



July 2016

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Strive for Unity and Cooperation

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help your family members work together as friends.
2. To reveal ways your family can become more unified—with each other and with Jesus.
3. For guidance as you direct your children to get along and work through conflicts.

Jesus calls his followers to work together and get along—within our own families and within his church.

Family unity can be challenging to put into practice. This is especially true during summer months, as more down time leads to boredom, and boredom leads to bickering.

How can you keep the peace in your family and strengthen bonds with one another? Here are expert tips.

Pray for each other. Lifting up other family members in prayer makes it difficult to stay angry at them.

Serve one another. Challenge siblings to perform one act of kindness for each other every day.

Hold family meetings. Make your expectations clear. Talk (and hug!) out problems as they arise.

Don't play favorites. Strive to ensure equal treatment in all areas of family life.

Praise positive behavior and cooperation whenever you see it.

Don't solve children's disagreements for them, but don't let conflicts escalate to physical violence.

If necessary, separate siblings for a while. That can make them eager to play with one another again.

Read on for more fun ideas to try.

“Make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.”

—Philippians 2:2, NLT



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

United in Jesus

Give family members each a 3-foot-long string of red licorice. Say: **Don't eat this yet. First, pull on the licorice to test how strong it is.**

Work together to braid three licorice strings together. Ask: **What do you think will happen if we pull on this now?**

Have two family members pull as hard as they can on the ends of the braided strand. Ask: **Why was this braid of licorice harder to break?**

Read aloud Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Say: **Just as the licorice was stronger with three pieces together, we're stronger when we stick together as a family. When we love each other and work together, we show other people Jesus' love.**

Family Members Unite!

Solid relationships are crucial to developing family unity. As children and parents grow closer to one another, they're better able to learn and grow together. They also can open up and trust others to help them make their way through life. It's the basic principle of the body of Christ at work—a concept that even preschoolers can grasp. No matter if your family is traditional, single-parent, blended, or multi-generational, these ideas will help you build mutual appreciation, nurture group identity, and develop an atmosphere of trust. Have fun leading your family members into greater community.

Stay Connected Sit in a circle and give each family member one paper clip. Try to connect all the paper clips with each person using only one hand. Afterward, discuss how well you worked together and what technique worked best. Also discuss what you learned about one another during the process.

In Agreement As a family, try to agree on an answer in each of these categories:

- A snack food you like to eat.
 - A subject in school you like.
 - A Bible account you like.
 - A place you like to go for fun.
 - A holiday you enjoy.
 - A sport you enjoy.
 - A TV program you enjoy.
- Talk about how easy or difficult it was to agree. Ask: "Which statements were the most difficult to agree on? What was the most surprising thing we all agreed on? How can we have different opinions yet still get along?"

Assembly Line Love Work together to make a treat you can then deliver to neighbors or friends. For example, prepare special sandwiches or a fruit pizza, assembly line style. Talk about how each person makes an important contribution to the task—and to your family.

Come Over, Red Rover Invite neighborhood children over to play Red Rover (rules are available online). The goal is to break up teams. Afterward, talk with your family about how Jesus is sad when families and friends get mad and fight. Jesus wants us to stick together, and he helps us hold tightly to him and to one another. Then we won't break apart! Close by reading aloud John 17:11b.

A Helping Hand Using chairs, bedsheets, and clothespins, work together to create a house with a hole in the roof. Then use a blanket to lower an object into the house. Read Mark 2:1-5. Discuss how the friends cooperated and how that compares to the cooperation needed in this activity.

Teamwork Toss For each family member, use masking tape to attach the side of a small paper cup to a wide craft stick. Then tape one contraption to the tip of each person's right shoe. Spread ping-pong balls throughout the room, and try to scoop up the balls with your feet and drop them into a bucket. Play again, this time helping one another scoop up the balls. Talk about which method was easier and how working together can help us do things better and faster.

GET CONNECTED!

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CALVARY FACEBOOK PAGE

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