

April 2022

The month of April includes the Spring equinox and Easter. Studying our inherent spiritual power to live and express a life of goodness that cares for all life is beautifully enhanced by the abiding message of life, resiliency, and strength in the stories of spring and Easter. By exploring the 12 Spiritual Powers (originally understood by Charles Fillmore, co-founder of Unity), with children, we are true to the learning of what it means to be spiritual beings having a human experience. During April we explore Divine Strength.

Divine Strength reveals an integrity of embodied spirituality. We adults are constantly attempting to understand this and live it! Inner strength helps us meet life beyond rational thinking. It is highly motivated by love and faith. Our very needs in the midst of challenge seem to activate this strength; we become rather like a magnet drawing upon greater love, greater faith, greater strength. As we live from this inner strength, we grow and mature this unfailing power to meet life, to make change, and to be content.

Resource books, children: (youngers)--After the Fall by Dan Santat; I Am Courage by Susan Verde; It's Never Too Late by Dallas Clayton; These Hands by Margaret H. Mason (fighting discrimination); The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden by Heather Smith. (9 and older)--What Do You Do With A Problem? By Kobi Yamada; The Tree That Survived The Winter by Mary Fahy. (mature enough...) the biblical story of Jesus who endured and was true to the reality of Oneness with God, who was a teacher of love and peace in violent times. A child must be mature enough to explore and contemplate what the message of Easter can be, not just for Jesus but for all.

Resource books, adults: 12 Powers of Man by Charles Fillmore; 12 Powers Meditation by Charles Roth. Powers of the Soul by Ella Pomeroy. I use TruthUnity.net to listen to live talks recorded by many of these early Unity teachers, speakers, authors. New through unity.org: Adventures in Resilience by Rev. Sharon Connors; 12 Powers Card Deck.

WHERE TO BEGIN: exploration, study, increased understanding ***Divine Strength***

Children, and people of all ages, love stories about being strong, persevering, and overcoming challenges. The study of a divine ability to be stronger in any situation reveals that there's more to us than our outer circumstances! This is the ultimate story of the life of Jesus and many other great spiritual teachers and leaders. If we only had physical muscles to help us be strong, we would not be equipped to be emotionally strong enough to say, "Yes," and claim our good; or, to say, "No," and decide for ourselves in the midst of other people's opinions. By turning to that which we call God, a power that is invisible and greater than our current understanding of self is seemingly magnetically reconnected. This requires practice, yet the results are sometimes quite miraculous! Divine Strength is also thought of like a muscle. When we 'exercise' Divine Strength to address a challenge, we are inherently stronger when we meet the next challenge.

Family Circle & Talking Stick

The September issue of 12 Spiritual Powers For Families introduced the Family Circle (meeting) and a Talking Stick—ideas to implement consistently as a family. These help not only with weekly exploration of monthly spiritual ideas such as the 12 Spiritual Powers but also with problem solving and family planning.

Family discussions about any challenge, and the ways to overcome, are ideal. Ex. Asking what can help the family be thoughtful of others when eating at a restaurant. Children might suggest going for a walk while waiting for the food. Ex. Parents might share feelings of tiredness at bedtime and ask: what can we do to work together and get homework done when we're all tired? Children might bring up their issues and solutions. Parents might bring up new ideas such as pizza night at the end of the week. Strength is discovered by working together and persevering. A simple quiet prayer, affirming oneness

with God and with inner strength, Divine Strength, is so helpful for the whole family, and quite a model!

APRIL IDEAS TO CONSIDER AS A FAMILY

Divine Strength is an idea of enduring ability, perseverance, resilience... "Strength flows to the individual in accordance with the Faith he/she starts out to express." (Ella Pomeroy, Powers of the Soul)

Begin the study of Divine Strength by noticing strength: muscles, words, skills, etc.

Next notice 'inner strength'. The earth example of a tree coming through winter is ideal. The tree appears dead in winter; branches broken by the wind make it appear weak. During spring the tree appears to come back to life; new branches are flexible and strong in the spring winds.

Also, notice individuals that demonstrate 'inner strength', and those that reveal spiritual/Divine Strength such as Jesus the Christ, Mother Teresa, Guatama Buddha, Claire of Assisi, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr.

Parents, grandparents, and children benefit from sharing (as appropriate) that we have challenges. All of us have difficulties—some of which children can appreciate such as: picking up our clothes, forgetting things, needing to study and work at things. Hearing a story about perseverance and overcoming, and becoming stronger because of the challenge, is like medicine! Story books about meeting difficulties can also help confirm that difficulties are a part of life but so is strength and overcoming.

April's gift for FoU families with children:

Eggs, of course! And, magnets to play with, and symbols to use as we convey this abstract concept becoming like a magnet for the inner power of strength.

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12 Spiritual Powers Study for Families

The spiritual faculty of "STRENGTH"

Monthly guide books beginning Sept. 2021 are available at friendsofunity.org/families

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