



# parenting CHRISTIAN kids

March 2016



## Live With Eternity in Mind

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To help you keep the “end goal” of eternity in mind each day.
2. To guide you in the work of raising children who love and follow Jesus.
3. To nurture your children’s growing faith—and your own.

Ever feel as if you’re living in survival mode? Many parents are pulled in all directions, juggling never-ending responsibilities at home, work, and school. That can make it tough to keep our perspective on what matters most: the eternal future of your children and yourself.

The celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection reminds us we have a forever home in heaven. But how do we stay mindful of that good news from day to day when we’re busy trying to keep the fridge stocked, meet deadlines, and get everyone to school and activities on time?

Here are some tips for helping your family stay focused on heaven while dealing with the challenges of life on earth:

- Talk with a pastor, mentor, or friend to determine what kids need to know about Jesus and when. Brainstorm simple ways to incorporate Jesus into everyday life on an everyday basis.
- Talk to with your spouse, family members, and caregivers about your spiritual priorities, making sure you’re all on the same page.
- Intentionally arrange daily and weekly plans around your spiritual goals. If activities start to interfere with your priorities, re-evaluate and rework your family’s schedule.

When you make faith the top priority for your family, it’ll help your children make it their top priority as well. Read on for more ideas about how to look forward to heaven every day of the year.

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parenting  
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Real. Bold Love.

“I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”

—Philippians 3:14



## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Jesus Is the Key

You'll need a bunch of old keys, plus a padlock and key set. Hide all the keys throughout your house. (Remember where you've hidden them!) Have family members go on a hunt for the keys, telling them how many to find.

After all the keys are located, say: **Only one key will open this padlock. Let's take turns to see which one it is.**

When the lock is opened, read aloud John 14:6. Ask: **In what ways does the key that opened the lock remind you of Jesus? How did Jesus "unlock" the way to heaven for us?**

Say: **Because Jesus died for our sins and rose again, we can live with him forever in heaven. He opened the door and gave us new life. That's great news to remember all year long!**

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for giving us new life.

## Maintain an Eternal Perspective

According to the Barna Research Group, 85 percent of parents with children under age 13 believe they're primarily responsible for teaching their kids about religious beliefs and spiritual matters. (Just 11 percent say it's the responsibility of the church.) Yet according to related research, a majority of parents don't spend time during the week discussing religious matters or going over religious materials with their kids. For many parents, it's not so much that they won't spend time having spiritual conversations with their kids. It's simply that they don't know what to do or where to begin. Parental involvement is vital to children's spiritual growth. With that in mind, try these ideas to keep Jesus and faith in him at the forefront of your family's life:

**Before & After** Prepare for worship by softly playing Christian music in your house and car beforehand. After worship or Sunday school, ask children what they learned and how they can apply the lessons in the week ahead. Also display and refer to any take-home papers they received.

**What's Our Mission?** Place Jesus at the center of your home and family by working together to craft a family mission statement. Decide what your purpose, vision, and values are, and have everyone commit to live by them—both privately and publicly. Then pray together, asking Jesus to help you live them out.

**Pray Without Ceasing** Move prayer beyond the dinner table and bedtime routine. Pray for and with your children as they leave for school, when they're discouraged or facing a challenge, and when they have something to thank or praise Jesus for. Try using a pray

er calendar, filling in every day with the name of someone your family can pray for.

**"Wordly" Wise** Play a word-association game by standing in a circle and tossing a ball around. When someone throws the ball, have them say a word, such as *food, clouds, tree*, etc. Then have the person catching the ball respond with the first word that comes to mind. After everyone has had a turn, say, "Jesus died on the cross, but he didn't stay dead. Jesus came back to life and is living in heaven. By believing in Jesus, we can join him in heaven someday." Play the game again, calling out the same words, but this time challenge family members to respond with words associated with heaven—such as *feast, angels, or life*—because Jesus is alive in heaven. Afterward, ask, "Which was easier: thinking of earthly or heavenly words? What encourages you when you think of heaven?"

**Running as a Team** Run a three-legged race in which you add runners to the group each round. Play until everyone is tied together. Afterward, sit down (with ankles still attached) and ask: "What was it like to work together this way? Why was it important to work as a team and communicate as we ran?" Read aloud Hebrews 12:1-3. Say: "We have another race to run—the race of life. The Bible encourages us not to give up when we're running this race. When we help and support one another—and rely on Jesus—the race will be much easier. And we'll all win the best prize ever: life forever with Jesus in heaven!"

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