

BLINDED BY SIN

Best Use: As a Family Night activity with children ages three through twelve

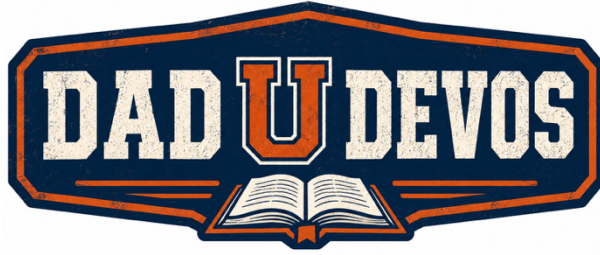
Nutritional Value: Explains that we all have a “disease” called sin

Advance Preparation: Have the following supplies ready for Family Night...

- Obstacle course items (toys, stuffed animals, shoes, balloons, plastic cups or blocks)
- A bell or whistle
- A blindfold
- A Bible

Serve It Up: Follow these steps to serve up a great experience...

1. Create a walking-path obstacle course somewhere in the house or yard using toys, shoes, pillows, balloons or anything you wish for the kids to maneuver around.
2. Add several obstacles that will break apart and make noise when hit – such as a tower of plastic cups, dominos, etc.
3. Have a contest to see who can walk through the obstacle course the fastest without touching any of the items on the path.
4. Ring the bell or blow the whistle before shouting the word “Sin!” if someone touches an object.
5. Next, take turns trying the same course while blindfolded. Again, ring the bell or blow the whistle before shouting “Sin!” If the child knocks over the stacked obstacles, ring or blow and then shout “Really bad sin!” to emphasize that some of our sins cause more mess than others.
6. Let the kids have fun watching dad or mom really make a mess of things as they try the obstacle course.
7. Read Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12 and 5:19 aloud together describing the “disease” of sin that causes everyone to behave in sinful ways. Explain that the disease of sin (represented by the blindfold) makes it impossible for us to avoid sinful acts (represented by touching the items).
8. Pray together, thanking God that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.
9. Memorize this phrase together: “For all have sinned!”



GOING ONCE... GOING TWICE...

Best Use: As a Family Night activity

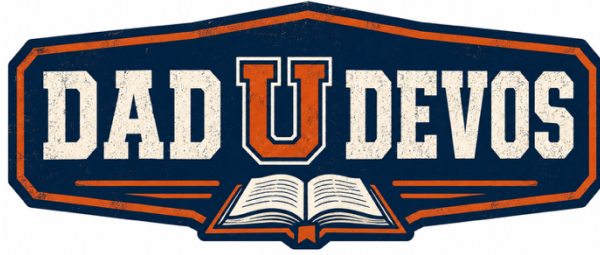
Nutritional Value: Teaching kids how valuable they are to God

Advance Preparation

- Gather several items your kids have created such as drawings, notes, or a graded school paper.
- Have enough play or real money on hand to give each child an equal amount.
- Prepare an auction paddle for each child. You can make these by stapling a piece of paper onto paint stir sticks. Write a number on each that represents the child such as their birth-order or month born.
- Make sure you have a Bible on hand.

Serve it up

1. Invite the family to sit in a row of chairs in order to participate in an auction. Briefly explain the rules of your auction, such as "You can't bid on your own items. This is about valuing the work of others."
2. One at a time let each kid introduce one of his/her items to the group. Allow them to explain their creation and encourage them to drive up the price by crafting a good story about the item.
3. Let the bidding begin! (You may want to serve as auctioneer for the first several items to model the process before letting the kids take turns.)
4. When each item sells let the kids take turns being the cashier. This gives the added bonus of incorporating a math lesson into family night!
5. After auctioning all of the items sit back down and discuss how you determine the value of an object. For example, "You determine the value by how much someone is willing to pay for it. Some items went for a lot of money, while others did not."
6. After establishing the basic principle, read **John 3:16**, **I John 3:16** and **Romans 8:32** aloud together. Explain that God paid a very high price for us by sending His son to die in our place. Ask "What does that tell you about how valuable you are to God?"
7. Next, read **Matthew 10:31** aloud together and then explain that Jesus tells us not to worry about stuff because we are so valuable to God.
8. End the auction by thanking God for loving us enough to pay the ultimate price for us.
9. Memorize the jingle together... *For God's Son to die, our value must be high!*



ROLLING IN MONEY

Best Use: As a Family Night activity with younger kids

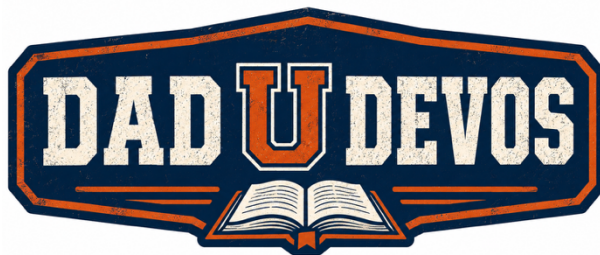
Nutritional Value: Teaches the value of money and good stewardship

Advance Preparation

1. Go to the bank and withdraw as many one-dollar bills as you can up to \$1000. (Don't worry – you'll return most of it the next day.)
2. Create an envelope titled "God's Instructions for Money" with several notes containing Bible passages with instructions on how to use the money.
 - Malachi 3:10 = Give 10% to God
 - Proverbs 30:24-25 = Save 10% for the future
 - Romans 13:8 = Pay your bills (List several pretend bills such as \$500 for the house payment, \$150 for food, \$150 for the car, etc. Make sure the mock bills add up to almost the entire cash pile – leaving only a few dollars free.)

Serve It Up: Follow the instructions for an unforgettable experience...

- **Step One:** Hide the pile of cash someplace in the house and invite the kids to find the secret treasure. When they find the money allow time for them to go nuts!
- **Step Two:** Invite the kids to count the treasure promising them they will be able to spend it on anything they want **AFTER** following God's instructions for money.
- **Step Three:** Have the children count out enough one-dollar bills to meet each financial obligation described on the three notes – 10% for tithe, 10% for savings and enough for each of the "bills."
- **Step Four:** Give each child the remaining cash to spend as they please. Needless to say, they will be a bit disappointed. But they will also better understand real-world expenses and our responsibilities as stewards of the money God gives.
- **Step Five:** End your time creating a "Stewardship Box" with three slots labeled "Give" and "Save" and "Spend" for the kids to use when they earn money or receive their allowance.
- **Step Six:** Memorize the following jingle together... *"Before you spend away – give, save and pay."*



TIME WISE

Best Use: As a Family Night activity with children ages three through twelve

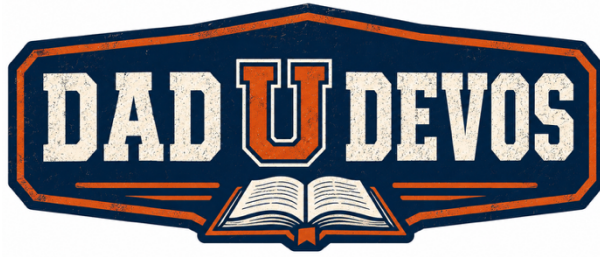
Nutritional Value: Illustrates the importance of using our time wisely

Advance Preparation: Have the following supplies ready for Family Night...

- About ten toy blocks or wood pieces of various lengths
- A coffee table or flat surface shorter than the combined length of the blocks or wood pieces
- A marker
- A Bible

Serve It Up: Follow these steps to serve up a great experience...

- Assemble the blocks from largest to smallest or have the child help you cut the wood into pieces of various lengths.
- Have a child write one of the following words on each of the longer pieces of wood representing the “Should Do” activities in his or her day: Sleep, Eat, School, Bathe, Chores, Read, Practice, etc.
- Now have them write one of the following “Could Do” words on each of the shorter pieces of wood: Television, Screen Time, Play with Friends, Eat Ice Cream, etc.
- Invite the kids to your “24 Hour Table” or flat surface. (Be sure the length of the surface is shorter than the combined length of the wood blocks.)
- Invite each child to design his or her ideal day by selecting the wood blocks that represent what they would like to do most and placing them end-to-end on the surface until they run out of table. The child will quickly discover that there is not enough room on the table for several of the “Should Do” blocks such as “bathing” or “sleeping” or “school.”
- Now invite each child to place the block on the “24 Hour Table” in order of importance – deciding which of the “Could Do” blocks should be lowest priority. Share that we should protect some time for fun activities, but we might not get to do everything we enjoy every day.
- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1 and Matthew 25:14-29 together and discuss ways to become wise with the time God gives us.
- Memorize this jingle together: *“Should Do before Could Do”*



UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS

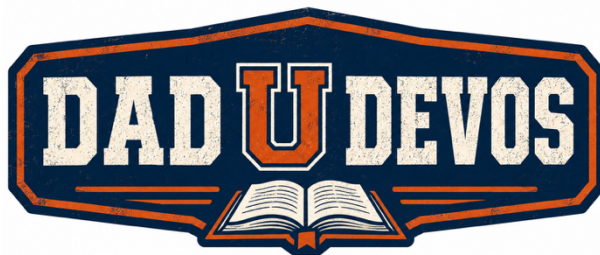
Best Use: As a Family Night activity with younger children

Nutritional Value: Helps children understand that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Advance Preparation: Schedule an evening to take the family out to ice-cream or some other favorite dessert. **Note:** If you live in a one story home you will need to change locations for this activity to a place with a staircase. You will also need to bring a Bible with you to the dessert place.

Serve it Up: Follow the simple steps for a great experience...

- **Build Anticipation:** Tell the children that you want to take them out for ice-cream or some other favorite dessert. Ask each “Are you willing to accept a challenge to earn the right to go?”
- **Pose The Challenge:** Go to the top of your staircase and explain the following to the children waiting below...
 - **Share The Goal:** “I want you to pretend that I am God in heaven. I want you up here with me very much. Let’s figure out how to make that happen.”
 - **Explain The Rules:** “You need to do your best to get up here to where I am. But no part of you (including your clothes) can touch the stairs or the railing. You have five minutes to figure it out. Now go!”
 - **Wait & Watch:** Silently wait as the children try to think through a solution. They will likely try to “cheat” in one way or another. Clarify that there is only one acceptable solution.
 - **Give Hints:** As time runs down, mom or dad should give hints so at least one child figures out the solution: ***“God” can come down the stairs and carry you up the stairs on his back!***
- **Discuss the Meaning:** Once each child has been carried upstairs load everyone into the car and head out for dessert. While eating, explain that Jesus Christ is God who came down from heaven to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.
- **Discuss:** Read Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8 together aloud and explain that we all sin and that no one can do enough good to get to heaven. But God wants us with Him so much that He came “downstairs” to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves!
- **Pray:** End your time together having each child say a brief prayer of thanks to God for the free gift of salvation.



DADDY/DAUGHTER MOVIE NIGHT

Best Use: As a movie night discussion guide for a dad with a younger daughter

Nutritional Value: Triggers a faith discussion between father and daughter.

Advance Preparation: Select whichever of the following *Disney* princess movies you consider most appropriate for your daughter and have it ready for a special evening together.

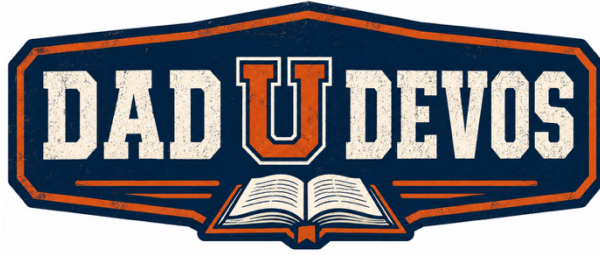
- *Snow White*
- *Cinderella*
- *The Little Mermaid*
- *Sleeping Beauty*
- *Beauty and the Beast*
- *Mulan*
- *The Princess and the Frog*
- *Moana*

Serve It Up

- **Step One:** Invite your daughter to get dressed up for a special dinner together. You can do something fancy like dinner at a nice restaurant or simple like McDonalds or home-cooked fish sticks. Just be sure to make it an early dinner to leave time for you to watch and discuss the movie.
- **Step Two:** Make sure you have a Bible handy, pop some popcorn and enjoy the movie selection.
- **Step Three:** Discuss the questions on the reverse side in order to highlight the story written on every heart that points us to the true happily-ever-after story of God's love for his bride.

Discuss It: After watching the film, ask your daughter the following questions.

1. Describe the girl's life at the beginning of the story. Is she happy? Does she wish for something more?
2. What danger does the girl face? Is there anyone who wants to harm her or make her unhappy? What kind of obstacles (problems) must be overcome?
3. What magical things happen to help make the girl's dreams come true?
4. Read each Scripture and then talk about the way princess stories reflect the true story of God
 - **1 Peter 5:8** – Our real world has a villain named Satan who deceives us and creates other obstacles to keep us away from our happily-ever-after destiny.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:55-57** – God defeated the villain with the “magic” (actually, the miracle) of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Now we can escape the darkness of sin and “marry” the Son of the King!
 - **Revelation 19:7** – Little girls hope for “happily-ever-after” with a handsome prince because it points them to the true story where God invites us to live happily-ever-after as His bride.



DINNER AND A MOVIE

Best Use: As a Family Activity with any age

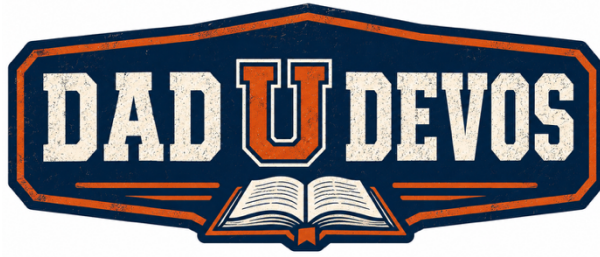
Nutritional Value: Good conversation around the movie of your choice

Advance Preparation

- Pack a picnic dinner or order in some of your family's favorite food.
- Rent a movie or choose a family favorite to watch together.
- Make tickets for the movie or have the kids make their own tickets to sell. (Let the have fund deciding the cost, such as 3 hugs and 1 kiss)
- Set up an area to eat and watch the movie together with pillows, drinks, food, popcorn, etc.

Serve it up

- **SAY:** "We are going to have a special night at the movies, only a little different."
- **OPTIONAL:** You might want to load up in the car and drive around the block to return at your home and show them in to the fun dinner/movie theatre you have created. Kids can also make drive-in cars out of large boxes. Have fun, be creative and have a good time together.
- **DO:** Watch the movie while you eat dinner together.
- **TALK:** After the movie is over, spend some time talking through the following questions:
 - Who is the central character? (The "hero")
 - Who or what does the main character want? (conscious and subconsciously?)
 - Who or what are the obstacles that must be overcome?
 - What was the "ultimate conflict" of the drama?
 - What wrong choices were made?
 - What right choices were made?
 - Can we learn anything from the story?
- **PRAY:** Thank God for your meal and fun time together as a family. Pray together: *"We thank you, Lord, that you have blessed us with our family. Thank you for our time together tonight. Help us to grow closer to each other and to you. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen."*



TRUTH TREASURE MAP

Best Use: As a Family Night activity with children ages three through ten

Nutritional Value: Shows that the difficult path may be the best path

Advance Preparation: Have the following supplies ready for Family Night...

- A Bible
- Draw two “treasure maps” as follows...
 - Map #1: Boring in appearance with lots of difficult steps before reaching the treasure
 - Map #2: Exciting in appearance with a few simple steps before reaching the treasure

Serve it up: Follow these steps to serve up a great experience...

1. Show the kids both maps and tell them you want them to follow the directions to find two different treasures. Be sure to let the children take turns reading the clues or going to the next location so the younger or slower children can enjoy the experience.
2. Make sure they follow the exciting, simple map first. It should lead to a box labeled “False Treasure” containing dirty socks, crumpled paper or some other useless item.
3. Let the children complain about the contents of the “False Treasure” and then explain that “You’ve been following a map that seemed exciting and easy, but it was actually a lie!”
4. Now pull out Map #2 – the one that looks boring and difficult. Make sure the steps involved include crawling backwards, climbing stairs and other fun yet challenging steps. This map should lead to a box labeled “Truth Treasure” containing candy, money, a coupon to get ice cream, or something else that will excite your children.
5. After the kids celebrate finding the “Truth Treasure” ask them which map was easier to follow? (The “False Treasure” map had easy steps.) Which was better? (The “Truth Treasure” map had a worthwhile reward.)
6. Read Proverbs 2:1-5 aloud together and emphasize that God promises great rewards for those who take the difficult path of truth rather than the easy path of lies.
7. Memorize this jingle together: *“It’s best for you to seek what’s true!”*