

# Making Memories

**Reproducible Vacation Devotions from CTA, Inc.**



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## Making Memories

Without looking at a calendar, do you remember what you did one month ago today? How about what you ate for supper one week ago? Probably not. But you most likely remember where you went on your last vacation or trip, what you did, and maybe even some of the restaurants where you dined. Vacations create memories that can last for a long time—sometimes an entire lifetime. What kind of memories do you think you'll make on this vacation?

That we should remember is one of the strongest messages in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. God wanted his people to remember what he did for them in the past. He wanted them to remember that he had saved them from difficult situations, that he had been faithful to them since the beginning of time, and that he had given them special blessings even while they traveled from place to place.

As they recalled his goodness, God's people would know that they could go into every day with confidence, knowing their Lord would be with them.

In the New Testament, just before Jesus was taken away to be crucified, he met with his disciples and shared a very special meal with them in the Upper Room. As he gave them the bread and as they drank from the cup, he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He wanted his disciples to remember what he had done—and what he would continue to do—for them. When we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, it strengthens us as we head into a new day, situation, or adventure.

What memories has God created in your life in the last twenty-four hours, the last week, or on your last vacation?

**Bible Verse:** *I will remember the deeds of the LORD (Psalm 77:11).*

**Prayer:** *Lord, I have great memories of your blessings in my life. Help me to never forget or take those memories for granted as I begin each new day. Give each of us joyful memories as we head into this vacation. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## We're Going to Be Spending a Lot of Time Together

On vacations, families spend more time together than they usually do during a typical day or week. During a regular week, family members are running around doing their own thing—going here and there and everywhere! But now you're on vacation. Look at those around you and say, "We're going to be spending a lot of time together!"

Okay, let's be honest. When we spend this much time with someone, some stressful times are likely. Others may do things that get on our nerves. We don't always want to do the same things. Arguments might start. We may even wish we had more time alone.

But there's good news! We can improve our family time by taking a few simple steps. Here they are:

- Remember that you're not perfect and your family's not perfect.
- Pray for patience.
- Ask others (and God) for forgiveness when you've acted selfishly or hurtfully.
- Try to treat others the way you want them to treat you.
- Remember that our Savior wants family members to be blessings to each other. We're each unique—a special creation. (Wouldn't life be boring if we were all the same?)
- Spend some time laughing together (*with*, not *at*, each other!)
- Respect each other and love each other as Jesus loves you.
- Thank God for each person around you. Try looking at each other as a special gift God has given you.

May God bless you with a fun and special vacation! Remember that we're all sinners and in need God's forgiveness. And while we're all in this together, God is ultimately in control and in charge! Enjoy the trip . . . and those around you!

**Bible verse:** *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise. . . . He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, thank you for being patient with me. I will always need your love and forgiveness. Help me to learn to be patient and loving with everyone around me. I love you, Jesus. Amen.*

## How Much Longer?

On almost every trip, someone asks, “How much longer?” Has anyone said that yet while you’ve been traveling? We want to get to our destination, but we don’t want it to take long. We want to see and do all of the things we’ve been waiting for! Sometimes it’s hard to be patient. It’s hard to wait.

That doesn’t happen only on vacations. It’s tough to wait until it’s time to open presents on Christmas. We want to know how much longer until a program starts on TV. It’s hard to be patient when we’re hungry and supper isn’t ready. And when we really have to go to the bathroom, we might yell, “How much longer?” We’re use to having things in a hurry, and we don’t like waiting.

God, however, is very patient with us. He wants us to trust him, to pray to him, and to go to him for help each day. He could become very impatient and angry when we ignore him or when we put other things ahead of him, but instead he is patient with us.

Love is patient (1 Corinthians 13:4). God’s patient love changes the way we live and love. How has his love changed your life?

God’s patient love is always there for us. We don’t have to wait for his goodness. His gifts of hope and forgiveness through Jesus are always present. Sometimes it might *feel* like God isn’t around, but he *is* always with us. He is patient with us and will always love us—we’ll never have to wait for his love!

**Bible Verse:** *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*

**Prayer:** *Thank you, God, for being patient with me, for loving me, and for always being near me. I don’t know how much longer it will be until I can thank you in heaven, but I’ll be patient in waiting for that perfect day. Amen.*

## Vacation Pictures

Vacations and cameras go hand-in-hand. With some digital cameras you can take hundreds of pictures and see each one right after taking it.

Just for fun, imagine following Jesus around with a camera. What pictures would you like to take and save in your memory? The shepherds worshiping baby Jesus would make a great picture. It might be fun to see a close-up of the face of the blind man Jesus healed, right after he received his sight! What fun it would be to use the sports setting of the camera and capture the lame man jumping in the air with the legs he couldn't move before Jesus healed him.

Would you take a picture of Jesus on the cross? It's hard to imagine what Jesus looked like and felt when he hung on the cross for us. Crucifixion was a horrible way for Jesus (or anyone) to die. The picture would show the blood, the agonizing look on his face, the scars, and the nails piercing his hands and legs. That's not a very pretty picture. But it's an important one that we need to remember. It helps us never forget his love for us.

Jesus, the perfect Son of God, loves us so much he died for us, to rescue us from our sins. Because of his horrible death, we have forgiveness.

But wait! We need to see another event. What a picture—Jesus on that first Easter Sunday morning. He didn't remain dead. He rose from the dead so we could live! He rose, so we know that everyone who believes in him as Savior will also rise from the dead. Because he lives, we will live forever in heaven! That's a perfect picture of Jesus' love for us!

**Bible verse:** *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus . . . (Hebrews 12:2).*

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, it's hard to picture you dying on the cross. But you did, and we thank you—not only for dying for us but also for rising from the dead. You live for us, and we want to live for you. We love you, Jesus! Amen.*

## Will We Eat Soon? I'm Getting Hungry!

Are you hungry? Well, where would you like to eat? Vacations often mean eating out, and our options are plentiful! If you've driven to a vacation spot, there's a good chance that you've made several stops at fast-food restaurants. If you're camping, you'll almost certainly be eating out—eating outside! God is so good in making sure we have food to eat in our various circumstances. Sometimes it might not be a lot, but he still provides it for us.

God put many stories in the Bible about hungry people. When the Lord led his people out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, he fed them with manna from heaven. But the people complained and wanted meat, too, so God provided them with quail to eat (Numbers 11). In Elijah's time, there was a great famine in the land, but God had ravens bring him bread and meat every morning and night. Sometime later, Elijah stayed in a house that was just about to run out of food, but God performed a miracle and made sure that the jar of flour and a jug of oil would never run out (1 Kings 17). Can you think of other times God provided food for his people?

Do you know the story of the time Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus the women and children with them, using just five small loaves of barley bread and two fish? You can read about it in John 6:1–15. Jesus fed everyone, yet they had so much food left over. What a miracle!

Hungry? Jesus hears when your stomach growls and wants to help. He knows what we need and has plenty of answers for us. Let's give thanks to the Lord!

**Bible Verse:** *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 118:1).*

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, please forgive us for the times we take for granted that we have plenty of food to eat. Thank you for all you provide. We know we'd have nothing without you. Help us to see your miracles and always give thanks to you! Amen.*

## Where Are We Going to Sleep Tonight?

Do you have trouble sleeping when you're on vacation? Mattresses (or sleeping bags), nighttime sounds, and surroundings are all different from what you're used to. While vacations should be a time to relax, we sometimes find it hard to get comfortable.

It's a blessing to have a place to sleep, though, and it's easy to take that for granted. Night after night we lie down, often forgetting to thank God for nice beds, pillows, sheets, nightlights, and maybe even stuffed animals!

Have you ever thought about where Jesus slept as he traveled around from town to town? Jesus once said that many times during his ministry he didn't have a place to lay his head—no comfy pillow or mattress to sleep on. Jesus didn't say this so people would feel sorry for him. He said it after a man told him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head’” (Matthew 8:19–20).

Jesus wanted to let the man know that following him wasn't easy. Even the animals had regular beds in which to sleep, but Jesus didn't have a home to live in because he traveled around ministering to people and teaching them.

As you go to sleep tonight, think about what Jesus' life on earth must have been like—even his first bed was on a pile of itchy hay in a manger. And then thank him for all the blessings you have throughout every day *and night*.

**Bible Verse:** *He who watches over you will not slumber (Psalm 121:3).*

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, while you lived on the earth, you may not have had a comfy bed. But I can sleep peacefully tonight because I know that you never sleep. As God in heaven, you always have your eye on me, wherever I am—day and night. I pray in your name. Amen.*

## What I Did on My Summer Vacation

*What I Did on My Summer Vacation.* Do teachers still start the school year by asking students to write an essay with that title? Stop right now and share with your family or travel group some of the highlights from your vacation that you would write about. (Go ahead!)

It's good to think about the memories we made on our vacation—both the good and the not so good. After thinking about what you did on your vacation, answer this question: What did God do on my vacation? How would you answer that question? Talk about that together. (Go ahead!)

When you consider all the things God did with you and for you on your vacation, you probably want to thank and praise him.

Before you thank God, read and remember this invitation his Son, Jesus, gives as we travel with him every day:

*Are you tired? Worn out? . . . Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*  
(Matthew 11:28–30 THE MESSAGE)

Praise God the Father for vacations, families, and blessings! Praise him for his forgiveness, love, and salvation! Praise God the Son for his invitation to rest with him every day. Praise God the Holy Spirit for giving you faith so that one day, when you arrive in heaven, you'll hear Jesus say to you, "Welcome home!"

**Bible Verse:** *Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life (Matthew 11:28 THE MESSAGE).*

**Prayer:** *How can we thank and praise you enough, God—Father, Son, and Spirit? Your love carried us through our vacation, and it will bring us through whatever we have to deal with in the days ahead. Thank you for everything you did on this vacation. We look forward to traveling with you every day. We love you. Amen.*

## License Plate Game

Check the box beside a state's name when you see a license plate from that state. Then lead your family in a brief general prayer for the people of the state or choose a more specific prayer request, such as for government leaders, pastors, unemployed workers, unbelievers, teachers, medical personnel, children, churches, the homeless, or the dying. On the line, write what you prayed for the people in that state.

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