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# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**St. Michael  
Lutheran Church**

**hope@stmlc.us**



## Help Kids Embrace People's Differences

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To give your children a loving, accepting spirit toward all people.
2. To help you and your kids look beyond appearances to see people's hearts.
3. To help your family live out Christ-like compassion daily.

As a parent, you likely teach your children to love and accept all people. This directive becomes more challenging for kids when they begin school and meet classmates with various abilities, skin colors, cultural backgrounds, and religious beliefs.

Children are often unsure how to interact with people who look and act differently from them. Young kids may be fearful, while preteens may resort to name-calling. It's important to discuss the topic in age-appropriate ways, emphasizing how Jesus loves everyone and wants us to do the same. Follow these tips:

**Acknowledge the differences children notice in people.** Answer

questions honestly and factually. Brushing over inquiries may send the message that there's something "wrong" with a person.

**Let kids explore their differences.** Allow them to interact with peers from other cultures. Discuss other religious beliefs, while emphasizing that there's only one true God.

**Encourage children to look for positive qualities in people.** Focus on what makes each person special and unique. Kids who feel secure are less likely to feel prejudice toward others.

**Model love and acceptance.** Through your actions, show children how to respect differences. As your role model, use Jesus, who befriended society's outsiders and outcasts.

## Valuing Our Varied World

When children enter school, they're often exposed to bullying, racism, and other forms of teasing or discrimination. They need to hear that God created a wide range of people with different skills and interests to add variety to his world. Start a conversation with your children using these questions:

- How are your friends or classmates alike? How are they different?
- What have you learned from people who are different from you?
- If everyone looked and acted the same way, what would life be like?
- How does it feel to be judged based on what you look like? When we judge someone by appearance, what do we miss?
- What are some ways we can show love to people who are different from us?



### TEACHABLE MOMENTS

#### Building Kindness

Have family members spread out at least an arm's length from each other. Give them each eight building blocks.

Say: **Quickly build a tower with six of your blocks.** (Allow time.) **Now stand by your tower and use your two extra blocks to knock down other towers. You can protect your tower, but you have only 10 seconds. Go!**

Then ask: **How did it feel to have other people tear down your tower? How does it feel when other people tear you down with their words or actions?**

Read aloud Ephesians 4:29. Say: **When people are unkind, it tears down other people's feelings. But Jesus calls us to build each other up through love and kindness.**

Ask: **What are some things you can say and do to build up other people?** For each answer, have family members pick up a block and add it to a tower.

Close in prayer, asking Jesus to help you build up others with kindness.

**Expanded Horizons** Choose books, shows, games, and toys featuring a range of ethnicities. Read about children and adults who deal with physical and mental challenges, and discuss how they deal with or try to overcome them.

**Meet and Greet** Invite someone with a different cultural background to your house. At dinner, have him or her share customs, traditions, and stories. Also ask people who might normally feel left out to join you on family outings; for example, single parents and their children, kids from less-privileged backgrounds, and so on.

**Common Ground** When children point out people's differences, have them help you brainstorm ways that everyone is alike (we're all God's children, we all have feelings, and so on).

**Kindness Croquet** Set up a croquet course, using family members and friends as wickets. Say: "The goal is to show kindness and to help everyone win." As someone kicks a ball (of any kind) toward a "wicket," that wicket should move to let the ball go through, if possible. Remind players to show kindness through words and actions. Give everyone

a chance to play and to be a wicket. Afterward, read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4a, and discuss how we show love to others by being kind to them.

**Crowd Around** Tape together four different-colored squares of paper to form a large game board. Read aloud 1 John 4:7-12. Say: "Jesus says we are to love one another because love comes from God. Let's play a game and show love." Shout out the color of one square. Have everyone stand on it and perform a loving act; for example, red is "Give high fives," yellow is "Tell each other what you like about them," green is "Give two people a shoulder rub," and blue is "Shake someone's hand and say, 'Jesus loves you, and so do I.'"

**Breezy Kind Time** Draw or tape a smiley face on an old sheet. Have family members stand in a circle and hold the sheet with both hands. Play music while passing the sheet hand-to-hand in a circle. Stop the music; have whoever is closest to the face sit under the sheet in the middle of the circle. Everyone else should wave the sheet, creating a gentle breeze, and take turns saying kind things about the person. Play until everyone gets to be in the middle.

**"Clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."**

—Colossians 3:12, 14

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## MEDIA MADNESS



### MOVIE

**Title:** *Leap!*

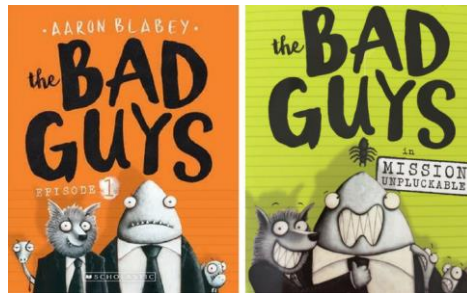
**Genre:** Animation, adventure, comedy

**Rating:** PG

**Cast:** Elle Fanning, Nat Wolff, Carly Rae Jepsen, Mel Brooks

**Synopsis:** Félicie, a poor 11-year-old who dreams of being a ballerina, runs away from an orphanage with her best friend, Victor, an aspiring inventor. The two head to Paris, where they become separated. By assuming another girl's identity, Félicie enters a prestigious ballet school and begins training.

**Our Take:** This movie, which released last year in Europe under the title *Ballerina*, emphasizes determination, courage, and hard work, but doesn't shy from tension and challenging situations. Discuss with kids what's needed to turn a dream into reality.



### BOOK

**Title:** *The Bad Guys*

**Author:** Aaron Blabey

**Synopsis:** This series, aimed at kids ages 7 to 10, will have four books released by the end of summer. Boys—especially previously reluctant readers—are devouring these graphic-novel hybrids. In the books, a group of typical “bad guys” undertakes silly missions that turn out to be good missions.

**Our Take:** These fun stories get kids and their parents laughing, and it's great that the books are attracting children who don't usually care to read. Expect some off-color humor, at times, along the lines of the “Captain Underpants” series. But these books are backed by the reputable Scholastic Paperbacks, winner of many awards.

## Games, Sites & Apps

### Yooka-Laylee

This 3-D platform game (rated E10+) was named one of 2017's most exciting family-friendly titles. The main characters are a bat and chameleon, and play includes exploring worlds, unlocking secrets, and solving puzzles. Players can overcome obstacles at their own speed.

### WhatsInside.it

Father-son duo Dan and Lincoln Markham became a YouTube sensation by cutting open random objects. Each week, almost 5 million curious people tune in to see the destructive pursuits—performed with safety gear. As the website's tagline notes, “We cut stuff open so you don't have to!”

### Pango Build Park

This interactive app, available for both iPhone and Android, lets kids create their own fun attractions or select from nine pre-made worlds. Young builders can customize to their heart's content, with no rules, timers, or scores. The app is for ages 3 and up. No reading is required.



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.



## CULTURE & TRENDS

**Non-Mean Memes** The Internet may be becoming a bit kinder and gentler, thanks to a wave of more wholesome memes. In response to recent negativity in society, people have been creating messages of hope and empowerment. “We don't have to be angry all the time,” says Reddit CEO Steve Huffman. (*time.com*)

**Treats That Bite Back** The “sweet heat” food trend is extending to candy. Skittles and Starburst, for example, are incorporating a spicy kick to some flavors. In fact, food-trend experts have declared spicy the new sour. (*foodbusinessnews.net*)

## QUICK STATS

**Refugee Relief** Six million Syrian children now rely on humanitarian aid for survival. Their plight prompted a California mom to launch Operation Refugee Child, sending thousands of filled backpacks—each with a personalized letter—to young refugees in Greece and Jordan. (*unicef.org; operationrefugeechild.org*)

**Time Out** Children with special needs might be disproportionately disciplined in schools. A study in Texas reveals that although only about 9% of elementary students there receive special services, they account for 22% of out-of-school suspensions. (*dallasnews.com*)