

April 2016

# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



through excellence in  
ministry to children.

## Protect Children From Falsehood

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To help you remind your children about God's unchanging truths.
2. To protect your kids from Satan's lies and deceptions.
3. To strengthen all your family members so they can stand firm against worldly temptations.

In today's relativistic, "anything goes" culture where people pick and choose their beliefs, Christianity gets a bad rap. To some, it represents a rigid, narrow-minded belief system.

Jesus valued people no matter their nationality, age, gender, or abilities. He wasn't exclusive. In fact, during his ministry on earth Jesus embraced non-Jews as God's people—a radical idea at the time. Jesus wants all people to know him and have a relationship with him. He was clear, though, that he is the only way to heaven (see John 14:6).

How can you respect different views while reinforcing that there's only one true God? How can you teach your children that believing in Jesus is the only way to eternal life?

It's important to talk to children about false religions and belief systems that steer people away from faith in Jesus. Otherwise, they'll be unprepared to evaluate and respond to falsehood when they're on their own.

Let kids know it's okay to wrestle with doubts and tough questions. Doubts help spur faith growth, and children must think critically about their faith so they know what they believe and why.

Also help kids understand the Bible's teachings by showing them the context of verses. And remember to keep praying and trusting the Holy Spirit. God promises to safeguard his children in his truth (see 2 Timothy 1:14).

Read on for more insights and discussion starters about this topic.

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## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Truth Seekers

Fill a large tub with an equal number of ice cubes and clear marbles. Have family members try to pick up the marbles with their bare toes.

Ask: **How easy or difficult was this? How were the marbles different from or similar to the ice? How is picking out the marbles and ice cubes with your toes like or unlike deciding what's true and what isn't?**

Say: **What's false often looks or feels like truth. Just as our feet got cold and numb from the ice while we were looking for the marbles, sometimes false things can make us numb to God's truth. The best way to know God's truth is to read and hold on to his Word, the Bible.**

Read aloud Psalm 119:105. Discuss ways that God's Word lights our path and warms our hearts. Close in prayer and enjoy a warm snack.

## Stand Firm in Faith

Lately people have become more open to discussing spirituality, God, and faith. Although the conversations aren't always Christian-friendly, any openness to faith is an opportunity for Jesus' story to come alive for people. Children can play a role in this, too. When kids get excited about having a relationship with Jesus, they'll be encouraged to share their faith with friends. To nurture your children's growing faith, it's important to have age-appropriate talks with them, explaining why Christians believe in Jesus and not other gods. Also explain why practices such as horoscopes and fortune-telling have a dangerous influence. As a family, you can be on a mission to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20)!

**Only Jesus** Sit in a circle and take turns sharing things you know about Jesus. Turn to the person on your left and share one thing only Jesus can do; for example, "Jesus can walk on water." That person then turns to the left and repeats that fact and adds another one: "Jesus can walk on water, and Jesus can forgive sins." Each new person should repeat everything that's been said and add one more thing. Help one another as needed. Afterward, discuss: "What's your favorite thing Jesus ever did? Why was Jesus able to do so many special things?" Read aloud Matthew 3:16-17. Say: "Jesus is God's Son. Only God's Son could do all the special things Jesus did."

**Absolutely True** Form a circle, play some music, and toss around a small ball or beanbag. When the music stops, the person with the item steps into the circle and says one true personal thing; for example, "Shrimp is my favorite food." Play until everyone has several turns. Then discuss: "What did you learn in this game? How easy or hard was it to come up with true things to share? Why?" Read aloud Psalm 119:160. Say: "The Bible tells us that all of God's words are true. We can trust and believe everything the Bible says."

**Pure Refreshment** Give each family member a bottle of water with the words to John 4:13-14 attached. Have them refrigerate the water and drink a little each day for a week, reading the verse each time. At the end of the week, discuss these questions: "What do you think the 'living water' is? How is Jesus like or unlike the pure water in these bottles? Why is water so important to us? Why is Jesus so important to us? How can water remind us of Jesus?"

**Stand Firm** Create a space for your family to stand inside, such as a hula hoop or a shape marked off on the floor with tape. Work together so you all fit in that tight space, and then sing a song (such as "Jesus Loves Me") while maintaining the position. If the space is too easy to occupy, tighten it and start again. Afterward, talk about these questions: "In what ways did we have to work together during this challenge? If we had to do this again, how could we make it easier to stand firmly in our little space?" Read aloud Philippians 1:27. Ask: "How can we honor Jesus by standing firm as individuals? How can we honor Jesus by standing firm as a family?" Pray that Jesus will help you all stand firm in faith.

Jesus [said], "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

—John 14:6, NLT

## MEDIA MADNESS



### MOVIE

**Title:** *The Jungle Book*

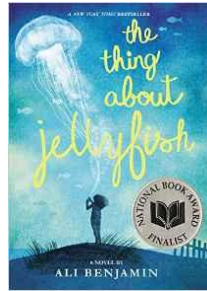
**Genre:** Adventure, Drama, Fantasy

**Rating:** PG (for some scary content)

**Cast:** Neel Sethi, Ben Kingsley, Lupita Nyong'o, Giancarlo Esposito, Scarlett Johansson, Idris Elba, Bill Murray

**Synopsis:** This is a live-action version of the Disney classic, which is based on a Rudyard Kipling novel. An orphan boy is raised in the jungle with help from a pack of wolves, a bear, and a panther.

**Our Take:** This film will appeal to kids who feel as if they've outgrown animation but still enjoy animals and adventure. Scenes of peril may be too intense for younger children. The movie can spark discussions about family, upbringing, and what factors influence how people "turn out."



### BOOK

**Title:** *The Thing About Jellyfish*

**Author:** Ali Benjamin

**Synopsis:** When seventh-grader Suzy's best friend dies in a drowning accident, she's convinced it's due to a rare jellyfish sting—because things don't just happen for no reason. Suzy sets off to prove the jellyfish theory true, and along the way she examines life, death, grief, and the wonders of the universe.

**Our Take:** Ultimately, the book's science-heavy message is that sometimes bad things happen and you can't know why. This can be a great launching-off point for a discussion with children about how we may not understand why bad things happen, but Jesus always loves and comforts us.

## Games, Sites & Apps

### Star Fox Zero

This 3D scrolling shooter video game features animals that engage in aerial combat. Players can see the view from the cockpit of the Arwing spaceship. The rating is still pending, though previous installments in the franchise have ranged from E to E10+.

### TuxPaint.org

This site offers free open-source drawing software for kids ages 3 to 12. As users access a range of drawing tools, their computer literacy improves as well. The software, which is available on multiple platforms, is also being used in elementary-school art classes.

### Kids Trade

With this free app, school-age kids can trade toys, clothes, and other items without money. Registration is required, and parents must approve trades. Users post a photo and description of each item. The app helps kids learn about trade-offs and decision-making.

## CULTURE & TRENDS

**Middle School Is the New High School** A new study shows that having kids in middle school is the most stressful time period for moms. Mothers of middle-schoolers report the highest levels of stress and loneliness, while mothers of infants and adults are the most satisfied. (Arizona State Univ.)

**Planning Made Easy** Parents who are too busy to schedule "together time" can now turn to online event planners specializing in date nights. Packages come in a range of prices, and the service takes care of all details.

## QUICK STATS

**All the Single Parents** 26% of kids now live in single-parent homes—up from 9% in 1960. This number correlates to an increase in divorce and a higher rate of births outside marriage. (Pew Research Center)

**Connected Parents** Parents spend 1.3 times more time on Facebook mobile than do childless adults. And 70% of parents who use Facebook believe they listen to their kids more than their parents listened to them. (fastcompany.com)

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# April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 <b>April Fool's Day</b>	2
3 Communion Sunday	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 <b>Tax Day</b>	16
17 God Tag Sunday	18	19	20 Final Wednesday.comm classes	21	22 <b>St. Luke's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party!</b>	23 <b>Passover Begins</b>
24	25	26	27 Closing Event for Wednesday.comm  No classes for kids- they participate	28	29	30 <b>Passover Ends</b>