Slow Down & Soak It In

Psalm 19:1–2 (NLT)

When: Saturday, 9:00 a.m. Length: 20-30 minutes

PARENT PREP - 5-10 minutes before your devotional time

This first devotional will help your family practice the first sacred rhythm: **meditation**.

The goal is to slow down enough to notice God, listen to His Word, and dwell on what He has revealed.

Today you will start a tea-bag activity that you will check tonight and tomorrow. The longer a tea bag soaks, the more the water changes. That gives children a picture of what happens when we stay with God's truth and let it sink into our hearts, just as the tea is absorbed into the water.

Read Psalm 19:1-2.

> "The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
> The skies display his craftsmanship.
> Day after day they continue to speak;
> night after night they make him known."

Take a breath. Be still for a moment. Then read it again.

Look around you. What has God made that you might normally rush past without noticing?

As you lead your family, remember that **being still is a skill we learn over time.** Some children may sit quietly for only a few seconds. That's okay. Praise them for whatever they are able to do.

You also don't have to fill every quiet moment with words. If things feel awkward, take a breath and quietly ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance.

Today, your family is learning *about* meditation and will **practice it together.**

Pray: *Holy Spirit, help me slow down. Help me pay attention to You and to what You are showing me through Your Word and Your creation. Show me what You want me to notice today. Help me not just teach my family about meditation, but practice it with them. Give me patience when it feels difficult or awkward. Give me wisdom about what to say and when to simply be quiet. Help our family learn to slow down, notice You, and dwell on Your truth. Amen*

Supplies needed:

- ☐ Printed Bible & journal (per person)
- ☐ bag of M&Ms
- ☐ 1 tea bag
- ☐ 1 clear cup or container with a lid
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Leather coaster

Devotional - Slow Down & Soak It In

(Find a semi-private location and have your family sit on chairs or a blanket. Bring your devotional kit)

Have everyone sit quietly for 30 seconds or more if capable.

It can help if everyone **folds their hands and takes deep breaths.** (Praise your kids for being still and quiet. This is a skill that takes time to develop. Younger children may not be able to sit quietly for 30 seconds, and that's okay. Let them be still for as long as they can and praise them for their effort.)

> **Ask**: What did you hear? What did you notice? Was it hard to be quiet? (Empathize with them about how hard it can be to slow down and notice God.)
>
> This morning, we're going to practice the first sacred rhythm: **Meditate.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MEDITATE? Meditation means to slow down, pay attention, think deeply about something, and stay with it for a while.

> **Take out the M&Ms bag.** The M&Ms are going to help us remember two sacred rhythms this weekend: Meditate & Memorize. Eat a few and have each family member share something descriptive about them.
>
> Read Psalm 119:103. This verse says God's word is sweeter than honey. **Honey is** roughly **1.1–1.3 times as sweet** as sugar. So God's word is sweeter than M&Ms!

We just meditated on an M&M. Now let's meditate on God's creation & His words.

> Read Psalm 19:1-2 (NLT) :
>
> Ask: **What does the Bible say the heavens and skies are doing?** (Look for: proclaim, display, speak, make Him known.)

Define or ask your family if they know what these words mean.

> **PROCLAIM**: To proclaim means to announce or tell something. The heavens are proclaiming something about God.
>
> **GLORY**: God's glory is His greatness, beauty, power, and worth. When we look at creation, we are seeing clues about how great our God is.
>
> **DISPLAY**: To display means to show something clearly. The skies display God's craftsmanship. They show us what God has made. Have you ever displayed something? (try to come up with an example like a trophy, stuffed animal, award at school etc.)
>
> **CRAFTSMANSHIP**: Craftsmanship means something made with skill and care. When we look carefully at creation, we can learn something about the Creator (Try to give them an example of something they have made and how it shows their strengths and uniqueness like a painting, lego creation, poem or paper they wrote.)
>
> **MAKE HIM KNOWN**: Creation can't talk with a human voice, but God made it in a way that tells us something about Him.

TALK ABOUT IT, BY AGE

Parents: Please share your own vulnerable answers to each question and take time to empathize with your child's answers.

Ages 3–5

- What is something God made that you really like to look at?
- What does that tell you about God?
- What happens when we slow down and really look at something God made?

Ages 6–9

- What can creation help us notice about God?
- What is something God made that you might miss if you are rushing?
- How is slowing down to think about God's Word different from just reading it quickly?

Ages 10–12

- Psalm 19 says creation is continually speaking. What do you think God wants us to notice?
- What might you miss about God if you are always rushing?
- What's the difference between reading God's Word and slowing down long enough to let it sink in?

Teens

- What tends to keep you from slowing down enough to notice God?
- What's the difference between reading Scripture and allowing yourself to dwell on what God is saying?
- Where in an ordinary day could you intentionally slow down and practice this?

☕ THE TEA BAG: SOAK IT IN

Place one tea bag into the clear cup/container and add water. Put the lid on it.

Ask: What do you think will happen if we leave it here all day?

The longer it soaks, the more the water changes. That's a picture of meditation. We stay with God's truth, think about it, and let it sink into us."

Tonight and tomorrow we'll come back and see what happened while it soaked.

MAKE IT A SACRED RHYTHM

Ask: "Where could our family practice slowing down and dwelling on God's Word?"

- At bedtime: "What is one thing you noticed about God today?"
- On a walk: "What do you see that reminds you of God?"
- In the car: "Let's say our verse and think about one phrase."
- When someone is worried: "What does God's Word say about Him being with us (Ps. 23)"
- At dinner: "What did you notice today that showed you something about God?"

"A sacred rhythm is something we return to again and again. We don't have to wait for a beautiful moment to meditate. We can practice slowing down and paying attention anywhere."

Blessing & Prayer:

Parents, place a hand on each child's head or shoulder and say, " **The God who made the heavens and filled them with stars knows your name, [name]. Rest in Him tonight knowing you are seen and loved."** Kids can pray if they want.

CREATED TO CREATE

A Family Leather Stamping Activity

“The skies display His craftsmanship.” — Psalm 19:1

God is a craftsman. When we slow down and look at His creation, we see that He makes things with incredible skill, care, creativity, and purpose. And because we are made in God's image, He has given each of us the ability to create, make, build, design, and care about the things we make.

Today, your family gets to practice being craftsmen!

A NOTE ABOUT THE STAMPING TOOLS

We have two leather stamping kits for all 30 families, so the stamps will be shared throughout the weekend. Don't feel like you have to finish your leather piece right away! Take your time, and look for an opportunity during the weekend when a stamping kit is available. You can work on your design, choose your letters and symbols, and then come back to the craft when the tools are free.

The goal isn't to rush. Take your time creating something meaningful for your family and enjoy the process of creating together!

Parents: Please keep the stamping tools to the designated craft area when your family is finished so another family can use them.

Together, create a leather piece that represents your family.

You can stamp:

- Your family name and Psalm 19:1-2
- A meaningful word - Faith, Love, Abide, Serve, Joy, Hope
- A symbol - cross, heart, star, leaf, etc.
- Your own combination of words and symbols



There isn't one “right” design. Be creative and make something your family will enjoy seeing and remembering.

PLAN BEFORE YOU STAMP

Take a few minutes to talk as a family.

- What do we want our leather piece to say?
- What word describes something we want our family to be known for?
- What symbol represents our family?
- What has God created that inspires us?

STAMP YOUR LEATHER

Place your leather piece on the hard stamping surface.

1. Place the stamp where you want the impression.
2. Hold the stamp straight up and down.
3. Give the top of the stamp a firm tap with the hammer.
4. Lift the stamp straight up.

Tip: You want a firm impression, but you don't need to pound extremely hard.

IMPORTANT: Adults should supervise the hammering, especially with younger children. Little ones can help choose the stamps and hold the leather while an adult does the actual striking.

LOOK AT WHAT YOU MADE

When everyone is finished, take a minute to look at your family's creation.

Ask: What does this tell us about our family?

Then ask: What can the things we create teach us about the One who created us?

God's creation displays His craftsmanship. When we create something with skill, care, creativity, and purpose, we get a tiny glimpse of what it means that we were made in the image of a Creator.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

As you go through the rest of the weekend, slow down and notice craftsmanship.

- Look at a tree.
- Look at the stars.
- Look at an animal.
- Look at another person's creativity.
- Look at something your child has made.

- Ask: “What does this show me about the God who made it?”

God is a Craftsman.
I am His creation.
I was created to create.