Dear Friends,

I have been doing a lot of thinking lately about passing faith to my kids. Raising a spiritually strong family doesn’t happen by accident. Faith is caught more than taught. With that in mind, I have been thinking about our daily times and special times with my kids. I got to thinking, if I am the primary faith shaper in my children’s lives, how am I reflecting God’s love in my daily life? I quickly realized I need to be more vocal and intentional about my relationship with God. So here are the positive changes I have made this year. I list them to tell of the amazing things God has done in my life this year through small simple changes.

1. Listening to the Bible daily. I love the Daily Audio Bible app and/or podcast.
3. Talking about where I see God and giving my kids the chance to do the same.
4. Praying before bedtime with my kids and blessing them before they leave for school.

Giving these things a higher priority has brought us so much joy. We are noticing and giving God thanks for the many ways God blesses us each and every day. Living with holy joy!

Lisa Kammerer
Associate in Ministry

What is a Family Gratitude Journal?
A family gratitude journal is simply a daily journal that you use as a family to capture the unique things you are thankful for each day. Every day each person in your family should write down or draw a picture of something they are grateful for. There is nothing too big or too small to be written down. There are only two rules to a family gratitude journal.
1. All journal entries must be positive.
2. You can only list something you are grateful for once.

How do I start a Family Gratitude Journal?
All you need is a pen and a journal. Your journal can be as simple as a spiral notebook or as elaborate as a family decorated journal. The most important thing is to select something that you and your family can be excited to write in. Next pick a spot to keep the journal that is easily accessible for the whole family. Once a week gather the family to read the entries.

Why?
To acknowledge and give thanks to God for the many ways He blesses us each and every day. Living with holy joy!

This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network for use by families and local congregations. For more ideas about how you can pass on faith in your homes go to: http://www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/YouthFamilyResources.asp
Here are some fun ways to celebrate the start of your summer of family fun.

- Ice cream for breakfast
- Run through a Welcome Summer Banner
- An outdoor movie and s’mores
- Buy a book for a family summer read
- Greet kids with balloons, cupcakes or silly string
- Go shopping for summer or vacation items
- A surprise activity (build up the suspense and wonder all week)
- Fill a piece of poster board with ideas of things you want to do and people you want be sure to visit this summer

**Did you know?**

You can mail things under 13 oz without a box? You can write an address on them, stick on stamps, and mail them! Cards are nice for special occasions, but why stop there? You can mail things like a ball, Frisbee, flip flop, ping pong paddle, pack of cards, message in a water bottle, an Easter egg, a small pillow. The possibilities are endless! Send some encouragement and fun!

- Go through the drive through and buy lunch for the person behind you
  - Write a letter to someone
- Bake cookies or brownies and take them to the police, fire station, or library
- Buy a bouquet of flowers and give away each flower one at a time
- Leave a thank you note in a public bathroom for the person who cleans it
- Fill Easter eggs and leave an Easter egg hunt for someone (especially fun when it is not Easter)
- **Involve a family for dinner**
- Make small bags with candy and add a note that says “thank you for serving me today!” Hand these out to people who help your family today.
- Write and send a note to a military member who is deployed
- **Leave an extra big tip**
- Call your church and find out how you can meet a need
- **Let someone go in front of you in line**
- Bring food or needed supplies to a local food bank
- Make cupcakes and surprise someone
- Have a lemonade stand or garage sale to raise money for your favorite charity
- **Hand out cold water bottles to people working outside on a hot day**
  - Pick up trash at a park
  - Go through items at your house to donate
- Bring flowers or cards to a nursing home
  - Use your talents to help someone
- **Find and meet a volunteer opportunity in your community**