

The Family Forum

Growing Together in Faith and Family Life

November 2010

From My House To Yours

There are times when life seems to bring such blessing and such trial—all at the same time!

We experienced sickness, online identity theft, massive home renovations, and rapid vehicle deterioration in October.

We also experienced healing, the return of stolen finances, completion of the upper floor of our house, hosting a Thanksgiving dinner that blessed us at least as much as those in attendance, a Halloween food drive that brought in over 2000 lbs of food, and overall a much greater sense of God's purpose and vision in our lives.

There will always be the bad and the good in our lives, pain and healing, sadness and joy, trial and blessing.

The question is what do we do with it? How do we look at it?

In my own life I know that when I am faced with the not-so-good I tend to retreat, become discouraged, try to fix everything and everyone, and it is hard for me to see the good.

But when I look, when I search God out, He always gives me a glimpse of what He is doing, and He always shows me some of the good in my life. There is always good. A smile from my husband, laughter from my children, a kind email from a friend, or the beauty of nature are simple yet wonderful examples of the goodness of God.

And when I'm having a really rough day, I am reminded that tomorrow is another day, a new beginning.

November is a totally different month—who knows what will come of it? On the 11th we



Our Advent Candle Holder

remember those who have fought for our hope and our future in battles that I can never imagine. So much good has come from so much bad.

One thing I love about November is the start of Advent. (Read more about it in our Faith At Home section.) Advent has become an anticipated tradition in our family as we prepare our hearts and homes for the coming of Christ—now THAT is always a good thing!
- Anna Sklar

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Family Library

Find our monthly Amazon.ca picks at thefamilyforum.ca

We create sample orders of about \$25 - that means free shipping for you!

Discover our [Store](#) on our [site!](#)

Connection Points - Ideas For Building Community

MEN - Josh Sklar

As I sit to write this I am looking out on a blustery autumn day. These autumn days will soon turn into winter and for those of us living in the North, that means snow!

Why not get a few guys together before that happens and help out a few older folks by getting them ready for winter?

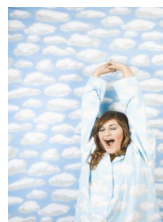
Clean their gutters, put away their summer gear, turn their gardens (or whatever it is you do for gardens) and weather strip their windows to save heat and money.

Finish off your day with a bite to eat & enjoy the feeling of making a difference in someone's life...



WOMEN - Amy Phillips

Remember Sleepover Parties? Invite a group of girlfriends over for a night of movie watching, pyjama lounging, tummy filling fun. Here's the plan - one house, no kids (or husbands), a line up of "chic" flicks, comfy jammies, sleeping bags and everyone's favourite snack foods. To balance out the expense each woman brings either a movie or food item (depending on how many women you have attending, a small group of two or three might need to bring both). Invite your friends to show up in the evening with their pyjamas on. In the morning, you can keep it simple with a self serve, continental breakfast. It's a no brainer!



FAMILIES - Anna Sklar

The Santa Claus parade will happen in many towns and cities this month.

If you have an opportunity to help in preparing a nativity float or some other role in sharing the birth of Jesus with bystanders - great!

If not, why not invite a family or two to join you in the audience.

Enjoy a warm cup of hot chocolate together before or after (or during!) the parade, either at someone's house or a local coffee shop.



Contributions Needed!

Here's what we need for the December issue:

- Your Family Favourite Recipe
- Connection Point for FAMILIES (about 100-125 words)
- Your idea for Reaching Out (about 100-125 words)
- Couples for Marriage on pg 2 (about 200 words each)

Deadline is November 15th

Email contributions or ask for more info:

anna@thefamilyforum.ca

Contact Us & Subscribe

Email: anna@thefamilyforum.ca

Website: thefamilyforum.ca

Newsletter Archives:

thefamilyforum1.wordpress.com

Health - Whole Grains

For the next couple of months we'll read articles contributed by a Registered Dietician in Ohio - she loves to encourage families towards better health!

Grains are referred to as "the staff of life" for their historically vital role in our diets. Grocery stores offer many choices. What's best? Simply put: 100% whole grains. Whole wheat flour needs to be listed as the first ingredient. You also want to avoid breads with high fructose corn syrup and partially hydrogenated oils/trans fats, as these are unhealthy ingredients.

Whole grains are better sources of fibre and

other important nutrients, such as selenium, potassium and magnesium than refined grains.

A high-fibre diet helps you feel full longer after meals, aids in elimination, and helps lower your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

For better health, choose whole grains which include barley, brown rice, wild rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), millet, oatmeal, and whole-wheat foods. These include breads, pitas, bagels, pasta, crackers, waffles, and pancakes. My family enjoys pancakes that both taste great and include wholesome and nutritious ingredients.

I use half whole wheat pancake mix with half buttermilk pancake mix, and add blueberry fruit spread for natural sweetness, great flavour, and added nutrition. Enjoy how good it can taste to eat more healthfully!

- Wendy Lempner, R.D.



Family Activity



Family members will soon begin writing out their Christmas gift lists.

As you all make your lists and check them twice, ask everyone to add a very special item to their lists. Encourage your family to think of others who are in need and how they can bless those people with a gift this holiday season.

Help each other think of ways to cross those special items off the gift lists this Christmas!

Family Favourite Recipe - Crockpot Beef Stew

*½ cup Italian Dressing
2 lb (1 kg) stewing beef
1 large onion, chopped
3 large carrots, chopped
2 stalk celery, chopped
1½ lb (750g) potatoes, peeled, cut into large chunks (about 4 cups)
1 small can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can reduced-sodium beef broth*



Put all ingredients into the crock pot, placing the meat on top. Cook on low for 8-10 hours, or on high for 4-6 hours.

Ideas for sides: Whole grain rolls or salad.

Freeze leftovers in single servings to enjoy this warm, nutritious meal again!

Finances - Creating a Budget Part 3: Income

For the last two months, we've been listing all the money that is going out of our households - our variable and fixed expenses.

Maybe that was a bad-news-first scenario for you, or maybe you are doing better than you thought. Either way, you should have a good estimate of how much money is going out every month. Be encouraged that you are taking some great steps in developing a solid plan for money usage in your family.

Now let's keep going with the momentum and figure out how much money is coming in every month. Hopefully this will be good news for you!

Write down all the income that comes into your household and the dates the money comes in.

Record your net income (take-home pay after

taxes). Also record any baby bonuses or other supplemental income. Use our [blank budget worksheet](#) if you like.

Be as accurate as you can.

If you have automatic deductions from your paycheques, double-check you have recorded those amounts and the dates they are deducted in your expenses. Then make sure you add them to your income totals so you know exactly how much money your family is making.

You need a really accurate picture of your money situation in order to gain confidence, realize any areas that are out of balance, and bring a budget together that will be a blessing to your family.

Next month we're going to take a break from creating our budgets. We'll look at ideas for

decreasing Christmas spending!

In January we'll get back to the budget as we look at what percentages should be spent on different budget categories. I'm excited to look at debt reduction, savings accumulation, kids and money, and much more with you in the new year!

Click on the photo → to read, print or download our Blank Budget Worksheet.

Also find it at:

thefamilyforum.ca

We'll update the worksheet as we move ahead with the budget in the new year.

Marriage: Opposites Attract Part 1

Living With An Extrovert...

My husband recently took a test that scored him a 95% on the scale of extrovertedness. He loves to be the centre of attention, he loves to be around people, and he loves to speak his mind. He absolutely loves an audience.

Then there's me. I would most likely score a 95% on the scale of introvertedness if I were to take the same test. I long for time alone, love the quiet, need a few lessons in conflict resolution, and avoid attention at all costs.

There are two ways I could look at our situation - an extreme introvert living with an extreme extrovert. I could try to change him and be miserable with trying to keep up with his social schedule, or I could appreciate the differences in us and seek a balance that works for our social needs.

I tried the ideas mentioned first, but to no avail. Josh was quite happy with himself (as he should be), and I was exhausted from all the mingling.

After 11 years of marriage we've learned more and more about loving each other for who we are, and trying to meet each other where we're at. I am free to stay home if I'm mingled-out, and he's free to sing in the grocery store. I remember when we first

married, he would grab my hand as we did a few groceries, start belting out a big-band tune and twirl me around the aisle. It was more than I could handle most days, but he learned to tone it down, and I learned to live in the moment, red cheeks and all.

Last spring we had reason to visit a medical clinic, and as soon as we walked into the small waiting room, I could feel the inspiration building in Josh. A little girl was trying to keep herself amused in a very boring atmosphere, and she was singing a song and dancing around. He immediately started singing and dancing along. He had the whole waiting room laughing. And I stood beside him and smiled. It took me back to when I first met him - I was a receptionist at a chiropractor's office and he was a patient. Every time he came in for an appointment he'd have everyone laughing within minutes. I remember sitting behind my desk, pulling up his file on the computer, and checking to see if he was my age.

One of the reasons I love that man is for his freedom. And I no longer want to change him to make life "easier" and less "embarrassing" for me. I just want to love him, as best I can, with all I've got. Do I look forward to dancing in the grocery aisles? Some days... I'm getting there...

- Anna Sklar

Josh and I will be celebrating our 11th anniversary on November 20. Recently we wrote about the pros and cons of being married to a total opposite. We had fun with writing the article, but it was way too long to include all of it in just one shot. So we'll share it in two parts. I'll go first!



November 20, 1999

Marriage Prayer:

Lord, You have made every person unique. Help us to always appreciate the differences in one another. Help us to always see the good in our spouse and others you send our way to share our days. Help us to keep a list of positive qualities instead of a record of wrongs. Help us to always remember why we walked down the aisle in the first place and never let go of that.

Faith At Home - Celebrating Advent—Starting on November 28th



Josh, Uncle Ben & the boys - daily Advent reading

I didn't have the slightest idea what Advent was or what it meant until I married my husband, who was a youth pastor at the time.

Just in case you are in a similar situation, Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ, and is celebrated during the 4 weeks before Christmas. Advent always starts on the last Sunday of November, and traditionally a candle is lit every Sunday leading up to Christmas. Each candle represents something wonderful and sacred. Different resources focus on different aspects of Advent as they relate to the candles.

Back to our Advent story - The church where he worked in 1999 started lighting candles every Sunday around the time of Christmas

and I thought, "That's nice." They handed out Advent devotions and I tried to read through them every year. My husband made a gorgeous wooden candle holder for our third Advent together - just after Josiah was born.

Every year I would learn a little more about Advent. As our boys grew, I gathered more ideas and resources for Advent, and I knew this could be a really special time of remembering Christ within our family.

The anticipation grows every year, and this year I am truly giddy with it. I am so excited for the family time that is coming, for the traditions we have created, for the fun we have as we learn more about Christ.

There are too many resources out there for me to share all at once, but check out our [Store](#) on our [site](#) for a few ideas! - Anna Sklar

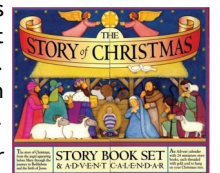
Family Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Jesus. Thank You for Advent. We pray that this special time of preparation will truly take root in us as we approach the holiday season this year. May we come to joyfully anticipate the coming of Christ in our hearts, our families, our homes, and our world this Christmas.

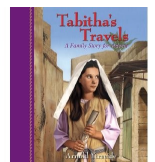
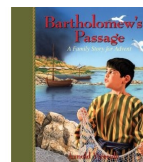
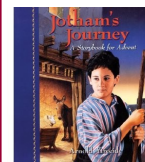
Preschool Idea:

This resource contains 24 mini board books that tell the Christmas story. Each book turns into an ornament once it's read.

Find more resources for all ages in our [Store](#).



Elementary-Age Idea: Click on photos for info



Teen Idea:

"This DVD contains 25 mini-documentaries (3 to 5 minutes each) that take viewers on an entertaining yet informative journey through the Advent season." Click on the image to discover more! Or ask for it at your local christian bookstore.



Green Living - Weatherproofing Your Home

There is no doubt the cold weather is coming. Here are a few ideas for making your home a little more cozy and shaving a few dollars off your utility bills this winter!

- Conduct your own draft search by lighting a candle on a windy day and inspecting for leaks
- Wrap hot water tanks in a thermal blanket
- Insulate hot water pipes
- Seal outlets/light switches with foam gaskets
- Seal gaps around windows/doors with caulking
- Seal windows with shrink film
- Seal wall gaps with expanding foam insulation

- Weather-stripping & sweeps for exterior doors
- Replace air filter on furnace
- Place area rugs on cold floors
- Plant pine or fir trees on the north side of your home to serve as windbreaks

- Anna Sklar



Reaching Out



Remembrance Day brings a special time of remembering loved ones lost to war, of reflecting on the realities of conflict, and of focusing on the hope we have for our future.

Many still suffer at the hands of persecution in our world today. And many Christians suffer for their faith. Let's do what we can to support them in their efforts.

The Voice of the Martyrs is "dedicated solely to serving persecuted Christians worldwide."

They have a [monthly newsletter for adults](#), a [quarterly newsletter for children](#) (both free), [guidelines for writing letters to prisoners](#), a [prayer map](#), and much more on their site.

<http://www.persecution.net/>

NOVEMBER 2010 Unique Holidays *Enjoy this calendar in your family - hang it up to use for schedules, appointments, anything!*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Family Stories Month	Family Caregivers Month	Roasting Month	Peanut Butter Lovers Month	Adoption Month	Aviation History Month	Inspirational Role Models Month
→Give Wildlife a Break Week	1 All Saints Day Give Up Your 'Shoulds' Day	2 Cookie Monster Day	3 Sandwich Day	4 Men Make Dinner Day Use Your Common Sense Day	5	6 Saxophone Day
7 →Pursuit of Happiness Week Daylight Savings - Fall Back	8 Parents As Teachers Day	9 Young Reader's Day	10	11 Guinness World Record Day Remembrance Day	12 Domino Day	13 World Kindness Day
14 World Diabetes Day →Hunger & Homeless Awareness Week →Dear Santa Letter Week	15 I Love To Write Day Bundt (Pan) Day	16	17 Homemade Bread Day	18 Mickey Mouse Day	19	20 Family Volunteer Day
21 →Bible Week →Game & Puzzle Week	22	23	24 Celebrate Your Unique Talent Day	25	26 Buy Nothing Day	27 Day of Listening
28 Advent Begins!	29 Electronic Greetings Day	30 Stay Home Because You're Well Day				