

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

**FAMILY
DEVOTIONS**

Adventures in
ODYSSEY

WHIT'S END

MEALTIME DEVOTIONS

THE SECOND HELPING !!



90 MORE IDEAS YOUR KIDS WILL EAT UP!

JOHN AVERY WHITTAKER

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JOHN AVERY WHITTAKER

WITH HELP FROM CRYSTAL BOWMAN, TRISHA GOYER, KEVIN MILLER,
ED STRAUSS, AND LINDA WURZBACHER

WHIT'S END MEALTIME DEVOTIONS: THE SECOND HELPING

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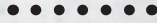
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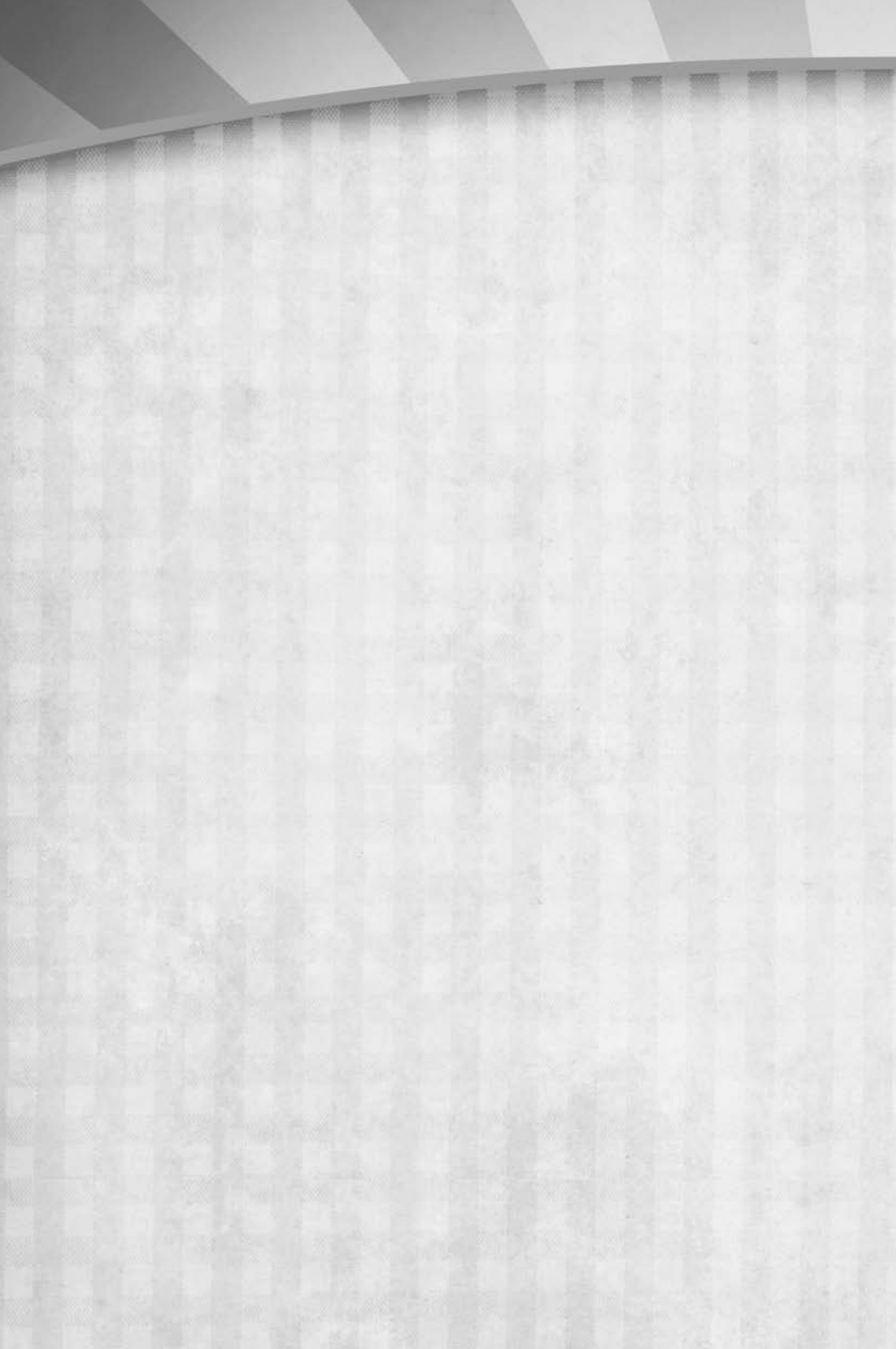
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Welcome to the Table

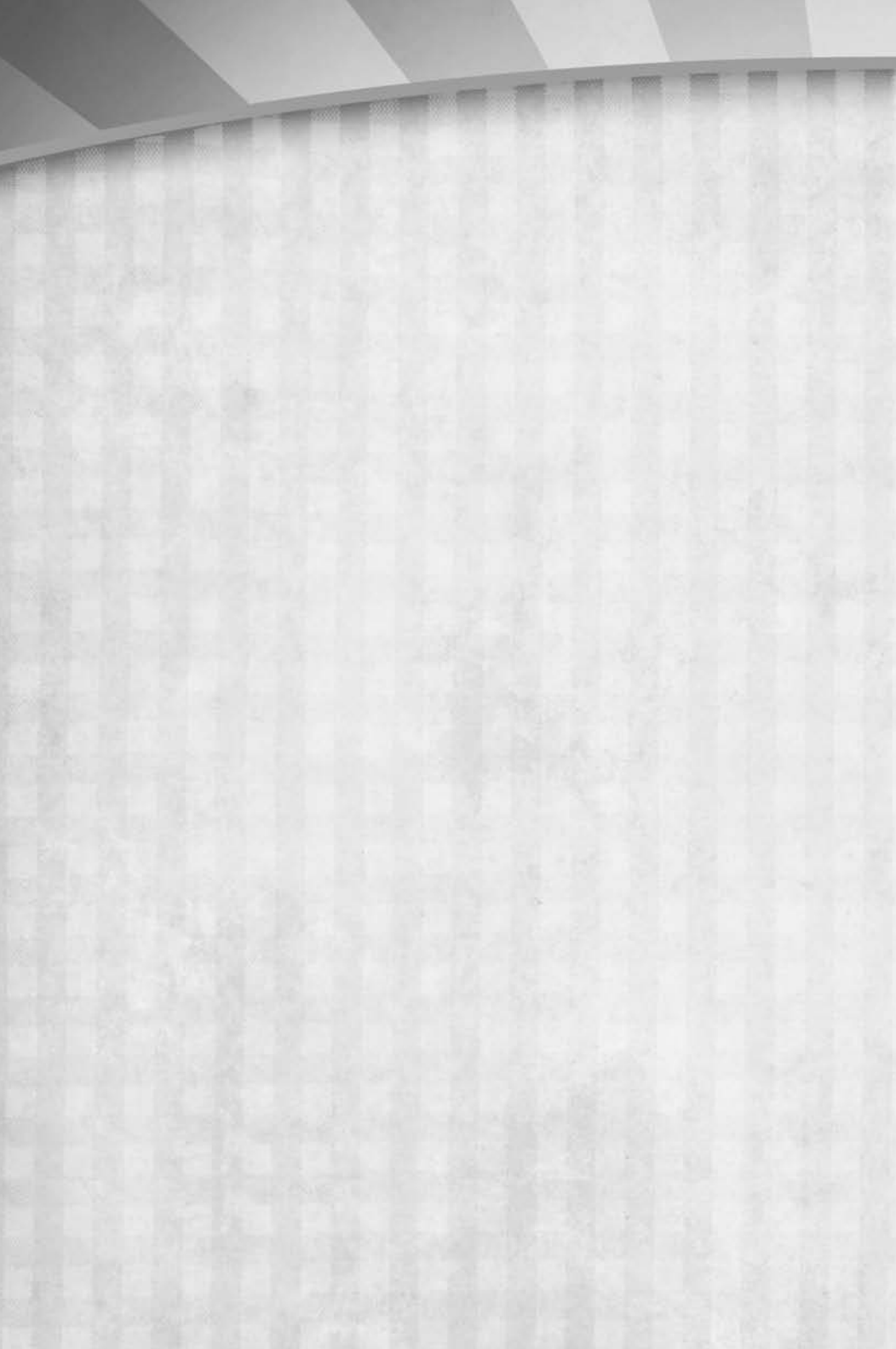
by John Avery Whittaker

In today's busy world, it's rare for families to sit down for a meal together. With school, sports, extracurricular activities, work, church, and so much more, when is everyone ever home at the same time for dinner? The more time that you spend as a family, however, the tighter the bonds and the stronger the foundation for your children. So start with a meal—it doesn't have to be dinner—and use this book to turn mealtimes into lively times for talk and teaching about faith. This book will make starting interesting family conversation as easy as pie.

After announcing the title of the devotion, read the Mealttime Prayer suggestion and then ask your children to pray it together. Then read the Appetizer to whet your appetite for more. Follow it with the Main Course. This contains the “meat” of the section. Once you've given your family something to chew on, it's time for Table Talk. These questions will help your kids think about what they've just learned and enable them to digest it for their daily lives. The questions are suitable for all ages; you can go deeper as your children grow. End with Vitamins and Minerals—a Bible verse that relates to the day's reading and discussion. To get the most out of this book, allow yourself to be *flexible*. You don't have to go through it from cover to cover. You might want to use the table of contents to find a topic that sounds good that day or relates to what you'll be eating.

The point is to turn mealtimes into a fun and enjoyable time of learning about each other. It's about bringing God into every part of our lives. Be sensitive to how your children respond. Allow enough time for them to answer the questions, but don't force conversation if they don't seem interested. That usually isn't a problem with kids, I've found. These readings have been time tested around a few tables—and should stir up animated conversations about the things that really matter.

Let's eat!



In a Pickle?



Mealtime Prayer:

Give thanks to God that He is with us in all situations and will guide and direct our lives.

Appetizer:

Q: What is green and bumpy and red all over?

A: A pickle with a sunburn.

How many kinds of pickles can you name?



Main Course:

Ever gotten yourself into a pickle? Not a bumpy, green pickle, of course, but a difficult situation. What happened? The Bible gives examples of people who got themselves into “pickles” and how God helped them:

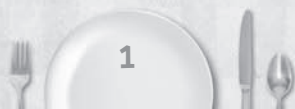
- Daniel ended up in a lions’ den because he prayed, but God kept the lions from hurting him (Daniel 6).
- Jonah disobeyed God and ended up inside the belly of a big fish (yuck!). He prayed to God, and the fish spit him out (Jonah 2).
- When Paul and Silas were in prison for preaching the gospel, they prayed and sang hymns of praise. God sent an earthquake, and their chains fell off (Acts 16).
- Who deserved their “pickles,” and who didn’t? Why?

Table Talk:

- How do we sometimes end up in a pickle?
- What did the Bible characters above do to get out of trouble? What should we do?
- Will God help us get out of our pickles? Why or why not?

Vitamins and Minerals:

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. (James 5:13)



Not Like Ice Cream

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Mealtime Prayer:

As you thank God for your food today, thank Him that He is eternal and that His love is everlasting.

Appetizer:

Q: Which animal lives the longest?

A: The quahog clam. Some live for more than 400 years.¹

Who is the oldest person you know?



Main Course:

At the beginning of your meal, place a small scoop of ice cream in a bowl. What happens to the ice cream while you eat your dinner?

Ice cream doesn't last long, does it? Name some other things that don't last very long. Name some things that *do* last for a long time.

The Bible says that God is everlasting. What does that mean? What are some things about God that are everlasting?

Table Talk:

- How does God being everlasting make a difference in our lives?
- How do we know that God will always be alive?
- How are Christians everlasting?

Vitamins and Minerals:

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2)

1. Jennifer Viegas, "Top 10 Longest Living Animals," *Discovery News*, July 21, 2010, <http://news.discovery.com/animals/top-10-longest-living-animals.htm>.

Let's Go Fishin'

.....

Mealtime Prayer:

Ask God for opportunities to share your faith and bring others to Him.

Appetizer:

Name all the ways that it is possible to catch fish.

Main Course:

Have you ever gone fishing? If so, what bait did you use? How many fish did you catch? Imagine you caught 500 in an hour. How could it have happened? Read the story of an exciting fishing trip in Luke 5:5-7.

Table Talk:

- How did the men catch so many fish?
- How are people like fish?
- What did Jesus mean when He told the disciples they would catch men?
- What kind of bait can you use when you fish for people?
- Where can you go fishing for people?

Vitamins and Minerals:

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)



Aromatherapy

.....

Mealtime Prayer:

Ask God to help your life be a sweet smell—pure and acceptable to Him.

Appetizer:

Have each person share his or her favorite smell. Which do you prefer: the smell of food or the smell of flowers? Why?

Main Course:

Why do you enjoy pleasant aromas? What aromas remind you of certain things or events from your life?

The Bible tells us that God enjoys pleasant aromas too. When Noah came out of the ark and offered a sacrifice, “the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma” (Genesis 8:21).

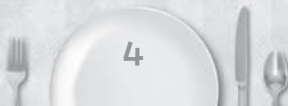
Imagine that your life is an aroma, and everything you do and say is part of your aroma. What would your life aroma be like? Why?

Table Talk:

- If kindness had an aroma, what would it smell like? Why?
- How do you think God feels when you send pleasing aromas to Him?
- How can you make your life smell nice?

Vitamins and Minerals:

We are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 2:15)



Sweet Attitudes

.....

Mealtime Prayer:

Ask God to help you be what He wants you to be.

Appetizer:

Do you know how bees make honey? They eat pollen, mix it with their saliva, and put it in their honeycombs!¹ Think of as many words as you can that rhyme with the word *bee*.



Main Course:

Why do people use the phrase “busy as a bee”? What do bees do that keeps them so busy?

Every bee has a special job, and each bee does what it’s supposed to do without grumbling or complaining. Do you think they have “sweet attitudes”? (Imagine a bee complaint box. What might it contain?)

The teachings in Matthew 5:3–12 are called the Beatitudes or “Bee-attitudes!” Read what these verses have to say about attitudes.

Table Talk:

- What does the word *blessed* mean?
- How can you be happy when you are having problems?
- How can changing your attitude help you to be happy instead of sad or angry?
- How can you turn a disaster into an adventure?

Vitamins and Minerals:

Blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. (Proverbs 16:20)

1. College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “How Bees Make Honey,” June 4, 2012, <http://news.cals.wisc.edu/departments/highlights/2012/06/04/how-bees-make-honey-producing-honey-is-a-strenuous-team-effort-for-bees/>.

Free Refills



Mealtime Prayer:

Think of ways that God provides your family with what you need. Thank Him for providing these things for you.

Appetizer:

Set a pitcher of water on the table. Have everyone guess how many glasses the pitcher of water will fill. Then fill as many glasses as possible. Whose guess was the closest?

Main Course:

Read the story of a poor widow in 2 Kings 4:1–7.

Why did the oil stop when all the jars were full? What do you think would have happened if she had collected more jars? If the widow had come to you for jars, how many would you have given her?

Table Talk:

- How does God provide for poor people today? How can you be part of that?
- How does God provide for you?
- How is the widow's oil like God's blessings?

Vitamins and Minerals:

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20–21)



Mud Pie



Mealtime Prayer:

Thank You, Lord, for the food we eat, for our family and the friends we meet. Each is special and unique! Amen.

Appetizer:

Q: Can you name three types of dirt?

A: Sand, silt, and clay.

The main difference between them is their size. “If a particle of sand were the size of a basketball, then silt would be the size of a baseball, and clay would be the size of a golf ball!”¹ What would your yard look like if dirt were really that size?

Main Course:

Is there a special place where you can dig in the mud? What do you like to make out of mud?

Q: When did God play in the mud?

A: When He formed Adam out of dirt! Read Genesis 2:7.

Table Talk:

- Why do you think God “formed” Adam instead of simply speaking him into existence like the other creatures?
- If you formed all the food on your plate into the shape of a man, could you make him come alive? Why or why not?
- How did God’s “breath of life” make man different from the animals?
- What do you think God enjoyed most about forming you?

Vitamins and Minerals:

The LORD God formed the man . . . and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

1. “Facts of the Case: Soil Types,” *The Great Plant Escape*, Urban Programs Resource Network, University of Illinois Extension Teacher’s Guide, accessed June 3, 2013, <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gpe/case2/c2facts2.html>.

