



October 2017

# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**MIFFLIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

## Help Kids Develop a “Thinking Faith”

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK JESUS:

1. To help your children trust God, not themselves, for answers.
2. To help you be a faithful example of how to learn, evaluate, and problem-solve.
3. To guide your kids to make wise, God-honoring decisions.

You’ve likely heard the buzz (in some form) about “21<sup>st</sup>-century learning.” Instead of just memorizing facts, children are now learning how to think, critique, and synthesize (combine and apply) information. Collaboration and problem-solving are also key.

These learning strategies can help kids grow in their Christian faith, too. Teaching abstract concepts to younger children can be challenging, but experts say certain techniques help preschool- and elementary-age kids move beyond concrete thinking.

For example, sensory experiences, movement, interaction, and personal involvement all make concepts more real to young learners. Children hang new information onto previous bits of knowledge called “mental hooks.” Kids

need hands-on experience to build on those hooks. That’s why, rather than just call God a divine being, we also say God is a father, friend, and provider. We “hang” God onto hooks kids can grasp.

Then as children’s cognitive abilities develop, they’re able to use “mental operations”—letting them think more abstractly about relationships or patterns of objects without the actual objects present. Asking kids solid, higher-level questions further enhances their critical thinking about faith issues.

As author Josh McDowell notes, “I needed to teach my kids to think, to think logically, to come to their conclusions. Because if there is always Dad’s answer, then they couldn’t develop convictions. ... We need to put our children on a quest for truth.”



## Living and Learning



## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### On the “Grow”

With a marker, divide a sheet of poster board into four squares. Label the squares “Wisdom,” “Physically,” “Friendship With God,” and “Friendship With People.”

Read aloud Luke 2:52. Say: **Jesus was a child once and grew up. Let’s play a game to think about ways we grow.**

Stand back from the poster and take turns throwing a beanbag at it. The “thrower” then acts out one thing he or she can do to grow in that area. For example, “Friendship With People” could be sharing a toy. Try to guess what’s being acting out—no talking!

Afterward, ask: **Why was it important for Jesus to grow in these four areas? How can Jesus help you as you grow in each area? What’s one area you can ask Jesus to help you grow in this week?**

Say: **By strengthening your mind, your body, your friendship with God, and your friendships with people, you can grow up just like Jesus did!**

As children grow and learn, they must solve problems along the way. Here’s how that happens—and how you can help as a parent.

**Birth to Age 2** Young children are sensory-oriented and learn by imitating. Offer choices and model different basic problem-solving techniques.

**Ages 3 to 5** Preschoolers are multisensory, solving as they touch and do. Allow time and space for problem-solving. Praise children’s efforts.

**Ages 6 to 8** Kids this age begin to learn in specific ways (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), which also affects how they tackle problems.

**Ages 9 to 12** Preteens observe how peers solve problems. They want to be independent but may lack confidence. Tell kids you trust their abilities. Let them know failure is okay. Also be available to discuss problems.

**Mobile Learners** Researchers agree that some of the most productive mental processing occurs when children are active and involved. So get up and discuss Jesus and faith while doing other activities as a family.

**The “I Can’t” Jar** When children say they can’t do something, write down the problem and pray about it together. When the obstacle has been overcome, put the slip of paper in a jar as a reminder of what Jesus helps us accomplish.

**Apply Always** While reading the Bible together, ask questions with specific applications; for example, “How can we serve our neighbors today?” and “What’s one thing you can do this week to show love?”

**Calm & Collected** Model for children how to react to bad or scary news. Don’t use worst-case scenarios or exaggerate risks to make a point. Instead, provide accurate, age-appropriate information. Brainstorm solutions together to empower kids and to give them a sense of control.

**Wise Guys (and Gals)** Ask family members what they’d wish for if they were granted one wish. Then read aloud 1 Kings 3:5-9. Make

booklets out of folded paper, stapling the folded edge. Fill them with wise sayings (or drawings) you can teach one another—anything from “Treat others the way you want to be treated” to “Don’t shake a bottle of soda before opening it.” Browse through Proverbs for ideas. Add pages and ideas throughout the school year.

**Twenty Questions** Encourage interruptions and pause often while sharing biblical concepts with your kids. Let them share their thoughts and ask questions. You’ll discover whether they have adequate “mental hooks” (see page one) on which to hang new information.

**Be Strengthened** Read aloud Isaiah 40:31. Say: “If we trust in God, he will give us new strength.” As a reminder to trust God when problems arise, take turns trying a cool trick. Stand in a doorway and press the backs of your hands against the door frame as hard as you can. Count to 25, then step away, relax your arms, and see what happens. Say: “You found new strength! When you stopped pressing so hard, your arms wanted to fly up. God renews our strength when we’re tired and when life gets tough. Always trust God!”

## SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:10

# October Calendar

## Congregational Meeting and Chili Cook-Off Sunday, October 15 Following Worship at 10:30 am

We will have ONE Worship Service on Sunday, October 15 (with Sunday School at 9:15 am that day), which will be followed by our Annual Congregational Meeting to elect new officers for 2018.

Following that brief meeting, we will gather for a Chili Cook-Off in the Fellowship Hall. You KNOW that you have a great chili recipe that you're dying to share. Bring a pot so that others can try it and compare it with other great cooks in the church. Maybe preparing the chili can be a family activity! Don't want to cook? Then plan to join us for a yummy lunch—bread, chips and cheese will be provided.

## Halloween Trunk or Treat Saturday, October 29 3:00 pm

Join us for a fun all-church outing as we gather together in the church parking lot for some Trunk-or-Treating.

Don't know the term? We will have cars parked in the church lot, with candy in the trunks of their cars. Children move safely from one station to another for candy and games—in costume, of course! (Grown-ups are welcome to wear costumes, too...)

More details will be coming soon, but be sure to save the date—and invite a friend! This is a great event where you can introduce others to our Mifflin Church family.

## Advent Children's Musical

This year, Julie Oswalt and Kate Cremean will be leading our youngest children, preschool-5th grade, in an Advent musical.

The program will be presented in worship on **December 3rd, at 10:30.** (one service that Sunday)

Would your child like to participate? There will be large and small group singing and speaking parts for those who are interested.

We will rehearse on Sunday afternoons from 3:30-4:30. Rehearsal dates are: Oct. 8, 15, 22 and Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26.

There will be a dress rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 2nd, from 10-12.

This is a wonderful way for our children to lead worship.

There is a sign-up sheet at the Info Center. Please see Kate if you have any questions. Thanks!



Growing in  
Faith Together

## GiFT for Parents

GiFT for Parents provides an opportunity for parents of preschoolers through middle schoolers to gather together once a month to talk about issues they are dealing with as parents and families. Topics in the past have included:

- Prayer
- Dealing with technology
- Healthy eating
- Helping your child grow spiritually
- Having a simpler Christmas
- Planning activities for families

GiFT for Parents meets the first Sunday of every month. The first meeting will be on **Sunday, October 1.** After you have dropped off your children for Sunday School at 10:10 am, grab a cup of coffee and plan to join us in the choir room at 10:20 am.

Julie Oswalt, our new Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry, is looking for things that YOU would like to discuss. Contact Julie at [joswalt@mifflinpres.org](mailto:joswalt@mifflinpres.org) or come to the first meeting.