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parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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Watch for Signs of Bullying

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To guide your child's interactions with other children.
2. To help you model for your family how to treat others the way you want to be treated.
3. To help you notice the signs if your child is being bullied or being a bully.

Bullying is a top concern for many children and parents. An estimated 160,000 kids miss school each day due to bullying behavior.

Although most adults watch for signs of physical bullying, it's actually the least common form. More often, kids experience verbal bullying, such as jeers, insults, and taunts. Relational (or social) bullying in particular—when victims are shunned or ostracized from a group—can have a powerful negative effect on a child. This is the most common form used by female bullies.

Here are five signs that relational bullying may be taking place:

1. The spread of rumors or gossip
2. The deliberate exclusion or isolation of a child by a group

3. The use of verbal taunts or harassment (repetitive, deliberate attempts at cruelty that clearly make the target uncomfortable)
4. The use of hostile body language or non-verbal expressions, such as aggressive staring, rolled eyes, or derogatory gestures
5. Phone calls, emails, or social media posts which are abusive in nature (cyberbullying).

Include more than just new backpacks and pencils in your back-to-school conversations. Prepare your kids to report any bullying they witness or experience and help them avoid acting like a bully, too.

Read on for more ideas on how to curtail the cycle of bullying behavior.



Nip Bullying in the Bud



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Packed and Prepared

Place these items in a backpack: a yellow construction paper banana with the fruit of the Spirit (from Galatians 5:22-23) written on it, a hand weight, a cell phone, a gold construction paper heart, and a box of bandages.

Ask: **What are some things we put in our backpacks when we get ready for school?** Allow time for responses.

Say: **Let's look at some of the most important things to take with us to school.** Pull out the paper banana. **The fruit of the Spirit, which are important to practice in the classroom and on the playground.** Pull out the weight. **Strong faith muscles that come from exercising our trust in God.** Hold up the phone. **The knowledge that we can call on God in prayer any time.** Hold up the heart. **Hearts that are kept pure by resisting temptation.** Pull out the bandages. **The readiness to be kind to everyone—even bullies—just as Jesus would.**

Close with a prayer of blessing for your kids in the new school year.

To reduce the likelihood of bullying behavior in your kids:

- Enhance their self-image by finding and building on their strengths.
- Be a role model, showing respect and proper conflict management.
- Talk with them about how God expects us to treat other people.
- Discuss how Jesus handled disagreements.
- Help them practice empathy through service to others.
- Offer positive reinforcement when you notice them acting in kindness.
- When you observe mean behavior from them, talk with them about it.
- Try the activities below to encourage empathy and teamwork in your kids.

Feather Toss—Call out an action from the list below, toss a feather in the air, and have kids complete the action while the feather floats. Have them freeze when the feather hits the ground. Afterward, read 1 Thessalonians 5:11, and discuss how this verse can help you treat others the way Jesus would.

- Pat someone's back and say, "Jesus loves you!"
- Rub someone's shoulders and say, "It'll be OK."
- Shake someone's hand and smile.
- Hold someone's hand and jump up and down.

Phone Book Folly—Let each family member try to rip a phone book in half. Then say, "Let's solve this problem by working together." Pull out the pages in sections about an eighth of an inch thick, and have everyone try to tear one section. Afterward, talk about how working together was different from trying to solve the problem on your own. Then read Hebrews 13:6, and discuss how God can help you with conflicts.

Ants and Grasshoppers—Watch the clip from the movie *A Bug's Life* starting at 24 minutes, 55 seconds, when Hopper demands to know where his food is. (End when Hopper says, "Someone can get hurt.") Talk about how the ants

were being treated. Then read Exodus 3:1-7, and talk about how God's special people were being treated in Egypt. Ask what made God care so much about the Hebrew slaves, and emphasize that God cares for us when others mistreat us, too.

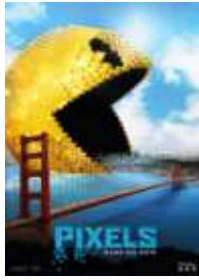
Busting Putdowns—Blow up one balloon, draw an ugly face on it, and tie it off. Inflate a second balloon, draw another ugly face, but don't tie it off. Hold up the balloon that's not tied off and have family members talk "mean" about it. With every putdown, let out a bit of air until the balloon is deflated. Next, concealing a needle, pick up the second balloon and encourage family members to describe the face. At the first negative word, pop the balloon. Discuss how putdowns can slowly tear a person down and sometimes even hurt a person forever. Then talk about how positive words build up people.

Move 'Em Out—Have a relay race where players transport goodies (such as a cookie) on an index card they hold in their mouth. Afterward, talk about the role unity played in completing the race. Read Colossians 3:12-14. Discuss how the qualities mentioned in these verses can help you have unity with others.

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."

—Matthew 7:12

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Pixels*
Genre: Animation, Action, Comedy
Rating: PG-13
Cast: Adam Sandler, Kevin James
Synopsis: In the 1980s, the U.S. government sent transmissions into space, hoping to find signs of alien life. Those transmissions included video game clips, which aliens misinterpreted as a declaration of war. Now they're attacking the earth, using those old games as the basis for their army. Humans must battle Space Invaders, Donkey Kong, and Pac-Man.
Our Take: This movie twists the "video games coming to life" concept by assuming the games are alive only because of a misunderstanding. It'll appeal to kids as well as to parents who remember playing these games when *they* were kids.



BOOK

Title: *Fish in a Tree*
Author: Lynda Mullaly Hunt
Synopsis: Dyslexia prevents Ally from learning like everyone else. But with the help of friends, she realizes that being different is okay. The book's title comes from the quote: "Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid."
Our Take: Up to 10 percent of kids have some sort of learning disability—with dyslexia being the most common. It's great to see a book that takes dyslexia seriously but also teaches anyone with dyslexia not to be ashamed and to embrace his or her different way of looking at the world. This wonderful book reminds readers to not expect fish to climb trees.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Drone Parents—Often the children of helicopter parents, "drone parents" have a strong digital presence in their kids' lives. These tech-savvy moms and dads rely on GPS and other devices to monitor every move their child makes. (*gastongazette.com*)

A "Sharenting" Epidemic—Sharing about their kids on social media—"sharenting"—helps parents feel as if they aren't alone, according to a study by the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. However, the same study warns that "oversharenting" can cause children's privacy and safety to suffer. (*mottnpch.org*)

QUICK STATS

Bright Tots—Think you're smarter than your toddler? Think again! Scientists have found that kids as young as 18 months are better than adults at solving some kinds of problems. The reason? Their brains haven't yet been biased by automatic processes. (*pri.org*)

Play 'n' Eat—In schools with recess scheduled before lunch, there was a 54 percent increase in the consumption of fruits and vegetables and a 45 percent increase in the number of kids eating at least one serving of fruits and veggies, according to a Brigham Young University study. (*news.byu.edu*)

Games, Sites & Apps

Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Tipping Stars
This is a puzzle game of levels filled with mechanical Super Mario characters. Players move Mario along by creating walls and ramps, and timing is key. You can buy the game for the 3DS or WiiU, and then play it on either platform.

Khan Academy
At khanacademy.org, teachers and kids have free access to online video tutorials on math, science, history, and more. They can also complete practice exercises and receive progress reports. Beware that some science videos teach that humans evolved from apes.

Parent Cue
This app—developed by Orange—is for parents and kids to use together. With new content each month, it prompts spiritual discussions by providing videos, activities, and questions to use throughout the day—such as at meals or at bedtime. The cost of the app is \$1.99.

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parenting
CHRISTIAN
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Real. Bold. Love.

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.