



January 2020

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Church Logo and
Information

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.



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)

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*)

Games, Podcasts & 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.

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)

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January

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





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