
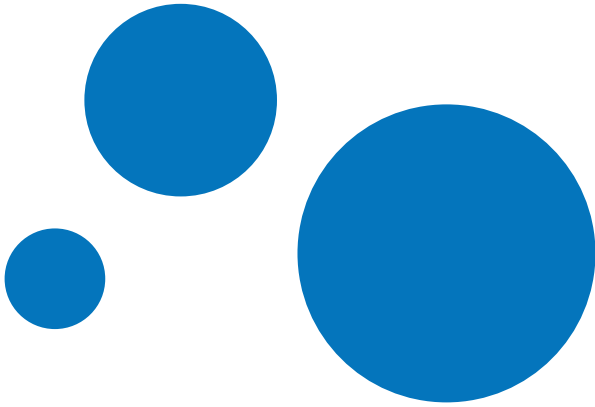


Ten Tips

For Parents





Welcome

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

-Deuteronomy 6:5-9

Discipling a child is a ministry of the heart. It addresses the heart of a child and directs their affections to God. But every parent knows - they cannot change the heart of their child.

God, in his wisdom, has designed the family unit as the best environment for a child to be born into. To be nurtured and to grow. And it's within this relationship, between parent and child, that God speaks these words in Deuteronomy.

This a call to action. Parents to be proactive. They are to impress, talk, tie, bind, write - to be intentional about the daily discipling of their child.

Every parent is to make God visible within the family home. 'Tie them as symbols... write them on the doorframes...' God's presence is not to be a once-a-week Sunday experience but a 24/7 experience in the life of a child. God-talk is to be part of the 'waking up, lying down, sitting, walking' aspect of daily family life.

But what does this look like? Ten Tips aims to equip parents in their God-given, privileged role of speaking the truth of the gospel into the life of their child. Ten Tips is not meant to be prescriptive, rather descriptive. It allows parents to choose what's helpful for them and their family as they seek to bring their children up in the fear and love of the Lord, entrusting the changing of their child's heart into the sovereign control of their gracious God.

by Sandy Galea



On Addressing Kids Fears And Doubts

1. Be ready - children, just like adults, will go through periods of doubt. Disbelief is the lot of the non-Christian, periods of doubt is the experience of the Christian. So expect that your children will go through periods of doubt just like you.
2. Be merciful to those who doubt (Jude 1:22). Our response to anyone experiencing doubt is always mercy. Sometimes the way children express things can be very cute or at times sound funny, but taking their issues seriously is important. Be careful not to belittle or make light of a child's doubts.
3. When your child expresses doubts (i.e. God's existence, Bible being true, Jesus' resurrection...) stay calm. Children feel their parent's anxiety and this can make them feel uncomfortable. Our anxiety can deter them from sharing their doubts in the future.
4. Be patient. It often takes a child a long time to express their thoughts. Try to fully understand their doubts before responding.
5. Normalise doubts. Reassure them that this is normal. Children often think there is something wrong with them if they're unsure of something Mum and Dad think is true. Take them to heroes like David, Job and Thomas, who all went through periods of doubt.
6. Encourage your child to express their doubts by encouraging questions. Doubts will continue to grow if not expressed. Encouraging questions is one way of helping children express doubts.

7. Fears are very real for children. Night terrors, fear of the dark, fear of being alone, fear of the green and yellow monster under the bed... Encourage your child to talk to their Father in heaven about their fears and doubts. Sometimes this will mean children end up with a prayer that reads like a shopping list of all the things that terrify them, but speaking them out loud to their Father in heaven is great! They will eventually grow out of this mantra as their fears subside and their prayers will begin to vary.
8. Teach your child verses from scripture that address their fears or doubts. Put them on the fridge, on their bedroom walls. Say them, chant them, sing them - as you drive to school, as they fall asleep.
 - Proverbs 3:5-6
 - Psalm 18:2
 - Psalm 56:3-4
 - Psalm 118:6
 - James 1:5-8
 - 1 John 4:18
9. Appropriately share your fears and doubts with your child, and what you found helpful.
10. Read books that address fears and doubts appropriate for your child. The Storm That Stopped, by Alison Mitchell is a great retelling of Mark 4. Jesus asked his disciples, 'Why are you afraid?' It reminds us that we have nothing to fear because our trust is in Jesus, God's Son. Or, for older children, the books by Lee Strobel are a great place to start in addressing doubts.

by Sandy Galea

Recommended Resources

Big Truths For Little Kids, by Susan & Richie Hunt
Case For Christ For Kids, by Lee Strobel
Case For Faith For Kids, by Lee Strobel
Case For The Creator For Kids, by Lee Strobel

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Recommended Resources

Ages 1-2

The Beginners Bible
God Knows All About Me, Claire Page
God Made Me This Way, Hayley Down, Claire Fennell
A Time For Everything, Susie Poole
Always Near Me, Susie Poole
Whatever Is Lovely, Susie Poole
Near: Psalm 139, Sally Lloyd-Jones

Ages 3-6

The Beginners Bible
The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible, Jared Kennedy
The Christmas Promise, Alison Mitchell
The Storm That Stopped, Alison Mitchell
The One O'Clock Miracle, Alison Mitchell
Jesus And The Lions' Den, Alison Mitchell
The Garden, The Curtain And The Cross, Carl Laferton
Noah's Ark, Bethan Lycett
The Lost Sheep, Bethan Lycett
The Pearl Of Great Price, Bethan Lycett
God's Very Good Idea, Trilla Newbell
God Made All Of Me, Justin & Lindsey Holcomb
My First Story Of Jesus, Tim Dowely
Everyone A Child Should Know, C Heath-Whyte
Everything A Child Should Know, C Heath-Whyte

Ages 7-11

Thoughts To Make Your Heart Sing, Sally Lloyd-Jones
The Jesus Story Book Bible, Sally Lloyd-Jones
The Action Bible, Sergio Cariello
International Children's Bible
The Big Picture Story Bible, David Helm
Birds And The Bees By The Book, Patricia Weerakoon
The Ology, M Machowski
The Gospel Story Bible, M Machowski
This Is The Gospel, Raechel Myers, Amanda Bible Williams
Everyone A Child Should Know, C Heath-Whyte
Everything A Child Should Know, C Heath-Whyte