



Encounters

MEETING JESUS IN THE FEASTS

FAMILY GUIDE



Encounters

MEETING JESUS IN THE FEASTS

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them,
These are the appointed feasts of the LORD
that you shall proclaim as holy convocations;
they are my appointed feasts.”

LEVITICUS 23:1-2

Some of life's greatest moments happen over a meal. For some reason, sharing a holiday or great food can bring people together in unique and powerful ways. That's why it is no surprise in the Old Testament, God chose food to put his love and grace on display.

Beginning with the Exodus, when the children of Israel were delivered from Pharaoh and Egypt, and continuing throughout various moments in Israel's history, God established a rhythm of seven feasts designed for his people to remember and celebrate his presence, goodness, protection, provision and promises—visual reminders of his redeeming grace. These appointed feasts pointed to something much greater than the meal itself—actually, SOMEONE, much greater. These feasts were

but shadows of the coming Messiah, Jesus. With careful detail, God used the elements of each feast to communicate the salvation he would provide through his son, Jesus.

Over the next seven weeks, we invite you and your family to encounter Jesus in the feasts. Just as God encouraged parents to teach their children when they asked about the Passover, we encourage you to join us in helping teach your children how to meet Jesus in the midst of these memorable meals. We have put together a weekly plan that includes Scripture reading, a short devotional, a few discussion questions, and an activity for everyone involved. Our prayer is that you will encounter Christ in a powerful way while storing up some meaningful moments and lasting memories.

Let's Feast Together!

Feasts of Passover & the Crucifixion

Family Bible Reading

- Exodus 12:21-27
- John 1:29

Family Devotional

The Feast of Passover remembers when the angel of death “passed over” the Israelites who placed the blood of the lamb to their doors. The lamb’s blood was placed vertically on the posts of the door and horizontally on the lintel of the door. The combination of these motions helps us to see the Cross.

Like the blood of the lamb that saved the Israelites, Jesus shed his blood at Calvary for us. It is his sacrifice that allows the judgment of God to pass over all who believe. John understood this to be true when he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Family Discussion

- What emotions might the Israelite families have felt as they waited through the night of the final plague?
- The Passover lamb had to be a male without blemish—spotless and pure. How was this requirement fulfilled by Jesus?
- What were the Israelites instructed to do in order to be saved during the plague? What must a person do to be saved from sin?

Family Activity

Our salvation is found in nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ! Take time this week to celebrate and remember Jesus as the sacrificial lamb that provides for our salvation! Work as a family to create a poster that will hang inside your front door. Write John 1:29 on the poster. As you pass through the door each day, pause to remember Jesus as the One who saves!



Feasts of Unleavened Bread & Christ in the Grave

Family Bible Reading

- Exodus 13:3, 7-10
- John 6:35

Family Devotional

In their rush to leave Egypt, the Israelites did not have time to add yeast, or leaven, to their bread. So, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is celebrated through eating nothing leavened as a way of remembering God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

In the Bible, leaven is often compared to sin. When yeast is added to the dough, it invades every part of the bread. Once it has been added, it cannot be separated. This bread without leaven was a symbol of freedom that points us forward to Jesus, who was without sin and is the One who delivers us from living as slaves to sin!

Family Discussion

- What foods does your family share on special occasions or holidays? How do those foods help you to celebrate?
- How was the unleavened bread a reminder for the Israelites of God's deliverance out of Egypt?
- Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23. How does the Bible describe sin and its effect on us? What has Jesus done to free us from sin?

Family Activity

Designate a day this week to be "Cleaning Day." Assign each family member with age-appropriate chores to deep-clean the entire house—kitchen, living areas, bedrooms, and bathrooms! After you've finished cleaning, sit as a family and discuss how dirt just finds its way into the house, much like sin is a part of all our lives. Like the deep cleaning the house needed, we need the work of Jesus to cleanse us from all our sins. Read 1 John 1:9 and take a moment to thank God for the gift of Jesus—the Messiah who is faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.



Feasts of First Fruits & the Resurrection

Family Bible Reading

- Leviticus 23:9-11
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

Family Devotional

The Feast of First Fruits celebrates the way God provided for His people through the harvest. Before the Israelites ate any of their crops, they would offer the first portion back to God as a sign of their thankfulness and trust in what God would continue to provide.

This feast is celebrated three days after the sacrifice of the Passover lamb on the first day of the week after Passover. After Jesus was crucified, his body was laid in a borrowed tomb. Three days later, on the first day of the week after Passover, Jesus rose from the grave! This feast points us to Jesus as the Savior God has provided for us! His resurrection is our hope in the new and eternal life that God has promised!

Family Discussion

- How did the Feast of First Fruits celebrate God? How did it show the Israelites' trust in God as their provider?
- How did the resurrection of Jesus provide hope for his followers and for us?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus help us to have faith in the promise of eternal life?

Family Activity

Plan a family shopping trip this week to purchase groceries. Spend some time comparing a variety of fruits and vegetables in the produce section. Allow each kid to pick a fruit they'd like to try at home. After the shopping trip, sit as a family and taste the fruits. As you eat, share how God has been faithful to meet your family needs. Read Romans 8:31-39 aloud and end your family time by praising God for the gift of love and salvation provided through Jesus!



Feasts of Weeks & Pentecost

Family Bible Reading

- Leviticus 23:15-17, 22
- Acts 2:1-4, 32-41

Family Devotional

Several weeks after Passover, the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Weeks. This feast celebrated God's faithfulness to provide a plentiful harvest. The people would worship by presenting God with several sacrifices, including a grain offering of two leavened loaves of bread.

Several weeks after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, on the exact date of this feast, the Holy Spirit came to the waiting disciples. Immediately, they were filled with power and began to share the Gospel with others! Acts 2 tells us the story of how God brought more than 3,000 new believers on Pentecost and birthed the Church that would continue to spread the message of Jesus. The Gospel spread to both Jews and Gentiles—the two leavened loaves of the feast—and now the message is available to us! Praise God that the Good News is for all people!

Family Discussion

- Why were the people commanded not to harvest the grain on the edges of their fields or to pick up the gleanings from their harvest? How does this show us God's concern and love for all people?
- In Matthew 9:37, Jesus looked at the crowd of people and said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." What did Jesus mean by this?
- The arrival of the Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the Church. How did God use this body of believers to spread the message of Jesus? How does God continue this mission through us today?

Continued on Next Page

Feasts of Weeks & Pentecost

Continued

Family Activity

The people of Israel often celebrate the Feast of Weeks by reading the book of Ruth. This story takes place during the time of the celebrated harvest, but it is also significant because it's a story of an outsider being welcomed into the family of God. Boaz generously provides for Ruth and redeems her to be part of his family. The book of Ruth ends with a genealogy that shows how Ruth's son would be the grandfather of King David, who's family line would lead to Jesus—our Redeemer!

The book of Ruth and the Feast of Weeks are beautiful pictures of how God has generously provided for us through Jesus and how we might be adopted into God's family through faith in Him! Read through the book of Ruth this week, as a family. Take four days and reach 1 chapter each day. Each family member may read it alone or you may read it aloud as a family. On the night you finish the book of Ruth, read Ephesians 2:12-13. Help kids understand how sin separates us from God and leaves us hopeless, much like Ruth. Be sure to show them how Jesus, like Boaz but even greater, has generously provided for us and become our Redeemer.



Share a Photo of
Your Family Activity | *Post & Tag!*
@FellowshipKidsAR

Feasts of Trumpets & Christ's Second Coming

Family Bible Reading

- Leviticus 23:23-25
- 1 Corinthians 15:52-57

Family Devotional

The Feast of Trumpets was the beginning of the new year for the people of Israel. In the busyness of the fall harvest, this was celebrated as a day of rest and no work. The feast was also a time of repentance and dedication to God. The sound of trumpets would remind the people of Israel of the trumpets that sounded when God gave Moses the Law at Mt. Sinai. Each year, the people would repent of the things they had done to break this covenant. They hoped to find God's favor for another year and find their names written in His Book of Life.

The New Testament also mentions the sound of trumpets, but each time is associated with the second coming of Jesus! Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:52 that when the trumpets sound, "the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." While the trumpets of this feast call the people to repent and hope for God's favor, the trumpets of the New Covenant are a reminder that our forgiveness and righteousness is found in Jesus Christ! We no longer have to hope to find God's favor because He is our hope! When Jesus returns, we will celebrate and feast together as we find our name in the Book of Life, due to His good works and not our own!

Family Discussion

- Why is it good to have a time of reflection and repentance? How would that time look different for a follower of Jesus?
- What is righteousness? Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. Where does this verse say our righteousness is found?
- The Feast of Trumpets reminds us that Jesus will return as King of Kings and the one who judges sin. Why should this motivate us to share the Gospel with family, friends, and even strangers?

Continued on Next Page

Feasts of Trumpets & Christ's Second Coming

Continued

Family Activity

The Feast of Trumpets is often celebrated by families by eating apples dipped in honey and by writing cards to friends and relatives for the New Year. The apples & honey represented the sweetness for the coming year, and the cards included a message of hope to find God's favor in the new year.

For dessert, prepare a plate of sliced apples and dips like honey, caramel, or chocolate. As you enjoy this snack, write cards to friends or relatives to share what you're learning about the feasts and how they point us to Jesus. Be sure to include the message of the Gospel and invite them to believe in Jesus as the Messiah who came to live with us, died and rose again for us, and is coming back soon!



Share a Photo of
Your Family Activity | **Post & Tag!**
@FellowshipKidsAR

Day of Atonement & the Judgement Seat

Family Bible Reading

- Leviticus 16:20-22, 29-30
- 1 John 2:1-2

Family Devotional

The Day of Atonement was the holiest day of Israel's calendar. While most feasts were celebrations, this was a more somber day because it was the reminder that sin must be punished. On this day, the priest would enter the Most Holy Place—the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle and the place where God's presence dwelled. He would bring with him two goats to pay the penalty for sins. The first goat was sacrificed, and the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat, which was part of the ark of the covenant. The priest would lay his hands over the head of the second goat and confess all the sins of the people. Then, the goat was released into the wilderness and would carry away on himself the sins of the Israelites.

These sacrifices were necessary year after year because the atonement was only good as long as blood was continuously shed. These sacrifices provided only temporary forgiveness. But this feast points us to Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice who gave himself to fully pay the penalty for sin and to provide eternal forgiveness of sin for all who trust in Him. Hebrews 9:12 tells us that "he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." Everyone will stand before the judgment seat of God, but those who trust in Jesus will be declared innocent and righteous because He has paid the debt of our sin!

Family Discussion

- What are some ways that Jesus' sacrifice was different than the sacrifices made by the priests?
- When Jesus was crucified, the curtain to the Most Holy Place tore. What does this teach us about how His death changes our relationship to God?
- Read Psalm 103:10-12. How does God respond to the sins of those who believe in Jesus?

Continued on Next Page

Day of Atonement & the Judgement Seat

Continued

Family Activity

The Day of Atonement reminds us that everyone sins, and that sin must be punished. The day was a sad reminder of our hopelessness, but, as followers of Jesus, we can rejoice in the forgiveness that Jesus has provided through the Cross!

Psalm 103:12 says that “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.” Through faith in Jesus, our sins are forgiven and removed! As a reminder of this forgiveness, take an afternoon this week to release a helium-filled balloon. Before the release, ask your kids to define sin or even confess some of the sins that come to their minds. Use a permanent marker to write those sins on the balloon. Pray as a family, and thank God for the gift of Jesus—the perfect sacrifice who paid the penalty for sin once and for all! As you release the balloon and watch it disappear into the sky, celebrate that the blood of Jesus has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west!



Share a Photo of
Your Family Activity | **Post & Tag!**
@FellowshipKidsAR

Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) & Eternal State

Family Bible Reading

- Leviticus 23:39-43
- Revelation 21:1-4

Family Devotional

The Day of Atonement was followed by the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. The sad day of remembering sin was followed by a celebration of God's faithfulness and presence. During this feast, the Israelites would spend several days living in temporary booths, like tents. First, this sacrifice of comfort was a reminder that the fruitful harvest is a gift of God and not a work of their own. But it was also a reminder that God dwelled with His people as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Even during their wandering, the Israelites were called to trust that God would lead them to the Promised Land.

The prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means "God with us." God himself came to dwell with us! Jesus came to be God with us and to offer eternal life to all who believe in Him. This gift of eternal life is described in the book of Revelation as God dwelling, or living, with His people forever with no more tears, no more pain, no more sadness, and no more death! For now, we wait with a confident hope that if we believe in Jesus, we will live with Him forever and ever.

Family Discussion

- How does living in a temporary booth or tent remind us of what God has provided? How can this temporary discomfort help us to appreciate all that God has done?
- If you were taking a long journey to a new place, would you rather go alone or with someone who knew the way? How was God's presence with the Israelites a way of helping them trust Him as they wandered?
- How has God come to be with us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit? How does knowing God is with us right now help us to trust in the promise to be with Him eternally?

Continued on Next Page

Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) & Eternal State

Continued

Family Activity

Every family has a testimony of God's faithfulness, but have you taken the opportunity to share that testimony with your children? The feasts were a way of remembering what God had done, but they were also a way of teaching the next generation the stories of God's faithfulness and presence. During this week, take the opportunity to share a personal story with your kids about a time when God was faithful to provide or faithful to be with you when you needed Him most.

To make this week extra special and to celebrate God's gift of eternal life through Jesus, set up a tent in the back yard and spend at least one night in the tent with your kids. As you rest in the tent on that night, talk about how this "temporary home" of a tent reminds us that our time on earth is just temporary and there is a greater life to come. For those who believe in Jesus, that life is filled with joy as we dwell with God forever and ever. Read Revelation 21: 3-4 and talk with kids about how wonderful eternity will be when sadness, pain, tears, and death are no more!



Share a Photo of
Your Family Activity | **Post & Tag!**
@FellowshipKidsAR