

The Family Forum

Growing Together in Faith and Family Life

April 2011

From My House To Yours

I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full.
- John 10:10

That is exactly what this newsletter is all about - experiencing the full life that Christ spoke of, that He died for, and that He rose for. Then living that full life out in our families, and being a strong and positive witness to the world around us.

Let's make a promise to Christ and to our families to grab hold of that full life and never let His love and sacrifice for us return void.

I hoped to publish these newsletters until June, but as I look at our family calendar I know that life is very full and gets even more full in the coming months.

Full life for me means finishing up a [book](#) I started years ago in hopes of seeing it published.

This [book](#) shares our stillbirth story and reaches out to others who experience the loss of a baby. Please pray for the book to go where God intends, and pray for those who grieve in the loss of a wee one.

Full life also means my first missions trip! At the end of April I will be travelling with a team to Dominican Republic to help at a Children's Health Care Centre run by [Transformation House](#). I'd love to send you all an update on the trip when we get back in May!

Life is always very full with day-to-day family life. Soccer schedules will start soon and then summer vacation and maybe school or work for me in the fall.

These are just the things I can see. I know there are many things coming that I cannot even



glimpse right now.

As you celebrate Easter and head into the warmer weather months, may you live life to the full, whatever that life looks like. May Christ's love and sacrifice for you return abundant and overflowing to Him.

Feel free to visit my blog:
annasklar.wordpress.com

HAPPY EASTER!

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Connection Points - Ideas For Building Community

MEN - Josh Sklar

The ice is melting, the snow is disappearing, and the sun is making its triumphant return. After a long winter of hibernating (and putting on a few extra pounds) it is time to get back outside and get moving. Why not take the time to run, join a team, and get active again this spring? It can be hard to keep going and stay motivated, so make it a group effort and team up to get your health plans rolling. When there are two or more of you with the same goals of staying in shape, you are much more likely to keep at it. I would love to share more but I have to go dig out my rugby boots for the season kick off in 6 weeks. Cheers!



WOMEN - Amy Phillips

Plan a weekend away with the girls! Perhaps you know of a great concert coming to a city near you or maybe someone you know owns a camp that needs to be opened up for the spring season. Maybe you have a friend who has recently moved to another town and would love a visit from her "old friends". Another great opportunity would be to attend a retreat with some of your favourite pals. All Nations Church (my church) puts on a fantastic retreat in the Muskokas every May (check out the details at allnationschurch.ca - click on the Women's Ministry Link). Be inspired, ladies, 'cause friendship is worth it!



FAMILIES - Anna Sklar

There's nothing like a good old-fashioned Easter egg hunt!

Invite over some other families you know who may not have anyone around to help them celebrate this special holiday.

If the weather is warm enough, have the Easter egg hunt outside!

Along with hiding candy or chocolate eggs, how about hiding special Easter symbols in plastic eggs? Maybe include a blurb about the meaning of the special symbol? Here's 3 examples—a cross (where Jesus died), a rock (for the tomb where Jesus was buried) and an empty egg (for the empty tomb). Happy hunting!



Contact Us

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Family Library

Build your library at home with some of the books highlighted in our [Store](#) on our [site](#)!

Please Note: This will be the last edition of The Family Forum newsletter!

It has been wonderful to connect with you and share ideas and resources for your family!

I hope you are encouraged in your faith and family life. God has great things planned for you! Blessings, Anna

Health - Drinking Enough Water?

We all know that water is crucial to maintaining the health of our bodies. It is often hard to remember to get in 8 glasses of the good stuff every day, but it is important that we try. Children need a little less water than adults, but they still need a few glasses every day to keep their bodies running and growing.

Milk and 100% juices are among the better substitutes for water. Cocktail or punch juices, caffeinated beverages and pop are among the least healthy substitutes.

Try sprucing up your water with some frozen berries, orange slices, lemon and lime wedges, or mint sprigs.

I mapped out a plan a few years ago to get in my daily dose of water. I always helps me to map things out. When I stray from the plan (which happens often!), getting back on track is easier with the plan.

Here's my plan for getting in 8 glasses:

- Glass of water when I wake up.
- Glass of skim milk at breakfast.
- Glass of water and herbal tea throughout the morning - no sugar or milk in the tea.
- Glass of water at lunch.
- Glass of water or herbal tea throughout the afternoon.

- Glass of water or 100% juice at dinner.
 - Glass of water or herbal tea after dinner.
- Here's to pure, refreshing water every day!



Family Activity



Many summer camps offer special weeks for the whole family—Family Camp—how about trying it out this summer?

Each member of your clan will enjoy this unique atmosphere. There are times for family togetherness, times for age-specific activities, times for spiritual growth (at Christian camps), times for hanging out with friends, and times for crazy fun.

Check out the summer camps near you!

Family Favourite Recipe - Resurrection Rolls



1 can refrigerated crescent roll dough
8 large marshmallows
¼ cup melted butter
Cinnamon
Sugar



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Give each child one triangle-shaped section of crescent roll. This represents the tomb. Each child takes one marshmallow which represents the body of Christ. Dip the marshmallow in the butter and roll in cinnamon and sugar mixture. This represents the oils and spices the body was anointed with upon burial. Lay the marshmallow on the dough and carefully wrap it around the marshmallow (not like a typical crescent roll up, but bring the sides up and seal the marshmallow inside). Make sure all seams are pinched together well - sealed tightly like Jesus' tomb (otherwise the marshmallow will "ooze" out of the seams). Bake about 12-15 minutes. Cool. Break open the "tomb" and it will be empty!

- Adapted from Allrecipes.com

Finances - Personal Balance Sheet

Every year around tax time I also make up a Personal Balance Sheet for our family. This gives us a big-picture idea of how we're doing financially, and gives us a tool to compare the state of our finances year after year.

At the beginning of each year statements are sent out to those who have RRSPs, RESPs, investments, mortgages, etc.

Take those documents and make a Personal Balance Sheet for your family.

Start with your Debts—list them along with their amounts. Include mortgage, credit cards, personal loans, etc. Total them up and mark beside each one Good or Bad.

Is this a good debt (school loan, mortgage, something that has improved your circumstances and can be viewed as an investment

in the long-term)?

Or is this a bad debt (something that could have been avoided, splurge items or impulse shopping)?

Hopefully you have more Good debts than Bad, but if not just keep paying them off. There is always hope for the future!

Now move on to your Assets—list them along with their amounts. Include things like RRSPs, RESPs, investments, house, vehicles, savings, etc. Total them up.

You now have a general picture of how you are doing financially. I hope this encourages you and I hope the picture you see is better than you thought! If not, be encouraged that you are learning and growing in this area.

Keep a booklet of these personal balance

sheets and compare them year to year to see how you are doing financially.

You may notice areas you need to improve, or you may notice you are in a better financial state year after year.

Now on to those taxes.... Eek!



Marriage - Date Nights



When was the last time you and your significant other enjoyed a date night together? Has it been a while? Or maybe it was just last week?

Date nights are so important to the health of a relationship. Spending intentional time together and making each other a priority is crucial to keeping the home fires burning.

Date nights come in all shapes and sizes. And they definitely don't have to be at night. Maybe I should have given this article a different title! Dates can be enjoyed at home, out on the town, even playing at the park with your children!

Often we assume dates mean hiring a babysitter, and spending lots of money on dinner or a movie or both. Many of us don't have the money to spend on these weekly outings, so they don't happen. And then we're told that date nights should happen once a week - that just makes things seem a little more hopeless!

Let's think outside the box when it comes to date nights, shall we?

What if dates looked like a lunch-hour walk, or bringing your packed lunch to a local park?

What if dinner and dancing looked like a spin around the kitchen in the middle of cooking a meal TOGETHER? Any music will do, even tunes of your own creation!

What if going to a movie looked like taking turns picking a video, popping some popcorn after the kids are in bed and sitting on the couch TOGETHER, cuddled up and holding hands?

Do you like board games or card games? Make a night of it and discover how to play a new game TOGETHER.

You may have noticed I highlighted the word TOGETHER a few times in this article. That's what matters most when it comes to dates—that you are together, that you're intentionally putting one another first, making each other a priority. It matters that you are fully present and give your undivided time and attention, even if you've got a movie playing.

Dates can happen anywhere, and if all you have is a few moments while your kids are playing at the park, make those few moments truly special. Even a gaze and a smile across a crowded playground can go a long way!



Relationship Challenge:

Brainstorm ways to make dates happen in your relationship. Make sure you think outside the box and have fun with the ideas!

Grab a calendar and start writing down your dates IN PEN. If you need babysitters, call now and book them. Make this calendar marking a monthly ritual in your relationship.

Be on the lookout for spontaneous dates—like dancing in the kitchen or a lunch-hour walk!

Marriage Prayer:

Lord, thank You for marriage. Help us to never take our marriage for granted. Help us to think of ways to make each other feel special and loved. Help us to make intentional time for one another, even right at home or with our children in tow. May we always find ways to put each other first and make our marriage a priority. May we always have fun together and enjoy each other's company! May our lives be filled with many good memories of our time together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Faith At Home - Leading Kids to Christ & Easter Ideas

What better way to end this series of newsletters at Easter time than by talking about Leading Kids to Christ?! This most amazing event in their lives could happen anywhere, anytime. It might be with you, it might be at camp, it might be at church. Your children might be 4, 14, or 54 when they give their lives to Christ.

Whatever the age, whatever the circumstance, celebrate the event with your children! Angels rejoice when someone gives their lives to Christ—let's rejoice with them!

How about highlighting that day on the calendar every year and having a different kind of birthday celebration? Give your children a special present that will help them grow in their faith—and don't forget the cake as well!

The decision could come at any time, and God can use us to lead our children through the decision. Our older son made the decision at church, then repeated the process with me a few more times just to make sure! Our younger son made the decision as we read a devotion at bed time. It was just so natural for them, and it came from their hearts. I am so blessed to share those experiences with them.

Don't worry about making mistakes, God can use even our most feeble efforts! One thing to remember is that it DOES have to be their choice.

Here are a few handy verses to know:

1. God loves you – John 3:16
2. You have done wrong things (sinned) – Romans 3:23
3. God says that those wrong things must be punished – Romans 6:23
4. God sent Jesus to take the punishment for us – Isaiah 53:5
5. Tell God you are sorry for the wrong things you have done – I John 1:9
6. Ask Jesus to be in charge of your life and be your Saviour – John 3:16-17

Family Prayer

Lord, I trust You with my children. I trust that You are working in their hearts always to bring them closer to You. They are really Your children, and I thank You for giving me the blessing of parenting them. Lead them to follow You in Your perfect timing, and may they follow you always. In Jesus' name, Amen

Preschool & Elementary Easter Idea:

Jelly Bean Prayer

Red is for the blood He gave
Green is for the grass He made
Yellow is for the sun so bright
Orange is for the edge of night
Black is for the sins we made
White is for the grace He gave
Purple is for the hour of sorrow
Pink is for our new tomorrow



A bag full of jelly beans colourful and sweet
Is a prayer, is a promise, is a special treat
May the joy of Christ's resurrection
Fill your heart and bless your life.

Teen Idea:

There's nothing like a sunrise stroll on Easter morning. Invite your teen to take an early-morning walk with you on Easter Sunday and watch the sun come up together. Encourage your teen to tell you the good things in their lives and thank God for them together. Finish it off by treating them to breakfast before church. Make sure you set your alarm!

In The Garden - Starting A Garden

Let's keep it simple...

1. Remove all weeds
2. Turn over the soil.
3. Add triple mix if your soil is in need of a little help.

Notice how much sun and shade your garden area gets in a day.

Every garden needs "bones" or a framework to build on. These are the trees and shrubs that add Winter interest. Work with existing ones if you can.

Find a local nursery where they supply plants with labels that have instructions on them. Save these instructions until you find out what works and what doesn't in your garden. Most



nurseries are very friendly and will help you find alternatives for your area if a certain plant is not available.

Impress someone when you remember the names of your plants as you show them to your friends!

Remember to have fun in your garden.

I always feel like God has allowed me to share the wonder of His creation every time I see a new bud in my garden or hear a hummingbird buzzing by. These are special opportunities to talk to the children in our lives about God's love for us and How He cares for His creation.

- Lynne Collier ganaraskagardens.com

Reaching Out

Many charities host walks, runs or bicycle trips to raise funds in the spring and summer. You don't have to look far to discover one of these events in your area.

Choose a charity that holds special significance for your family and commit to helping them in their fundraising efforts.

Your family will be participating in a worthy cause, exercising together and enjoying the warm weather! That sounds like a wonderful way to spend a few hours!



APRIL 2011

Feel free to use this calendar for your family - hang it up to keep track of schedules, appointments, anything!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 April Fools Day	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Palm Sunday	18	19	20	21	22 Good Friday Earth Day	23
24 Easter	25 Easter Monday	26	27	28	29	30