
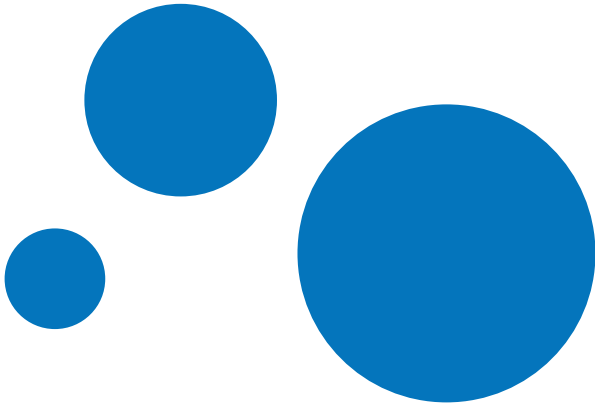


Ten Tips

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 Celebrating Christmas With Your Child

1. God's amazing gift to us is the forgiveness of our sins through his son, Jesus. We don't deserve this gift nor did we do anything to earn this gift. It's a gift. And God never takes back his gift to us. So be careful not to discipline a child by taking a gift away as a punishment. If you do, then you'll teach them that they have to be good in order to deserve the gift and that they have to be good if they want the gift back. Gifts are neither deserved nor earned. They are freely given and never taken back.
2. Establish helpful family traditions that help your child to stop and be reminded both visually and verbally of the centrality of Jesus in the craziness of Christmas. Example: pray together after you've set up the Christmas tree, read a passage of scripture together before you open presents, retell the birth of Jesus using commercial or homemade figurines as a family.
3. Use an Advent Calendar to kick start your family into daily Bible reading. Each day of December, read the verse suggested in the booklet, pray and open up a window in the calendar.
4. Foster a thankful heart in each of your children. Spend time with them making cards and writing letters thanking people who have been generous with their time and energy throughout the past year (e.g. Kids Church leaders, Kids Club leaders, Playtime leaders, school teachers, preschool teachers, tutors, coaches...).
5. Encourage your children to be servant hearted. Look for opportunities to serve as a family, people who are in need in your local community.
6. Teach your children to have a generous heart. As a family, reduce the amount of gifts bought for family members, and instead select a gift from the Compassion catalogue. When family gifts are being opened ask a child to remind the family what gift was purchased and how it will help people who are in need. As a family pray about the people who will receive this gift.

7. Seek to develop a sacrificial heart in each of your children. Encourage young children to think about what they can give away to children who don't have much (give their best, not to just give what they don't want anymore). Encourage older children to purchase gifts out of their own money and put a shoe box of gifts together for a child in need for the Samaritan Purse appeal called, Operation Christmas Child (done in October each year).
8. Model a welcoming heart to your children by looking for opportunities to invite people who have no family into your home to share a meal at Christmas.
9. Keep Santa Claus in the area of fantasy. If you treat Santa Claus as real, children may then question whether Jesus is real.
10. Stop and consider what you model to your child about what's important at Christmas. So, gather around God's word, stop and pray together, meet with your church family, buy less and give more.

by Sandy Galea

Recommended Christmas Resources

Kidswise Christmas Mini Movies

Kidswise Christmas Stories

Kidswise Christmas Lessons

King Of Christmas, Colin Buchanan

Advent Calendars, The Good Book Company

Beginning With God At Christmas, The Good Book Company

My First Christmas Story, by Tim Dowley

Little One We Knew You'd Come, by Sally Lloyd-Jones

The Christmas Promise, by Alison Mitchell

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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