

# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



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article

## Turn to God in Uncertain Times

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK JESUS:

1. To protect your family members physically, emotionally, and spiritually during uncertain times.
2. To help you see evidence of goodness and kindness—and to be that evidence for others.
3. For renewed faith and strength through life's trials.

On earth, everyone faces seasons of trial, suffering, and unwelcome change. This spring, however, *all* of us are facing unprecedented levels of disruption, uncertainty, and fear—all at the same time.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic—and the shutdowns and isolation it's causing—have forced families, schools, churches, and entire communities to make and adapt to changes in all aspects of daily life. The good news is that God remains steady and steadfast, ready to walk with us through what's being called "uncharted waters."

Children have specific needs during uncertain times, whether that's an emergency, illness, or family crisis such as divorce or job loss. Even positive

changes such as a planned move or a new sibling can disrupt schedules and affect relationships.

Though you can't control everything that happens to your family, you can minimize the impact of uncertainties. Make sure children have consistent relationships, which offer reassurance and familiarity. Model God's positive qualities of unconditional love and acceptance. Keep the same schedules and rules, as much as possible, to help kids feel safe. When new situations arise, tell children beforehand what to expect. Finally, encourage family members to share their thoughts and feelings about what's happening.

Read on for activities that convey important messages for uncertain times.

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## Remember: God's in Control!

During uncertain times, adults need to take care of their own bodies, minds, and souls, too. When parents are struggling, children notice—and often feel more anxious as a result. Remember these tips to give everyone a BREAK:

**Be an example.** Try to handle stress in a God-pleasing manner.

**Relate.** Spend time with kids, share a hobby, listen, and cheer them on. Educate yourself. Find out what stressors your children are facing.

**Ask questions.** These help you understand needs and express care.

**Keep praying!** Ask Jesus to work in kids' lives, especially amid trials.



## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Our Powerful Protector

Say: **The Israelites, God's special people, were slaves in Egypt. The king, or Pharaoh, had worked the people so hard, they were tired. God told Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Let my people go!" Moses went 10 times, but Pharaoh refused. Each time, God sent a plague—something horrible—to Egypt. But God kept the Israelites safe from these plagues!**

Re-enact the first nine plagues:

1. Blood—Put food coloring in water.
2. Frogs—Hop around the room.
3. Gnats—Make buzzing sounds.
4. Flies—Zoom around the room.
5. Sick livestock—Moo and moan on the floor, with limbs sticking up
6. Boils—Put red dots on your skin with washable marker.
7. Hail—Throw paper wads around.
8. Locusts—Nibble green snacks.
9. Darkness—Turn off all the lights.

After each plague, shout: **Let my people go!** Close by praying: **Thank you, God, for protecting us during tough and scary times. Amen.**

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**Overflowing Oil** Toss paper wads around a room. Give each person a bag and say: "You have a minute to collect as much 'oil' as you can. Go!" Toss out more wads, as needed, before calling time. Read aloud 2 Kings 4:1-7. Ask: "What was it like trying to fill up your 'oil jar'? How did it feel to get lots of oil? In what ways would you like God to bless you—and us?" Say: "When we're worried and tell God what we need, we can trust him to provide. At times, God gives us even *more* than we expect!"

**Create a Smile File** Stress is exhausting and removes our focus from life's many joys. Make a file, box, or journal where people can put pictures or notes about God's blessings. Then review it together when your family feels discouraged or overwhelmed.

**God Seeks and Saves** With younger children, unwind by playing a fun game of Hide and Seek as a family. Then talk about how God always comes looking for us and always watches over us.

**Jesus Calms Our Fears** Tape an outline of a boat on the floor and fill it with blue streamers or yarn pieces. Have family members sit in the "boat." Read aloud Mark 4:35-41. Then say: "These streamers are water, and you

need to toss them out so you don't sink!" As you stand nearby, make wind sounds and throw streamers back in. Afterward, ask: "How did you try to keep your 'boat' from sinking? Why can storms be scary? What other troubles might we need Jesus' help with?" Say: "Jesus' disciples were afraid of sinking. They needed help, so Jesus spoke to the sea and made it calm. We can call on Jesus when we're afraid, and he'll calm our fears."

**Lick Life's Problems** When life gets messy, spend one-on-one time with each child. If possible, go on a simple outing, such as to get ice cream, and let the child share what's on his or her mind. Then come up with ways you can stick together and face problems.

**God Protects Daniel** Adapt the swimming-pool game Mr. Shark for Daniel 6. Read that chapter aloud and choose a Daniel. He or she faces a wall, and others, the Lions, creep up and try to touch Daniel. If Daniel hears a noise, he turns and points at the Lion, who returns to the starting point while everyone shouts, "God protects Daniel!" If a Lion touches Daniel, have them hug and say, "God protects me!" Afterward, discuss the ways God keeps us safe.

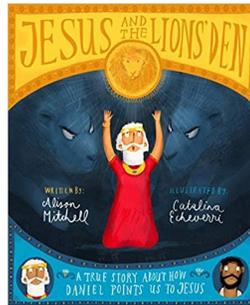
"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."  
—Joshua 1:9

# MEDIA MADNESS



## TV

**Title:** *Jessy and Nessy*  
**Service:** Amazon Prime Video  
**Synopsis:** Curious young Jessy has an unusual BFF: an ancient sea monster named Nessy. In this new G-rated series, the pair explore a range of questions common to preschoolers—from why the wind blows to how echoes work. Along the way, they meet new friends, learn to work in teams, and discover important life skills, including how to make people smile.  
**Our Take:** This simple, upbeat TV show uses colorful mixed-media and fun music to keep young viewers engaged. It does have a touch of magic, as Jessy uses “inspectacles” glasses to conduct investigations—and to see her friend Nessy. The show should be a hit with curious young kids.



## BOOK

**Title:** *Jesus and the Lions' Den*  
**Author:** Alison Mitchell  
**Synopsis:** As most Sunday school kids know, Daniel, not Jesus, was thrown into the lions' den. But this book reveals—in a child-friendly way—how the Old Testament lesson points to Jesus. Readers can search for hidden lion symbols as they discover the parallels between Daniel and Jesus.  
**Our Take:** By making connections between the Old and New Testaments, this title helps readers understand that the gospel message is woven through the entire Bible. Kids learn about prayer, faithfulness, and God's sovereignty over everything. This book—and others in the “Tales That Tell the Truth” series—are geared toward ages 4 to 8.

## Games, Sites & Apps

**Kanoodle Head-to-Head**  
In this puzzle-based game, two players race to arrange pieces to match a design on a card. If you're too slow, your pieces go flying! The portable game has 80 challenges that build spatial-reasoning and problem-solving skills. Best for ages 7+, and a hit with parents, too.

**Kids Ask Authors**  
Launched just before the pandemic hit, this short-session podcast from author and illustrator Grace Lin celebrates reading and writing. Lin asks fellow authors questions from young readers. Kids can submit their questions, book reviews, short stories, poems, and jokes, which are featured at the end.

**Blinx**  
With this free app, families can share photos with their “in-crowd” members without leaving a digital footprint. You also can assemble individual “blinx” into “blinxbooks,” adding captions and audio comments, if desired. This alternative to social media is rated E for Everyone.



## CULTURE & TRENDS

**Decreasing the Distance** During this era of social distancing, personal connections are more vital than ever. Technology such as Zoom is soaring in use, with many people home—and homeschooling. Virtual celebrations of birthdays and milestones have become quite creative. And old-fashioned phone calls and snail-mail are ideal for building bonds with grandparents and other relatives.

**Community Kindness** Tough times are bringing out lots of goodness and camaraderie, as neighbors reach out to offer assistance and cheer. Neighborhood teddy bear hunts, sidewalk-chalk messages, concerts, and vehicle parades show how “minor” acts spread major joy.

## FREE HELPS

### Devotions & Bible Activities

<https://tinyurl.com/safxgts>  
<https://tinyurl.com/ukywxnk>

### Helping Children Cope

<https://tinyurl.com/v4lynwe>

### Explaining the News to Kids

<https://tinyurl.com/jv8l46a>

### At-Home “P.E. With Joe”

<https://tinyurl.com/ragqo5z>

### Mo Willems’ “Lunch Doodles”

<https://tinyurl.com/vzwy7en>

### Loads of Virtual Tours

<https://tinyurl.com/qxkxmwv>

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This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our goal is to help you make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.



# May

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

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