

October 2016

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**Presbyterian
Church of the
Atonement**
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Always Rely on Jesus

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To guard your children and their faith during good times as well as challenges.
2. To make Jesus' love real to all your family members.
3. To help you trust God no matter what you're facing.

Family life brings plenty of challenges—and also plenty of opportunities to practice trusting in Jesus. Even positive changes can disrupt our schedules and affect relationships with each other and with God. Although you can't control everything that comes your way, you can minimize the impact of stress, change, and uncertainty.

Whether children are experiencing good times or facing challenges, they have three primary needs:

1. Consistent Relationships

When life gets tough, kids need reassurance and familiarity. Model the positive qualities of Jesus, who's consistently present, unconditionally accepting, attentive, affirming, and reliable.

2. A Safe Place Children need an accepting place where they can talk about what's happening in their lives. Be real with kids and encourage them to open up about their thoughts, fears, and emotions.

3. Boundaries and Structure When new or different situations arise, maintain the same rules and routines, as much as possible. Let children know ahead of time what to expect. Then provide extra attention during changes.

The good news is that Jesus is *always* trustworthy, no matter what we're facing. Read on for active ways to share that important truth with your children.

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Jesus Won't Let You Down



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Powerful Protection

Say: **God's special people were slaves in Egypt and were tired from working so hard. Moses told the Egyptian king, "Let my people go!" but the king didn't listen. So God sent plagues, or troubles, to the land—but God kept his people safe each time!**

Re-enact the first nine plagues:

1. Blood to water—Drop red food coloring into water.
2. Frogs—Hop around the room.
3. Gnats—Buzz in a high pitch.
4. Flies—Buzz in a lower pitch and zoom around the room.
5. Diseased livestock—Moo and moan; lie on the floor with arms and legs sticking up.
6. Boils—Put dots on your skin with washable red marker.
7. Hail—Throw paper wads.
8. Locusts—Nibble on some snacks.
9. Darkness—Turn off the lights.

After each plague, shout, "Let my people go!" Take turns sharing times you've seen God's power in action. Close in prayer, asking God to help your family trust in his protection.

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Real. Bold. Love.

When life spins out of control, children need reminders of Jesus' complete trustworthiness. They also may need skills to cope with anxiety or uncertainties. Use these tips to offer kids a much-needed B.R.E.A.K.:

- **Be an example.** Minimize any unnecessary stresses and cast all of your own cares on Jesus (see 1 Peter 5:7).
- **Relate.** Spend time together, share interests, listen, and cheer kids on.
- **Educate yourself.** Learn what stressors your kids face each day. What goes on at school, at daycare, or with their friends?
- **Ask questions.** Inquiries show you care—and help you understand.
- **Keep praying.** Talk to Jesus regularly about what your kids are facing.

Trust Fall Have one partner stand behind the other and catch the standing partner as he or she falls back. **Ask:** "How did it feel to trust someone? How did it feel to be trusted—or not trusted?" **Read (or summarize) Genesis 22:1-14. Ask:** "Why did Abraham trust God? How did God reward Abraham? When is it easy or difficult for you to trust God? What does this Bible passage reveal about God that will help you trust him?"

Always Found With younger kids, unwind with a fun family game of Hide and Seek. After playing for a while, talk about how God looks out for and watches over us—at all times and in all circumstances.

Create a Smile File Not only is stress exhausting, but it removes our focus from life's many joys. Make a file, box, or journal where family members can put pictures or notes about God's blessings. Look through it together when you feel discouraged or overwhelmed.

Lick Life's Problems When life gets messy, spending one-on-one time with your children is crucial. If possible, take each child on a simple outing (for example, to an ice cream shop). Let your child air what's on his or her mind. Then

share ways you can stick together, trust God, and address any issues.

It's Stickin' Place an index card on each person's shoulder, and see if they can shake it off. Next, clip a clothespin on each person's shoulder, and see if they can shake it off (no hands allowed!). **Ask:** "Which was easier to lose, the card or clothespin? Why?" **Read aloud Hebrews 13:5b-6. Say:** "God is always with us. He's like the clothespin, not the card. We can trust God to stay with us wherever we go." **Ask:** "How does it feel to know that God never leaves you? When is a good time to trust that God is with you?"

Synchronized Skating "Skate" around a room, either with socked feet on a carpet-less floor or by placing paper plates under your feet. Then have pairs skate together, trying to do the same moves without talking. Change partners every two minutes. **Afterward ask:** "As you skated, how did you get to know your partners?" **Read aloud 1 Corinthians 8:3. Ask:** "How does it feel to hear that God knows you? How can you stay synchronized with God and always trust him?"

"He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands."

—Deuteronomy 7:9, NLT

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life*

Genre: Comedy

Rating: not yet rated

Cast: Lauren Graham, Thomas Barbusca, Griffin Gluck

Synopsis: This film, based on a novel by James Patterson, follows a sixth-grader named Rafe through assorted challenges in junior high. Feeling oppressed and stifled, the imaginative preteen devises a plan to break every single rule at school.

Our Take: The book handled tough topics with humor, so the movie has potential. But the content probably won't be appropriate for kids under 10. Parents are wise to steer clear of the stereotype that middle school is automatically a nightmare.



MUSIC

Title: *7/27*

Artist: Fifth Harmony

Synopsis: This pop and R&B girl group formed on second two of *The X Factor* reality show. Their debut album, *Reflection*, went gold. This sophomore CD includes collaborations with many big-name artists and producers, including Ty Dolla Sign, Fetty Wap, and Missy Elliott.

Our Take: Beware: Many of Fifth Harmony's lyrics and music videos are sexually explicit, such as the hit single "Work From Home." So we wouldn't recommend this group as quality role models. Although songs such as "The Life" feature a good sound without sexual content, you'll still likely come across references to drinking and "getting lit."



CULTURE & TRENDS

After-School Battles This is something to pay close attention to. A group opposed to religious-oriented extracurricular activities in public schools is fighting back with the After School Satan Club. Chapters in elementary schools throughout America will teach children about scientific reasoning, empathy, and social skills. (washingtonpost.com)

Tech Addicts Mental-health experts say technology can be just as addictive as drugs and alcohol. Some young people admit they crave video games and other screen time, using it as a coping mechanism to deal with life's problems. (dailycamera.com)

Games, Sites & Apps

Lumo

In this game, players view the action in a classic 3-D isometric perspective—but with a fresh, modern take. With more than 400 rooms to explore, players solve puzzles and find secrets. Rated E10 for comic mischief, the game also contains some toilet humor.

WatchKnowLearn.org

Serving as a library of free educational videos, this site offers children and parents a goldmine of information on a wide range of topics. The 50,000 videos are sorted into 5,000 categories, from academic topics to cultural and ethical issues. An age filter helps viewers locate appropriate content.

Color Switch

This popular app game, which is free to download but comes with ads, challenges players to move a ball through color-coded obstacles. Although the task seems simple, it takes a lot of skill. Players say it's fun because they can play over and over again in a short time period.

QUICK STATS

Got Hope? In a survey of fifth- and sixth-graders, 91% say they feel they have a promising future ahead of them. (gallup.com)

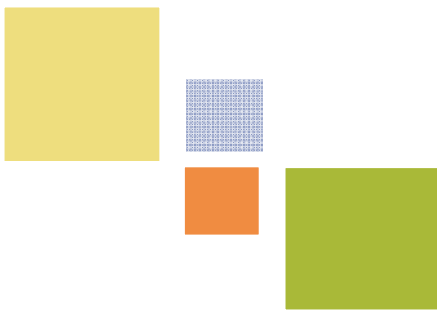
Risky Business According to the Centers for Disease Control, 43% of kids are severely under-vaccinated. Those children—as well as peers they come in contact with—are at a higher risk for disease. (bostonglobe.com)

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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.



October

SUNDAYS, 10/2, 16, 23, 30

8:30 and 11 AM WORSHIP

9:00 AM PRAISEMEISTERS Children's Choir Rehearsal

9:50 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAY, 10/9 Special Guest: Terence Little

9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:30 AM WORSHIP

NOON CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (Nursery Provided)

SUNDAY, 10/16, after 11 AM worship BISTRO! Family Style Meal

THURSDAYS, 10/6, 20, & 11/2 10:30 AM – Noon ABC (ATONEMENT BABY&TOT CLUB)

FALL FESTIVAL!
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22 – 11 AM to 2 PM

FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT DAWN MOLLOY, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES, AT children@atonementlife.org or 301-649-4131.