

themes for family and friends day at church

themes for family and friends day at church serve as a central element in organizing memorable and meaningful events that foster community spirit and spiritual growth. Selecting the right theme can inspire participation, create a welcoming atmosphere, and communicate the core values of the church to attendees. Whether the goal is to celebrate unity, encourage fellowship, or emphasize faith-based teachings, well-chosen themes help guide the activities, decorations, and messages throughout the day. This article explores a variety of creative and impactful themes for family and friends day at church, offering ideas that cater to diverse congregational needs and preferences. Additionally, practical tips on how to implement these themes effectively are discussed to ensure a successful and engaging event for all participants. The following sections will cover traditional themes, contemporary ideas, seasonal inspirations, and ways to incorporate biblical principles into the day's programming.

- Traditional Themes for Family and Friends Day at Church
- Contemporary and Creative Theme Ideas
- Seasonal and Holiday-Based Themes
- Incorporating Biblical Messages into Themes
- Tips for Implementing Themes Successfully

Traditional Themes for Family and Friends Day at Church

Traditional themes for family and friends day at church often emphasize core Christian values such as love, unity, and fellowship. These themes resonate deeply with congregations that appreciate timeless messages and classic celebrations. Incorporating familiar concepts can enhance the sense of belonging and spiritual connection among church members and their guests.

Unity in Christ

The theme of "Unity in Christ" focuses on bringing together families and friends under the shared belief in Jesus Christ. It highlights the importance of community, harmony, and mutual support within the church. This theme can be expressed through collective worship, group prayers, and collaborative

activities that reinforce unity.

Faith, Family, and Fellowship

This theme combines the three foundational elements of church life: faith in God, the importance of family bonds, and fellowship among believers. It encourages participants to strengthen their relationships with both God and each other through worship services, family-oriented programs, and social gatherings.

Celebrating God's Blessings

Focusing on gratitude, this theme invites attendees to recognize and celebrate the blessings God has bestowed upon their families and friendships. It is ideal for events centered around thanksgiving, praise, and testimonies of faith, fostering an atmosphere of joy and appreciation.

Contemporary and Creative Theme Ideas

Modern churches often seek innovative themes that appeal to younger generations and diverse congregations. Contemporary themes can incorporate current cultural trends, interactive elements, and engaging visuals to make family and friends day more dynamic and inclusive.

Building Bridges, Not Walls

This theme emphasizes reconciliation, inclusivity, and outreach. It encourages the church community to break down barriers and welcome all families and friends, regardless of background. Activities might include community service projects, intergenerational dialogues, and multicultural celebrations.

Rooted in Love, Growing in Grace

Highlighting spiritual growth and nurturing relationships, this theme uses the metaphor of a growing tree to illustrate how faith and love develop over time. It can incorporate nature-based decorations, workshops on personal and spiritual development, and family bonding exercises.

Joyful Noise: Celebrating Togetherness

This lively theme centers on music, worship, and celebration. It encourages families and friends to express their joy through singing, dancing, and

creative performances. It is especially suitable for churches with vibrant music ministries seeking to engage all age groups.

Seasonal and Holiday-Based Themes

Aligning family and friends day with seasons or holidays can enhance the relevance and excitement of the event. Seasonal themes often evoke a festive spirit and provide opportunities for themed decorations, food, and activities that correspond with the time of year.

Harvest of Blessings

Typically held in the fall, this theme focuses on gratitude and the fruits of God's provision. It can include harvest-themed decor, food drives, and thanksgiving services, creating a warm and abundant atmosphere for fellowship.

Spring Renewal and New Beginnings

Spring-themed events symbolize renewal, growth, and hope. This theme encourages families and friends to reflect on spiritual renewal and the promise of new beginnings, often incorporating floral decorations, baptism celebrations, and outdoor activities.

Christmas: The Gift of Family and Faith

Christmas-themed family and friends day events emphasize the joy of Christ's birth and the importance of togetherness. Activities may include nativity plays, gift exchanges, and special worship services that highlight the spirit of giving and love.

Incorporating Biblical Messages into Themes

Integrating scripture into the themes for family and friends day at church strengthens the spiritual foundation of the event. Biblical messages provide guidance, inspiration, and a deeper connection to faith that resonate with attendees on a personal level.

Love One Another

Based on the commandment in John 13:34, this theme centers on the Christian call to love and serve one another. It encourages acts of kindness, family support, and community outreach as expressions of faith in action.

The Family of God

This theme draws from passages that describe the church as God's family, such as Ephesians 2:19. It reinforces the idea that all believers are united as brothers and sisters in Christ, fostering inclusiveness and spiritual kinship.

Walking in Faith Together

Focusing on collective spiritual journeys, this theme reflects themes found in Hebrews 10:24-25 about encouraging one another. It inspires families and friends to support each other's growth through prayer, study, and fellowship.

Tips for Implementing Themes Successfully

Choosing a meaningful theme is just the first step toward a successful family and friends day at church. Proper implementation ensures that the theme resonates throughout the event and engages all attendees.

Aligning Activities with the Theme

All planned activities should reflect and reinforce the chosen theme. Whether it is through worship, games, workshops, or community service, consistency helps create a memorable and cohesive experience.

Decorations and Visual Elements

Decorations should embody the theme's message and atmosphere. Use colors, symbols, and materials that complement the theme and create an inviting environment. Visual cues can significantly enhance participant engagement.

Effective Communication

Promote the event and its theme clearly through church bulletins, announcements, and social media. Explain the significance of the theme to encourage enthusiasm and participation among families and friends.

Inclusive Planning

Engage a diverse planning committee that represents different age groups and backgrounds within the church. Inclusive planning ensures that the theme and activities appeal broadly and meet the needs of the entire congregation.

- Select a theme that reflects the church's mission and values
- Incorporate scripture and spiritual teachings into the event
- Plan activities that encourage interaction and bonding
- Use decorations and music to reinforce the theme
- Communicate clearly to maximize attendance and involvement

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some popular themes for Family and Friends Day at church?

Popular themes include "Faith, Family, and Fellowship," "Celebrating God's Love Together," "Building Stronger Bonds in Christ," "United in Faith and Friendship," and "A Day of Gratitude and Joy."

How can a theme enhance the experience of Family and Friends Day at church?

A theme helps create a focused and meaningful atmosphere, encourages participation, unites attendees around a common message, and guides decorations, activities, and sermons to reinforce the event's purpose.

What are some creative ideas for Family and Friends Day themes that include children?

Creative themes for children include "God's Little Disciples," "Walking in Jesus' Footsteps," "Family Fun in Faith," "Kids of the Kingdom," and "Growing Together in God's Love." These themes can be accompanied by engaging activities and crafts.

How can a church incorporate the theme into activities for Family and Friends Day?

The church can incorporate the theme through themed worship services, family games and competitions, group Bible studies, testimonial sharing, themed decorations, and community service projects that reflect the chosen theme.

What factors should be considered when choosing a

theme for Family and Friends Day at church?

Consider the church's mission and values, the demographics of attendees, the message the church wants to convey, inclusivity for all age groups, and how the theme can be practically integrated into activities and worship for a memorable event.

Additional Resources

1. *Faithful Bonds: Strengthening Family Ties Through Christ*

This book explores the importance of nurturing family relationships within a faith-based context. It offers practical advice on how families can grow closer by incorporating prayer, scripture, and shared worship into their daily lives. Ideal for Family and Friends Day, it encourages unity and mutual support grounded in Christian values.

2. *Friends in Christ: Building Lasting Spiritual Friendships*

Focusing on the power of friendship within the church community, this book highlights how spiritual friendships can provide encouragement, accountability, and joy. It includes stories, biblical examples, and activities designed to help church members deepen their connections. Perfect for celebrating the gift of friends during church events.

3. *Gathered Together: Celebrating Family and Fellowship in the Church*

This title emphasizes the significance of communal worship and fellowship in strengthening both family and church bonds. It offers reflections and discussion guides to inspire families and friends to come together in faith, support one another, and celebrate their shared spiritual journey.

4. *The Heart of Hospitality: Welcoming Families and Friends into God's Home*

Hospitality is a central theme in this book, which encourages readers to open their homes and hearts to others. It provides biblical insights and practical tips on how church members can create a welcoming environment for family, friends, and newcomers. This book is a wonderful resource for Family and Friends Day events focused on inclusion and warmth.

5. *Roots and Wings: Faith Lessons for Families and Friends*

This book combines inspiring stories and biblical teachings to help families and friends grow in faith together. It addresses challenges faced by modern families and offers guidance on nurturing spiritual growth in a loving environment. A great resource for church groups seeking to deepen their collective faith experience.

6. *Hand in Hand: Walking Together in Faith and Friendship*

Exploring the journey of faith as a shared experience, this book encourages families and friends to support each other through life's ups and downs. It includes prayers, devotionals, and activities designed to foster a sense of companionship and spiritual growth. Ideal for Family and Friends Day celebrations aiming to strengthen community ties.

7. Circle of Grace: Embracing God's Love in Family and Friendship

This uplifting book focuses on the theme of God's unconditional love as experienced through family and friendships. It offers reflections and practical advice on how to create loving, grace-filled relationships that mirror God's compassion. Perfect for inspiring church members to cultivate kindness and understanding.

8. Shared Joy: Celebrating Life's Blessings with Family and Friends

Highlighting the joy found in shared experiences, this book encourages families and friends to celebrate milestones and everyday blessings together. It provides ideas for meaningful gatherings, prayers of gratitude, and ways to make faith a joyful part of communal life. A fitting choice for Family and Friends Day festivities.

9. Faithful Families, Faithful Friends: Building a Christ-Centered Community

This book presents a blueprint for creating a supportive, Christ-centered community through strong family and friendship bonds. It combines scriptural teachings with practical strategies for fostering love, respect, and service among church members. An excellent guide for churches aiming to enhance their Family and Friends Day programs.

Themes For Family And Friends Day At Church

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Want to plan a Family and Friends Day at your church that's truly memorable and impactful, but feeling overwhelmed by the possibilities? Do you struggle to find a theme that resonates with all ages and backgrounds, while also aligning with your church's mission? Planning a successful event requires creativity, organization, and a clear vision. This ebook provides the tools and inspiration you need to create a meaningful and engaging Family and Friends Day that strengthens your church community.

"Celebrating Together: A Guide to Meaningful Family and Friends Day Themes"

Contents:

Introduction: The Importance of Family and Friends Day and Planning Strategies.

Chapter 1: Themes Based on Biblical Narratives: Exploring stories that resonate with families.

Chapter 2: Themes Focused on Community and Service: Highlighting unity and outreach.

Chapter 3: Themes Centered on Fun and Fellowship: Ideas for enjoyable activities for all ages.

Chapter 4: Themes Emphasizing Growth and Discipleship: Fostering spiritual growth within families.

Chapter 5: Practical Planning and Implementation: Budgeting, logistics, and volunteer coordination.

Conclusion: Making Family and Friends Day a Lasting Tradition.

Introduction: The Power of Connection and Shared Faith

Family and Friends Day at church is more than just a social gathering; it's a strategic opportunity to strengthen bonds within your congregation and reach out to the wider community. A well-planned event can foster a sense of belonging, encourage spiritual growth, and create lasting memories. However, many church leaders and event organizers struggle with the initial planning phase. Choosing the right theme is crucial; it sets the tone, inspires activities, and shapes the overall message. This guide provides a comprehensive framework for selecting and implementing impactful Family and Friends Day themes. We'll explore diverse options, offer practical advice, and empower you to create a celebration that truly reflects your church's values and mission.

Chapter 1: Themes Based on Biblical Narratives (SEO Keyword: Biblical Themes Family Day)

Drawing inspiration from powerful biblical narratives offers a rich foundation for your Family and Friends Day. These stories provide relatable characters, compelling plots, and timeless lessons that resonate with people of all ages and backgrounds. Consider these options:

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32): This classic story highlights the unconditional love of God and the joy of reconciliation. Activities could include role-playing, discussions about forgiveness, or creative expressions of gratitude.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21): This miracle demonstrates God's provision and abundance. You could organize a food drive, potluck, or community service project focused on feeding the hungry.

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37): This story emphasizes compassion, service, and reaching out to those in need. Consider partnering with a local charity or organizing a service project within the community.

The Story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50): This epic tale explores themes of perseverance, forgiveness, and God's faithfulness. Activities could include storytelling, dramatic presentations, or discussions about overcoming adversity.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20): This powerful mandate calls believers to share the Gospel with the world. You could incorporate a mission project, testimonies of global impact, or outreach initiatives.

Remember to adapt the chosen narrative to your specific audience and context. Engage visual aids, interactive elements, and age-appropriate activities to make the story come alive.

Chapter 2: Themes Focused on Community and Service (SEO Keyword: Community Service Church Events)

Building a strong sense of community is paramount to a thriving church. A Family and Friends Day centered on community and service can foster unity, collaboration, and a spirit of giving back.

"Serving Together": Organize a community cleanup, visit a local nursing home, prepare meals for the homeless, or partner with a local charity for a service project. This theme emphasizes the importance of collective action and shared responsibility.

"Celebrating Our Unity": Focus on showcasing the diversity and richness of your congregation. Include performances, food from different cultures, and testimonies from members representing various backgrounds.

"Building Bridges": This theme encourages reaching out to those outside the church community. Consider inviting local leaders, organizations, or individuals from different faiths to participate in the event.

"Celebrating Our Heritage": This theme could focus on the history of your church and the community it serves. You can incorporate historical displays, slideshows, or storytelling sessions.

Chapter 3: Themes Centered on Fun and Fellowship (SEO Keyword: Family Fun Church Activities)

While spiritual growth is crucial, don't underestimate the power of fun and fellowship. A Family and Friends Day should be enjoyable for people of all ages.

"Family Fun Fest": Organize games, bounce houses, face painting, carnival games, and other activities that appeal to children and adults.

"Talent Show Extravaganza": Encourage members to showcase their talents through singing, dancing, comedy acts, or instrumental performances.

"Outdoor Adventure Day": If weather permits, organize outdoor games, a picnic, or a hike.

"Game Day Extravaganza": Organize sports tournaments, board game competitions, or video game challenges.

"Family Movie Night": Screen a family-friendly movie followed by snacks and discussions.

Remember to ensure accessibility for all ages and abilities, and consider providing options for different interests.

Chapter 4: Themes Emphasizing Growth and Discipleship (SEO Keyword: Spiritual Growth Family)

Activities)

Family and Friends Day presents an exceptional opportunity to nurture spiritual growth within families.

"Growing in Faith Together": Focus on workshops, seminars, or discussions related to family discipleship, prayer, Bible study, or faith-based parenting.

"Building Strong Families": Offer sessions on communication skills, conflict resolution, or strengthening family bonds.

"Passing the Faith to the Next Generation": This theme could focus on mentoring, intergenerational activities, or sharing family faith stories.

Chapter 5: Practical Planning and Implementation (SEO Keyword: Church Event Planning Guide)

Successful event planning requires careful organization.

Set a budget: Determine how much you can spend and allocate funds for different aspects of the event.

Form a committee: Assign roles and responsibilities to different individuals or groups.

Choose a venue: Select a location that can accommodate your expected attendance.

Secure necessary permits and licenses: Ensure you comply with all local regulations.

Promote the event: Use various methods such as flyers, social media, announcements, and email blasts.

Recruit volunteers: Enlist the help of church members to assist with various tasks.

Develop a schedule: Create a detailed schedule for the day's activities.

Gather supplies and equipment: Ensure you have everything you need before the event.

Evaluate the event: After the event, gather feedback and learn from your experiences.

Conclusion: Building Lasting Traditions

Family and Friends Day is a powerful tool for strengthening your church community and creating lasting memories. By carefully selecting a theme that resonates with your congregation and implementing a well-organized plan, you can create an event that fosters spiritual growth, builds strong relationships, and leaves a positive impact on all who participate. Remember that the most successful events are those built on prayer, collaboration, and a shared vision of celebrating together in faith.

FAQs:

1. How do I choose a theme that appeals to all ages? Consider themes with broad appeal, offering diverse activities for different age groups.
2. How can I involve the entire church community in the planning? Form a committee representing various age groups and interests.
3. What's the best way to promote the event? Utilize multiple channels: flyers, social media, announcements, and email.
4. How do I manage the budget effectively? Develop a detailed budget early on and secure sponsorships if needed.
5. What if the weather doesn't cooperate for an outdoor event? Have a backup plan, such as an indoor venue or alternative activities.
6. How do I ensure everyone feels included and welcome? Create a welcoming environment, offer diverse activities, and be mindful of accessibility needs.
7. How can I measure the success of the event? Collect feedback through surveys, testimonials, or informal conversations.
8. What if I don't have many volunteers? Divide tasks into smaller, manageable parts and recruit volunteers from different areas.
9. How can I make Family and Friends Day a yearly tradition? Establish a planning committee, document successful strategies, and build anticipation each year.

Related Articles:

1. Creating Engaging Activities for All Ages on Family and Friends Day: Tips for planning activities that appeal to children, teens, and adults.
2. Budgeting for a Successful Church Family and Friends Day: Strategies for managing finances and securing sponsorships.
3. Marketing Your Church's Family and Friends Day Event: Effective promotion strategies for maximizing attendance.
4. Building Community Through Service on Family and Friends Day: Ideas for community service projects that involve families.
5. Incorporating Intergenerational Activities into Family and Friends Day: Strategies for creating activities that bring together different generations.
6. Using Technology to Enhance Your Church's Family and Friends Day: Ideas for using technology to improve communication and engagement.
7. Making Family and Friends Day Accessible to All: Strategies for ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities.
8. Post-Event Evaluation for Family and Friends Day: Learning from Your Successes and Challenges: A guide to analyzing your event and making improvements for next year.
9. Inspiring Testimonies and Stories for Family and Friends Day: Ideas for sharing inspiring stories of faith and community.

themes for family and friends day at church: Character Matters Aaron Menikoff, 2020-05-05 Pastor, it's time to turn down the noise and focus on what matters. Today's pastoral world is packed with books, conferences, and seminars teaching you different techniques for being

an all-star pastor, growing your church quickly, and changing the world. But the key to true success is much harder and much simpler. Pastors are called to be faithful, to have exemplary character, and to love Jesus. Without faithfulness, their ministry ends up harming others rather than helping them. Churches need pastors with sound doctrine and a sound life. Character Matters was written to help you slow down, cut through the noise and distractions, and focus on what matters—the fruit of the Spirit. Each chapter is a guided, biblical meditation on one aspect of each piece of the fruit of the Spirit. As you reflect and focus on the simple things that matter, you'll see your heart change and your ministry follow, slowly, surely, and by the power of the Spirit.

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themes for family and friends day at church: I Love Jesus, But I Want to Die Sarah J. Robinson, 2021-05-11 A compassionate, shame-free guide for your darkest days “A one-of-a-kind book . . . to read for yourself or give to a struggling friend or loved one without the fear that depression and suicidal thoughts will be minimized, medicalized or over-spiritualized.”—Kay Warren, cofounder of Saddleback Church What happens when loving Jesus doesn't cure you of depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts? You might be crushed by shame over your mental illness, only to be told by well-meaning Christians to “choose joy” and “pray more.” So you beg God to take away the pain, but nothing eases the ache inside. As darkness lingers and color drains from your world, you're left wondering if God has abandoned you. You just want a way out. But there's hope. In I Love Jesus, But I Want to Die, Sarah J. Robinson offers a healthy, practical, and shame-free guide for Christians struggling with mental illness. With unflinching honesty, Sarah shares her story of battling depression and fighting to stay alive despite toxic theology that made her afraid to seek help outside the church. Pairing her own story with scriptural insights, mental health research, and simple practices, Sarah helps you reconnect with the God who is present in our deepest anguish and discover that you are worth everything it takes to get better. Beautifully written and full of hard-won wisdom, I Love Jesus, But I Want to Die offers a path toward a rich, hope-filled life in Christ, even when healing doesn't look like what you expect.

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betterment of society at large. Though they aimed to change America one soul at a time, that is only part of the story. They also engaged the political arena, forcefully and directly. Simply put, Baptists were social reformers. Relying on the ideas of rank-and-file Baptists found in the minutes of local churches and associations, as well as the popular, parochial newspapers of the day, *Politics and Piety* uncovers a theologically minded and controversial movement to improve the nation. Understanding where these Baptists united and divided is a key to unlocking the differences in evangelical political engagement today.

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themes for family and friends day at church: *The Color of Water* James McBride, 2012-03-01 From the New York Times bestselling author of *Deacon King Kong* and *The Good Lord Bird*, winner of the National Book Award for Fiction: The modern classic that Oprah.com calls one of the best memoirs of a generation and that launched James McBride's literary career. More than two years on The New York Times bestseller list. As a boy in Brooklyn's Red Hook projects, James McBride knew his mother was different. But when he asked her about it, she'd simply say 'I'm light-skinned.' Later he wondered if he was different too, and asked his mother if he was black or white. 'You're a human being! Educate yourself or you'll be a nobody!' she snapped back. And when James asked about God, she told him 'God is the color of water.' This is the remarkable story of an eccentric and determined woman: a rabbi's daughter, born in Poland and raised in the Deep South who fled to Harlem, married a black preacher, founded a Baptist church and put twelve children through college. A celebration of resilience, faith and forgiveness, *The Color of Water* is an eloquent exploration of what family really means.

themes for family and friends day at church: *For the Strength of Youth* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965 OUR DEAR YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN, we have great confidence in you. You are beloved sons and daughters of God and He is mindful of you. You have come to earth at a time of great opportunities and also of great challenges. The standards in this booklet will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future. We promise that as you keep the covenants you have made and these standards, you will be blessed with the companionship of the Holy Ghost, your faith and testimony will grow stronger, and you will enjoy increasing happiness.

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an activity rooted in the grace of the gospel that affects every area of our lives. And while worship is more than just singing, God's people gathering in his presence to lift their voices in song is an activity that is biblically based, historically rooted, and potentially life-changing. Thoroughly based in Scripture and filled with practical guidance, this book connects Sunday worship to the rest of our lives—helping us live as true worshipers each and every day.

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mother you long to be. No calling is greater, nobler, or more fulfilling than that motherhood. Every day, as we nurture our children, mothers influence eternal destiny as no one else can. Tragically, today's culture minimizes the vital importance of a mother's role. In *The Mission of Motherhood*, Sally Clarkson helps you rediscover the joy and fulfillment to be found in the strategic role to which God in all his wisdom has called you, for a purpose far greater than you can ever imagine.

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A stunning "portrait of the enduring grace of friendship" (NPR) about the families we are born into, and those that we make for ourselves. A masterful depiction of love in the twenty-first century. NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • MAN BOOKER PRIZE FINALIST • WINNER OF THE KIRKUS PRIZE *A Little Life* follows four college classmates—broke, adrift, and buoyed only by their friendship and ambition—as they move to New York in search of fame and fortune. While their relationships, which are tinged by addiction, success, and pride, deepen over the decades, the men are held together by their devotion to the brilliant, enigmatic Jude, a man scarred by an unspeakable childhood trauma. A hymn to brotherly bonds and a masterful depiction of love in the twenty-first century, Hanya Yanagihara's stunning novel is about the families we are born into, and those that we make for ourselves. Look for Hanya Yanagihara's latest bestselling novel, *To Paradise*.

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Disappointed Expectations in Motherhood Creating Routines that Bring Rest Pursuing the Discipline and Diligence of the Proverbs 31 Woman There is nothing more important than fostering your faith, building your marriage, training your children, and creating a haven for your family. *Women Living Well* is a clear and personal guide to making the most of these precious responsibilities.

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Scripture clearly sets forth how to do so, modern Western society has formalized, professionalized, and systemized disciplinarianism to a point that it seems too complicated to practice. What happened to the simple, heart-to-heart ministries of the New Testament? In *Walk with Me*, you'll return to the essential biblical practices that help people grow as Christ-followers in simple, slow, and deep ways. Learn how you can connect with your neighbors, coworkers, or anyone you want to reach with the gospel in ways that are relational and Spirit-led. You'll learn five kingdom principles that will reshape how you can pass on the faith: In heart-to-heart ways By keeping it simple By going slow By building deep By living on mission

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themes for family and friends day at church: *The Hunger Games and the Gospel* Julie Clawson, 2012-03-05 In a globalized world full of uncertainty and injustice, Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* series has captured the imaginations of readers looking for glimmers of hope. The tale of Katniss Everdeen's journey of survival in the post-apocalyptic country of Panem, where bread and circuses distract the privileged and allow a totalitarian regime to oppress the masses, parallels situations in our world today. At the same time, the series' themes of resistance to oppression and hope for a better world, portrayed honestly as messy and difficult endeavors, echo the transformative way of life Jesus offered his followers. *The Hunger Games and the Gospel* explores these themes in the *Hunger Games* series that have resonated so deeply with readers by examining their similarity to the good news found in Jesus' message about living in the ways of God's Kingdom. Taking the rich statements of the Beatitudes, which serve as mini-pictures of God's dreams realized on earth as in heaven, each chapter reflects on how those pictures are exhibited both in the narrative of *The Hunger Games*, and in Jesus' time, and then explores their significance for our own world. Thought-provoking questions provide direction for personal reflection and group discussion. Readers are invited to allow the inspiration of *The Hunger Games* help them live in the ways of the Kingdom of God by discovering how they too can work toward the possibility of a better world. ***** PRAISE FOR THE HUNGER GAMES AND THE GOSPEL My favorite analysis of *The Hunger Games*... Clawson does a fantastic job of reminding readers that Collins' world of occupation, oppression, excess, and poverty is not so far removed from our own, and that it is exactly the kind of world in which Jesus himself lived. -- Rachel Held Evans, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* It shouldn't surprise anyone that Julie Clawson finds everyday justice in the *Hunger Games* trilogy, but what may surprise and delight is that she reads the story so well and writes so beautifully about the lessons she finds there. Everyone who loves *The Hunger Games* should read this book. -- Greg Garrett, author of *Faithful Citizenship*, *One Fine Potion: The Literary Magic of Harry Potter*, and *The Other Jesus* Are we living in the United States of Panem? The *Hunger Games* trilogy's depiction of a wealthy, totalitarian regime that exploits its conquered neighbors is more than fiction. The series brings to life the Roman Empire of Jesus' day and suggests a searing indictment of contemporary American imperialism. Using a framing structure of the Beatitudes, Julie Clawson powerfully explores Katniss's suffering as a lens for understanding Jesus' passion for loving our neighbors and

building a better world. -- Jana Riess, author of *Flunking Sainthood* and *What Would Buffy Do?* Julie Clawson writes with intelligence, thoughtfulness, and nuance. This is a collection of fascinating and insightful reflections, a set of mirrors that we as Christians must confront, even though they come to us from the unlikeliest of places: a story we've all read for fun. -- Shauna Niequist, Author of *Cold Tangerines & Bittersweet* There is no question that the Hunger Games trilogy has touched something deep in the psyche of its millions of readers, stirring up questions and uncertainties that we all foster about our future. With sharp clarity and stunning insight, Julie Clawson helps us understand our visceral response to the series by interweaving the narrative with Jesus' Beatitudes. The result points to a realistic hope for today and tomorrow. -- Jamie Arpin-Ricci, author of *The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis & Life in the Kingdom*

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