

January 2010



NOTE FROM YOUR CHILDREN'S DIRECTOR

Welcome to the new Children's Monthly Parent Link newsletter. Each month we will email you the link. Inside each issue you will see dates for upcoming events, birthdays listed on a calendar, the virtue and verse, upcoming mission projects for the month along with the Food Pantry items. Enjoy!

PowerSource

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How to Handle Doubt & Questions

"Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith," wrote Frederick Buechner. "They keep it awake and moving." This runs contrary to most people's assumptions about doubt—that questioning your faith proves you're a weak Christian. But when we have doubts about something, we're forced to examine its truthfulness and consider how much of ourselves we wish to invest in it. If we (and our children) are going to truly own our beliefs, we must critically evaluate them first.

Teaching your children that it's okay to express doubts and ask questions is crucial for their faith development. "When the doubts get ignored, it could eventually result in serious skepticism of one's worldview and personal faith," says professor Dean Hardy. Use these tips to help kids wonder and open up:

Don't feel threatened when children want to ask questions. These queries help kids verbalize their doubts. View tough questions not as a sign of rebellion but as opportunities to teach and learn.

Listen intently, and don't shame kids for asking questions. Reflect on what children say and affirm their feelings with phrases such as "You seem afraid" or "You look like you have a question."

Make your family a "safe zone." Foster attitudes that say it's okay to question and doubt. That will encourage children to feel free to think critically and explore honestly.



Parenting Insights

These age-level insights from *Children's Ministry Magazine* track how young Christians' thoughts and questions change over time.

Ages 3 to 5

Older preschoolers begin to ask "why?" and "how?" Miracles, symbolism, and God's nonphysical nature are often confusing for kids this age. Answer their questions simply with words that mean exactly what they say.

Ages 6 to 8

Children this age begin to distinguish between fantasy and reality and begin to use logical thinking. Give them answers that allow them to use these skills; otherwise, they'll get frustrated.

Ages 9 to 12

Older children tend to question some basic beliefs they previously accepted. They want to explore an issue from many perspectives. Share your own doubts and help kids find a niche to put their faith into action.

OpenTheBook

**“You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”
John 20:29**

Jesus said these words to “Doubting Thomas,” the disciple who wouldn’t believe that Jesus rose unless he saw and touched him. When our faith is unsteady, we can find answers in God’s Word.

Teachable Moments

- 1. Establish the Bible as the authority for truth.** Affirm that whatever God’s Word says has either happened or will happen. Tell Bible accounts with enthusiasm so your children will believe them, too.



- 2. Let your children know that you also doubt sometimes.** Share the ways that your faith is a work in progress. Tell how God has worked in your life today. Be an example of how to grow through positive doubting.
- 3. Celebrate your children’s faith journeys.** Recognize that kids’ images of God expand as they struggle with life’s complexities. Accept their immature perceptions and challenge them as their ability to think abstractly develops. Mark important milestones such as baptism, first Bible, Sunday school promotion, confirmation, etc.

JANUARY SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATES

VIRTUE: Discipline doing what you need to do now so you can grow stronger.
MEMORY VERSE: “Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come.”
1 Timothy 4:8

FOOD PANTRY: Canned Soup

MISSION PROJECT: C-rats packing 1st Sunday
Care Giver kit notes-2nd Sunday

Support children’s faith development by talking to them about their doubts and questions. Start by asking:

1. How much proof or evidence do you need before you believe something or someone?
2. What things about God and the Bible are hardest for you to believe, and why?
3. Why do you think God asks us to believe without visual “proof”?

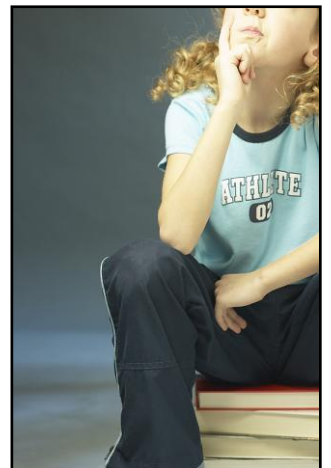
Family Experience: Faith Adventures

Many people in the Bible struggled with doubt. Use these experiences from Group’s Hands-On Bible to explore faith.

- **What You Know**—Read aloud John 20:24-31 to meet a doubting disciple. Then say: “When you have doubts, it’s helpful to separate what you *know* from what you *feel*. For example, you may doubt that God loves you because you didn’t make the soccer team. You feel alone and unloved. But the Bible says that God loves you and that he’ll take care of you. Because the Bible says it, you know it’s true, even if it doesn’t feel that way right now.”

Together, divide a sheet of poster board into two columns. Label one “What I Feel” and the other “What I Know.” List some feelings, and across from each feeling, write a Bible verse in response. For example, across from “loneliness” you can write “God is with me. Matthew 28:20.” Use a Bible index to help you find relevant passages.

- **Childlike Faith**—Say: “When you were littler, you trusted your parents about everything. Jesus says everyone should have faith like little kids—even grown-ups! We *all* need Jesus, *all* the time.” Read aloud Luke 18:15-17. Then make something to remind you that Jesus wants you to trust him the same way little kids trust their parents. Have each family member draw a heart on a piece of construction paper. Write “Jesus” inside it. To the left, tape a picture of when you were little. To the right, tape a recent picture of yourself. Decorate and hang the paper as a reminder of your faith.





What's Playing at the Movies

Movie: *The Tooth Fairy* (Jan. 22)

Genre: Family comedy

Rating: PG

Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Ashley Judd, Julie Andrews

Synopsis: A tough minor-league hockey player with a reputation for doing facial damage to opponents gets busted for some insensitive comments to a child. His lousy attitude earns him a sentence working for a week as a real-life tooth fairy. After getting used to his new role, he starts to rediscover some of his own long-lost dreams.

Discussion Questions: What type of attitude do you usually have? Think of a time you've hurt someone with your words: Were you able to undo the damage? If so, how? Read aloud Matthew 18:4. What does it mean to have a childlike faith?

3rd GRADERS PRESENTED BIBLES IN WORSHIP JAN. 17TH

Jan. 10th our 3rd graders and their parents participated in a Home Court Advantage Class just for them. We started as a group and then the 3rd graders were escorted by coach Bonnie Pierson and Julie Smith to the library. Our librarian Peggy Greenawalt gave the children a lesson on using the library and reference books and Bibles. Later the children explored using the helps in their new Bibles. The parents remained to write messages to their children to be included inside their Bibles. A special thank you to Nelda Moore for the beautiful calligraphy inside the Bibles and for donating the Bible covers. The following children received their Bibles on SUNDAY January 17th.

Ryan Blais
Everett Burgess
Caroline Cheatham
Uriah Dorian
Laura LaBoon
Luke Lasseter
Mason Nelson
James Stritzinger
Noah Watson
Megan Cox
Audrey Kaufmann
Kinga Parrish
Owen Robertson
Olivia Rodrigues
Samantha Williams

Kyle Boyer
Kevin Camera
Ivan Dorian
Brian Jessich
James Lane
Katie Nabors
Brooke Schneider
Hope Vittorini
Rory Williams
Katherine Craig
Ben Pankonien
Sarah Patino
Alex Thornley
Pierce Rodrigues



Culture & Trends

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

- "Helicopter parents" who are overinvolved with their children's lives face a growing backlash. Kids grow best when parents let go, experts say.
- The recession is slowing such "hyperparenting." One-third of parents say they've had to cut their children's extracurricular activities—and most families admit they like the results.

(CBS News Poll)

Quick Stats

- An estimated 13% of U.S. children walk or bike to school these days, compared to more than 50% of children 40 years ago.
- A study shows that children burn about three times more calories playing some exercise-oriented video games than they do just sitting on the couch watching television.

(USA Today)



January 2010

					1	2
Birthdays					Ella Gomillion	Haley Kimery
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Jack Hoover Audrey Humann Haley Ely Kingdom Court meets	Caroline Wilson	Landon Smith			Brooke Fertig	Avery Rose Henry Smith
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Kingdom Court Meets Home Court Advantage Class 3 rd Grade	Brynn Perry Davis Chibib			Anna Wehring Grant Garrison Katie Kassabian Will Rogers		Parker Short Audrey Swallow Isabella and Jillian Palmieri
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Ryan Lindley Tessa Davis Kingdom Court Meets 3 rd Graders Receive Bibles in Worship	Honor Stokes William Helble Bennett Ross Angel Russell Max Bryant		Katherine Abel			Lauren Pence
24	25	26		28	29	30
Jennifer Jeah Katherine Steed Kingdom Court Meets	Claudia DeGroot Stone Patterson	Nathaniel Leper		Lilly Young Luke Mizell	Payton Siler Layne Jenkins	
31						
Kingdom Court Meets						

Sunday school Curriculum

Virtue: DISCIPLINE - doing what you need to do now so you can grow strong.

Objective: Memorize - The Apostles' Creed

Food Pantry Item: Canned Soup

Jan. 3rd- Bottom Line: If you want to know God better, read His Book.

[Refrigerator Door](#) [God Time Card](#)

Jan. 10th- Bottom Line: If you want to know God better, remember His words.

[Refrigerator Door](#) [God Time Card](#)

Jan. 17th- Bottom Line: If you want to know God better, talk to him.

[Refrigerator Door](#) [God Time Card](#)

Jan. 24th- Bottom Line: If you want to know God better, talk about Him with your friends.

[Refrigerator Door](#) [God Time Card](#)

Jan. 31st - Bottom Line: If you want to know God better, make Him more important than anything.

[Refrigerator Door](#) [God Time Card](#)