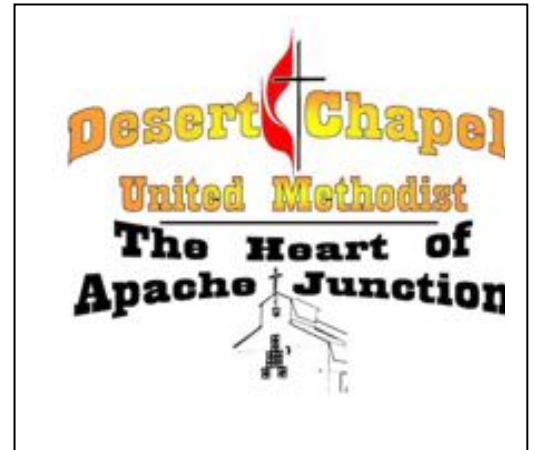


# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



## 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.



## 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.

## Jesus Won't Let You Down

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:** *Enola Holmes*

**Genre:** Action, Adventure

**Rating:** PG-13

**Cast:** Millie Bobby Brown, Henry Cavill, Sam Claflin

**Synopsis:** In this anticipated new Netflix film, Enola (Brown) searches for her missing mother. Enola becomes a feisty and capable sleuth in her own right, outsmarting even her famous brother Sherlock as she unravels a dangerous, high-stakes mystery using her smarts and fighting skills.

**Our Take:** Fans of Millie Bobby Brown (*Stranger Things*) will love the premise and adventure of this film. Based on the book series by Nancy Springer, the story can inspire conversations about independence, loyalty, and grit.



## MUSIC

**Title:** *folklore*

**Artist:** Taylor Swift

**Synopsis:** In the midst of the pandemic, Taylor Swift released her newest album with one day's notice to wide acclaim and enormous sales. The album marks a departure from Swift's typical pop stylings. The songs are simpler with a less-produced sound; heavy on guitar and piano with introspective storytelling. Swift calls it "a collection of songs and stories that flowed like a stream of consciousness."

**Our Take:** In recent years, Swift shed the innocent, upbeat lyrics and image that endeared her to young listeners (and parents). This new album is a step further into adult themes and language that aren't appropriate for kids.

## Games, Sites & Apps

### Wordington

This new word-puzzle app has kids solving puzzles to earn points and fix up an old house. Kids spell different words by drawing lines through letters arranged onscreen. Kids can buy hints with coins earned through play. The game has no objectionable content and is appropriate for ages 8+.

### Funbrainjr.com

This site is a learning hub for preschoolers, offering games, stories, apps, and printables. The site also includes reading and math exercises, plus activities with parents. While education has been short-circuited due to the pandemic, this is a great option for families unable to get young children into preschool.

### Highlightskids.com

This site offers elementary-age kids lots of fun diversion, including jokes, polls, reading, math, hidden pictures, educational topics to explore, and even ways to share their artwork. Kids can even tune in and listen to stories on demand or choose a kid-friendly recipe to make at home.

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

**Stress Epidemic** Nearly 50% of parents with children under 18 report that their stress levels related to the coronavirus pandemic are high. Many also say managing kids' online learning is a significant source of stress, according to a new survey by the American Psychological Association. (*sciencedaily.com*)

**Impacts of Isolation** Though data on how pandemic isolation is affecting kids is still limited, a study of 2,330 children in Hubei province China where the pandemic originated offers some insights. During an average 33.7 days of lockdown, 22.6% of children reported depressive symptoms and 18.9% were experiencing anxiety. (*time.com*)

## QUICK STATS

**Roll Up Your Sleeves** Since the pandemic began, parents are bearing the brunt of increased activity (and mess) at home. In a recent study, 42% of parents say they now do at least three hours *per day* of household chores or cleaning. (*American Enterprise Institute*)

**Special Needs Strain** Parents are concerned that children with special needs are more severely impacted by educational inconsistencies throughout the pandemic. Many report decreased virtual class participation, regressing social skills, and the interruption of specialized education and interventions. (*washingtonpost.com*)