



March 2014

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**St. Michael
Lutheran Church**

hope@stmhc.us



Preparing Our Hearts

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you look for ways to grow closer to God—and not just at certain times of the year.
2. For opportunities to teach your kids how to block out distractions and focus on God.
3. To help you be intentional with the way you lead your kids.

At this time of year, people in some denominations lead into Easter by preparing their hearts and drawing closer to God through a formal time of prayer, fasting, and giving. But even if your denomination doesn't formally practice this observance, drawing our hearts closer to God is still a worthwhile pursuit.

In Matthew 13 Jesus talked about how good soil was key to a good harvest. A farmer who ignores the soil will have bad soil, but if he works to make the soil good, it will produce a great harvest.

So it is with us. Jesus said that we can “produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted.” That's both overwhelming and exciting!

When we pray, fast, and give, we're preparing the “soil” of our hearts. We're aligning ourselves with God and his great work.

And it's never too early to teach our children to work the soil of our hearts. How can your family create soil-strengthening habits?

© Group Publishing, Inc., 2014

parenting
CHRISTIAN
kids

Group
Exal. Bold Love.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Distractions

Have one of your kids volunteer to tell the plot of his or her favorite movie. Once he or she begins, do everything you can to create distractions: jump around; talk over her; play loud music, or crank the TV; clap; repeat everything he says; and so on. Then ask:

What made this difficult? What are some of your biggest distractions?

Say: **There are things that distract us from God, too. We're "too busy," or we forget that God wants our attention—wants to spend time with us.**

Ask: **Think honestly about your biggest distraction. Maybe it's a cell phone. or video games. or TV. Would you be willing to give up that thing for one month?**

Pray: **God, help us to remove the distractions that keep us from connecting with you.**

© Group Publishing, Inc., 2014

parenting
CHRISTIAN kids

Group
Est. Bold Love.

Thoughts On...

What some wise people have said about prayer, fasting, and giving.

Prayer—"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." ~Martin Luther

"Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays." ~Soren Kierkegaard

"If any of you should ask me for an epitome of the Christian religion, I should say that it is in one word—prayer." ~Charles Spurgeon

"Prayer is the most concrete way to make our home in God." ~Henri Nouwen

"Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night." ~George Herbert

Fasting—"Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." ~Andrew Murray

"Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in him a source of sustenance beyond food." ~Dallas Willard

"Is fasting ever a bribe to get God to pay more attention to the petitions? No, a thousand times no. It is simply a way to make clear that we sufficiently reverence the amazing opportunity to ask help from the everlasting God, the Creator of the universe, to choose to put everything else aside and concentrate on worshipping, asking forgiveness, and making our requests known—considering his help more important than anything we could do ourselves in our own strength and with our own ideas." ~Edith Schaeffer

Giving—"No one has ever become poor by giving." ~Anne Frank

"Giving is true having." ~Charles Spurgeon

"I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc, is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them." ~C.S. Lewis

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable."

—1 John 3:18

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Title: Muppets Most Wanted

Genre: Comedy/Family

Rating: PG (for mild action)

Cast: Ricky Gervais, Tina Fey, Ty Burrell

Synopsis: The Muppet gang is headed around the world on tour, but they're caught up in an international crime caper when Kermit is mistaken for a master criminal.

Our Take: The Muppet movies have always been family friendly, full of fun cameos, and generally absurd. This one should be no different. With Kermit being mistaken for someone he's not, you could discuss how sometimes we have two sides to our personalities.

TV

Title: Brain Games

Channel: National Geographic

Summary: This TV show digs into the ways our brains can trick us—and the ways magicians, advertisers, and others can *make* our brains trick us. You'll see optical illusions, ways to boost memory, and how we can be distracted even when we know we're being distracted.

Our Take: This is a great show to watch as a family. There's nothing offensive in it, it's full of ah-ha moments, and there are lots of opportunities to talk to your kids about how we can be fooled.

CULTURE & TRENDS

A new survey from BabyCenter finds that Millennial moms (between the ages of 18 and 32) are confident: 96% describe their parenting style as "loving"—while 92% think they're "encouraging," and 90% are "supportive." *J. Maureen Henderson, contributor to Forbes*

Games, Sites & Apps

Yoshi's New Island

This installment of the classic franchise finds Yoshi and Baby Mario exploring a rich, clever world in search of treasure and fun. While you can't play as a family, it's a great game for all ages. *Rating: E; Nintendo 3DS*

timeforkids.com

This companion page to Time Magazine has articles from both adults and "kid reporters," on topics that include national interests, science, entertainment, and just-for-fun.

Gabbit app

Whether you're at the kitchen table, waiting at the doctor's office, or on a road trip, this app will give you lots of thoughtful questions designed to get your family talking. And there are plans for Road Trip, Couples, Dinnertime, and Youth editions. Available in the App Store.

QUICK STATS

Buckle Up More than 1/3 of kids killed in car accidents weren't properly restrained. A quarter of parents and caregivers drive around with unbuckled kids in the car. (*autoblog.com*)

Charity Begins at Home Ninety percent of kids between ages 8 and 19 give to charity. Talking to kids about charity has a greater impact on their giving than role modeling alone. (*unfoundation.org*)

© Group Publishing, Inc., 2014



This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.