

Letter to Families

How to Use *Family Time*

www.godmadeeverything.com

God Made Me

Age 3

Date: _____

Dear Parent,

Of the many gifts you give to your child, the everyday, ordinary times you share together are among the most important. Mealtimes, daily conversation, sharing household tasks, bedtime routines, showing hospitality to others, recreation—in these daily activities, families give evidence of their love and care for one another. In these same activities, we can also discover God’s loving presence in our lives.

Children learn about God’s love through their experiences of human love, and so family relationships have spiritual significance. Trusting their family to care for their physical needs, children learn to trust that God provides for them as well. Learning that they are special and loved, children can believe God made them special and loves them always.

Children naturally make connections between everyday experiences and their understanding of God. With this in mind, the *Family Time* page in your child’s preschool book, *God Made Me*, is designed to help you nurture your child’s developing faith. This page, which will be sent home with

your child each week, begins with a summary of the preschool lesson. In addition, *Family Time* includes notes about the children’s faith development, a Scripture passage and prayer for you and your family to share together, and a list of suggested activities to help you make connections between the faith themes taught in the preschool program and your child’s everyday experiences. Sharing these activities together can be an opportunity to enrich your own faith as you help your child grow in his or her faith.

Each *Family Time* page also includes a special opportunity to help make faith connections with a common family activity: reading books together. The model is simple and easy to use. The final item listed under the heading “Do” lists a suggested storybook, a discussion starter, and a prayer suggestion, such as this one found in Chapter 1 of *God Made Me*:

Read to your child *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers. After a moment of quiet, encourage your child to identify sounds he or she heard. Thank God for giving us ears and good things to hear.

Prepare in advance by obtaining a copy of the suggested book. If the storybook suggested is unavailable, visit www.godmadeeverything.com for additional storybook suggestions chosen to connect with the themes taught in the preschool lesson. Of course, you can also use a storybook you have readily available. The information provided on the *Family Time* page can guide you to choose a book that connects with the faith theme of the preschool lesson.

Choose a time during the day that best suits your family schedule. You might consider incorporating this into your child's bedtime routine. At whatever time you choose, find a quiet, comfortable place and enjoy reading the storybook with your child.

After you finish the story, take a few minutes to talk about it, using the discussion starter provided on the *Family Time* page. This gives you an opportunity to connect the story with the faith theme your child learned in preschool. Furthermore, talking about what was read helps children develop good reading comprehension.

Finally, share a moment of prayer together. Begin by inviting your child to share with you a moment of quiet and awareness of God's presence,

using words such as, "Let us sit very still and become quiet for prayer.

Remember God always loves us."

Developing the practice and habit of quiet is a wonderful gift we can share with young children and is a gift we can also give ourselves. When ready, continue to pray using the prayer starter suggested on the *Family Time* page. You may wish to pray in your own words and invite your child to pray spontaneously as well. You might conclude your prayer by tracing the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead in blessing or by helping your child to pray the Sign of the Cross.

Once you are familiar with the pattern, you can use this prayer model with other books you read to your child and create your own discussion and prayer. Establishing daily prayer rituals will reap benefits now and in coming years. When children are young, their eagerness to please and to be part of family activities make these years an ideal time to introduce and establish important rituals. In the years ahead, it will be your child who returns the gift to you by recalling these daily rituals and insisting on their importance to your family life.

May you enjoy many opportunities to share faith together with your child!

Sincerely,