



November 2014

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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Love God by Loving Others

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To give your children loving, grateful hearts toward him.
2. To help your family members put their love for God into action by serving other people.
3. To help you make service a joyful, regular habit in your home.

Jesus summed up the entire law in two commandments: “Love the Lord your God” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39). Followers of God express love and thanksgiving to him by showing love to other people in practical ways.

No matter our age, we can live out this gratitude in a variety of ways—big and small. And service isn’t limited to the holidays. Follow these tips to make service a year-round occurrence in your family:

- Set a model of servanthood and responsibility. Don’t use acts of service to manipulate or “one up” each other. Instead, perform tasks out of humility, not expecting thanks in return.

- Make serving fun. Spend an afternoon raking leaves for elderly neighbors or church members. Afterward, gather leaves on your own lawn, and throw some individually wrapped candies into the pile. After kids search for the candy, discuss what makes helping others feel so “sweet.”

- Offer age-appropriate ideas. Kids of all ages can pitch in to help others. Find ways for your children to actively help by considering what they’re able to do.

- Share your adventures in serving. Each week, challenge family members to perform acts of giving and kindness. Then report the activities every night during dinner or family devotions. Examples include shoveling snow, delivering cookies, helping someone carry their books or packages, and so on.

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

In Jesus' Steps

Have family members take off their shoes. Read aloud John 13:1-15, about Jesus washing his disciples' feet. Say: **In Bible times, servants washed the dirty feet of guests. It was a lowly job, but Jesus did it to show how we can serve other people.**

Take turns giving one another foot massages. Ask: **Why was Jesus willing to be a servant? How can we encourage each other to serve?**

Have family members use wet-erase markers to write the name of someone they'd like to serve on the bathroom mirror during the week. This will be a reminder to follow through on your service ideas.

Close in prayer: **Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to serve us. Help us love you by serving people around us. In your name we pray, amen.**

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Living Out Our Gratitude

Like love, true thanksgiving is expressed through our actions. Serving God by serving others doesn't necessarily mean you need to travel across the world on a mission trip, though. Opportunities abound in our homes, churches, schools, neighborhoods, and communities to meet other people's needs—and, by doing so, to show our love and gratitude to God. Children are pre-wired for service, so they'll be more eager to help out than you might expect. Just watch out: Your kids will begin to view the world from a whole new perspective. Coming face to face with human need is truly transformative! Use these ideas to start living out your gratitude as a family.

- **With babies and toddlers, read aloud picture books about thankfulness.** Then talk about ways we say thank you to God and other people.

- **At home, provide Helper's Hints.** On slips of paper, have kids write or draw a picture of a way to serve each family member. Then place the slips in a decorated shoebox. Examples include "Make Mom's bed," "Give a hug," or "Empty the dishwasher." Each morning, kids can choose a slip and use the hint to serve someone that day. Regularly add new ideas to the box.

- **At church, volunteer as a family at a work day.** Look for age-appropriate tasks for your kids, such as cleaning out pews, washing toys in the nursery, or pulling weeds.

- **Be good neighbors!** Older kids can help with lawn work, painting, and house- and pet-sitting. Younger children can provide company to elderly or homebound people, bringing flowers or cards during visits.

- **Enlist children in the CSS: Christian Secret Service.** Deploy kids for undercover operations by having them serve others covertly. They can leave sidewalk-chalk messages, deliver cards to a local nursing home, pick up trash at a favorite park, or wash windshields in the church parking lot.

- **In the community, serve as volunteer readers at local schools and libraries.** Older kids can tutor or be "buddies" to younger kids who need extra attention.

- **Donate to food drives or help at a food bank.** Discuss how God provides for us in amazing ways. (For example, read about the Israelites and manna in Exodus 16:11-18.)

- **Participate in holiday toy drives.** Or pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

- **Stuff and label envelopes at a nonprofit or denominational organization.** Ask what other immediate needs they have.

"Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from the ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God."

—2 Corinthians 9:11-12

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *The Book of Life*

Genre: Animation, Adventure, Comedy

Rating: PG (for mild action, rude humor, some thematic elements, and brief scary images)

Cast: Zoe Saldana, Channing Tatum, Diego Luna

Synopsis: A young man goes on an adventure spanning three fantastic worlds. He must decide between fulfilling family expectations and following his heart.

Our Take: This 3D computer-animated film has a unique visual style and offers a fresh take on pop-music favorites. Its “Day of the Dead” look features spirits and scary-looking characters. The plot also involves a love triangle.



MUSIC

Title: *1989*

Musician: Taylor Swift

Synopsis: The pop superstar’s fifth album is her self-declared first official pop project. The title refers to the year Swift, 24, was born. She says the sound was inspired by late-’80s pop. But the lyrics still reportedly contain lots of the personal, diary-like lines Swift has become known for.

Our Take: “Shake It Off,” the first single from the new album, has already topped the charts—and inspired numerous parodies. Although some people say Swift’s songs about “haters” are becoming cliché, others like the empowerment anthems about being yourself and shaking off criticism.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Nutrition News—Mobile farmers markets are heading to “food deserts”—inner-city or low-income neighborhoods that lack access to fresh produce. An estimated 6.5 million U.S. children live in these food deserts, where fast-food chains often fill the void of grocery stores. Health experts hope that providing fresh produce in these areas will help reduce childhood obesity and obesity-related diseases.

Games, Sites & Apps

Monsters Ate My Birthday Cake

In this Cartoon Network game for the iPhone and iPad (\$4.99), a birthday boy must track down monsters and rescue his dog. It has received good reviews from puzzle fans. Note that there’s cartoony violence and some mild language.

Kideos

At kideos.com, children ages 10 and under can watch pre-approved, age-appropriate videos on a wide range of subjects. Some are educational while others are humorous. A Bible “channel” includes some animated accounts and musicals.

Kids Music Factory

With this free iOS app, children can place instruments, notes, and characters on a staff, then listen as the music and sounds are played back. Young composers (ages 4 to 8) will enjoy experimenting with patterns and scales. A \$2.99 upgrade is available.

QUICK STATS

Rock On!—When asked at what age they’d take their kids to a pop concert, 26% of parents said 5 or under, 13% said 5 or 6, 24% said between 7 and 9, and 50% said 10 or older. (parents.com)

Sports Spending—The more money parents spend on youth sports, the more likely their kids are to lose interest, according to researchers at Utah State University’s Families in Sport Lab. The more money parents spend, the more pressure kids feel, which leads to lower enjoyment and ultimately, lower motivation. (gazette.com)

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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.



November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29

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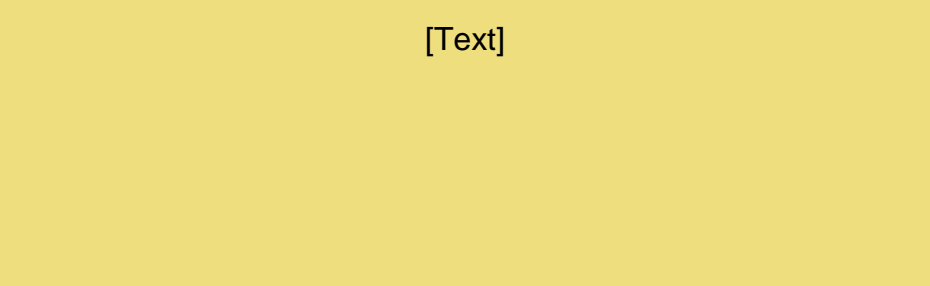
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