



April 2009



## Instill a Deep Love for God's Word

During Jesus' earthly ministry, he encouraged people to bring their children to him, and he praised the qualities of childlike faith. More than 50% of Christians choose to follow Jesus between ages 5 and 9. So it's never too early to nurture this most important relationship. And you don't need a theology degree to help your children love the Bible. Here are some easy steps to spark a passion for Scripture:

**Provide age-appropriate resources.** Look for books and materials that encourage spiritual development. Take advantage of your local and church libraries, as well as experts at Christian bookstores.

**Read to children and let them see you reading the Bible.** Reading aloud is one of the best things parents can do for their children's development. So why not use that one-on-one time to read from God's Word? Also, model a love for Scripture by letting children see you read (and live) it regularly.



**Partner with your local church.** Parents and churches can work together to help children discover God's message of love and salvation. Talk to your pastor or children's pastor for ideas about nurturing your children's relationship with God.

**Adapt as your children grow.** Watch for cues that children have outgrown Bible storybooks. After reading with your older children, ask questions that encourage them to dig deeper into God's Word.

### The Good Book

In national surveys of adults, the Barna Group found:

- Most Christian adults rated themselves as strong in relationships but below average in Bible knowledge.
- Two-thirds of adults said they accept six well-known Bible accounts as literal truth. These include God creating the world in six days, Moses parting the Red Sea, Daniel surviving in the lions' den, David slaying Goliath, Jesus walking on water, and Jesus rising from the dead.

### PowerSource



#### Ask God:

1. To give your children a hunger for his Word.
2. To help your children hide his Word in their hearts (see Psalm 119:11).
3. To help family members apply the Bible to their daily lives.

### Parenting Insights

Use these age-appropriate ideas from *Children's Ministry Magazine* to help tailor the Bible's message to your children's learning skills:

#### Ages 2 to 5

Preschoolers' attention span is only two to 10 minutes. They learn by touching objects and by repetition. Paraphrase Bible stories and highlight only main points.

#### Ages 6 to 9

By this age, children's attention span is 10 to 20 minutes. They think concretely and focus on people's actions. Provide more details and then let children share the passage in their own words.

#### Ages 10 to 12

By this age, most children have heard many Bible stories a lot. They need to know, "So what?" Offer modern-day applications because children learn more when they see how God's Word applies to them personally.

## OpenTheBook

"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.... The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand."

Psalm 119:105, 130

The Bible shows us the way to heaven, as well as the way to live here on earth. Use every opportunity to introduce your children to God's Word.

### Teachable Moments

1. **"The B-I-B-L-E"**—Many children absorb new information quickly through music. Plus, it's fun! At home or in the car, sing songs about Bible people and events. Many praise lyrics come directly from Scripture verses.



2. **Hide God's Word in Your Hearts**—If you want your children to memorize Bible passages, start simple and keep it fun. For longer Bible passages, family members can each memorize a different section.

3. **Act It Out**—If your children enjoy playing pretend and dress up, encourage them to act out various Bible stories. Read directly from the Bible and then help children search for fun props (a stuffed whale for Jonah, building blocks for the wall of Jericho, a doll for the baby Jesus, and so on).



"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**

The above passage from Deuteronomy is a command but also a wonderful privilege. As you teach your children about God and his Word, use these discussion-starters:

1. Why do you think God gave us the Bible? What makes it so special and important?
2. How do you know that everything in the Bible is true?
3. How can we use the Bible to get to know God better? How can we use the Bible to help us know how to live?
4. What are some of your favorite Bible verses or stories, and why? How can you share these with other people?

## Family Experience: Bible Exploration

During an evening together, dive into God's Word with these ideas from Group's *Hands-On Bible*.

- **The Ultimate Group Project**—

The Bible was written by more than 40 people over 1,500 years in three different languages. Yet it fits together perfectly! What if your family decided to write a book and each person got a chapter? What would you each write about? It would be interesting, but it wouldn't fit together like a story. Ask family members to each write (or tell) a description of the same movie. Then compare what everybody wrote. How close or different are the descriptions? Now read examples of how different Bible writers presented the same event. Read Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; and Luke 3:21-22.



- **It's Knot a Problem**—Without the Bible, it's impossible to know how to live a life that pleases God. Together, read 2 Timothy 3:16 once or twice. Have everyone try writing (or saying) the verse in their own words. Next, take a one-foot length of rope or clothesline. Say, "I'm going to hold one end of the rope in each hand and tie a knot without letting go of the ends. It seems impossible, right?" Let family members try to come up with a solution. After a few minutes, lay the rope out straight on a table. Cross your arms over your chest, then lean over and pick up the ends of the rope with your arms still crossed. Then unfold your arms to reveal the tied knot. Say, "With God's guidance in the Bible, it's possible to make good decisions. The Bible teaches us to do what's right."



## What's Playing at the Movies

**Movie:** *Hannah Montana: The Movie* (April 10)

**Genre:** Comedy, Family, Music

**Rating:** G

**Cast:** Miley Cyrus, Billy Ray Cyrus, Emily Osment

**Synopsis:** Ordinary girl Miley Cyrus, who morphs into pop star Hannah Montana, is having trouble juggling her busy life. When Miley becomes overwhelmed by her alter ego, Dad whisks her away to the family's Tennessee hometown for some perspective. While there, Miley must decide which life to pursue.

**Discussion Questions:** When have you felt overwhelmed, and what was the reason? If you could "reinvent" yourself, who would you become, and why? Read Joshua 24:14-15. Think of a time you had to choose between two different paths: How did you make your decision? How does God help you make decisions?



## What Music Is Releasing

**Artist:** Mandisa

**Album:** *Freedom*

**Artist Info:** Now a contemporary gospel artist, Mandisa placed ninth on *American Idol* season five. She forgave judge Simon Cowell for making mean comments about her weight.

**Summary:** Mandisa's second album contains upbeat praise, R&B, and pop tunes. Her strong alto vocals praise God in catchy anthems and ballads. The album's first single, "My Deliverer," celebrates Mandisa's freedom from a food addiction. In "Definition of Me," she sings, "Pretty is cool for a minute, but it will always fade away.... I want the beauty on the inside."

**Discussion Questions:** Why are so many people focused on outward appearances? What is your definition of true beauty? Read 1 Peter 3:3-4. What about your spirit makes you beautiful on the inside?



## What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Roogoo</i>	Players test their reflexes by guiding falling meteor shapes through a series of platforms. This game is similar to <i>Tetris</i> .	E; Xbox 360
<i>NASCAR Kart Racing</i>	Driving teams work together to win championships, racing on 24 layouts. Up to four people can play this fun game.	E; Wii
<i>Zubo</i>	Players "battle" by solving puzzles and completing humorous gags. This game will appeal to Pokemon fans. It contains mild cartoon violence and mild crude humor.	E10+; Nintendo DS

**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:**

- Thanks to the recession, now more families are enjoying home-cooked meals together. Food trends for 2009 center around comfort, value, and simplicity. (NPR)
- In the last decade, the number of stay-at-home dads has tripled. (Newsweek)

## Quick Stats

- 75% of U.S. households now forbid smoking. That's up from 43% just one decade ago. (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Each day, an estimated 4 million children post content to the Web. (netlingo.com)



- Every week, MySpace deletes 25,000 profiles of users who don't meet the site's minimum-age requirement of 14 years. (netlingo.com)

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