*" Romans 5:3-5. The hope we have in Christ is not physical, but spiritual and lasting.

God's Assurance

Christ is our hope for now and for all eternity. "*If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.*" 1 Corinthians 15:19. It is just as Paul tells us, whether we live or die we are the Lord's (Romans 14:8). Christ will live in us in the best and worst of times until we live with Him forever in heaven.

The Mystery

The hope we have in Christ is "*the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*" Colossians 1:26-27. Our hope in Christ is a mystery to be shared and Thanksgiving provides an excellent opportunity to do so

Every Thanksgiving:

Plan ways you and your family can share the hope of salvation you have through faith in Christ.

- In prayer, thank the Lord for His gift of hope and salvation.
- Print "Jesus is my Hope and Salvation" on place cards and then the names of your guests.
- Place the name "Jesus" and the words "Hope" and "Salvation" into a Thanksgiving centerpiece.
- Create a Thanksgiving banner as a family to display every year that thanks God for His Son.
- Make place mats out of 11" X 17" paper. Print "Christ, Our Hope and Salvation" on them and laminate them.

Pass the hope and salvation you have in and through Christ on to future generations by making the ideas in this insert Thanksgiving Day traditions in your home.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

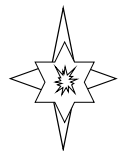
Romans 15:13

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Real Christmas Balance

The Struggle

Christmas can throw our normal lives out of balance. We don't always sleep as much as we need to. We don't eat what we should. We tend to spend more than we can afford. The balance we work to keep during the year can get pushed right out the door as Christmas draws near.

However, the Christmas balance in this insert is more important that a balanced diet or budget. Certainly, we should eat healthy and spend wisely. It's just that real Christmas balance has more to do with how we live and what we believe all year long.

So, you ask, how can we achieve balance at Christmas that lasts all year long? We can't. But God can. In fact, He has already done so. The problem is, we forget all He has done to give our lives balance all year long.

We Strive For Balance

Each Christmas, as Christians, we work to achieve balance only Christ can give. We play Christian Christmas music, read Advent devotions, send Christian Christmas cards, choose gifts that share our faith, etc. We work hard, but we forget to let Christ work in us to give our lives balance.

We make Promises

We promise ourselves that we won't spend as much as last Christmas - definitely not more than we can afford. The same goes for the food we eat. It'll be delicious, but healthy. We will put up lights, but to save money, we won't plug them in until a week before Christmas. Our plan is good, but just after Thanksgiving, it gets tossed aside because *it's Christmas!*

Look At Us

The neighbors will think we are "Scrooge" when our lights are up but not turned on? Besides, lots of lights remind everyone of "Jesus, the Light of the World!" Our lights need to be on for the entire Christmas season. Not to turn them on until just before Christmas would be a sin.

We Are Out of Balance

We forget we do not need lights decorating our yards to proclaim Christ. We need mouths and lives of faith that shout to the world, "A Savior is born for you today! He is Christ the Lord!" Not only does He bring peace on earth and good tidings of great joy on Christmas, His message of love and salvation for all people brings balance to us and the world every single day. He is our real Christmas balance.

We Are Sinful

Our imbalance is not about our preparations or spending. It's about our sin "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3:23 Thankfully, Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again to forgive all of our sins and give us His balance as He comes to live in us through the Holy Spirit.

We Are Forgiven

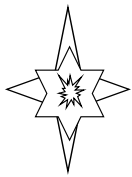
This Christmas, don't merely prepare for Christ to be born. Prepare for Him to come and live in you all year long. Never again will your very best Christmas depend on the money you spend or the food you eat or on gifts received or given. It will only depend on Christ who only gives the very best of every blessing to us every day. He is our perfect Christmas Gift! He never stops giving and growing His joy and peace in us and through us to produce real Christmas balance every day in people all around us.

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Christ's Light for the SAD

When seasons change, do you.....

- Have less energy than usual?
- Feel less productive or creative?
- Need more sleep?
- Feel down or depressed?
- Have less control over appetite?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, you may be one of the 6 % of people who suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD). This insert is for you and if you know people who may suffer from SAD, please share this insert with them also.

Winter Blues

Mild SAD symptoms can be what people call “winter blues.” Intense SAD symptoms require therapy and medication. Left to grow, SAD can be fatal. Thankfully, much can be done to alleviate SAD symptoms. A skillful therapist is a critical ally in helping to alleviate symptoms. So, is a healthy portion of Christ the Light of the world. Never underestimate the power reading God’s Word daily, worship, and prayer or very specifically, the power of God have to help therapy be successful.

SAD Depression

Symptoms of SAD raise their ugly head often after Christmas lights come down. People tend to get more depressed, anxious, gain more weight, have less energy, and lose control emotionally in the winter months. Going to work and arriving home in the dark, trying to pay off Christmas credit card debts, approaching tax time, and maneuvering in the ice and snow only intensify symptoms of SAD.

The Need to Know God

Mild non-life threatening SAD symptoms may be alleviated by getting more sunlight or using a bright white fluorescent light. The acronym SAD perfectly describes how many people with symptoms feel. As of from a distance, they also watch their lives move out of their control. That is why it is so important for them to know God who remains in complete control of the weather and of us. He will never leave us or forsake us. Deuteronomy 31:8.

+

God's Therapy

Light boxes are springing up in offices and anywhere it will work to use them. So does taking a walk outdoors any time of the day and even several times a day for some of God’s therapy. It consists of feeling the warmth and bathing in the light of the sun in the sky and welcoming His Son into our hearts and lives. His Son, Jesus, is our salvation in heaven and also our strength and help on earth - in every time of need.

Focus on the Son

Focusing our eyes of Jesus whose redeeming work has perfected our faith (Hebrews 12:2) means thinking about Him and praying to Him. We can do this as we walk outside in the sunlight or sit inside under bright or box lights. As we do, He will come and live in us through the Holy Spirit.

Digest God's Word

Jesus also comes to live in us as we digest His Word. That means read it over and over until we can say it in our sleep to dispel darkness and fill us with His light. As we walk in His light, our souls become lighter. He turns our sorrow or SAD symptoms in *the joy of the Lord*. This is a joy deep in our souls that is content in best and worst of times. It gives us the strength to survive all things and even thrive because of them..

Fill Up On The Psalms

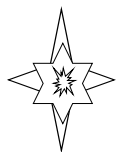
The light of Psalms are more helpful for SAD than we fully understand. As one who suffered for Christ, St. Paul urges us to fill our conversation with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. He even tells us to speak to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs and to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19). Melodies in our hearts speak of singing to ourselves as well as conversations we have with ourselves. Therapists call them self-talk. Believers know them as God-talks. Whether internal or external, speech populated with words, thoughts, and even melodies of the psalms we learn from God in His Word, give us all the “light” we need for our bodies and our to help through the winter and all the days of our lives.

Share this Resource to Help Generations Cope with SAD and every struggle in life.

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February - B230-02-22

This year **United Intergenerational Ministry Bulletin** Inserts offer generations an understanding of health issues and healthy ways to help build healthy generations body and soul.

We Need a Heart Attack?

Lost Lives and Souls

Every minute, someone in the United States dies from a heart disease related event (AMA). Sixty-eight people die every minute without "knowing Christ" (Religious Demographics). We can bring those numbers way down through the wisdom God provides in His Word.

Shocked Realization

In Isaiah 6:1-8, we hear the prophet cry, "Woe is me," in true heart attack style because he knows he is lost, a man of sin who dwells with sinners. Worse yet, because we are all sinners, we need to have a "heart attack" experience just like Isaiah. We need to be so stricken in our hearts that we are shocked before our holy God into the realization that we are responsible for the numbers of people who are lost because we fail to share Christ.

Know and Share the Symptoms

To help save physical lives - learn the symptoms of a heart attack: intense chest pain for over five minutes, nausea, sweating, and difficulty in breathing. Some heart attack pain or symptoms may be mild, not typical, or may even be absent. People with mild symptoms may not rush to the hospital during a heart attack, and can die. To save earthly lives, spread the word! If symptoms happen often and last for more than five minutes, get help!

Share Christ's Salvation

To help save eternal lives share that believers who die due to a heart attack will live forever. We will miss them on earth, but rejoice now that we will see them in heaven. It is not so for those who do not believe.

A Broken Heart

Only suffering awaits those who do not believe in Christ. This reality needs to break our hearts and tear us from our complacency.

A Different Perspective

You may have heard the story of a man who answered the phone and heard the voice of a friend he hadn't heard from in 15 years calling to apologize for an argument they had had years ago and never resolved. After they shared forgiveness, the man had to ask why his friend was calling after 15 years. The man was silent, then he said, "I just had a heart attack and my whole world looks different to me now."

A Changed Heart

When Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord (Isaiah 6:1-2), he felt sinfully incapable of ministry. It took a six winged seraphim to touch his lips with a coal that cleansed his soul (Isaiah 6:6), to shock his heart out of complacency and into action. Refined and refired, he was ready to go where God sent him (Isaiah 6:8).

A Self-Examination:

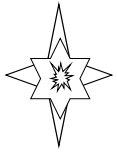
- What is clogging up your spiritual arteries?
- What is driving you away from Jesus?
- What is keeping you from prayer, God's Word, and His House for worship?
- Have your spiritual arteries been hardening to the Spirit?
- Have you gotten so used to the way things are you can't see how they need to be?
- Are your blood vessels too rigid now to consider any change of heart?

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March - B231-03-22

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Emptiness and Overeating

Doubled in Trouble

Obesity rates have more than doubled in adults and children since the 1970's (National Center for Health Statistics, 2009). While recent estimates suggest obesity has plateaued or even declined among some groups, it continues to be a leading health problem in the U.S. (Ogden et al., 2014; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012.)

Warning

Proverbs 23:21 warns against being a glutton or overeating. It leads to ruin. We see it with the physical medical issues, and emotional shame that come along with obesity. One Study Bible note on Proverbs 23:21 says overeating is a way to fill a God-sized hole in the heart. Whether this is true or not, those who overeat are trying to be filled. They just haven't found the right food or way to be filled.

Failed Ways

Diets are successful to a point, but the weight often returns. Some nutritionists say diets actually cause obesity. Others blame unhealthy foods that put on pounds. No one has found a successful way to help people eat right and exercise for good healthy. Years of failure have caused overweight souls to give up and hope that maybe if they learn to love themselves the pounds will go away.

God's Way

Since nothing else appears to be working, why not try God's way. Why not help people fill the need of their soul for Him. If people come to know God and depend on Him rather than on themselves to eat healthy and exercise, might they have more success? It's a question to which God Himself in His Word provides answers.

God's Word Holds Important Answers

- First of all, choosing to eat healthy food and exercise can seem impossible for us, but all things are possible for God (Luke 1:37). It's true that we would not find instructions to eat healthy in the Bible, unless it would be to feast on spiritual foods like the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23 or to partake of God's Word and Sacraments.
- Likewise, in the Bible, God does not specifically command healthy exercise, unless it is to walk in His way (Psalm 27:11). What He does offer is faith and strength (Psalm 46:1) to help us be healthy in our bodies and our souls.
- In Galatians 5:13, Paul tells us we were *called to freedom*. We can make choices, good or bad. That's why Paul warns us in the same verse not to use our freedom to sin, and overeating or what Galatians 6:8 calls *sewing for our own flesh* is sin.
- At first, choosing what's right seems easy enough. Romans 7:15-20 warns even though we want to do what is right, we do what is wrong because of sin.

- Sin is a powerful enemy to contend with. That is why we need the Word of the Lord to guide and strengthen us in all we say and do and eat. He fills our *emptiness* with every good thing (James 1:17).

Everything in Moderation

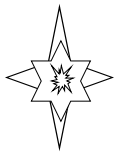
The President of the American Beverage Assoc. shared that obesity would most effectively be addressed by education on the importance of consuming a variety of good food and drink in moderation. Years before, in Philippians 4:5, God said our nature should be marked by reasonableness (moderation).

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Family Dinners are More Healthy Than We Think!

Family Dinner Survey

Eating dinner as a family can help kids long after the meal is over. A (CASA) National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse - Columbia University study compared teens who had five or more family dinners per week with those who had three or fewer weekly family dinners. It was based on a national phone survey of 1,000 teens and 829 parents of teens. Teens who had frequent family dinners fared better than those that rarely ate with their families.

Family Dinner Benefits

Teens who eat dinner often with their families are:

- Less likely to smoke.
- Less likely to drink alcohol.
- Less likely to try marijuana.
- Less likely to have friends who use illicit drugs
- More likely to get mostly A's and B's at school

- More likely to talk to parents about problems.
- More likely to report their parents are proud of them
- More likely to report lower levels of stress and tension.
- More likely to talk to their families during dinner with the TV off during the meal

Barriers to Family Meals

While family dinners look good, there are lots of things that prevent them families from having them like late work hours and after-school activities, lengthy commutes back and forth from work and school. It is hard to give up school activities and may be impossible to give up long work hours to eat as a family. This is the point of this insert. We do not know how to make time for family dinners, but God does.

Finding A Way

The Bible does not share ways to eat together; it offers us strength and determination to eat together. The ways will be different for every family, but God will help each family according to their needs. And, it is true that family members may need to give up what they like to receive what they need. This means they will need God to help them because giving up things on our own is hard. God helps it to not hurt so much or at all. When families commit their plans to the Lord, He will make all their plans succeed (Psalm 20:4).

Invite God's Help

So, make plans to eat family meals and commit your plans to the Lord. Invite God's help and guidance in His Word. In Isaiah 1:18, the Lord says to us, *"Come now, let us reason together."* In James 4:8, He promises that as we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. In James 4:2, God even warns us that we do not have because we do not ask. He knows that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). He will help us eat together as a family and give us His peace (Philippians 4:7).

Invite God for a Meal!

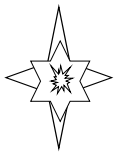
Actually invite God to come and eat with you. Ask His blessing before and after each meal. Share devotions or one short Bible verse at every meal. Give every family member one copy of the verse to place where they can read it several times a day. His Word will work in every member of your family and help you eat together more and more, because His word does not return void (Isaiah 55:11). It helps build healthy bodies and souls. As you eat, pray, and learn God's Word in your hearts, your family will become far more healthy than you ever thought you could be.

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Pass On Effective Discipline

Parents Difficult Role

Discipline is one of the most important roles of parents, but it can also be one of the most difficult. Effective discipline lays a strong foundation for self-discipline in children for life. It helps them to be happy and well-adjusted. Scriptures call it “learning to be content” (Philippians 4:11-13). When it is done out of love for the Lord, discipline builds healthy bodies and souls in the whole family. When administered lovingly in one generation, it can pass its blessings on for generations.

Effective Discipline

- protects from danger.
- teaches self-control.
- helps develop responsibility.
- helps instill values.
- does not force, only teaches and guides out of love.

God does not leave parents alone in their difficult discipline role. He lovingly guides them in His Word.

- “*Spare the rod and spoil the child,*” taken from Proverbs 13:24, is about more than spanking. It equates discipline with love and lack of discipline with hate for a child. As we read on in Proverbs 23:13-14, we learn of the rod that guides and protects to save lives, much like a shepherd’s rod guides and protects sheep from harm. Undisciplined children can lack self-control and make choices that place their faith and lives in danger. A study of God’s Word reveals ways to effective discipline.

- Ephesians 6:4 warns parents not to *provoke your children to anger*. Discipline administered in anger or that causes children to become angry is not effective. Angry parents can discipline too harshly and angry children can act up, causing the whole family to suffer. The best discipline is administered out of love for God and each other.

- *No discipline is pleasant at the time, but trains in righteousness* (Hebrews 12:11). Discipline trains best when it is consistent. It is never good to allow a behavior one time and discipline for that same behavior another time. Consistent discipline helps to set boundaries. Inconsistent discipline is confusing. Children have no idea how to act, so they act badly. When discipline is consistent and administered out of love for God and each other, it produces a desire to do what is right out of love.

- It’s hard for children to believe it when a parent about to spank them says, “*This is gonna hurt me just as much as it hurts you.*” Yet, this age old adage actually helps describe loving discipline. If you see a child who can’t go rollerskating because of very bad behavior, standing with a parent who loves to rollerskate but must stay home with the child, and both are crying as the rollerskating bus drives away, you are watching loving discipline that works. And when it is done out of love to save a child from harm, spanking can work too. Discipline that is all about love for God and each other works! Parents trying to help their child who did something wrong think about and explain how to make it right should not be surprised to hear their child plead, “Can’t you just spank me?”

- Above all, 2 Corinthians 2:6-7 warns that punishment should not be overwhelming and should be accompanied by forgiveness. If food is thrown, it must be cleaned up. When the mess is cleaned up, the consequence is over and the infraction needs to be forgiven and forgotten.

Build good Behavior:

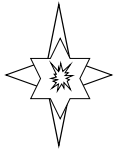
- Watch for good behavior and praise it.
- Provide lots of opportunities for physical activity to run off the negative energy that causes bad behavior.

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When Picky and Power Collide

The Power Struggle

Getting healthy food into picky eaters is a struggle parents feel they must win for the health of their children. Yet, winning this particular struggle is more about not allowing eating healthy to become a struggle in the first place. Don't be overly alarmed when toddlers begin to assert their desire not to eat healthy foods. Unhealthy snacks are always most popular. Let them have the food they desire after they finish the healthy food on their plate. Some will not be hungry after eating the healthy food, others will be full and eat less of the food they desire. They will also have healthy food in them to counter the unhealthy food.

Don't Worry

Concentrate on offering healthy foods. Over the course of the week, children will receive all the nutrients necessary. Asking God to fill our children, body and soul, with good things is far more helpful than forcing them to eat everything on their plates, which in the process can cause a power struggle.

Introduce new foods

The more different foods your children are exposed to, the more food they will have available to like. Children often need at least ten exposures to a new food to actually like it. Try these tips:

- **Make it fun.** Sometimes children will try a new food if it's served with a food they like or with a food that is fun to eat. *For example:* Serve broccoli with a favorite dip or sauce. Cut foods with solid textures into various shapes with cookie cutters.
- **Involve your child.** At the grocery store, let your child help select healthy foods. At home, involve your child in food preparation. Teach your child to set the table and also to set out the devotion book.
- **Be a good example.** Children like to mimic their parents. The more frequently you eat healthy food, the more likely your child will be to eventually try it and begin to like it too.

Mix and Unmix Food

- If you want your child to eat more vegetables, you might add them into familiar foods. *For example,* add broccoli to macaroni and cheese, or mix grated zucchini and carrots into muffins, meatloaf, and soups.
- You may have to "unmix" food for children who prefer to eat the ingredients of a salad or sandwich separately.

Routines are Helpful

Bedtime routines help children sleep. Mealtime routines help children eat. Serve snacks an hour or two after meals at about the same times every day. Turn off the TV during meals. Turn meal times into enjoyable times of engaging, learning more about and supporting each other. Remember, eating and talking together as a family is just as healthy as eating healthy food.

Rules Prevent Hassle

Establish a firm no snacks rule one hour before a meal. This will help hungry, picky eaters consume healthy meals more easily. Pray before and after meals to thank God for the food He provides. Children taught to be thankful for food are less apt to reject it. Children are taught to be health conscious today. So take time to explain the health benefits of food you introduce.

Depend on God Power

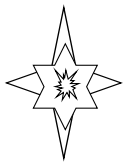
Power struggles and picky eating cannot exist in an atmosphere of good food and good times, talking and eating and praying together. Many family problems are resolved as faith in Christ and love for God and each other grow in the hearts of family members. So, be sure to bring your family to the Lord in prayer, in worship, and in the study of His Word. He has the power to make healthy food for both bodies and souls enjoyable for even the pickiest of partakers. No power struggles will be necessary.

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Laughing All The Way

Laughter Is Good for the Body

There's lots of evidence that laughter is good for the body.

- It reduces pain and allows us to tolerate discomfort.
- It can reduce blood sugar, increasing glucose tolerance in diabetics and non-diabetics alike.
- It can help to improve job performance, especially in work that depends on creativity and complex problem solving.
- Its role in relationships is vastly underestimated. A good sense of humor is often sited as the glue of a good marriage.
- Laughter emotionally attunes the brains of the speaker and the listener to create understanding and bonding.
- It can help establish or restore a positive emotional climate and connection in negative climates.
- It can bring people together and even help them to support each other, which has many health benefits all by itself.

A Belly Laugh is Better

Experts say a belly laugh helps blood vessels function better. It acts on the inner lining of blood vessels, causing them to relax and expand, increasing blood flow. In other words, it's good for the heart and brain (two organs that require the steady flow of oxygen carried in the blood) to laugh.

Michael Miller, M.D.-American College of Cardiology - Univ. of Maryland reported that in a study of twenty healthy people, provoking laughter did as much good for their arteries as aerobic activity. At the very least, he adds, "laughter offsets the impact of mental stress" that causes many health problems.

The Joy of the Lord Is Best!

The joy of the Lord is so much better than a belly laugh for believers because it occurs deep in our souls. It remains with us on earth to lighten the burdens and turn our sorrows into joy and for eternity in heaven.

Joy in Sorrow

Laughter can quickly cease as burdens overwhelm us and we find ourselves with no energy left to laugh. This is where the joy of the Lord shines. It offers more help than the deepest belly laugh because those who have Christ have the joy of the Lord in the best and worst of times.

Cleansing Joy

Studies report that as deep belly laughs shake the body, they increase breathing to let out the old air and breath in all fresh oxygen to renew the body in health and strength for a time. Christ's forgiveness offers deep cleansing of the soul for time and for eternity. The old is gone and as the joy of the Lord moves through the whole body and rests deep in the soul where a belly laugh cannot ever reach, causing a lasting joy that is healthy for the body and soul.

Lasting Joy

Experts report that laughter can trigger the release of hormones that have a healthy effect on the body. Through God's Word and Sacraments, and prayer, the Holy Spirit releases the joy of the Lord in the soul. The effects of this joy from the Lord triggers the spiritual strength for the faith and lives of believers on earth and assures them of eternal life in heaven..

Life and Soul Saving Prescriptions

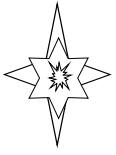
Dr. Miller believes thirty minutes of exercise three times a week and fifteen minutes of laughter a day could actually save lives. Partaking of God's Word and Sacraments and prayer gives bodies joy from the Lord and saves souls. Do all of the above and you truly will be "laughing all the way" filled with the joy of the Lord on earth and forever in heaven!

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Autism In Church

Individuals with autism and their families need a church where they can be nurtured. To reach out to families with autistic members:

Prepare Your Congregation

- Offer this bulletin insert. Save copies and have them available, even reprint them when needed.
- Prepare several members to stay with siblings if parents need to leave during worship to accompany their autistic child to an area of greater comfort if he or she becomes distressed. Be sure one member is available to assist at each service. This can create a wide base of support and foster a caring atmosphere for many other situations where parents need help with children during worship.
- Individuals with autism can become less distressed when they have an object to focus on. Ask families what items provide security at home and make them available at church as well. Objects such as a cross in the pocket can help to enhance worship as they calm the souls of those who use them.

Prepare The Individual

- An autistic individual may be stimulated by sights, sounds, and even smells within the church and classrooms. Invite families to visit these areas when they can explore them without interruption. Also, invite them to play the organ or piano to prepare the individual for the sudden or loud sounds that can accompany worship.

Greet The Individual

- Members can set the family and individuals with autism at ease with simple words of welcome like, "So glad you could join us."
- Greet individuals with autism with eye contact and a personal, "Hi, Bryan," a high-five, a popular stylized handshake, or a pat on the shoulder. A simple greeting by a number of members every Sunday or service can share the gospel lovingly and effectively.

Reach Out To the Family

- Occasionally, ask the family if there is anything they would like to see offered by the congregation or done differently to nurture the individual and help the family.

Prepare Your Sunday School

Include a child with autism in a variety of ways:

- Pass a ball while sharing or learning parts of a memory verse to calm autistic tensions.
- Stop and ask individuals with autism to listen to and repeat words said or read to keep them actively involved.
- Use lots of extra visuals such as pictures, objects, etc.
- Reword a story to make it easy to understand for everyone.
- Use action to hold attention like clapping hands, stomping feet, bowing heads and folding hands for prayer, standing to sing or repeat words, etc.
- Hold up a focus object to help an individual with autism look at the person speaking.
- Send a notebook home to ask questions about favorite foods, things the family or individual like to do, etc. Then speak to the individual about things you read in the notebook to open up communication and establish a friendship.
- As you read the notebook, pray about things that require prayer and give encouragement for things that require words of encouragement.

Offer Sunday School for All Ages and Needs

Often, individuals with autism or other special needs are placed in classes of younger students to help them better understand the lesson. This can work well when those who attend are taught to care for one another and experience the blessings of getting to know and love a person with special needs. It may not work well if those with special needs feel slighted by not being with their age group.

Thankfully, there are Sunday School lessons today that teach all ages in the same class and focus on welcoming and helping each other. Families can attend together and those who attend are formed into caring family groups. This Sunday School is called United Intergenerational Ministry Sunday School and is especially helpful for welcoming and helping those with special needs learn about Jesus. Be sure to check out UIM SS for your congregation on the web at:

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