

# 7 Ways to Help *Overwhelmed Parents in* this New Season

Routines and schedules are beneficial for people of all ages—yes, even adults. It's important that in this time of uncertainty, we encourage parents to establish consistent routines that help contain the daily chaos.

The structure of a schedule can actually help them make space for new and exciting ideas that will not only keep their kids entertained, but will also help them thrive during this time.

Let's be honest—a schedule can also help with the number of times they hear “I'm bored” or “now what” each day.

There are ways to do this that don't have to become a burdensome add-on to an already packed family life.

For instance, parents can integrate spiritual learning and practices within usual times together—like praying before meals and bedtime. Then, parents can look for other times when there can be more intentional spiritual practices with their children.

It's important that we all have grace for one another and *ourselves* during this time.

In this time, encourage parents to consider the unique gifts and interests of their children. The ideas below may spark ideas for activities that are even better suited for their child or children's gifts.

It's especially important to encourage parents that they *still* do not need to be perfect!

Remind them of their calling to love their spouses and children in order to demonstrate the love of God through their lives. It's important that we all have grace for one another and *ourselves* during this time.

## Pray and Bless Children



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Before children begin their homeschool or class activities, encourage parents to pray with them. Prayer helps us reset our minds and focus on the things that matter—the things above. And praying together unites us together in Christ

Read Philippians 4:8 (NIV) and remember to reset your minds:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

This is also a great time for parents to [bless their children](#). A blessing will look different than a prayer. When we pray, we are talking to God; but when we bless, we are directing our words to a person. Parents could take this time to speak life over their children.

The blessing can come directly from Scripture or from the parent’s heart. There are some great examples [here](#).

## Bible Time

This social isolation is a great time for us to lean into Scripture and hold tight to God’s words. So encourage parents to use age-appropriate ways to help their kids discover God through His Word. Some ideas include:

- Silent Bible memorization time. Pick a verse for your kids to work to memorize. You could [check out this post](#) for Scripture ideas!
- Begin dinner by reading Scripture and praying. Then discuss the passage during the meal. Consider

Ecclesiastes or Proverbs for youth or older children and gospel stories for younger children.

- Institute family bedtime reading from the Bible, a favorite devotional, or books from children's writers like C.S. Lewis.

Use this time to let God speak to you and sing over you through His Word. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) says:

“The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”

## **Have Children Prepare a Skit**

Parents can encourage children to prepare a skit for them based on a favorite Bible story. Kids can practice while parents are working and then share the skit after dinnertime. This is a fun way to engage children with the Bible, while encouraging their creativity.

Some stories that would be great during this time:

- Noah and the Ark
- Esther
- David and Goliath
- Daniel in the Lion's Den

- The battle of Jericho
- Jonah and the Big Fish
- Jesus raises Lazarus
- Jesus enters Jerusalem

## Take Walks

It's important to take breaks throughout the day—especially in a time like this. We can stay cooped-up and focused on our stress or create space for grace to work. Therefore, encourage parents to take walks where they can discover God's creation together as a family. A fun game they can play is "Eye spy something God made."

Let's all take some time to look around and appreciate the gifts God has given us ... and to join in with the heavens in declaring His glory.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Psalm 19:1 (NIV)

During these walks, also encourage parents to spend time praying for their neighbors as they walk. This will teach children how to love others intentionally, even when we can't be together.

# Scheduling



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Encourage families in your ministry to work toward a schedule and routine that allows time for parents to rest and work *and* for children to learn and play (at the same time!). Doing this every day will help create a healthy normal in the midst of the chaos.



Another great idea to share is for parents to renew one Sabbath practice as a family. This will make the Sabbath stand apart from the “every day” during this time. Observing the Sabbath in a special way will stick with kids as they grow.

Some ideas include:

- Attending church (yes, even online!)
- Having a special devotional time ([check out these resources](#) for ideas)
- Praying over your family, your community, and our world
- Encouraging one another in a special way; speaking life over one another
- Doing a special craft together
- Baking something delicious together
- Spending time together outside in God’s creation
- Scheduling time OFF from everything outside of your family
- Intentionally resting



# Worship Together

There's no better time to worship together than *now*. Encourage parents to engage in worship with their kids. Talk about setting an example—kids will never forget the attitudes of praise their parents display during this time.

Worship can look like raising our hands together, verbally praising God, singing together, or even serving together. Here are some ideas to share:

- Put on worship music for the children to dance and sing. You can [find some great ideas for kids' worship songs in this article](#).
- Have children draw, paint, or write notes of encouragement to others who are sick, live alone, or even those who lost a job. Pray over these cards together before sending them.
- Ask the children to plan and record a short devotional to share on safe social media channels—or through text or email.
- Encourage children to journal, writing down what they feel as prayer and thanksgiving to God.

Assure parents that it's important to give space in the week for kids to point to how they saw God move and who He is to them. As an example, parents could say, "This week God

gave me peace in the middle of this hectic time. God is peace.” Giving kids a chance to respond to God helps them see Him in places they otherwise might not have been looking to.

Remember what Jesus says in Matthew 28:20 (NLT), “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Look for Him, and you will see that He is there!

## Overwhelmed Parents: Give Yourself Grace

This may be the hardest one for parents to let sink in.

Parents will need breaks. They will need to lean into the unforced rhythms of grace.

Reassure parents that they need grace just as much as their kids do during this time. Many are stressed from work pressures—whether they’ve lost a job, are temporarily laid off, or are still working while trying to parent and keep the house afloat. It’s a lot to tackle.

The pressures are real, and it seems that parents take out the worst of it on themselves. *I wasn’t a good employee today. No matter how hard I try, I feel like I can’t give enough attention to my kids. I don’t know if I can keep doing this.* There are many voices.



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Parents will need breaks. They will need to lean into the unforced rhythms of grace.

Jesus gives all of that—in the midst of what feels like the unending busy. Jesus is the answer.

Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG) says:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.