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parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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Keep in Touch With God

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you model prayer in your home.
2. To show your kids that prayer is more than just making requests, it requires listening as well.
3. To remind your family members to keep listening when answers to prayer don't come right away.

In this digital age, we're constantly in touch with our family and friends. Likewise, through prayer we have the privilege of 24/7 access to the one true God—the one who created and saves us. Prayer is a powerful way to deepen our relationship with God and grow our faith.

Anyone can pray, even little children (see Matthew 19:14). But kids—and adults—can often use some pointers about connecting with God. Jesus' disciples needed help learning to pray, too!

Here are a few tips for helping your kids develop their prayer lives.

- Make prayer a regular part of your home life—and not just at meals and bedtime. Turn to prayer as

the first resort, not the last. And let your kids hear you pray.

- Share with your kids how you see God at work through your prayers. Keep lists of answers you receive and other ways God speaks to you.
- Pray as a family, but also encourage your children to set aside time to pray on their own.
- Use acronyms as reminders of how to pray, such as PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield) or ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication).

If your family gets stuck in the prayer "doldrums," try the ideas on the next page to reinvigorate your communication with God—who loves to talk with you.

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Guess Who's Talking?

Have family members take turns saying this line into a recording device: "God knows my voice when I talk to him." Leave a brief space between each person's line or make a separate audio file for each person.

Have family members close their eyes. Play back the voices, and see who can identify each speaker the fastest. Then record people again, letting them use silly voices this time.

Afterward, ask: **What do you think it's like for God to hear all our different voices when we pray to him?**

Read 2 Chronicles 30:25-27. Say: **God doesn't have to guess who's talking to him. God knows the voice of each person. God hears us all when we pray!**

Close in prayer, thanking God for always recognizing us and listening to us.

Pray Without Ceasing

Prayer is an opportunity to talk with God at any time, for any reason. It's also an attitude of always being aware of God's presence, no matter our circumstances. When you talk to your children about prayer, remind them that talking to God isn't an obligation but a privilege.

Because children's perceptions of communicating with God change as they grow, use different approaches to prayer for different ages. Preschoolers enjoy saying and singing simple prayers together. Older kids can look up Bible verses about prayer and may benefit from reminders that no prayers are insignificant to God. Occasionally change up your approach to prayer by using these ideas.

Never Busy Pass around an old phone, and discuss what it's like to get a busy signal, an answering machine, or an "out of service" message. Read aloud Psalm 4:3. Ask, "Why isn't God ever too busy for us?" Pass the phone around again, taking turns saying one thing you'd like to tell God.

Mime a Message Form teams, and act out messages for one another. Afterward, talk about what was difficult about acting out or trying to guess the messages. Read Psalm 116:1-2. Say, "I'm so glad we don't have to act out our prayers. When we talk to God, he hears our message loud and clear!"

Mighty God With younger children, sing this praise prayer to the tune of "Old MacDonald":
You, O Lord, are powerful.
I've seen what you can do!
But even though you're mighty strong,
You're kind and loving, too!
You help me out when I'm in need.
Thank you, God, for loving me!
You, O Lord, are powerful.
I've seen what you can do!

Prayer Squares Use chalk to draw several squares on a driveway or sidewalk. Label each square with categories such as "family,"

"friends," "animals," "food," "hobbies," "nature," and so on. Play music as family members walk from square to square. When the music stops, have everyone stop on a square and take turns sharing one item from that category they want to thank God for. Offer prayers of thanks for those things. Then play another round.

Adopt-a-Leader God tells us to pray for people in authority (see 1 Timothy 2:1-4.) As a family, adopt a leader to pray for each month. It can be a community leader, a government leader, or a spiritual leader. Pray faithfully, and send encouraging notes to let the person know of your commitment and that you're praying for him or her.

Echo, Echo With young children, pray aloud—one brief phrase at a time—and teach them to echo you. As kids gain confidence, switch roles and let them lead.

Ways to Pray Pray together in a variety of postures, such as kneeling, standing, lying down, lifting your hands, and so on. Also vary the volumes of your prayers, from whispers to shouts. Let kids lead the prayers, thanking God for what's important to them, even if it's stuffed animals or video games.

The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

—James 5:16

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Fantastic Four*

Genre: Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi

Rating: PG-13

Cast: Kate Mara, Miles Teller, Michael B. Jordan

Synopsis: This is the latest superhero series to get another reboot. After being transported into an alternate universe, the titular four return with incredible new powers—and must use them to fight Doom, a former friend turned evildoer.

Our Take: The trailers suggest the characters must wrestle with what their responsibility is to humanity and doing “good” now that they have superpowers. Unlike the comic book, Reed and Sue aren’t married, though the film sets them up as a couple. Based on recent Marvel movies, expect little in the way of sex and questionable language.



MUSIC

Title: *This Is Not a Test*

Artist: tobyMac

Synopsis: This former member of DC Talk has continued to top the charts—selling an estimated 10 million albums between his band and solo career. His new album, *This Is Not a Test*, features strong beats, stronger lyrics, and guest stars—including Capital Kings, and a reunion with DC Talk band mates Kevin Max and Michael Tait.

Our Take: One of tobyMac’s greatest strengths is the way he champions diversity. He understands that God’s love is global, and wants his listeners to see that, too. His new album is catchy, loud, and full of lyrics that challenge people to give themselves completely to God.

Games, Sites & Apps

Mario Party 10

The first Mario Party game for Wii U includes 50+ mini-games. The most unique new feature is Bowser Party; one player controls Bowser, and others play against that person. As with nearly everything Mario-related, you can play this game with everyone.

NASA Kids’ Club

Space enthusiasts of all ages can learn about current missions, play interactive games, download puzzles and coloring sheets, and vote in online polls. Educational material is tailored to various ages. Find this site at www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html.

Terraria

In this game similar to Minecraft, you’re exploring, building, and crafting—and at night, bad things come to get you. It’s a side-scrolling game rather than first-person. Due to the 2D platform, room for creativity is limited. Some monsters might be scary for young kids but not for preteens.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Reduce, Reuse Back-to-school spending is expected to drop this year compared to last year, as budget-savvy parents inventory their kids’ existing supplies and see what can be reused. Experts say this applies to families with kids from elementary age to college age—and it includes high-tech supplies, too. (nrf.com)

Game Time The amount of time kids spend playing video games affects kids’ behavior more than the type of games played—a University of Oxford study suggests. Kids who play more than three hours per day “are more likely to be hyperactive, get involved in fights and not be interested in school,” while those who play less than an hour a day may actually improve in some social and academic skills. (videogamer.com)

QUICK STATS

Phone Home! According to a survey of nearly 2,300 parents, the average age of kids when they get their first cell phone is 6. The majority of parents cited “security” as the reason for the purchase. (vouchercloud.net)

Kids vs. Goldfish Attention spans are dropping. In 2000, the average human attention span was 12 seconds. In 2015 it dropped to 8.25 seconds. In comparison, goldfish have an average attention span of 9 seconds. (statisticbrain.com)

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