

# heartfelt Newsletter

September 2009

SCRIPTURE: James 2:1-17

THEME: Hero Night!

family  
'round  
the  
table

EATING TOGETHER



Decorations: law enforcement or fire badges, toy fire trucks and police cars

## MENU

Hero Sandwiches (a.k.a. subs or hoagies), Spinach Salad (you know, to grow big and strong like Popeye), Carrot Sticks, Fresh Fruit

## Blessing:

Superman Grace (*To the theme from the Superman movies*)

*(Right fist over head, as if flying)*

**Thank you, God, for giving us food!**

*(Left fist over head)*

**Thank you, God, for giving us food!**

*(Both fists up, as if flying)*

**We praise you!**

*(Fists down and quickly back up)*

**We praise you!**

*(Both hands up, palms open)*

**Alleluia!**

*(Hands on hips, step boldly forward on right foot)*

**Amen.**



# PLAYING TOGETHER

## Activity One: Lifesaver Relay

**Materials:** two bowls, one roll Lifesavers™ per team, one toothpick per player

### Directions:

1. The Lifesaver Relay can be played either in two teams or one against another other for speed and accuracy.
2. Distribute the bowls and rolls of candy.
3. Explain that no hands are used during the game. The candies are passed person to person by way of the toothpicks which are held between the teeth.
4. The first person on a team puts one candy on the toothpick and passes it to the next person on the team, and so on until the candy reaches the last player in line. The last player puts the candy into a bowl.
5. Only one candy goes down the line at a time. Dropped candies go back to the start.
6. Continue until one team has the all the candies in their bowl. Option: set a time limit and the team that has the most candies in their bowl is the declared winner.



# STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

- Find James 2:1-17 in the New Testament and read the passage aloud or invite a family member to read it aloud while others follow along.
- The Contemporary English Version (included below) is very readable and understandable, although it loses some of the poetic feel of other translations. If you like this version but have a different version at home, think about reading both:

### ***Warning against Having Favorites***

*My friends, if you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people better than others. Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes. You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, and you would be acting like a crooked judge.*

*My dear friends, pay attention. God has given a lot of faith to the poor people in this world. He has also promised them a share in his kingdom that he will give to everyone who loves him. You mistreat the poor. But isn't it the rich who boss you around and drag you off to court? Aren't they the ones who make fun of your Lord?*

*You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves. But if you treat some people better than others, you have done wrong, and the Scriptures teach that you have sinned. If you obey every law except one, you are still guilty of breaking them all. The same God who told us to be faithful in marriage also told us not to murder. So even if you are faithful in marriage, but murder someone, you still have broken God's Law.*

*Speak and act like people who will be judged by the law that sets us free. Do this, because on the day of judgment there will be no pity for those who have not had pity on others. But even in judgment, God is merciful!*

### ***Faith and Works***

*My friends, what good is it to say you have faith, when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you? If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food, you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help? Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead! (James 2:1-17 CEV)*

- When the scripture reading is finished, read or tell in your own words the following:

*In this passage, the author makes things pretty easy to understand. If there are both rich people and poor people in your group, don't treat one better than the other. It isn't fair, and it isn't right. This is very much the same as the One Rule in LOGOS: "Treat everyone as a child of God. No one has the right to treat anyone as if they did not matter."*

*Some people feel that poor people are not good for much, but this passage reminds us that many who are poor have a rich faith in God, while some who are rich with money treat people harshly and do not respect God at all. It is important that we remember that faith or goodness do not have anything to do with money and wealth. God calls us to love all people.*

*In the last part of this passage, the Bible tells us not just to talk about caring for people in need, but actually to help them. Real faith means acting in love for others. If we really love and trust God, we can take the risk to share what we have with others who need help.*

### **Reflection Questions for the Family**

1. Do you know people who seem to have a lot of money? How do you know they do?
2. Do you know people who seem to have no money? How do you know?
3. We often hear about helping people around holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas or after a natural disaster. Can you think of ways that people need help and get help at other times?
4. Pretend for a minute that you can afford anything you want. How would you use your money? Why?
5. Pretend for a minute that you have very little money. How would you use your money? Why?
6. What does your church do to help people in need? How important is helping others in the life of the congregation? What can your family do to help?



# PRAYING TOGETHER

- Place an open Bible and lighted candle on the table to create a worship center.
- Sing, speak or listen to the hymn “We Give Thee but Thine Own”  
[www.oremus.org/hymnal/w/w082.html](http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/w/w082.html)

- Invite the family to do this responsive reading together from Psalm 146 (CEV):

Leader: Shout praises to the LORD!

**Family: With all that I am, I will shout his praises. I will sing and praise the LORD God for as long as I live.**

Leader: You can't depend on anyone, not even a great leader.

**Family: Once they die and are buried, that will be the end of all their plans.**

Leader: The LORD God of Jacob blesses everyone who trusts him and depends on him.

**Family: God made heaven and earth; he created the sea and everything else. God always keeps his word.**

Leader: He gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry.

**Family: The LORD sets prisoners free and heals blind eyes.**

Leader: He gives a helping hand to everyone who falls.

**Family: The LORD loves good people and looks after strangers. He defends the rights of orphans and widows, but destroys the wicked.**

Leader: The LORD God of Zion will rule forever!

**Family: Shout praises to the LORD!**

- Invite everyone to share their joys and concerns and close by praying:

O Savior God, thank you for Jesus who saves us from sin and death.

O Savior God, thank you for those who work to protect us, like firefighters, police officers,

and those in the armed services.

- Savior God, thank you for those who work for justice for the poor and needy, in government, in the courts, and through the church.
- Savior God, thank you for those who work to keep us healthy, like doctors, nurses, paramedics, and pharmacists.
- Savior God, use us as your instruments for the peace and well-being of others, according to the grace of Christ our Lord. Amen.