

God Made You on Purpose!

A Word for Parents

Why did we choose this value?

How beautiful is the confidence young children have! Even if they start walking on the later end of the developmental spectrum, they're blissfully unaware that other kids started walking months before them. They don't have any existential insecurities about being "behind the curve." Or if they're born with red hair, curly hair, or little to no hair, it makes no difference. When they look in a mirror, they're pleased with the face staring back at them.

Sadly, this confidence starts to falter with age. As kids get older, the questions start to emerge. Why am I so tall? Why am I so short? Why can't I be as funny as him? Why can't I be as smart as her? Kids begin to pick apart their reflection, as well as what lies beneath. The questions intensify, "Where did I come from? Where am I going?" and culminate with one of the biggest questions of all, "Who am I?"

As Christians, we believe that the answer lies in another question, "Whose am I?" As our kids develop and make their way through the choppy waters of adolescence, we want them to know that God made them on purpose. And in Jesus, their lives have purpose.

What We Want Kids to Know

Read the following as a script or tweak how you like!

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them...And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:27, 31

After God created each thing in this world, the sun, the plants, and the animals he said it is GOOD. When God made people, men and women, he said it is VERY GOOD. God made each of us in his image which means we NEVER need to doubt who we are. We are children of God, created by him with love and wonder.

- How do you see that God created you? God made others on purpose too--how does that affect how you interact with others?

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." Psalm 139: 13-14

God created you wonderfully--do you know what *wonderfully* means? It means very great and delightful! God made you with wonder and on purpose. He took time to create all the beautiful parts of you. You are not an accident. God wanted you in this world. He delights in you.

Because God is an all-powerful and all-knowing creator He knows everything about you. Not only does he know *when* you do things (like lay down, play, eat) but he knows *everything*.

- How does it feel to have God know everything about you? What does it mean to be loved by your creator?
- I wonder what kind of purpose God has for your family as a whole?

The Memory Verse

Can be expanded for older kids.

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139: 14

Activities

Playdough, heavy paper for a self-portrait and frames for PreK through 2nd Grade were included in your latest goodie bag. Let us know if you need something!

- 1) Do your own "creating" by making something out of playdough (or cookie dough!). Talk about the joy of making something out of nothing!
- 2) Decorate a picture frame and draw a self-portrait to put in it.
 - Kids can draw themselves as they are now, or who they hope to be as grown-ups. Older kids might enjoy the challenge of making life size 3-D collage portraits using items found at home.
 - If kids are resistant to drawing themselves, ask them to list out some attributes, skills, and talents they believe God has given them. Parents, you might suggest some too!

Prayer

Father, thank you for creating us and knowing us. Jesus, thank you for loving us and being our friend. Holy Spirit, thank you for guiding us and being with us everywhere we go.

Opportunities for further study

- Families: Read all of Genesis 1-2, Psalm 100, and Psalm 139
- Parents: Check out *The Gift of Being Yourself*, by David G. Benner.

He Loves You Completely

A Word for Parents

Why did we choose this value?

Is there any truth easier to pronounce but harder to grasp than, “God loves you”? Especially in our present day call-out culture, where people can be “cancelled” for various offenses, how difficult is it to believe in a God who doesn’t just tolerate us, but loves us through and through? It sounds too good to be true.

In all honesty, young children probably have a leg up on us cranky adults in believing this value. Jesus must’ve been on to something when he said, “You must become like a child of God to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We chose the word “completely” rather than unconditionally because “completely” calls to mind Philippians 1:6, “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.” God’s love doesn’t just leave us in our rough state. It works on us, perfecting us, and making us into more of who He created us to be. God’s love makes us whole! And this is a love that changes the world. We can give our lives away in service to others because Jesus has first done that for us.

What We Want Kids to Know

Read as a script or tweak however you like.

“God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.” 1 Jn 4:9-10 (NLT)

God loves YOU, yes, YOU! God loved you before you were born, before you even knew about him. God has a “never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love” for you. God delights in you.

God knows everything about you, the good and the bad. And there is nothing you can do to stop Him from loving you. In fact, God loves you so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for you. On the cross, Jesus cleared away our sins and created a new way for us to be together with God. Because He wants to be with us!

- I wonder how you see God’s love for you?
- What can you do in times where you don’t “feel” God’s love?

“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.” 1 Jn 4:11-12 (NLT)

God is love. God shows us how to love. We are able to love Him and others because we are first loved by God. The love God has for us overflows into love for Him and love for our neighbor. Many times in the Bible, Jesus asks his followers to love their neighbor. God puts each of us in places on purpose, and part of that purpose is to allow the overflow of God’s love to seep into the lives of the people near us and our “neighbors” who are further away.

- I wonder how God is asking you to love others?
- What are ways you can love your family, friends and neighbors?

The Memory Verse

Can be expanded for older kids.

“We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

Activities

Supplies for the first activity are included with your latest goodie bag. Let us know if you need something!

- 1) Take your kids on an adventure with a scavenger hunt all about God’s love! Cut out the hearts, hide them, and as they find them, talk about what we learn about love. Maybe even spread the activity out for a few days and talk about a few each day!
- 2) Cut out three hearts from construction paper and title one with “Family,” the next with “Church,” and the last one with “Neighbors.” In the hearts, write one or two ways that you can love each one. How can we love our family? How can we love our church? How can we love our world? Take time this week to do the things you write down!

The Prayer

Father, thank you for creating us and knowing us. Jesus, thank you for loving us and being our friend. Holy Spirit, thank you for guiding us and being with us everywhere we go.

Opportunities for Further Study

- Families: Read all of 1 John 4:7-21, Jeremiah 31:3, Zephaniah 3:17
- Parents: Check out *Embracing the Love of God*, by James Bryan Smith.

He Goes with you Everywhere!

A Word for Parents

Why did we choose this value?

At first glance, these values might seem a bit narcissistic. God created ME, He loves ME, He goes with ME! But serious followers of the Trinity know that God gives to us so that we can give to others. Since the beginning of time, God has invited us into his work of stewarding creation (Gen 1) and blessing all the families of Earth (Gen 12).

This is the way of God. A continual infilling and outpouring of love, among the persons of the Trinity and among God with us. Though not explicitly stated, the previous two values have inherent movement, “God created you on purpose, *with purpose(s)* and *for purpose(s)*. He loves you completely, *so that you can love others.*”

Similarly, the promise “I will be with you always,” comes tucked within the action of disciple-making. As we share the good news of Jesus, in our Monday through Saturday lives, from the Twin Cities to the ends of the Earth, we can rest in the promise that we won’t be going it alone. God is with us!

What We Want Kids to Know

Read as a script or tweak however you like.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

God goes with you everywhere! God is not limited like we are. We cannot be in more than one place at a time--unless you're at the Four Corners where you can straddle Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona simultaneously! God tells us in the Bible that he is omnipresent. Omni (all) and present (to be or exist). So God is not just in one or two places at once, but in all places at all times.

God is with you when you're in church, and when you leave church! He is with you when you are reading the Bible and he is with you when you're playing! There's nowhere you can go where God is not with you.

- I wonder how you see God being with you everywhere you go?

In Matthew 28 Jesus tells his people to GO and tell others about Him! He invites us to share his love with our family, friends, and neighbors, even the whole world! And because He promises that He will always be with us, we can go boldly into places that might seem scary or hard. God is in the places you go already, and goes with you because you have the Holy Spirit.

- Can you think of a family member, friend, or neighbor that you'd like to share God's love with? Through a good deed or an encouraging word?

The Memory Verse

Can be expanded for older kids.

"Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Mt 28:20

Activities

Supplies for the activities are included with your latest goodie bag. Let us know if you need something!

- 1) **Maps:** Mark places you've been and places you would like to go. Select a country, state, or city, and pray for them this week.
- 2) **Magnets (PreK and up):** Have fun exploring magnetic forces. Although you can't see them, you can see their effects. Just like we can't see God but we can see his movement everywhere!
- 3) **"God is Always with Me" book (Nursery & PreK):** Fill the small book (covered by a paper map) to help kids understand God goes with them everywhere. Have them draw or cut out pictures of all the places kids go- a car, the grocery store, the library, a church building, school, etc, and write on each page "God Goes with Me!"
- 4) **Keychain/bracelet (K-2 and Club):** The bag of beads with tassels are to make a keychain or bracelet that says "Mt 28:20" a physical reminder of God going everywhere that kids can take everywhere. :-)

The Prayer

Father, thank you for creating us and knowing us. Jesus, thank you for loving us and being our friend. Holy Spirit, thank you for guiding us and being with us everywhere we go.

Opportunities for Further Study

- Families: Read all of 1 John 4:7-21, Jeremiah 31:3, Zephaniah 3:17
- Parents: A missionary biography like Helen Rosavere's *Give Me This Mountain*