

September 2018

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Use Jesus' Parables to Teach Biblical Truth

POWERSOURCE

ASK JESUS:

1. To help you share God's Word with children in age-appropriate ways.
2. To bless your family's worship, study, and devotional times.
3. To help kids see how Jesus' teaching—and all of Scripture—is relevant to their daily lives.

As a master storyteller, Jesus used simple everyday objects and stories called parables to convey profound eternal truths. Through these parables, Jesus explained in ways that humans could understand the incomprehensible logic of God's kingdom.

Because Jesus knew his audience well, he was able to speak at their level. Jesus could have taught us about the kingdom of heaven with only commands and facts: "God values the lost," "Forgive because you are forgiven," and "Be prepared for my return." But he knew the truths of heaven wouldn't make sense to human minds.

Jesus knew we'd understand better if we could identify with a woman

frantically searching for a lost coin, a servant who'd been forgiven much yet refused to forgive a little, and bridesmaids who had (or had not) come prepared for a long wait. While our human nature causes us to identify with the jealous older brother in the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus calls us to open our arms as the father did...and come home with humility as the lost son did.

Jesus began or ended his parables by saying, in effect, "This is the point. If you get anything out of the story, get this." Despite any inconsequential details of each story, truth is involved—and Jesus clearly points it out.

Read on for ideas about reinforcing biblical truth to children through the use of Jesus' parables.

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Keep Watch for Biblical Truth

God's Word isn't stagnant, which means biblical principles shows up even in stories that aren't in the Bible. Movies, fairy tales, cartoons, stories, and songs can contain traces of the gospel message that are helpful for introducing Bible themes. Discuss and debrief to help children discover the meat of the message. The Bible's truth supersedes any fiction, and it's vital that kids understand the difference. Emphasize the verse or passage that a story reinforces. Encourage children to identify forgiveness, faith, and kindness in their lives. As a family, stay alert! The kingdom of God is here, and if we watch for it carefully, we can see God working in our lives and in the lives of others.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

God Speaks Through the Bible

Beforehand, print out the words of 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Say: **Have you ever tried to see how long you could hold your breath? We'll do something kind of like that. But instead of holding our breath, let's see how far we can read something out loud in one breath.**

Read the passage aloud. Then have everyone take a deep breath and read the passage aloud as far as possible on one breath. Try several times, affirming everyone for their efforts.

Afterward, ask: **What do these verses say about the Bible? Why is the Bible important? How does God use the Bible to speak to us today? How else does God speak to us?**

Say: **Jesus told many parables, or stories, that used simple objects to teach lessons. If we listen and look closely, we can see Jesus speaking to us today, too. Praise God that he continues breathing his truth into our hearts!**

Lost and Found Set out a blanket containing several small items. Have family members study the items for 30 seconds and then close their eyes. Remove one item and hide it. Have everyone open their eyes, figure out what's missing, and search for the lost item. Play several times, rejoicing when an item is found. Read aloud Luke 15:3-10. Ask: "How did it feel to find each lost item? Why does Jesus celebrate when one of his lost children is found?"

Seed, Seed, Grow! Play this wet version of Duck, Duck Goose outside using a watering can and water. Have everyone but a "Gardener" sit in a circle. The Gardener taps people on the head while saying, "Seed!" When the Gardener says, "Grow!" and sprinkles a head with water, the Gardener puts down the can and runs around the circle to that person's spot. If the Gardener gets caught, he or she starts over. If the Gardener makes it to the empty spot, the person who was sprinkled becomes the Gardener. After playing, read aloud Mark 4:26-29. Ask: "What does a seed need to grow into a plant? What happens to a seed if it doesn't have water? What does God give us to help us grow closer to him?"

Good Samaritan Relay Choose a "hurt person" to lie on the floor across the room. Set out bandages and a cup of water. Take turns racing to the hurt person to apply a bandage and offer a drink. Time yourselves, and give each person a turn to be "hurt" and helped. Read aloud Luke 10:30-37. Ask: "How did it feel to help the hurt person—or to be helped? How would you feel if you were hurt and no one stopped to help? What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves? What can we do to help people in need?"

Who's Invited? Set out markers and blank cards or card stock. Say: "Make an invitation for any kind of party you want. Dream big and think about how fun your party will be." When everyone's done, sit in a circle. Say: "Pass your invitation to the person on your left. Look at the invitation you received and make up a weird or ridiculous reason for *not* coming to the party." Share excuses. Then pass the invitations again and invent new excuses. Ask: "How would you feel if *no one* came to your party?" Read Luke 14:16-24. Say: "Let's not make excuses to avoid Jesus! He wants us to accept his invitation to live in our hearts—and to be with him forever."

"Jesus...had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things."

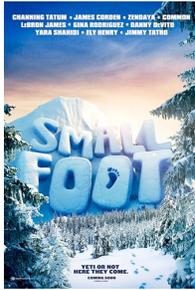
—Mark 6:34

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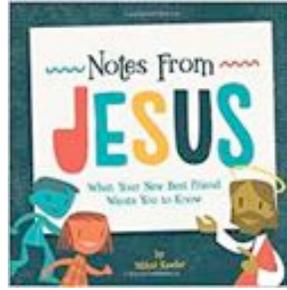
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MOVIE



BOOK

Title: *Smallfoot*

Genre: Animation, Adventure, Comedy

Rating: not yet rated

Cast: Channing Tatum, Zendaya, Gina Rodriguez, Danny DeVito, Common

Synopsis: In this 3D computer-animated comedy, a Yeti named Migo is convinced that the elusive creatures called Smallfoots (humans) really do exist. Migo tells a group of young Yeti about “a terrifying creature with perfect white teeth and breath that just smells all minty fresh, and the only hair it has on its entire body is on top of its head!”

Our Take: By turning the legend of Bigfoot upside down, this family-friendly film explores truth and why we believe or don't believe something. It also addresses what's considered frightening to different people.

Title: *Notes From Jesus*

Author: Mikal Keefer

Synopsis: This hardcover book, subtitled “What Your New Best Friend Wants You to Know,” is geared toward children and families who are new to the Christian faith. It has answers to common questions, inspirational Bible verses, and age-appropriate ideas for growing a relationship with Jesus. Playful illustrations fill the pages.

Our Take: By reminding children that Jesus enjoys their company and wants to have a lifelong friendship with them, this book makes Jesus personal and relatable. Kids will feel more comfortable sharing their lives with Jesus and will be reminded to keep learning more about him, too. *Notes From Jesus* makes a meaningful gift.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Endangered Species? According to demographers, the family-planning habits of Millennials are making middle children extinct. Fewer couples want more than two children, and only 12% of women in their early 40s have four or more kids. (usatoday.com)

Flipped Classrooms If your child's teacher has “flipped,” don't flip out! More educators now ask students to watch videotaped lectures at home, reserving school time for completing assignments and activities. Teachers say flipped classrooms encourage active, collaborative learning and allow students to get more one-on-one help. ([various websites](http://variouswebsites))

QUICK STATS

Raking in the Dough According to a poll of 10,000 parents, children ages 4 to 14 earn more than \$8 per week in allowance. For the top-paying chore of car washing, kids earn about \$12 per task. For help with managing allowances, see the app to the left. (cnbc.com)

Literacy Boost More than 85% of African-American fourth-grade boys aren't proficient in reading. A new literacy program is stocking more than 100 U.S. barbershops with culturally relevant stories for young readers. (barbershopbooks.org)

Games, Podcasts & Apps

Runbow

This fast, competitive game is now available for Switch, PS4, and Xbox One. Players race across platforms to touch a trophy. The challenge is that the game's background color keeps changing. When it matches a platform's color, the platform can no longer support a player.

Dream Big

Hosted by third-grader Eva Karpman and her mom Olga, this family-friendly podcast features inspiring interviews with trailblazers, experts, and celebrities from a wide variety of fields. Eva's goals are to help kids live their passion, realize their potential, and “take massive action.”

RoosterMoney

This free app helps parents track allowance and chores, while teaching children the value of money. Kids can save toward goals and earn rewards, with parents overseeing what money goes in and out of their accounts. The app is designed for use with kids ages 4 and up.

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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.