



Summer 2026

Dear Families,

Raising children in the faith doesn't happen just at church, but at home and in everyday life. As parents, you have the unique role to walk alongside your children every day and teach them about Jesus. In order to help promote and encourage faith development at home, I have included several resources for you to use in your homes:

- Family Devotions
 - Adventures of Donkey Ollie
 - Silly Scriptures
- Smart Moves for Little Ones
 - Discipline and Forgiveness
- Family Traditions
 - Bedtime
- Summertime Activities
- Parent Cue Crisis Conversation Guide

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 11:18-19).

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jen Roettjer".

Jen Roettjer, DCE

Director of Youth and Discipleship



[FAMILY DEVOTIONS]

For Little Ones

SHARE

What are your highs and
lows from the day?

What are you thankful for
today?

LEARN

The Adventures of Donkey Ollie

Ollie, the donkey, lives at
the time of Jesus in the
Bible lands.

YouTube

Search for The Adventures
of Donkey Ollie

MUSIC

Silly Scriptures

Website

<https://sillyscriptures.com>

YouTube

@SillyScriptures1991

PRAY

Confess
Honor
Ask
Thanks



[SMART MOVES FOR LITTLE ONES]

DISCIPLINE AND FORGIVENESS

Thoughts to Consider

No one likes to discipline their children, but it comes with the territory of being a parent. Instead of thinking of the negative connotation attached to discipline, let's consider the word discipling. In order to raise up a child that believes in Jesus, they must be disciplined to follow in the way taught in the Bible, in their behavior, values, and beliefs.

Discipline or Discipling

Every time your child makes a mess or defiantly does what you just told them not to do creates an opportunity to speak about the sinful nature of our world and need for Jesus. We are all sinful and will mess up again and again. Once your child was able to move around, you already began the process of discipling. As their world grows larger, your discipling process will need to become more intentional in forming a child with a godly character. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind:

- Give choices
- Set limits
- Model the behavior you want them to copy
- Use natural consequences when possible
- Redirect
- Speak words of forgiveness regularly

Use your best judgement to decide what situations that you would use for opportunities to grow and ones that are best let go. Just as each situation requires different parenting techniques, so do the times you choose to talk about sin and Jesus.

For more information, check out: "Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood" by Jim Fay and Charles Fay



[FAMILY TRADITIONS]

BEDTIME

Thoughts to Consider

Bedtime is the special time of day to connect with your child before drifting off into sleep for the night. While some traditions and activities are essential, like brushing your teeth and putting on your pajamas, others can help set the mood for a restful evening or even create a space to connect with God and each other.

Bedtime Activities

- Storytime – Read a book, read the Bible, or make up your own story
- Highs and Lows for the day
- Pray for a different family member or friend each day
- Blessings – Lay your hands on your child and speak a blessing
- Marking the Day – Each day put a star on the calendar and thank God for the day
- Set out clothes and items for the next day/week
- Share future excitements and concerns
- Give thanks for the good things that happened that day
- Singing – Ask your smart device to play a song to sing along to
- Prayer Journal – Write down what you pray about and record how God answers
- Memorize Bible Verses
- Create an atmosphere with low lights and soft sounds
- Cup of milk or tea
- Use Belly Breathing techniques – put a stuffed animal on their tummy. Take deep breaths to move the stuffed animal up and down

Summer Bucket List Ideas

Here is a list of ideas on how to make the best of your summer this year. Use the included Summer Bucket List Sheet to create your own list.

Backyard Activities

- Roll Down a Hill
- Fly a Kite
- Host an Outdoor Family Movie Night
- Run through the sprinklers
- Have a Water Balloon Fight
- Find the Summer Star Constellations
- Find Pictures in the Clouds
- Have a Picnic
- Make Tie-Dye Shirts
- Watch a Sunset
- Catch Fireflies
- Blow Bubbles
- Make Snow Cones
- Take a Mud Bath in a Kiddie Pool
- Feed the Ducks at a Park
- Dance in the Rain
- Drive through Town on a Picture Scavenger Hunt
- Play Capture the Flag
- Late Night Flashlight Tag
- Nature Journaling
- Roast Marshmallows/Make S'mores
- No Electronics Day
- Hold a Pool Noodle Olympics
- Make a Frisbee Golf Course in Your Backyard
- Pick Wildflowers
- Paint Rocks
- Hike in the Dark with No Flashlights

- Make Sponge Water Bombs or Water Balloon Fight
- Camp in the Backyard with Tent
- Color with Sidewalk Chalk
- Find a New Trail to Hike

Indoor Activities

- Attend VBS
- Make Homemade Ice Cream
- Make Your Own Comic Books
- Make Homemade Playdough or Slime
- Finger Paint
- Create a Paper Bag Puppet Show
- Pick a New Hobby to Learn
- Have a Pajama Day
- Make a Movie or Music Video
- Explore YouTube for a New Science Experiment
- Make Jewelry
- Host a Family Game Tournament
- Create the Ultimate Fort
- Pillow Fight
- Dance Party
- Fly Paper Airplanes
- Fruit and Veggie Canning
- Make a Summer Scrapbook
- Host a Dinner Party with Friends or Someone Who Lives Alone
- Photo Shoot
- Pinterest Day – Find and Create Your Favorite Find
- Bake Cookies

- DIY Spa Say
- Lego Stop Motion Video
- Plant a Fairy Garden
- Minute to Win It Games
- Make a Blessings Jar of All Blessings from the Summer
- Hold an All-Day Movie Marathon
- Make Your Own Board Game
- Complete a Book Reading List

Themed Meal Ideas

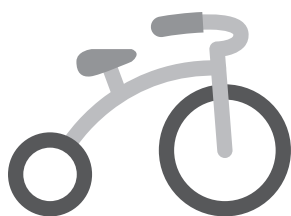
- Fancy Meal
- Taco Tuesday
- Baseball Park Night
- Fondue Night
- Throwback Thursday (Favorite Meals from Long Ago)
- Princess Tea Party
- Finger Foods
- Luau
- Farmer's Market Only
- Breakfast in Bed
- Disney Night
- Rainforest Cafe
- Carnival Foods
- Find the Best Pizza (or other food) in Town

Service Projects

- Bake a Treat for Your Neighbor
- Wash the Car
- Write a Letter or Card to a Friend or Relative (Become Summer Pen Pals)
- Do an Act of Random Kindness

Staycation Activities

- Water Park
- Library
- Farmer's Market
- Zoo or Animal Farm
- Fishing
- Flower picking
- Beach
- Movies
- Ziplining
- Pick your own Fruit
- Waterfall chasing
- Fairgrounds
- Boat Ride
- Mini Golf
- Hiking
- Aquarium
- Geocaching
- Nature Scavenger Hunt
- Laser Tag
- Swimming
- Roller Skating
- Botanical Gardens
- Painting
- Outdoor concert
- State Parks
- Selfie Museum
- Ride on a train
- Baseball game
- Rock Climbing
- Arcade
- Find a new playground
- Bowling
- Rock Hunting
- Children's Museum



Preschool

CRISIS

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

... for great conversations with kids

Your toddler/preschooler can have a meltdown over a toy or snack. But what happens when there is a bigger crisis or tragedy in their world, like the death of a loved one or a big move or a divorce? What do you do? What do you say? A preschooler may not be able to verbally express how they are coping, but there are ways to pay attention to your child's non-verbal cues.

No one knows your preschooler better than you. You will be able to notice if they are in crisis mode before anyone else. Pay attention to changes in behavior (like thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, and clinginess) and provide a consistent, safe, and loving environment for them to heal and grow.

Help them feel secure. When your preschooler is experiencing a crisis, there are some things you can say and do that will help them feel safe. Here are a few ideas:

- "I'm here, you're not alone." (*Listen to their feelings and validate them.*)
- "Why don't we draw/color together." (*Observe how they express themselves symbolically.*)
- "I love watching you play." (*Pay attention to what they mirror, watch how they play and notice changes or regression in their behavior.*)
- "I am always looking out for you."
- "I'll help you when you need it."
- "I'll play with you. I love having time with you." (*Move to their play area or space. Play is their first language.*)
- "He/she died. That means their bodies stopped working." (*Explain in simple clear words. Don't use confusing phrases like, "We lost grandma."*)
- "You are a beautiful, wonderful, child of God."
- "You can know that God is always with you."
- "Even when you feel sad, God loves you."

Make sure to involve professionals, counselors (as needed), as well as your ministry leader.