

CELEBRATING YOUR FAMILY WINS

You and your family have made it to the end of another school year—and what a school year this one has been! It feels like an achievement for all of you, doesn't it?

It's a big deal! And it's definitely something worth celebrating. Get a date on the calendar to gather your family together to talk about all the awesome things that happened this school year.

Below are some suggestions for what this celebration could look like. Don't feel like you need to complete each step. In fact, we want you to tailor each section for what would work best for your family.

BEFORE THE CELEBRATION:

- Confirm a time and date that everyone can get together for about an hour. Put a reminder in a central location—like on the fridge or by the home computer.
- Make the celebration a little more enticing by offering everyone's favorite snack. Cupcakes usually draw a crowd!
- Consider adding some decorations if you're celebrating at home—a few streamers, some noise makers, and if you're extra brave, some silly string.
- Prepare some fun awards beforehand. You can even print out certificates or buy objects that represent the award. For example, "The No Cavities Award" would get a new toothbrush. Or the "New Bike Rider Award" would get a bike horn.

AT THE CELEBRATION:

- Start with your fun awards. Take time to share funny stories that go with the awards. End by taking a family selfie with your awards and posting it to social media.
- Transition to the "Family Wins Celebration" portion by asking the following questions about the school year. Keep track of the answers. You may want them later.
 - » What's one new thing you learned?
 - » What's one new skill you gained?
 - » What's an area you improved in?
 - » What's one way you grew in character?
 - » What's one way you grew in your faith?
 - » What's one thing you're really proud of from this school year?
 - » What's your favorite friend-related memory?
 - » What's your favorite family-related memory?
- What are some things we could do next school year to make it even better than this last one?
- After you're finished with your questions, give each family member a sincere compliment, telling them some of the wins you've noticed.
- End your time together by spending a few minutes in prayer, thanking God for the past year, and praying for an awesome, safe, and connected summer.

AFTER THE CELEBRATION:

- Record some of the family-related answers in a creative way. Maybe on a chalkboard, a whiteboard, poster, cardstock—whatever you have on-hand.
- Post this in a central location so you can celebrate the wins all summer long.
- Write each person's wins on a separate piece of paper or sticky-note and put it somewhere in their room or bathroom, where they'll see it every day.

CELEBRATING YOUR FAMILY WINS:

SPECIAL NEEDS EDITION

Challenges are all around us. It's easy for us to make the challenges our focal points, causing us to be discouraged and overwhelmed. The good thing is WINS are all around us too, though they're often overlooked because we feel like the WINS aren't big enough to celebrate. Think about all the potential WINS your child could experience in the next few months:

- Making it through the flu season without catching the flu
- Riding independently in equine therapy
- Developing a new friendship with a peer in a class
- Putting the cap on the toothpaste
- Asking for milk with words or signs

Some of these may seem insignificant to others, but they are a big deal! And they're definitely worth your whole family celebrating because a WIN for your child with special needs is a WIN for your entire family. List some of the WINS for your child here:

Now list some of the WINS from other family members, including YOU . . .



Including everyone makes it a team event! Before you become consumed by the next challenge that might be right around the corner, get a date on the calendar to gather your family together to talk about all the awesome WINS you just have all experienced.

Below are some suggestions for what this celebration could look like. Don't feel like you need to complete each step. In fact, we want you to tailor each section for what would work best for your family.

BEFORE THE CELEBRATION:

- Confirm a time and date that everyone can get together for about an hour. Put a reminder in a central location—like on the fridge or by the home computer.
- Make the celebration a little more enticing by offering everyone's favorite snack. Cupcakes usually draw a crowd!
- Consider adding some decorations if you're celebrating at home—a few streamers, some noise makers, and if you're extra brave, some silly string.
- Prepare some fun awards beforehand and be sure to include everyone. You can even print out certificates or buy objects that represent the award.

For example, if you're celebrating making it through flu season without catching the flu, you could give the award for "Most Washed Hands" and give a bottle of hand lotion or "Best at Covering a Cough" and give a decorated face mask.

AT THE CELEBRATION:

Start with your fun awards. Take time to share funny stories that go with the awards. End by taking a family selfie with your awards and posting it to social media.

Transition to the "Family Wins Celebration" portion by asking the following questions. Keep track of the answers. You may want them later for encouragement during the harder times.

- Why is this a WIN for our family? What WINS are you most proud of?
- How were all of us involved in the WIN? Did we have any WINS that involved teamwork? Who helped?
- How does this WIN change our family? What have we learned from our WINS?
- How has this WIN changed you as a member of our family? Have any of the WINS helped you grow as a member of our family? How?
- How can we use this WIN to grow our faith? How can we encourage each other to have more WINS?

After you're finished with your questions, give each family member a sincere compliment, telling them a way they were involved in making this celebration possible for the family.

End your time together by sharing words of encouragement with each other. If you are comfortable, lead your family in thanking God for each member of the family and asking Him to help you see the WINS in the future.

AFTER THE CELEBRATION:

- Record some of the family-related answers in a creative way. Maybe on a chalkboard, a whiteboard, poster, cardstock—whatever you have on hand. Or you can write them down/tape them in a journal or notebook that is just for your child's wins!
- If you decide to use a chalkboard or posterboard, post it in a central location so you can celebrate the wins all year long.
- Write each person's wins on a separate piece of paper or sticky-note, and put it somewhere in their room or bathroom where they'll see it every day.



AWARD CERTIFICATE

AWARDED TO:

FOR EXCELLENCE IN:

DATE



SIGNED