

theParentLink Buzz Edition



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Offer Praises to Our Loving God

This quarter in Sunday school, your children are learning that "God is loving." Children are discovering the many ways God loves us and how we can respond as a result.

When children learn that God is loving, they praise and trust him. God lovingly made us, and he forgives our sins when we mess up. He offers us eternal life through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. Because of that sacrificial love, we worship God joyfully. God, who *is* love (1 John 4:8), also meets all our daily needs and knows what's best for us.

Feeling safe and loved helps children trust that God loves them, too. You can help children develop trust through:

Trustworthy Relationships—Children need to learn to trust other adults. Expose kids to nurturing people, from grandparents to church nursery staff. Try to keep your promises to children.

Trust-Building Games—With younger children, play Peek-a-Boo and sing familiar songs. With all your kids, laugh often and give lots of reassuring hugs.

Trustworthy Environments—Safe, engaging surroundings allow children to trust that they're taken care of. But the most important environmental aspects aren't things; they're the people who offer consistency and comfort to children.

Faithful Foundations—As trust grows, you create a foundation for children to build trust in God. Bit by bit, you empower kids to trust in Someone who's so much bigger than they are.



PowerSource



Ask God:

1. To help your children offer God heartfelt praise.
2. To strengthen your children's trust in God and his forgiveness and goodness.
3. To show your children ways to reflect God's love daily.

Parenting Insights

Use these age-level insights from *Children's Ministry Magazine* to understand how children's views of God change and develop as they grow.

Ages 2 to 4

Preschoolers identify God as having a human form and characteristics. These traits most likely resemble those seen in significant adults in kids' lives.

Ages 5 to 8

Fear of the unknown prompts kids to want to believe in a God who's all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere all the time. Their understanding of God's love and tenderness depends on how adults express these qualities.

Ages 9 to 12

Older children's perception of God can range from a legendary superhero to a living, spiritual being. Kids often picture God the same way they view their own fathers.

In Parents We Trust?

- In a survey by mission group OneHope, many children and teens worldwide said they doubt God's existence. Yet kids almost everywhere said their parents were their main influence.
- At quibblo.com, a quiz site popular with preteens, kids were asked, "Who do you trust?" The answers, in order, were "yourself," "friends," "God," "boyfriend or girlfriend," "parents," "animals," and "the church." In last place was "the media."

OpenTheBook

"Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name."
Psalm 103:1

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart."
Proverbs 3:5a

Because God is loving and trustworthy, we offer him heartfelt praise each day.

Teachable Moments

1. **Impromptu Praise**—As you go about your day, point out to your children the many often-overlooked blessings that God has given us. Stop, wherever you're at, to give a "shout-out" to God, thanking him for everything he made and does for us.



2. **A Living Trust**—Let children see what your loving, trusting relationship with God looks like. Using age-appropriate words, talk to children about times you've felt really close to God. Also discuss with them how God hears and answers your prayers.
3. **Trust in the Word**—Remind children that God's Word is as trustworthy as he is. Turn to the Bible often when children have questions or fears. When your children are afraid of something, for example, read to them how Jesus calmed the storm (see Mark 4:35-41).



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are **ON THE ROAD**, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." **Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT**

Talking to children about God and their relationship with him is essential for faith development. Plus, it's great for family bonding, too. Use these questions to start a conversation:

1. What are some reasons we praise God?
2. What are some ways we praise God every day? How can we praise and worship God even when we aren't in church together?
3. How has God provided for our family? What needs can we bring to God in prayer right now?
4. How can we build our trust in God?

Family Experience: Wonderful Worship

Use these fun, meaningful experiences from *Group's Hands-On Bible* to help children realize why we praise God—and what a privilege it is.

- **Why Worship?**—Gather family members together to see what a herd of sheep has to do with why we should worship God. Place a handful of cotton balls on a table. These are your sheep. Then wave a sheet of heavy paper at your flock.



Ask: "What happened to our sheep?"
Say: "Maybe they needed a shepherd to take care of them! God is our shepherd, and he always takes care of his sheep—which means us! What a great reason to worship God!" Read aloud Psalm 95:6-7. Then pray together, thanking God for always taking care of your family.

- **Marshmallows From Heaven**—The Israelites, wandering in the middle of the desert, were running out of food. The answer didn't come from earth; it came from heaven. Read the account in Exodus 16:11-21. Gather some spoons and mini marshmallows, and have everybody wash their hands. Then have family members take turns using a spoon to launch marshmallows into one another's mouths. See how far apart you can stand from one other and still make it.

Say: "We fed each other in a fun way. God fed his people in an amazing way." Read aloud Psalm 37:25. Then ask: "How has God provided what you've needed at home? at school? away from home? How should we respond to God for meeting our needs?"



What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *The Secrets of Jonathan Sperry*
(Sept. 18)

Genre: Christian drama

Rating: PG (for mild thematic elements)

Cast: Gavin MacLeod, Jansen Panettiere, Robert Guillaume

Synopsis: This coming-of-age tale takes place in a quaint town in the early 1970s. Three 12-year-old boys are inseparable friends who face challenges, including a town bully. Their lives change when they meet Jonathan Sperry, age 75, an encouraging mentor. The film contains a clear Christian message, emphasizing how the Bible contains answers for everyone's lives.

Discussion Questions: Talk about someone, besides your family, who's made a lasting difference in your life. What do you think you'll remember most from your childhood, and why? Read 2 Timothy 3: 14-17. How is the Bible relevant to the stuff you're facing now?



What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Selena Gomez

Album: *Kiss and Tell*

Artist Info: Gomez, now 17, has been an actress since appearing on *Barney and Friends* at age 7. After being discovered by the Disney Channel, she appeared in two Disney shows. Now she has a lead role in *Wizards of Waverly Place*.

Summary: On her "pop-rock-techno-inspired" debut album, Gomez aims to create "fun" music that parents and kids can enjoy together. Some of the deeper lyrics address how plastic Hollywood can be. Gomez says she tries to "live day by day" and not focus on media scrutiny or rumors.

Discussion Questions: What entertainment does our family enjoy together? What does it feel like to be under lots of scrutiny? Read Ecclesiastes 3: 1. What helps you take life one day at a time?



What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Gardening Mama</i>	Players grow and harvest various flowers, fruits, and veggies by using the stylus as a gardening tool.	Wii; E
<i>Go Play Lumberjacks</i>	Players use the Wii Remote to saw trees, split logs, and compete in events such as the Pole Climb and Log Roll.	Nintendo DS; E
<i>TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled</i>	The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles return in this downloadable 3D remake, with lots of beat-'em-up action.	X-box Live; T

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- More than 1,200 teachers have petitioned educational book publisher Scholastic to stop selling toys to kids. Last year, about one-third of the items in Scholastic's catalogs weren't books. (usatoday.com)

- Due to budget cutbacks, more parents are now chipping in money toward classroom essentials, including teachers. PTA groups are raising funds to keep school programs and staff that would be cut otherwise. (msnbc.com)

Quick Stats

- Children eat an average of 228 more calories during meals when the television is on. (University of Toronto)
- About 10% of public elementary schools require students to wear uniforms. (publicschoolreview.com)



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