

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES

WITH CHILDREN

by

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It is in the setting of "Home and Family" that children will really be reached with the teachings of The URANTIA Book. This should be an integral part of every day life-- trying to live the teachings.

- On a Neighboring Planet, in the Garden of Eden, in Dalamatia and even in Jesus' childhood home (chosen as one of the best on this planet), in all of these places, children received their religious training from their parents and in the home. All of the examples are given, they tell us, to upstep our lives on this lowly planet. At this time, the authors also state, our spiritual and family life are at a standstill and are in serious
- * danger. p. 909 So let us work in the homes to upstep both family and spiritual life with these beautiful teachings.
 - * On p. 811, when describing life on a neighboring planet we learn: Religion is so entirely a family matter that no religious institutions such as URANTIA churches have developed among these people.

As The URANTIA Book points up the great importance of centering religious training in the home and by the parents, certain suggestions are given here to implement these activities in the daily living scene. They are not in any way all-inclusive. It is strongly recommended that each family creatively develop its own techniques. These will become a treasured, special heritage of that family, to be returned to again and again. However we hope that each new method will be shared at headquarters so there will be an ever-growing source of ideas.

One caution to remember is that illustrations made in the home cannot be duplicated nor can any of the little stories, without permission from the Foundation. We must help protect the copyright.

1) THE FAMILY BOOK



Stories from The URANTIA Book are read by the parents or told in appropriate vocabulary for the age and interest levels of the children. After a parent has read one story-- usually taking not more than 25-30 minutes--the children illustrate that story on a piece of paper which is pasted in the Family Book. If they are unable to draw, they can cut pictures out of magazines, calendars or catalogues which illustrate the story. These can then be mounted in the big Family Book. The parents will write a few sentences or a caption below each picture and give the page number of the story read from The URANTIA Book. A large scrapbook about 18" by 24" is recommended.

2) A FLIP CHART

This is another excellent technique for motivation and interest and can be used in a variety of ways with special topics from The URANTIA Book. One example is: "Jesus' Work as a Child." Every week or so a new chart is made for the flip rack with an illustration of certain work Jesus did as a child: He helped Mary with the little children, he worked with the flowers and plants, he milked the family cow. Many, many other duties can be illustrated and talked about and these lessons carried over into our homes to find what work can be done by our children. One Flip Chart we made and used successfully holds tagboard charts 14" by 16" and can be placed on a table or the floor for discussion periods.

3) ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing is a very effective means of developing a deeper understanding of many of the teachings of The URANTIA Book. In the various forms of role-playing are: Dramatic Play for younger children, Socio-Drama for older youngsters and other forms for adults. All of these techniques help develop a better understanding of how others feel and live. It helps children move from the ego-centric of self-centered stage to other-centered.

Younger children naturally play as in Dramatic Play and it is essential to keep this spontaneous creative element. However they cannot draw ideas from deprived experiential background so it is the parents' responsibility to keep enriching the concept background. Just as the Jewish children of Jesus' time played at weddings and funerals the book comments on their limited sources. By reading stories from The URANTIA Book the children will begin to enact these in their own way from very rich and accurate sources!



The older children will find it necessary to do some library research in order to know what the inside of the Jewish homes looked like in the first century and how those people dressed, etc. What did the cradle look like that Joseph built for Miriam and how many strings did the harp have, that Jesus played? This will all require careful checking in a good library or resource center before role-playing.

The older youngsters will enjoy role-playing in the form of Socio-Drama or simulation where the enactments are more structured and designed to help solve social problems, just as Jesus held the family meetings when he served as father to eight brothers and sisters. Socio-Dramas are focalized on several alternative solutions of human problems and their consequences. The way Jesus handled various problems with Jude could serve as a springboard for discussion and further role-playing.

Role-Playing (Cont.)



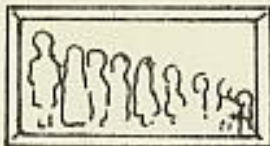
Through role-playing the youngster is continually confronted with decision-making. There are many alternatives of behavior and choices must be made and this is what free-will is all about--learning to make the best possible choice or God's will. Any child in modern society is faced with a myriad of options in many areas. He must learn selectivity and practice it daily, learning to select the better books, the better television shows, the better after-school clubs. He is bombarded with things to do. But it is very important for him to learn to omit and choose the better paths. This fast-moving complex life facing each child is just too much, unless he early learns the habit of choosing and selecting--one of the best skills we can help inculcate in him for lifetime use.

Examples of role-playing for young children are: Two boys playing in the sandbox on the roof of the Nazareth home. Their conversation--their work with blocks in the sand, etc.

An example of more complex role-playing with the older youngster is: David Zebedee leading his group of runners and messengers. Much research can be done here to determine the length of the runs, what these messengers ate, what they wore, how they knew where to meet the next man on the relay. Much historical work on runners of 1st century is found in the history of the Olympic runs.

See Role-Playing for Social Values by Shaftel and Shaftel.

4) FLANNEL BOARD STORIES



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This technique lends itself especially well to stories from The URANTIA Book for children. In preparing illustrations and drawings we consistently avoid any direct representation of Jesus' face or facial characteristics of others in his groups. This is in line with the admonition given to Michael by Immanuel, p. 1330. Further we do not want to interpret and give our own ideas about how he or others looked. Everyone should be free to form his own personal pictures from the statements in the book.

Flannel board figures are impersonal, yet they can help tell the stories in a graphic way and they are very effective as they are moved about in small group situations. They leave room for much creativity and adaptability.

5) DAILY LIFE
ACTIVITIES IN
THE HOME



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The best method of imparting the teachings to the children is in the lives we live and the way the daily activities of life are carried on. The teachings should be an integral part of living. The methods Jesus used in the home as he was rearing his eight brothers and sisters (and we have approximately 17 years of this clearly delineated) are our best guides and should be carefully studied by parents. (See bibliography for help.) Note how he copied the Believer's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. These were colored by Martha and long hung over James' workbench. Many activities of this kind can be utilized and taken from the Book. Consider his continual positive approach and his family councils. One example we could use in addition is a "THANK YOU FATHER" chart. The younger children can think of something to add every few days. You will be amazed at the things they are thankful for and the ease with which they will praise and thank the Father (pictures of the moon, the sky, the flowers, can start). As The URANTIA Book points out that thankfulness and gratitude are the prelude to true worship, therefore it is helpful to inculcate these habits in children. They had many forms of praise and prayer in Jesus' home, p. 1389, and speak of them as the "Family Altar" which can be utilized in modern homes at times when the family all gather together such as meal-time.

6) TALES OF JOSHUA



An example of stories for children written about the early life of Jesus is an attractive and very well-written book by Dr. Robert Slagle entitled: Tales of Joshua. The text has been carefully done and is beautifully illustrated by Dr. Slagle. Page numbers are given for each story as reference to The URANTIA Book, where further material may be utilized where expansion is desirable. It is presented as a coloring book for children. Much research preceded Dr. Slagle's careful drawings and beautiful stories.

7) CHILDREN'S SONGS



Music is the universal language and can be utilized as another form of worship. This is an excellent, warm way for a family to unite in joy and self-expression. Francyl Streano has prepared a beautiful collection of songs using The URANTIA Book philosophy. Voice, piano and guitar music are provided, with accompanying cassettes by Francyl. The collection is entitled: Songs for Children, Their Parents and Friends.