



the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition



December 2011



Kingdom Kids of First Baptist Church of Allentown
1808 N. 19th St.
Allentown, PA 18104



Try New Christmas Faith-Boosters

The most wonderful time of the year is a wonderful time to share Jesus—and why he came to earth—with your children. Instead of getting caught up in the holiday rush, focus on what Christmas truly means. Use the Advent season (the weeks of preparation before Christmas) to engage in old and new traditions, make simple crafts, have discussions, and worship Jesus, our newborn King.

Faith-boosters needn't be elaborate or time-consuming. Instead, use materials you already have to reinforce the good news that the angels shared on the first Christmas Eve: Jesus, our Savior, is born!

After you've shared this message with your children, look for simple ways to spread Christmas joy as a family. From caroling and delivering cookies to sending cards and inviting neighbors to programs or concerts, the possibilities are endless for letting your light shine as you celebrate Jesus, the Light of the world.

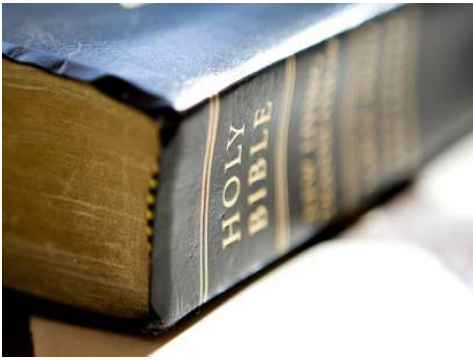
POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your Christmas preparations and to ready your hearts for his arrival.
2. To help your family stay focused on Jesus during the holidays.
3. To replace stress and busyness with calm and peace, so you can treasure family time.

INSIGHTS

- In a poll conducted in the U.K., 24% of children ages 7 to 11 said Christmas was about giving, rather than receiving, presents. *(Daily Mail)*
- When asked about the true meaning of Christmas, 70% of children said it's about celebrating the birth of Christ, 39% said it's about being thankful, 37% said it's about spending time with family, and 13% said it's about receiving gifts. *(KidzEyes.com)*



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

1. Wrap Race—You'll need some empty boxes and gift-wrapping supplies. Form teams and have them race to wrap an imaginary gift for the whole world (such as peace) in the shortest time possible. Afterward, discuss what gifts you'd like to give and why.

2. Chapter Chain—Encourage family members to spend more time exploring God's word. From Thanksgiving until Christmas, give out a red or green construction paper link for every chapter of the Bible someone reads (or listens to). On Christmas Eve, hang the chain as a special birthday gift to Jesus.



3. O Christmas Tree—Tie a red ribbon around the head of a concrete nail, and tie the ends of the ribbon into a knot to form a loop. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree. Talk about how baby Jesus wasn't only born for us but was born to die for us—on a tree.

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. (John 1:14)

At Christmas, we celebrate the good news that God became flesh, in the form of Jesus, to die for our sins.

While engaging in Christmas festivities, start a conversation by asking these questions:

1. What are your favorite Christmas traditions, and why? How do our traditions help us remember the real meaning of Christmas?
2. What are some ways we can add service and outreach to our Christmas celebrations?
3. How would you explain Christmas to someone who didn't know anything about Jesus?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Add a meaningful new twist to your Christmas celebrations by trying these ideas:

- **Unwrap the Story**—Start a new tradition as you unpack your family's crèche, or nativity scene. Let each person pull out one or two wrapped figures without peeking to see what's inside. Take turns unwrapping figures. When someone adds a figure to the



scene, have him or her say a prayer of thanks for the role that figure played in Jesus' birth. For example, the person holding the stable might say, "Thank you that there was at least a stable nearby where Jesus could be born." The person with a shepherd might say, "Thank you that the shepherds went and told lots of people about Jesus' birth."

After the scene is complete, discuss the role we all can play in preparing for Jesus' birth and in telling people why Jesus came to earth.

- **Parable Ornaments**—Make a different ornament each week that reflects a parable from the Bible. For week one, pour salt into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 5:13). For week two, pour mustard seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 17:20). For week three, tie Goldfish crackers in netting (Matthew 13:47). For week four, pour sunflower seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 13:37). Print the verses and tie them to the ornaments. Then hang the ornaments on a small Christmas tree as a powerful reminder of Jesus' life and teachings.

The Gratefulness Principle

Gratitude increases closeness in relationships. As you parent your children, look for opportunities to take advantage of gratefulness to draw closer to your kids. Give your children small gifts of love day after day. Be careful, though, that you don't confuse the gratefulness principle with the overindulgence trap.

Some parents, wanting their children to like them, recognize giving gifts opens the heart, so they overdo it by giving them too many things. Giving to your kids must be tied into relationship, or the gifts feed selfishness instead of gratefulness.

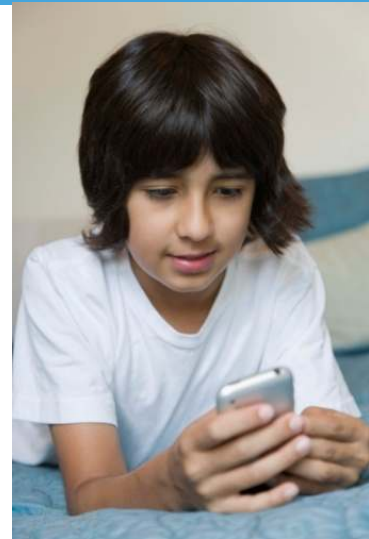
Overindulgence is giving your children more than their character can handle. When children lack gratitude, then the more you give them, the less they appreciate. Parents must restrain themselves or they'll exceed their children's ability to manage the blessings.

Overindulged children rarely become grateful when you give them more things. They grow to be more demanding and selfish. Parents then feel unappreciated and become resentful. The hearts of both parents and children harden toward each other, and closeness becomes a thing of the past.

If your children become overindulged rather than grateful, then pull back on the area where you're giving too much. Look for creative ways to give differently to your child. Teaching the heart gratefulness can be a challenge. Having a child say thank you is just behavior. Gratefulness comes from the heart.

Monitor your child's response to gifts of love to determine if you're growing gratitude or overindulgence. As gratefulness increases, you can slowly give blessings in a way that will produce more gratefulness. You'll know if you're moving too quickly by your child's response.

This parenting tip comes from the book series, *Parenting is Heart Work* by Dr Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller.



CULTURE & TRENDS

- Last year, 36% of kids ages 10 or 11 owned a cell phone. That number has more than doubled since 2005. Boys are more likely than girls to perform "data-intensive" activities with their phones, such as browsing the Web and downloading games. (*Mediamark, NY Times*)
- Before heading to the ER with their sick children, more parents are now logging in. One in eight parents now checks the Internet for medical information before plunking down an emergency-room copay. (*Reuters*)

QUICK STATS

- Only 4% of adults ages 25 to 34 in the U.K. believe that the most important part of Christmas is the religious meaning. (*Church of England Newspaper*)
- According to a new study, pre-schoolers who have trouble resisting temptation and delaying gratification are more likely than their more-patient peers to become adults who lack self-control. (*HealthDay*)





December



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Awana 5:45-7:15 pm	5	6	7 Pioneer Clubs 6:45-8:15 pm	8	9	10
11 Children's Christmas Musical 6:00 pm	12	13	14 Pioneer Clubs 6:45-8:15 pm	15	16	17
18 Family Christmas Program 6:00 pm	19	20	21 Pioneer Clubs Cancelled	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:00 pm
25 Christmas Day! No Evening Ministries	26	27	28 Pioneer Clubs Cancelled	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

