

THE 555 CHALLENGE

**SERIES 4:
INSIDE OUT FAITH**

JAMES

Introduction Material

THE 555 CHALLENGE

WELCOME

Home discipleship is an integral part of ensuring that we and our children are growing in our faith, but it can be daunting. The 555 Challenge is a simple tool designed to help families engage with God and each other in an attainable and regular way, 5 minutes a day for 5 days of each week for 5 weeks.

A weekly email is sent that provides participants with five short Bible passages, a few simple questions, prayer suggestions and a Spotify playlist. The 555 Challenge aims to help families establish a routine of exploring God's Word together in a way that connects with each member of the family, no matter their age.

Series 2 'The Unstoppable Gospel' guides you and your family through the first 12 chapters of Acts from Jesus' ascension into heaven, the coming of the Holy Spirit, miracles, persecution and more. See page 7 for further introduction to Acts.

This series was developed by the Youthworks Ministry Support Team in collaboration with Peter Morris, Natalie Walker (Families minister at Rouse Hill Anglican) and Sarah Lancaster (Kids & Families minister at Christ Church Gladesville).

WHY START THE 555 CHALLENGE?

PARENTS NEED THIS!

The first reason to start the challenge is because many parents know we need help! The Barna Group in America did some research in 2003 which revealed that 85% of parents with kids under the age of 13 believe they have the primary responsibility for teaching their kids about religious beliefs and spiritual matters (only 11% said it was the church's primary responsibility). The most striking part of the research was the finding that "parents are not so much unwilling to provide more substantive training to their children as they are ill-equipped to do such work." The 555 Challenge is a simple way to equip parents as they bring their children up in the "training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

OUR CHURCHES NEED THIS!

At the end of his life, Joshua challenges the Israelites to obey God's commandments, "Choose whom you will serve," he says. But Joshua has confidence in one thing, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) As he faces the end of his life, Joshua is able to say confidently (under God's grace) that his household will serve the Lord. He was confident that the patterns he had established with his family meant there was a certainty that his family would continue to serve God after his passing. Just like Joshua, we hope this tool will help you to establish a family habit of hearing from God's Word that will give you confidence that your family will continue in the ways of the Lord.

But just a few pages further on in our Bibles, in Judges 2, we see that after the elders who outlived Joshua died,

“there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10b).

Just a generation removed from Joshua’s confidence about his family, the cycle of sin and brokenness in Israel had recommenced. In the very next verse we read,

11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.

What a tragedy! How did the people forget so quickly? One simple answer – they were not reminded regularly about who God is and what he had done for his covenant people.

It is sad to hear truth about the church today in this quote from Donald Whitney:

I am persuaded that so little family worship regularly exists in Christian homes, that even in most of our best churches, most of our best men do not lead their wives – and their children if they have them – in family worship.

The 555 Challenge is a way for you to change that. In your family, in your church, right now, you can make a change. You can commit to discipleship in your home.

OUR GRANDCHILDREN NEED THIS!

Perhaps the clearest instruction to parents in the New Testament is found in Ephesians 6:4. Parents, especially fathers, are instructed with both the negative,

“Do not provoke your children to anger.”

and the positive,

“Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

When it comes to the spiritual development of our kids, many of us take a “do no harm” approach. Take your kids to church. Try and do the right thing, especially when they’re watching. And hope for the best.

This misses the opportunity and blessing of the second part of this verse. We have the opportunity to impact our kids with the truth of the gospel!

In Psalm 78, all of God’s people are given a generation-to-generation responsibility to pass on the testimony and law that God established with His people. The vision even extends to generations “yet unborn” (v6) to ensure that they hope in God, don’t forget his works, and keep his commandments. That – in a nutshell – is what family discipleship is about: regularly gathering as a family to remember what God has done and what he asks of us. We do that to raise our own children to know God, but we also do it for the generations to come.

HOW DOES THE 555 CHALLENGE WORK?

The 555 Challenge is designed to bless your family. We encourage you to adapt the material to work best for your family.

The challenge has three basic components: read, pray, sing!

1. READ

Each day includes time together in the Bible. The daily material includes:

- A truth statement – a brief summary of the day's theme. This is especially helpful for younger kids to recite.
- A short Bible passage – have one family member read the passage aloud. There is sometimes an additional passage you can read to go a little deeper.
- Discussion questions – the first three questions help everyone explore the Bible passage more carefully and notice key details. The fourth question guides you to see how this impacts our daily life.

2. PRAY

After you spend time in God's Word together, it is natural to lead your family to respond by talking to Him! Each day also includes a Prayer suggestion. This is a simple way to help you respond in prayer with praise, petition or thanksgiving.

You can get creative with this element and see what works for your family. You might ask one family member to pray or you might take time to share prayer requests and have everyone pray.

3. SING

Almost 150 years ago, the great preacher, Charles Spurgeon observed that "praise is certainly not at all so common in family prayer as other forms of worship." He then quoted theologian Matthew Henry agreeing that, "They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all."

The 555 Challenge is about equipping you and your family to do "best of all!" Each week includes a playlist of six songs related to the theme to help your family engage with God's Word through music.

This is potentially the most unfamiliar and daunting part of the 555 challenge, particularly if you feel that singing is not your thing! But music has great power to speak truth to our hearts, so please try this too!

TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE 555 CHALLENGE

1. Be realistic – The goal of the challenge is to develop healthy patterns, not immediately start deep theological conversations with your kids. Expect to have good days and bad days. Your family will take time to develop your rhythm.

2. Be consistent – Choose the best five days and a time of the day that will work best for your family (e.g. breakfast, dinner, before bed, etc.) and try and stick to those times.

3. Be flexible – Some days it will be hard to get the family together at the same time or place. Consider using technology to gather the family or prayerfully consider adjusting your family's schedule to make time for this important habit.

4. Be kind – Each day that you use this home discipleship tool is a win! Even when bad days come, focus on the rhythm you are developing. Look for opportunities to encourage the members of your family when they participate. You might even want to plan a special snack as a way to end your time together each day!

5. Keep it short – The readings are short. The questions are not required. Adapt the prayer and song suggestions for your family's circumstances. Some days you may have a rich discussion, other days you might barely make it through the reading, and that's ok!

6. Review in advance (if you can) – While the 555 Challenge is simple and written so you can pick it up at any time, having one family member review that day's reading in advance will help.

7. Remember the weekly focus – The 555 Challenge focuses on one gospel theme each week – creation, sin/judgment, promises of deliverance, Jesus' rescue, and the new life Jesus brings. The weekly focus can help you to prepare and guide your family through the readings.

8. Use the truth statements – Each day's reading has a "truth statement" that summarises the truth that will be taught. These statements are especially useful in guiding younger children to grasp key truths about the gospel.

9. Take it on together – Consider taking the 555 Challenge with your small group or alongside other church families. It is an incredible opportunity to "encourage one another daily!" (Hebrews 3:13).

10. Pray for each other – This is an exercise that can transform your family and church community. Pray that God will bless it richly!

MORE ON MUSIC

When it comes to singing in your home discipleship times, each family will be different.

We've created a playlist for your family to engage with God's word through music. This playlist gives you a range of options, with songs suitable for both younger children and older children, along with more familiar praise songs and traditional hymns. You can choose according to age range, choose what you like or simply put the playlist on shuffle.

The link to the playlist will be attached to your weekly emails. To listen you will need to sign up for a free Spotify account, or listen to each song individually on YouTube.

You can use the playlist however you like depending on what works for your family. If you are doing the challenge along with other families, talk about how music can be included in different families. If you're just starting out with home discipleship, we recommend choosing one or two songs to learn together and using them for a week or even the whole five-week period. If you are more confident with singing together, you could choose several songs each week. You could save the playlist and play it as background music in your home or car over the five weeks.

It may feel uncomfortable at first, but the important thing is to give it a go. You might be surprised at how well singing different songs connect with certain members of your family.

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

James was Jesus' brother who became an important leader of the church in Jerusalem. He wrote this letter to a group of Christians. Many of his readers were poor and they were often treated badly. Their lives were influenced by the world around them and many of them lived lives that did not look different to people around them who didn't trust Jesus.

James wrote to them to encourage them to live out their faith. His message was super clear: Christians should not only hear God's word, they must do what it says. Their faith must be seen in their deeds. So, James tells believers what an inside out faith looks like.

This is a really challenging letter to people who trust Jesus deeply. James' words help us to follow Jesus when life is hard, when we don't know what to do, and when we're tempted to sin. He teaches us the power of words and the dangers of speech, how to handle fights, how to think about ourselves in the right way, and the power of prayer. He was confident that Jesus would return and wanted his readers to know that this truth changes everything.

If you're ready to live out your faith, pray that God will help us to know what he says in James and then do it, from the inside out!

Week 1

If you've ever found life hard because of your faith in Jesus and have felt like the easiest thing to do is to hide your faith, you're not alone. James wrote his letter to people who were suffering because of their faith in Jesus. James' message is clear: our faith in the Lord Jesus must not be hidden deep inside, it must be lived out! Even when we are faced with difficulties, uncertainties, temptations and sin, we're not alone. God is on our side. And he gives us everything that we need to live out genuine, life-changing faith in Jesus.

Week 2

Faith in Jesus is amazing: God won't punish us for our sins but will forgive us; he won't abandon us but will generously bless us. We cherish these promises deep in our hearts. But faith in Jesus needs to be lived out. In this chapter, James helps us see what inside out faith looks like. It means that we will be like God, and show generosity, love, kindness and mercy to other people in very real ways. Prepare to be challenged as we dig into James 2.

Week 3

Words are important. Some words are full of wisdom and can help the listener. Other words promise wonderful things but are disappointing. Words are for speaking, considering, believing or not believing. This chapter is all about words and speaking. What does the world say? What does God say? What do we say? What power do words really have? What happens when we listen to foolish words? What happens when we listen to wise words?

Week 4

Have you ever had a "big head"? It happens to us all sometimes - when we have a big opinion of ourselves. We can believe that we are more important than others, better than others or that people should serve us. Big heads stop us from loving others, and lead to arguments and fights. This is not God's way. Living out our faith means loving it out - loving God first, then others, and ourselves last. And this comes from humility and understanding that God is God, that we are not, and that others are important and God - the king of the universe - wants us to love others.

Week 5

Living with inside out faith means that we live knowing that one day, the Lord Jesus will return from heaven. What an incredible day that will be - he will appear in all his glory and judge the world, making all the wrong things right. He will put an end to suffering and fix this broken world. And he will give eternal life to those who trust him. Knowing that Jesus will return soon changes everything. It helps believers to wait patiently, to persevere and pray, and to persuade people to come back to him.

SERIES 4 SONG LIST

All the songs are accessible on the Spotify playlist [here](#).

Suitable for Younger Kids

The Jesus Hokey Pokey – Colin Buchanan

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Open Your Ears to God's Word – Colin Buchanan

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

God is good all the time – Colin Buchanan

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Walk by Faith – Colin Buchanan

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Stranger in this world – Josh Goscombe

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Suitable for Older Kids

Let him ask God – Seeds Family Worship

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Be ready – Sovereign Grace Music

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Do what it says – Seeds Family Worship

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Everybody Needs You — Sovereign Grace Music

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Our Help — Sovereign Grace Music

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Because you first loved me – Sovereign Grace Music

[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

You're Coming Back — Sovereign Grace Music
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Ready, Set, Go – Sovereign Grace Music
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Be Strong and Courageous — Colin Buchanan
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Familiar Praise Songs

Made Alive — Citizens
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

You Never Change – Sovereign Grace Music
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

It is well with my soul – Matt Redman
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Magnificent, Marvelous, Matchless Love – Matt Boswell & Matt Papa
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

This I believe – Hillsong Worship
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Altogether Good – Citizens
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Count it all joy – Sovereign Grace Music
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me — City Alight
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone) — Christ Tomlin
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

Let Your Kingdom Come — Sovereign Grace Music
[Spotify](#) | [YouTube](#)

A FINAL WORD

The 555 Challenge is prepared to support families as they begin to establish a family rhythm of gathering around God's Word, listening, praying and singing. We'd love to hear your reflections on using this resource. At the end of the five weeks, a feedback survey will be emailed out. Participants are also welcome to contact Youthworks Ministry Support to share feedback directly (ministrysupport@youthworks.net).

May our heavenly Father richly bless you and your family as you seek to know and love him more.