

In closing...

I love my home. Not just the house, but the home my husband and I have shared for almost 44 years together. We're happiest when our family and friends are here with us. There's something just so special about being with those you enjoy and sharing meals, games, movies, or just talking. As I've gotten older, I don't invite as many people over as I once did. Excuses abound when I think about how much effort it takes to be a hostess for a large number of people. But think about it; don't you enjoy being invited to someone else's home? Always try to reciprocate. Others will feel that warmth as much as your family does. I can remember, when I was growing up, how much I loved being at home with my parents. They truly loved me, protected me and taught me God's Word and His love. I felt safe. Your home should be a shelter from the world. What better security can we give our families? Stretch to the limits; reach for excellence; make your home a haven of rest. I love you, dear ones, and would like to invite you over for a piece of cake. My home is open.

—Carolyn



MAY FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

The Home STRETCH

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Beginning thoughts...

New houses spring up everyday, especially in the United States. Small, middle-sized, and huge houses dot the landscape all across our country. Yet, until someone moves in and starts living, they aren't anything but sheetrock, tile, wiring, and brick. Every type of person imaginable lives within the walls of these houses. Yet, how many are believers establishing Christian homes? How many have families who love the Lord and want to serve Him?

We as women have the chance to make our home comfortable, beautiful, pleasant and spiritual. We can set the tone that honors God and makes our home wonderful. Doing this may stretch our personalities, our talents, our time and our energies. Still, it's worth the effort to make sure our home is what God intends.

Are we women of influence within the walls of our home? That's where it counts. Family and friends need a place where they feel respected, accepted and loved. They also deserve to be taught biblical principles, the way of salvation, faithful living, moral standards and much more. The task may seem daunting—more than we can accomplish without help. Thankfully, when we know God as Savior, we have the help we need. He is our help, our source of power and strength, our guide, our everything. All we have to do is trust Him and lean on Him for wisdom. He will provide us with the stretching abilities we need to get the job done. He created homes. He knows all our struggles, financial problems, personal conflicts, needs and wants. Give Him your life and let Him help you manage.





The Home Stretch


HOME PLACE


BODY FITNESS GOAL: Make a commitment to better heart health, stretching ourselves physically and spiritually.


CORE DEVELOPMENT: *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).*

 Write the Core Development verse on a 3x5 card. Try to memorize it this week.


 Together, go over all the questions and answers on p. 35 in *Treasure*.


 Stand and say the "Pledge to the Bible", p. 34, *Treasure*.


 Why is the Bible a "lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"? (*It guides our way—Psalm 119:130; Proverbs 6:23.*)


 Why should we hide it in our hearts? (*It gives wisdom, teaches, admonishes—Colossians 3:16.*)


 Do you consider yourself a student of the Word"?

 What does "propitiation" mean? (*Merriam Webster Dictionary: "an atoning sacrifice; "saved from God's wrath and reconciled to God."*)

 Reflect on these questions (*not for answering aloud*): (1) How often do you read your Bible? (2) Do you pray everyday? (3) Do you ever use a Bible commentary? (4) Are you committed to studying God's Word? (5) When was the last time you memorized a Bible verse?

 Does God really expect us to know His Word? (*Yes, so we can have it in our heart and obey—Deuteronomy 11:18; 30:14.*)

 What happens to our physical bodies when the heart is sick? (*The whole body deteriorates and eventually dies.*)

 Does the same thing occur with our spiritual heart? (*If we let our hearts get cold, stray from God's words, not communicate with Him, then our hearts are dead spiritually—Hebrews 3:13; Luke 6:45; Proverbs 4:23.*)

 When is the best time to start learning Scriptures? (*From the very beginning—Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20.*)

COOL DOWN: Go over the questions listed. Prayerfully sing, "Cleanse Me," p. 481, *The Free Will Baptist Hymn Book*, *REJOICE*.





The Home Stretch


HOME GROWN


BODY FITNESS GOAL: Utilize God-designed roles in influencing our families, teaching children by example.


CORE DEVELOPMENT: *"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up "* (*Deuteronomy 6:6-7*).


 Together review questions and answers on p. 37 of *Treasure*.


 Read the Core Development verse aloud together. What "words" is this verse talking about? (*the commandments of God—Deuteronomy 6:2.*)


 Who was giving this instruction? (*Moses*)


 Why was Moses so insistent on the Israelite children knowing God's Word? (*Remember, they were wandering in the wilderness. He knew where they had come from and wanted the children to know the reason for their survival—Deuteronomy 6:20-25.*)

 Did Moses have experience with children? (*Yes, he had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer—Exodus 2:21-22; 18:2-5.*)

 Read 2 Timothy 3:14-15. Who was taught "from a child" the sacred writings? (*Timothy, who became one of Paul's dearest friends.*)

 Do you think Mary and Joseph had any influence in the teachings of Jesus or did He have all His knowledge from birth? (*Luke 2:42-42,46-47*)

 How did Jesus feel about children? (*Matthew 19:13-15*)

 Why is Scripture important? (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21*)

COOL DOWN: Dismiss in prayer for your children or any other children with whom you may have contact and/or influence.



The Home Stretch

HOME MADE

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Engage in serving others from our homes through the works of our hands.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

- 🏠 Write the Core Development verse on a 3x5 card for memorization this week.
- 🏠 Go over the questions and answers on p. 39, *Treasure*.
- 🏠 Do you see yourself as the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31?
- 🏠 Why or why not?
- 🏠 Is it a stretch for you to make home-cooked meals?
- 🏠 Read the list provided on p. 38 of *Treasure*, (next to last paragraph) of opportunities to serve. Which of these can you implement in your life? Can you think of other ways?
- 🏠 Dorcus, or Tabitha was a good example of good works. Why do you think God empowered Peter to resurrect her? (Acts 9:40-41)
- 🏠 Could it have been she was a devout disciple who practiced what she believed? (Acts 9:36)
- 🏠 Are there ways you serve from your home? Name them.
- 🏠 Do you see your service to your family as unpleasant tasks you have to complete or do you perform them as an act of worship? Read the core verse again. Does this verse motivate you to more graciously approach those unpleasant tasks?

COOL DOWN: Use the suggestions listed as a preface to your dismissal prayer. Ask God to bless in your areas of service whether to family, friends or your church.



The Home Stretch

HOME BASED

BODY FITNESS GOAL: Establish home as a base for serving God and others through hospitality.

CORE DEVELOPMENT: “Use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Peter 4:9).

- 🏠 Write the Core Development verse on a 3x5 card and memorize it.
- 🏠 Go over all the questions and answers on p. 41 of *Treasure*.
- 🏠 Do you practice an “Open Door Policy” in your home?
- 🏠 Do people feel comfortable when they come to visit your home?
- 🏠 How do you plan for social events, family get-togethers or other gatherings?
- 🏠 Read Hebrews 13:2. What does this verse say to you?
- 🏠 Can you think of an Old Testament example of someone who experienced this? (*Abraham once hosted a dinner party for angels—Genesis 18:2-8.*)
- 🏠 What was the occasion? (*Abraham learned he was going to be a father—Genesis 18:10-14*)
- 🏠 Are you wary, fearful or receptive of strangers?
- 🏠 Given the age we live in, how can we minister to strangers and still be careful? (*I'd love to hear your answers.*)
- 🏠 Where do you need to exert the greatest influence in your home? (*In homes where there are children, shouldn't it be with them? Proverbs 22:6 tells us to “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*)
- 🏠 Do you believe the above verse? (*Remember, God doesn't lie. You can count on this verse.*)
- 🏠 If your children are not following the Lord, what steps can you take to gain peace concerning them? (*1) Give them to the Lord. 2) Pray daily and continuously for them. 3) Love them. 4) Trust God for the outcome.*)
- 🏠 What did Hannah do in 1 Samuel 1:27-28? (*Gave her child to the Lord.*)
- 🏠 How did Mary handle the responsibility of parenting Jesus? (*By trusting God and obeying God—Luke 1:45-49; 2:48-52*)
- 🏠 Whom do you trust—yourself or God?
- 🏠 Is your home open to others and filled with hospitality? Does your family take notice?

COOL DOWN: Dismiss in prayer for direction and wisdom in displaying hospitality within your home.