

February

2020

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Teach Kids That God Is Trustworthy

POWER SOURCE

ASK JESUS:

1. To help you be a trustworthy caregiver and an example of God's trustworthiness.
2. To reassure your children that God cares deeply for them and keeps all his promises.
3. To reveal his trustworthiness and goodness to your family.

Healthy trust levels with others set the foundation for how children experience social and emotional relationships later in life. When kids realize that God, their environment, and the people around them are trustworthy, they feel secure, hopeful, and optimistic.

Trust is also vital for spiritual development. Early experiences with parents and the church impact children's perceptions of God. When kids feel safe and loved, they can trust that God loves them, too. From birth, you can help your kids develop trust through:

Trustworthy Relationships

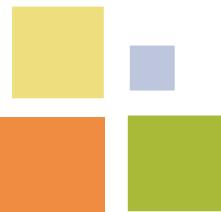
Children learn to trust you and other adults from their earliest years. Keep your promises and follow through.

Take care to expose them to kind, nurturing people, from church friends to grandparents.

Trustworthy Environments Safe, engaging surroundings help kids trust that you'll take care of them. Remember: Material possessions aren't as important as people who provide consistency and comfort.

Trust-Building Activities Inject laughter and fun at home. Younger children especially feel secure when play is part of life—Peek-a-Boo and familiar songs are a great starters.

Faithful Foundations You create the basis for kids to build trust in God. Bit by bit, you empower them to trust in Someone who's so much bigger than they are.



Trust Develops Over Time

As children grow, their views of God and his trustworthiness develop.

Ages 2 to 4 Preschoolers identify God as having a human form and traits. These traits most likely resemble those seen in key adults in kids' lives.

Ages 5 to 8 Fear of the unknown prompts kids to want to believe in a God who's all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnipresent. Their grasp of God's trustworthiness depends on how adults express these qualities to them.

Ages 9 to 12 Older children's perception of God can range from a legendary superhero to a living, spiritual being—often like their own father.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Seeing the Full Picture

You'll need a Bible, paper, washable paint (at least three colors), and paintbrushes. Say: **Think of a time when things felt ruined because they didn't go how you expected.** Have each person crumple a piece of paper into a ball. Ask: **How did you react?** Let people each choose one color to paint their paper ball while answering.

Carefully open the balls to view the paintings. Say: **Now think of a time you were confused or scared.** Have people crumple the papers again and use a different color to paint the balls while sharing. Then open the papers. Say: **Think of a time you felt alone.** Have people crumple the papers and use a third color to paint while sharing.

Read aloud 2 Corinthians 4:8-10. Ask: **How could those difficult times be better, knowing that Jesus is with us and understands?** Open the papers to see the finished paintings. Say: **God uses tough times to show us his glory—and to help us trust him. Have faith in God's full picture!**

That's Impossible! Take turns trying to unwrap Hershey's Kisses while wearing oven mitts. Read Matthew 19:26 and ask: "What things can God do that are impossible for us to do? What are you facing that seems impossible? How can we trust that God has all these things in his hands and takes care of them for us?" Close with a group hug and enjoy some Kisses.

Unseen Blessings Beforehand, gather paper cups, put a few drops of food coloring in each, and cover the drops with a heap of baking soda. Ask: "What troubles do you face? Draw or write them on the outside of your cup." Read aloud 2 Corinthians 4:18. Say: "If we focus too much on our *outside* troubles, we might forget to trust that God is doing good things we can't see." Pour a few drops of vinegar in each cup so the color appears. Ask: "What can we focus on instead of troubles? How can we trust God even though we can't see him?"

Multiplied Beforehand, cut 5-inch squares of tissue paper (yellow, pink, and blue) so there are more squares than people. Cut yellow stacks into bread-slice shapes, pink stacks into hearts, and blue stacks into fish shapes. Say: "Jesus cares for our bodies *and* our hearts." Read Mark 6:34-44. Give

each person one bread and one fish. Point out all the extras. Say: "Jesus did a miracle! People had food for their bodies *and* learned about Jesus' love." Give each person a pink heart. Ask: "What did you think about all these leftovers? How can we trust Jesus to give us more than we need?"

Trust Walk Take turns leading one another around the house or yard. The person being led should wear a blindfold or keep his or her eyes closed. First, have the guide hold the partner's elbow but say nothing during the walk. Then have the guide shout instructions from far away. Afterward, discuss what makes trusting easy or tough.

Molded by God's Hands Give each person a lump of modeling clay. Say: "Think of something you want to make. Then we'll try three different ways to make it." First, have people stare at their clay. Then have them try to mold it with bare feet. Finally, let them use their hands. Talk about what worked and what didn't, and why. Read aloud Isaiah 64:8. Ask: "How does God mold us?" Say: "We might think of God as being far away, but if he is a potter and we are the clay, then God is as close as our skin. We can trust God's promise that he is always with us and is active in our lives!"

"Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you."
—Psalm 25:5

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Sonic the Hedgehog*

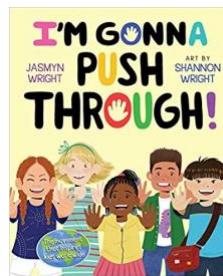
Genre: Action, Adventure, Family

Rating: not yet rated

Cast: Jim Carrey, James Marsden, Ben Schwartz, Tika Sumpter

Synopsis: This long-delayed movie based on Sega's video-game franchise features a blue hedgehog with super-speed that's in high demand. After accidentally causing a power outage, Sonic hides in Montana, where a sheriff tries to shield him from the government and an evil scientist.

Our Take: Even non-gamers will be drawn to this heavily marketed film. Sonic explores ways to harness his unique powers to help his friends. Use that concept to discuss individual talents and how we can use them in positive, God-honoring ways.



BOOK

Title: *I'm Gonna Push Through!*

Author: Jasmyn Wright

Synopsis: Wright, who taught elementary school in disadvantaged neighborhoods, wanted her students to feel empowered and excited to learn. After her #PushThrough movement went viral, Wright became a global speaker who spreads messages about self-worth, strength, grit, resilience, and overcoming adversity.

Our Take: This uplifting, inclusive picture book encourages children to recognize and build on their own strengths—and also to build up others. Wright inspires kids to aim high and keep reaching for their goals. While young people will benefit from these messages, they also need to hear that God is their source of strength and their help during times of trouble.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Keeping Kids on “Track” Thanks to technology, parents now have many options for keeping tabs on their children. With a \$25 washable patch (and a free app), B'zT helps pinpoint a child's location within a 100-foot range. The mom-founded company also offers tracking apparel, which some schools are using. (time.com)

Unisex Goes Universal A parenting trend that's on the rise is embracing gender-neutral names, nurseries, toys, playdates, haircuts, and even pronouns. Some parents striving for gender-neutrality use the pronoun “they-by” to refer to an unborn child. (*various sources*)

QUICK STATS

The Parenting Workout Don't “sweat it” if you miss an exercise class (or two). A study of 1,000 moms and dads of kids ages 3 to 6 finds that typical parenting tasks burn 1,478 calories daily—the equivalent of 1,179 burpees! (*Wren Kitchens*)

Going Vegan One of every 12 U.K. parents raises their kids as vegan. Plant-based food sales are soaring in the U.S., too. (*various sources*)

In Need of a Boost Between ages 8 and 14, girls' confidence levels drop by 30%. In that same time period, girls' confidence that other people like them drops 46%. (*YPulse*)

Games, Podcasts & Apps

Best Friend Forever

Though this Nintendo Switch role-playing game has a childlike look, it's rated T for Teen and has a grown-up twist. The title, released on Valentine's Day, is a pet-care simulation combined with dating adventures. Aided by furry critters, players explore an active singles scene.

5 Minutes With Dad

This upbeat, kid-hosted podcast covers a range of topics—from seasonal fun and hobbies to fears and family bonds. A father and his two kids engage in interesting chats that the whole family—including children as young as 4—will enjoy. The topics are sure to inspire continued discussions.

S'moresUp

With this highly rated app, families can stay organized and simplify chore assignments. Tasks and healthy habits are assigned a value and can add up to rewards (or charitable donations). Family members can share and sync calendars, so this works best with older kids who have phones.