



parenting CHRISTIAN kids



**MIFFLIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

Cultivate Children's Curiosity and Creativity

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your children with curiosity about God and the amazing world he made.
2. To help you remain curious and creative as you parent.
3. To reveal himself to your family members in meaningful ways.

Young children are savvy explorers, investigating God's creation with unbridled enthusiasm and fearless questions. Their imagination allows them to experiment with thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Imagination is also a powerful tool for discovering faith concepts. Without consistent opportunities, however, curiosity and imagination plummet by the preteen years.

Likewise, creativity often becomes less important to kids as they grow—and as they progress through the educational system. Yet that skill is an effective way to help children develop a relationship with Jesus.

"Kids can't literally hug Jesus or sit on his lap, [so] creativity helps bridge that

gap," says Jeff White, author of *Holy Wow* (Group). Creativity lets kids "explore God and understand who he is, whether through art, music, food, drama, storytelling, or other forms of self-expression," he adds.

Jesus adored and welcomed little children; in fact, he instructs us all to have a childlike faith (see Matthew 18:3). That type of faith is trusting yet curious. It asks questions, seeks new insights, and wonders how Jesus would address challenges.

Nurturing children's curiosity and creativity provides a solid foundation for learning, living, and loving. The ultimate goal of an inquisitive, imaginative mind is to know Jesus so we can discover how to serve and love him—and other people.

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Group
Real. Bold. Love.



Spark the Joy of Discovery



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Bubbling With Joy

You'll need a Bible, a clear glass filled with carbonated soda water, raisins, and praise music.

Ask: **What kinds of things make you burst with excitement?**

Read aloud Psalm 100. Say: **God wants us to be filled with joy when we praise and worship him.**

Give each family member several raisins. Take turns dropping raisins in the glass while music plays.

When the raisins start bouncing around, say: **The raisins are reacting to a gas called carbon dioxide. Tiny bubbles form on the raisins, lifting them up. When a raisin reaches the top of the water, the bubbles pop, and the raisin sinks. Then the process starts again.**

Ask: **How can worshipping God make us bubble up with joy?**

Close in prayer—and then dance to the praise music!

Spending time with children can be unpredictable—and can lead to many God-moments. Through their vivid imaginations, children become part of God's unfolding story with a sense of innocence and trust that we lose as adults. There's no rush to confront little ones with reality; that happens soon enough. Set aside criticism, competition, structure, and comparisons. Instead, emphasize praise, acceptance, freedom, insights, and smiles. Rushing squelches curiosity, so allow plenty of time for your children to make and share their discoveries. Welcome their questions, even if you don't have all the answers. And remember to show curiosity yourself, because that mindset is contagious! Try these ideas for revealing biblical truths through imagination and creative exploration.

It's a Draw Set out art supplies and draw, paint, or sculpt Bible events. Celebrate children's creativity, and find opportunities to link their abstract art with God's creation and his Word.

Make Merry Create homemade tambourines and then make joyful noises of worship to God. Sing and dance, waving ribbons for extra effects. Older kids can write songs about a Bible passage.

Action! Encourage children to engage with Bible events by acting them out together. After reading aloud from a children's Bible or Bible storybook, dress up, role-play, and improvise dialogue. Allow embellishment and laughter.

STEM Stimulation Incorporate other subjects into Bible time. Use math to demonstrate 40 days of the flood, 40 days of temptation, or forgiving 70 times 7. Do research to find out what's in a drop of pond water. Use blocks to build the Tower of Babel or the Temple.

Creative Creation Together, brainstorm things God created. Read aloud Genesis 1:27. Say: "Because we're made in God's image, we're creative too!" Set out shapes cut from different colors of construction paper. Have family members design pictures of God's creation (animals, flowers, people, and so on).

Snacks Make Things "Stick" Research shows that snacks affect children's memories because food connects to emotions. So make and enjoy Bible-themed snacks that tie into lessons. Use animal crackers, goldfish crackers, blue gelatin (for water), marshmallows (for sheep), and so on. Search online for easy recipes related to each lesson.

Curious Questions While reading the Bible together, encourage children's curiosity by asking questions such as "How might [Bible person] tell about this event? What do you think he or she saw? smelled? tasted? touched? What other choices did this person have? What in these Bible verses do you want to do? What do you *not* want to do?"

Everyday Examples Use a variety of household items to reinforce Bible truths. For example, place a dried-up sponge in a pan of water and discuss the changes that take place in us when we know Jesus. Pull some tissues out of a box and explain how the church is a bunch of people holding up one another.

SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe the in the **good news**."

Mark 1:14-25

JANUARY CALENDAR

Friday, January 12
Game Night
7:00—9:00 pm
Youth Café

Everyone is invited to an All-Church Game Nigh! Bring your favorite game and a snack to share. It's a great event to invite friends and family who do not regularly attend Mifflin.

Saturday, January 20
Marriage Workshop
9:00 am—12:30 pm

Make a good marriage even better as you join with other couples in the church for "Keys to A Successful Marriage". We will have time for group conversation as well as some "couple time" to talk about issues important to you. Set aside some quality time for your marriage. Childcare available— sign up at the Info Center. Talk to David or Kathi Bubb with questions.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Tuesday, February 13
Pancake Dinner and Program 5:30—7:00 pm

This fun and educational evening sets the stage for the Lenten season, which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14. Don't know much about Lent? Here's your chance to learn more while enjoying a delicious pancake dinner. With you church family.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Save the dates for Monday, June 4 through Friday, June 8 from 9:00 –11:30 am for children age 4 through grade 5 (older children/ youth welcome as helpers!) We will be looking for volunteers for recreation, crafts, snacks and group leaders, so let Kathi Bubb know how YOU want to help this year to make this another great Vacation Bible School. A volunteer sign up sheet will come out in February or March.



Growing in Faith Together

Once you have dropped off your children and grabbed a cup of coffee, join with other parents and grandparents in the choir room at 10:20 am. Our **GiFT for Parents** will be on **Sunday, January 7**, when we will talk about program ideas for the remainder of the year, as well as resolutions (individual and family).

LOOKING FOR WRITERS

Do you have wisdom to share—or even just a good story—about being a Christian parent? Would you be willing to share with other parents and grandparents here at Mifflin?

Let Julie know—we LOVE to have some of "our own" voices in the newsletter each month.