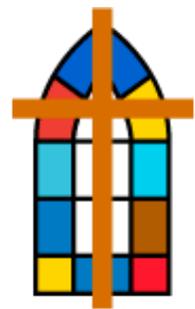




parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**MIFFLIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

The Benefits (Spiritual ones, too!) of Gardening

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you find ways to connect your child with God's creation.
2. To help you nurture your children's developing faith.
3. To help you assure your children that God is with them as they grow.

April showers bring May flowers....but what do May flowers bring?

I am not sure why this joke makes me smile. Maybe because it is so simple, maybe because it reminds me spring is coming...what's the answer? Well, read on, my friends.

So this month I have decided to write on the benefits of gardening, nature and such. So why garden with children? Gardening grows curiosity, exploration, and develops a strong sense of self.

Also backyard gardening is making a comeback:

- 35% of all households in America, or 42 million households, are growing food at home or in a community garden, up 17% in five years.
- Largest increases in participation seen among younger households - up 63% to 13 million since 2008
- 2 million more households community gardening -- up 200% since 2008

This is a trend I am happy to be a part of.

(continued on next page)

Your Family's Faith Journey

At-home faith talks are vital for nurturing children spiritually. In *Shift* (Group), Brian Haynes offers these guidelines for family times with Jesus:

Celebrate New Life After seeing a baptism, talk to your children about their own baptisms—or their desire to be baptized. Tell them baptism marks their inclusion into a church family. As a family, make handmade cards for newly baptized people.

God's Relevant Word Show children how the Bible applies to their lives. Talk about biblical heroes and how they both stumble and grow in faith. Tie Bible verses into kids' interests, from music and poetry to travel and adventure.

Lifelong Learners Preteens often feel as if they've outgrown Sunday school. Provide age-appropriate Bibles and devotionals for older kids who are forming their identity in Jesus. Help them anticipate the future, and assure them that Jesus is always with them as they grow.

Family Timelines Tape a long piece of paper to a wall. Together, create a timeline of your family's journey with Jesus using words, drawings, and Bible verses. Add marriages, birthdays, and milestones such as when a child started preschool or you moved. Include fun memories as well as challenges that affected everyone. Then discuss: "What are our best memories? What difficult events have we faced? How did those make us closer to each other and to Jesus? How have we seen God's faithfulness? What dreams do we have as a family?"

The Benefits... of Gardening

(continued)

I will talk about how a backyard garden has grown with my family. It started with one small box, and an asparagus patch. I now have 7 raised garden beds, and work from March through the time the ground freezes, although with recent warm winters, I will be investing in a cold frame, and continue as long as the Earth allows me.

Vivian has helped me since the beginning. She has moved from being curious, to Mommies helper, to an accomplished bean and carrot grower. She at age 6 understands very basic concepts such as plant rotation, how pesticides work, and why we love our friends the bees. The other benefit is she eats a ton of fresh veggies. There is a sense of pride in growing your own food, and it gives children a sense of accomplishment.

So all of this is great, but what does it have to do with GIFT? The Bible is full of agricultural metaphors, and growing flowers and vegetables can help teach children to appreciate where their food comes from.

I believe children should be taught to respect our Earth, it is a responsibility given to us by God. To me, gardening is a great way to teach respect for nature, and how to make it grow. I also think kids learn the life cycle, and how even their little hands can help a tiny little seed grow.

Well, for those who have two black thumbs and zero interest, I get that. It is not for everyone and it is a commitment. I also encourage exploring CSA's, farmers markets, community gardens. For us—it is a luxury, a hobby. For others, it is part of living, part of gaining some nutrition, and there is respect to be learned in getting to know your local growers. Start small, even a potted basil is enough to get started. Good luck----and oh, the answer is Pilgrims---Ha!

Kim Winters

SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. ~Joshua 1:9

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parenting
CHRISTIAN kids

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Fast. Bold. Love.

MAY CALENDAR

Friendship Tea

Sat., May 6, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Our Friendship Tea for women and girls of all ages is right around the corner! Plan to join us in the church Fellowship Hall for an afternoon of tea, fellowship, a Bible devotional and music, including a sing-along with a “friendship” theme. It’s a great event to invite friends or family who otherwise don’t attend Mifflin. Several young moms and daughters are coming—don’t miss out! Call or email the church 614-471-4491 or Mifflin@mifflinpres.org.

Education Appreciation Day Sunday, May 7, both services

We will be recognizing all those who help in our education program - Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, Mid-week class teachers and helpers. Please help us show our appreciation to those who give of their time to help us grow in our faith. Maybe your child could write a thank-you card.

GiFT for Parents AND GiFT for Families Sunday, May 7 (see sidebar)

**Presbytery Green Event
Tuesday, May 16, 12-3 pm** at Overbrook Presbyterian Church, 4131 N. High St., Columbus. Gather with others throughout the Presbytery for round table discussions and special speakers on how the faith community is **responding to climate change**. Round Table Topics include: **Church Gardening & Community Impact**; and, **Being the Voice of Caring for all of Creation**. A \$15 donation per person will help pay for the local food lunch. Contact Kathi Bubb for more information.

Prayer Eggs On-Going!!

Did your family take a prayer egg at worship? Don’t forget to pray for that child (or children!), and remind your child that someone is praying for them.

What to Know About VBS

When: Sunday, June 11—Thursday, June 15 from 6:00—8:00 pm, optional dinner at 5:30 pm

What: Our theme is “Hero Central: Discovering Your Strength in God”

Who: Children can be registered online at mifflinpres.org.

Adults are needed to volunteer for one or more nights—check out the sign up sheet at the Info Center.

Friends and Family are welcome—it’s a great opportunity to invite those who might be looking for a new church home.

See Kathi with questions.

GiFT



Growing in Faith Together

Our next **GiFT for Parents** will be on **Sunday, May 7**. Once you have dropped off your children in the choir room for Sunday School and had a cup of coffee, join with other parents and grandparents in the choir room at 10:15 am. We will hear a garden update, talk about summer programming and share ways that we can continue nurturing our children’s faith over the travels of summer.

GiFT for Families

Our next GiFT for Families event will be a potluck and church scavenger hunt on **Sunday, May 7** from 12:30 - 2:00 pm. This is for families of parents (and grandparents) who have children up through elementary school. Sign up at the Info Center. Friends are welcome!