

Involved in Acts of Service:

Serving one's neighbour is the response to Jesus' love for us. Service communicates that love to others.

Top-Secret Sweets

Bake biscuits in the shape of angels. Have everyone decorate them with icing and lollies. Distribute them secretly to friends and family members.

Angel Awards

Award members of your community and your family with special home made awards for acts of service to others. Why not take the time to have everyone in the family create the awards and make sure everyone signs them.

"_____ " Angels

Instead of the well known "Charlie's" Angels, why not make your family into a team that serves others? You could be "Smiths' Angels" or "Jones' Angels". Provide acts of service such as childcare, meals, sending messages of love and support.

Operation Angel

As a family, visit groups for no reason, other than for love and encouragement. Spend time in a home for the elderly or nursing home, drop in on someone in hospital.

Angel Adoption

Why not adopt a family in your local community and find ways to support them. It could be through simple ways such as praying for them and the odd visit.

Resources:



© "Angels and Me" by Carolyn Nystrom © 1984 Anzea Publishers. An easy to read children's book about angels and the bible.

© "What does the Bible say about . . ." is a series of bible studies for children produced by Scripture Union.

© "Faith-Talk with Children" is a series of cards which provide families with opportunities to talk about issues of faith. Great for long journeys in the car. They are available from Openbook Publishing (www.openbook.com.au)

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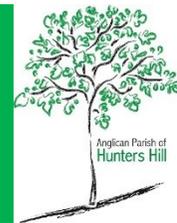
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The Fig Tree

"Nurturing the seed of faith"



Welcome to our second edition of "The Fig Tree". It is hoped that parents, caregivers and grandparents will use this as a tool to build upon the faith of their family.

We strongly believe that the home is the place where faith is best caught, taught, practised, nurtured and lived out. The role of the Church is to nurture and resource you in living this out, and be a place where we come together to share life with all its ups and downs.

We hope you find some resources and ideas to encourage you and your family in exploring the faith together.

Michael & All Angels

On 29th September the Church celebrates the feast of Michael and All Angels. The bible contains many stories about angels. The story we remember this day is the defeating of the devil by the Archangel Michael who then cast him out of heaven (Rev 12:7-12). Some believe passionately in angels, others see them as mythical. Whatever you believe, angels have a special place in the stories of faith—messengers, comforters, destroyers, challengers and guardians. Most importantly they point towards God's kingdom and its coming.



Probably one of the most well known stories about Angels is that of the Angel Gabriel, informing Mary that she was going to give birth to a child who would be called Jesus.

Mary said "yes" to this amazing request. However, as Mary was to discover, the task of being mother to Jesus, God's son, was not easy. There are only a few stories that show what Jesus may have been like to raise as a child. Maybe he wasn't the easiest of children to raise? However, his parents treasured every moment with him (Luke 2: 41-52).

Of course, we know that this mother experienced as much pain as she did joy in raising this child—a man who was eventually killed, but on the third day, as the women entered his tomb, an angel asked them "Who are you looking for? He is not here, he has been raised".

We hope and pray that in this issue of "The Fig Tree" you might be encouraged in your own faith, and in sharing that faith with your children. The word "angel" comes from the Greek work "Evangelist", which means a messenger. We pray you might be God's messenger in your home :).



Caring Conversations:

Caring conversations are those that allow time to share in others joys, hurts, dreams, hopes, concerns and values. Here are a few ideas to spark your imagination:

Ask:

- ⊙ Can you describe what an angel might look like?
- ⊙ Do you think they are real?
- ⊙ Assuming they might be real, do you think that they have wings? Where might they live?
- ⊙ What's the difference between an angel and a fairy?
- ⊙ Can you think of any person (alive or dead) who was like an angel to you? Look through family photo albums and remember some of those people.
- ⊙ What angelic qualities do you see in members of your family? Share these thoughts.
- ⊙ Have you ever met anyone who said something or did something "angelic" and then just disappeared? Tell that story.
- ⊙ If you had a guardian angel—what do you think their job description might be?
- ⊙ Has there been a time in your life when you have felt God's presence? What was that like?
- ⊙ What would you do if you were an angel? What are some of your own dreams? How might you help others?

Spirituality in the Home:

This is all about your family's devotional life. It includes deliberate activities like bible stories, prayer and table graces through to ensuring that you say please, thank you, sorry and providing Christian resources such as story books, music and much more.

+Angels are often regarded as messengers from God. Take time to look at your own life at home and reflect upon the types of messages that you are giving to your children. What things are important and are given pride of place? When you eat and meet together, do you turn off the television and other distractions? Why not try and practice having just 10 minutes of silence in your home once a week.

+Sometimes parents call their children "little devils"! Why not practice calling your children more heavenly names, such as "angels"? If you tell children they are bad, they may come to believe it. Build them up with positives. Practise saying things that will bless your children.

+Play some angelic music in the background during the week—harps, strings and flutes.

Family Rituals and Traditions:

Rituals and Traditions are patterns of behaviour that communicate meaning in life. They can include how you greet people, bedtime prayers, seasonal celebrations etc.

Sun-rise picnic by the water

This is a special tradition that requires a little bit of planning, but should be a nice surprise. Get your family up early one Saturday morning, pack a picnic and head for the water (beach, lakeside etc) - somewhere that has a bit of sand. Watch the sun rise.



As it gets higher in the sky, begin your picnic breakfast. Reflect on the warmth and brightness of the rising sun. Talk about how Gods love is far greater than this. Share ways that we can bring warmth to others.

As the day warms up find a clean sandy spot and make "sand angels". This is similar to making snow angels—lie down on your back and move your arms and legs up and down. Then stand up and check out the imprint that you have left behind.

Miming a Message

Why not have a fun night at home and play a game of charades with a difference. Take turns to try and get across an important message: E.g. God loves you.