



# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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## Take the “Chore” Out of Household Duties

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To help your children be willing, eager contributors to your family.
2. To give your kids—and you—a good attitude about doing chores.
3. To develop in your family members a heart for service.

In a recent national survey, only 28% of parents said they require their children to do chores—even though those parents realize the importance of having household responsibilities. “Parents today want their kids spending time on things that can bring them success,” says Richard Rende, co-author of *Raising Can-Do Kids*, “but ironically, we’ve stopped doing one thing that’s actually been a proven predictor of success—and that’s household chores.”

Chores also help children develop much-needed life skills and instill in them a sense of self-worth and belonging. Most child-development experts say kids shouldn’t be paid for household chores, which are part of contributing to family life.

Summer—when homework isn’t in the picture—is an ideal time to rev up your family’s chore assignments.

Here are some examples of age-appropriate tasks your kids can perform:

**Ages 3 to 5:** They can work alongside you to put away toys, place dirty clothes in a hamper, sort laundry, make their beds, and feed pets.

**Ages 6 to 8:** Children can dust and vacuum, put away their clothes, empty wastebaskets, set and clear the table, and help with some yardwork.

**Ages 9 to 12:** Kids can load and unload the dishwasher, unpack groceries, mop the floor, fold laundry, wash the car, and help prepare meals.

“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord, rather than for people.”

—Colossians 3:23, NLT

# TEACHABLE MOMENTS

## Team “Work”

Have family members line up, one behind another. Choose a leader to stand a few feet in front of the line and face the team. Have the leader throw a ball to the first team member, who then throws it back to the leader and stoops in place. The leader then throws the ball over the stooped player to the next teammate, who throws it back to the leader and stoops in place. Continue this way until the last team member has the ball. That person then carries the ball to the front and becomes the leader. The previous leader goes to the front of the line. Repeat until the original leader becomes leader again.

Afterward, ask: **How did our family work as a team in this game? When do we have to work as a team in our home? at school? at church?**

Read aloud Romans 12:5-6 and close in prayer: **Dear Jesus, thanks for each member of this family. Help us work together to serve you. Amen.**

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## Add Excitement to Chores

For many children, chores imply drudgery. But that doesn't need to be the case! Use these tips to make chores a positive, productive experience:

**Give kids ownership.** Enlist your children's help in selecting chores, as well as the consequences for not doing them in a timely manner.

**Teach tasks with “shaping.”** First, let children watch you perform a task while you explain it. Then let them try one step at a time.

**Use language cues and offer encouragement.** Say, “I see books on the floor” rather than giving orders. Thank kids for their efforts.

**Spur teamwork in your family** by using the fun ideas below!

**Terrific Teamwork** Designate a time when everyone chips in around the house. For example, do chores at a particular time every Saturday morning. This reinforces the importance of each individual's contributions.

**Whistle While You Work** Play a favorite upbeat music CD while children complete their chores. Also, have kids brainstorm a new, more creative name for chores, such as “home fun” or “household helpers.”

**Responsibility Roulette** Mix up the chore routine by letting family members randomly select their tasks for each week. On slips of paper, write all the chores that need to be done. Then place them in a cup or jar. Every Monday, have family members select their jobs for that week.

**Lend a Hand** Make a creative chore chart to keep your family organized. Have family members each trace one of their hands on card stock and cut it out. Use markers to decorate the paper hands with a ring, a watch, or a bracelet. Attach a small self-adhesive magnet strip to the back of each handprint. Then place a sticky note on the center of each hand, and have family members list their chores for

the week. (Help younger children.) Place the hands on the refrigerator, pointing downward. As family members complete their chores for the week, have them point their paper hand up to show that the tasks are done. Each week, replace the sticky notes with new lists.

**Church Chores** To show children how to extend the skills they learn while doing household chores, consider lending a hand at your church some weekend. Watch the church calendar for a designated “work day,” or just ask a staff member what tasks need to be done. Your family can clean out a closet, paint a room, organize pew racks, or straighten out the nursery or library.

**Work and Rest** Divide a long sheet of paper into seven sections, writing one day of the week over each section. Together, create a mural illustrating the different work and activities you all accomplish each day. Complete six days, leaving the Sabbath blank. Afterward, read aloud Exodus 20:8-11. Brainstorm different ways of resting on the Sabbath. Then choose how to make the Sabbath a special day for your family to relax with God and one another.

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