

January 2020

# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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## Encourage One Another Often

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK JESUS:

1. To remind you to frequently encourage family members.
2. To bless you through the Bible, prayer, worship, and fellowship.
3. To provide people in your life who serve as encouragers, especially during tough times.

A recent New Year's trend involves choosing one word as a theme or focus for the next 12 months. For parents, a great word to choose—and remember regularly—is “encourage.”

At times, it seems as if the parental job description involves being children's #1 fan, but true encouragement goes much deeper than cheerleading. Genuine messages of love and support nurture a child's sense of safety and well-being. Godly affirmations also build self-worth—one based not on individual merit but on the fact that our heavenly Father created and loves us.

Being an encourager also comes with fantastic “perks.” When you lift up others, you too will be uplifted. As

Proverbs 11:25 (NASB) says, “He who waters will himself be watered.”

Encouragers follow Jesus' example of service, humility, and generosity. Like Barnabas—a member of the early Christian community whose name means “son of encouragement” (see Acts 4:36)—you can serve God by selflessly encouraging others.

Parents need as much support and encouragement as they can get, too. Seek out other Christian parents so you can give and receive assistance, share insights and ideas, and pray for one another.

Read on to learn more about the importance of encouragement—and how to live it out in your family.

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## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### A Burst of Encouragement

You'll need a roll of yellow or orange crepe-paper streamers and a bright inflated balloon. Stand in a circle and wrap the streamer around one hand, then pass the roll to someone across the circle, and offer encouraging words (for example, "You're great at helping with housework" or "You're always honest with me"). Continue until everyone has several turns.

Then say: **Wow, we've created a sunburst! Now let's very gently use our sunburst to toss a sun in the air.** Add the balloon to the center and play a while, picking up the "sun" as needed.

Afterward, ask: **How is keeping the balloon in the air like trying to stay encouraged? When is it easy—and tough—to feel encouraged? How can kind words lift us up? In what ways does God support and cheer us?**

Read aloud Proverbs 12:25. Then close in prayer, thanking God for the gift of kind, encouraging words.

## An Encouragement Primer

Encouragement is vital and powerful yet amazingly simple. Look kids in the eyes and talk to them on their level. Reach out and touch them gently. Call children by name lovingly—not just when they're in trouble! Listen carefully and be willing to learn. Accentuate the positive. Be generous with praise. Compliment frequently, sincerely, and in public. Show interest in children's hobbies. Give credit where credit is due. Give age-appropriate challenges. Ask, "How can I help?" Also work on your own self-worth; you can't love and encourage others if you feel unloved, unlovable, or discouraged.

**Fill 'er Up!** Decorate a glass jar and place it in a special spot in your home. Cut patterned papers into strips, giving family members their own pattern. Starting January 1, fill the jar with love notes, Bible verses, quotes, and affirmations for each person. On Valentine's Day, read the notes as a family. Carry on the tradition at regular intervals all year long to keep everyone's "encouragement tanks" topped off.

### "Acts" of Encouragement

Beforehand, brainstorm situations where kids and adults might need encouragement (for example, taking a test, feeling sick, being new to a class or job). Write each one on a slip of paper. Then play Encouragement Charades. The person who picks a slip acts out that situation. The first person to guess it then acts out a way to offer encouragement. (Speaking is allowed for that part!)

**Be a Barnabas** Form pairs. Give each pair a book. Have one partner walk across a room and back with a book balanced on their head. Have the other partner walk along and offer encouragement. Then change roles. Afterward, ask: "How did it feel to have someone there all the time encouraging you?" Read aloud Acts 11:22-24. Ask: "What types of encouragement did Barnabas offer?"

What made him such a good encourager? What types of encouragement do you need most? In what ways can you encourage other people?"

**God Uses You!** Encourage family members by reminding them that God chooses and works through them. Say: "In the Bible, God chooses ordinary people for special tasks. David, a shepherd boy, defeated the giant Goliath and later became king. Mary, a teenage girl, became baby Jesus' mother. Let's see how God makes these choices." Read aloud 1 Samuel 16:7. Ask: "What do you think God cares about? Why do you think God works through average, ordinary people? How does that encourage you to listen to and serve God?"

**That's Encouraging!** Say: "Family members are special encouragers to one another, as we see in the Bible. When Mary hears she's going to have baby Jesus, she visits her cousin Elizabeth." Read aloud Luke 1:39-45. Ask: "How might Elizabeth have made Mary feel? What is it like when someone encourages you? What kinds of encouragement can we give each other?" Pray, asking God for help to encourage one another—especially family members.

**"So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing."  
—1 Thessalonians 5:11**

# MEDIA MADNESS



## MOVIE

**Title:** *Dolittle*

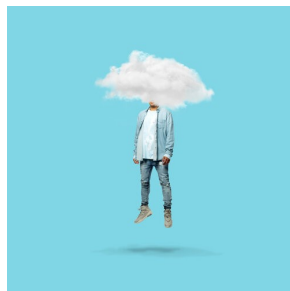
**Genre:** Adventure, Comedy, Family

**Rating:** Not yet rated

**Cast:** Robert Downey Jr., Emma Thompson, John Cena, Selena Gomez

**Synopsis:** In Victorian England, an eccentric, widowed veterinarian prefers the company of animal friends—with whom he can talk. But when the queen gets sick, Dr. Dolittle must summon up bravery and sail to a mysterious island to find a cure.

**Our Take:** This film is a feast for the eyes, with stunning scenery, historic settings, and lifelike animals. It will lead to discussions about God's wonderful world and the vast range of creatures he made. The movie shows the benefits of venturing outside your comfort zone, but scenes of peril may be too intense for some children.



## MUSIC

**Title:** *Citizen of Heaven*

**Artist:** Tauren Wells

**Synopsis:** In his second album, this breakout Christian pop artist offers a dynamic mix of worship songs. His debut album, *Hills and Valleys*, landed him four Dove Awards, including New Artist of the Year. Before going solo in 2015, Wells fronted the band Royal Tailor and led worship at church. Collaborators on *Citizen of Heaven* include Kirk Franklin and Rascal Flatts.

**Our Take:** On ballads as well as upbeat tunes, Wells is a master of catchy and inspiring lyrics. The new single "Close" describes encountering God and listening to his voice, while "Miracle" offers thanks to God for "every mountain that you move" and "what I've seen with my own eyes."



## CULTURE & TRENDS

**Smarty Pants** Though the year 2020 hasn't brought us flying cars (yet), parents now have smart diapers! The Lumi line from Pampers sends smartphone alerts when diapers need changing. Other upcoming "connected" baby products include sleep-tracking onesies and robotic rocking cribs. ([cnn.com](http://cnn.com))

**Safety Patrol** Elementary students are leading the way with pedestrian safety. Schoolkids across America have lobbied for new 3D crosswalks that capture drivers' attention via optical illusion. They're also called Iceland Crosswalks, for where they originated. (*various sources*)

## QUICK STATS

**Screen Savers** Since 1997, screen time for kids age 2 and under has more than doubled—despite warnings against *any* screen time for those 18 months and younger. Another study shows that parents who read to kids from tablets have less social interaction with them compared to those who read from print books. (*JAMA Pediatrics*)

**Addressing Addiction** About 5.7 million U.S. children under age 11 live with a parent who's battling substance abuse. That's one reason *Sesame Street* recently added Karli, a 6-year-old Muppet whose mom is an addict. ([SesameWorkshop.org](http://SesameWorkshop.org))

## Games, Sites & Apps

### Guess in 10

In this series of card games from Skillmatics, players can ask 10 questions to get hints about a certain animal, city, sport, or famous person. Educational as well as fun, the games build problem-solving and communication skills. Each pack costs about \$14. Best for ages 6 and up.

### Kids Corner: Terrene Episodes

In this ReFrame Media series, "Liz" and his reptilian middle-school friends have adventures and sometimes get into trouble. From parents and neighbors, they learn about biblical principles and faith-based decision-making. Other "Kids Corner" programs tell Bible stories.

### Disney+

This much-hyped new streaming service offers loads of content for just \$6.99 a month. Material ranges from animated favorites to the "Star Wars" franchise and original content such as *The Mandalorian*. Kids can set up their own profiles, but some users warn that parental controls are lacking.

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Real. Bold. Love.

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our goal is to help you make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.



# January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Island 6 (6th Graders) Unplugged 5:30-8:30pm
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 MLK Jr. Day	21	22	23	24	25
26 Baptism 4:00pm	27	28	29	30	31	

**Save the Date!**

**February 2 | Super Bowl Fun in Sunday School**

**February 9-March 29 | I'm A Christian Now**

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## Recipe of the Month

### Peanut Butter Football Dip

#### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter
- 4 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1 cup peanut butter your choice; crunchy or smooth
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar (up to 2 cups if needed)
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
- Chocolate sprinkles or chocolate chips for outside of the football
- White or chocolate frosting for the football laces

#### Instructions

1. Cream butter, cream cheese, and peanut butter until mixed (using a hand-held mixer). Mix in vanilla.
2. Add powdered sugar, 1/2 cup at a time, and mix until combined. (If you want a stiffer mixture, add the extra 1/2 cup powdered sugar.) Mix in chocolate chips.
3. Turn out mixture on a large sheet of waxed paper. Use your hands to form into a football shape.
4. Place the waxed paper onto your serving plate. (It helps if the plate has sides...less mess!) Cover in sprinkles or chocolate chips, pressing them into the surface a little so they stick. Pipe on the laces using melted white chocolate or some leftover frosting and chill until ready to serve.
5. Serving suggestions: pretzels, animal crackers, cookies, a spoon.

# 10 Ways

## to Build Relationships with Kids

- 1 Talk to them about non-school related subjects.
- 2 Let them teach you about their interests.
- 3 Remember things about their lives.
- 4 Share about your own life.
- 5 Engage in activities with them.
- 6 Tell hilarious (and even embarrassing) stories.
- 7 Share inspirational stories from your life.
- 8 Do crazy things.
- 9 Use their interests in your lessons and activities.
- 10 Apologize when you mess up.

## Volunteer Highlight

Karen Boyd

She has been volunteering at LifeSpring for 6 years. She currently leads in the Clippership (Kindergarten) room at 11:00.

**What are some of your favorite things about teaching and the kids?**

I love the conversations I have with my 5 year olds as they work through what they hear in Sunday School. Kindergartners are just starting school, absorbing so much knowledge and just beginning to read. They are beginning to understand more of the Bible and the gospel, and while some things are still beyond their understanding, it is exciting to plant seeds of truth that will grow in their minds and hearts. I know as they grow, realization of the truths will occur as they understand what I was able to teach them.

**Why do you teach Sunday School?**

I love teaching the Word of God and finding ways to capture the children's attention to instill truth into their hearts and minds. I love instilling in them a love for the Word of God and conviction of its truth and power.

**What is your favorite memory of teaching?**

Once when I was trying to explain how sin keeps us from God, I asked the children if any of them were good enough to go to heaven. They all assured me they had been good enough to get there. Then I explained to them that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" and that none of us were good enough. None of us could get to heaven by being good. One little boy in the group gasped and said "Oh no!" All the other children looked anxiously at him and then to me. I went on to explain that while we could not get to heaven on our own, God loved us so much He made a way for us to be with Him forever. He sent Jesus to die for us, and if we accept His payment for our sin, we can live in heaven, not because we are good but because Jesus is good. That same little boy lit up like the sun and clapped his hands with joy. The other children saw it and began to smile and clap as well. It was a precious moment!

**What is your reward for teaching?**

I feel blessed to be able to work with the children. I really enjoy my time with them, talking to them and finding out what they know about God and His Word. I feel good because I believe God wants me to fill this role and I am His will- that's a GREAT feeling. Sometimes I have been stumped about how to teach a concept, and God has shown me what to do or say. That's exciting!

**What is your favorite Bible verse?**

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and also the Greek." Romans 1:16

**Thank you,  
Karen!  
We  
appreciate  
You!**



### Parents

- ♦ "Can make a difference at home!!!
- ♦ "Be intentional with the Word at home!!!

*"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness."*

*Matthew 6:33*

*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord..."*

*Psalms 127:3a*

Two verses that remind us that priority should be placed on two things in our lives and homes:

**His kingdom & Children!**

- ♦ "Be encouraged to pre-teach the Sunday School lesson each week!
- ♦ "Invest in the spiritual life of your child!

## The Gospel Project

### January Sunday School Lessons

#### The Northern Kingdom of Israel (Unit 14)

January 5	Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh	Jonah
January 12	Hosea, Prophet to Israel	Hosea
January 19	Israel Taken Captive	2 Kings 17

#### The Southern Kingdom of Judah (Start of Unit 15)

January 26	Isaiah, Prophet to Judah	Isaiah 6; 53
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### Scripture (Unit 14)

**"The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance."**

**2 Peter 3:9**

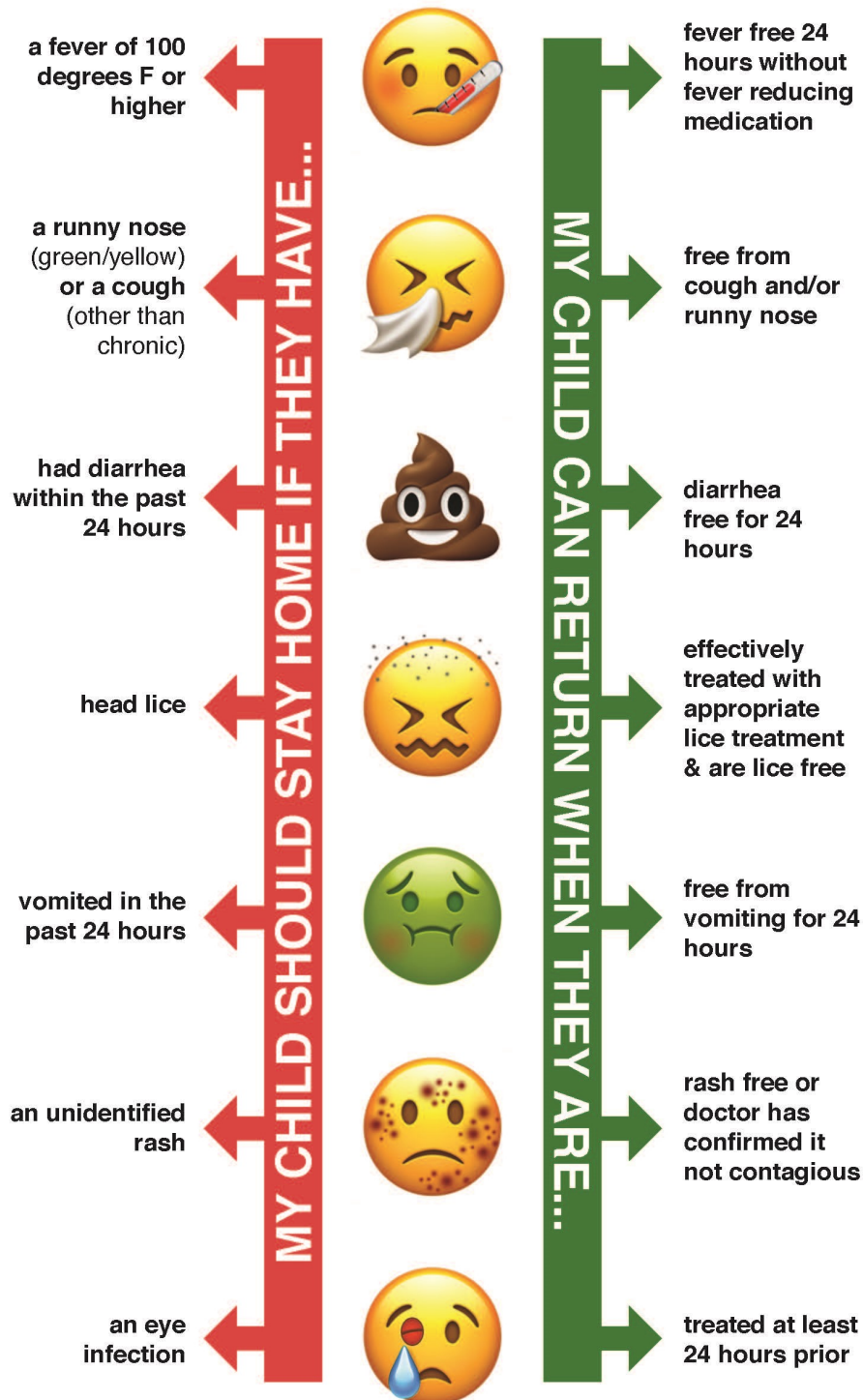
### Big Picture Question & Answer

**Why should we obey God?**

**We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.**

# LSC Sickness Guideline

- \* Winter is Upon Us!
- \* The flu/sick season comes with it.
- \* Note the chart below.
- \* Keep in mind many individuals have compromised immune systems.
- \* Staying home or going home when sick is the best way to protect others.





# FAMILIES ON A MISSION 2020

ACTION PACKED CALENDAR

PRAYER PROMPTS

FUN CHALLENGES

WACKY DAYS

GOD MOMENTS

FAITH-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

CONVERSATION STARTERS

INTERESTING FACTS

BOREDOM BUSTERS

JOKES & RIDDLES

## COURAGEOUS JANUARY

Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of them. Don't be frightened. The Lord your God will go with you. He will not leave you or forget you. *Deuteronomy 31:6*

### SUNDAY

**5** Make a list of the people in the Bible who needed courage.

### MONDAY

**6** Sometimes courage means going against the crowd.

### TUESDAY

**7** Learn to say a word or phrase in a different language.

### WEDNESDAY

**1** What are your biggest dreams for 2020?

### THURSDAY

**2** Tell your kids about one of the most courageous things you have ever done.

### FRIDAY

**3** Enjoy new music today. Play, sing, dance or listen.

### SATURDAY

**4** Get out into nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting.

**12** Memorize Psalm 27:1

**13** ★★ ★★ ★★  
**MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE DAY**

**14** When you feel you can't do something, add the word "yet."

**15** Try out something new that will get you out of your comfort zone.

**16** Is there something you need to admit, apologize for and make it right?

**17** When things get tough, say to yourself "My God is with me."

**18** Learn something new and share it with others.

**19** **POPCORN DAY**

**20** Draw one of your dreams for the future. Share it with the rest of the family.

**21** Learn a new skill from a friend and teach them one of yours.

**22** Write down three things you're grateful for.

**23** **NATIONAL HANDWRITING DAY**

**24** **BELLY LAUGH DAY**

**25** Say hello to a neighbor and get to know them better.

**26** Let everyone share one thing they're afraid of failing at. Pray for each other.

**27** What makes you feel better when you are afraid?

**28** Learn your name in Morse Code today.

**29** **NATIONAL PUZZLE DAY**

**30** Who do you know that is fearless?

**31** **BACKWARDS DAY**

IDEA: Serve breakfast for dinner today!

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UNDER CHILDREN'S PARENT RESOURCES OR  
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