



Winter 2024

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
 - Boz the Bear
 - Cedarmont Kids
- Smart Moves for Little Ones
 - Media and Technology
- Family Traditions
 - Christmas
- Advent Calendar
- Technology 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]

LEARN

Boz the Bear

Boz the bear helps kids discover God's world. Adventures start in his treehouse, from which they begin exploring God's good gifts each day.

YouTube @BOZthebear

SHARE

Highs and Lows from the day
What are you thankful for today?

PRAY
Confess
Honor
Ask
Thanks

MUSIC

Cedarment Kids—Bible Singalong Collection

Spotify or Amazon—Search for Artist Cedarment Kids
YouTube @cedarmentkids



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[FAMILY TRADITIONS]

CHRISTMAS

Thoughts to Consider

For many people, Christmas is their favorite time of year. As you spend time with your family and friends, celebrating the birth of the baby Jesus, the traditions we make at Christmas carry with us for years to come.

Christmas Activities

- Christmas Caroling – Sing your favorite Christmas songs to your neighbors, friends, or even at a nursing home. Then surprise them with a gift of cookies or candy.
- Gingerbread House Decorating Contest – Pick winners from a variety of categories: best use of one type of candy, most structurally sound
- Play Elf – Take a family walk and do something nice for a neighbor or friend, such as paying for a meal, doing yardwork, or bringing a special treat.
- Let the Games Begin – Host a board game or card game family tournament.

- Special Foods – Nothing says holidays like good food! Try one of these during your holiday celebrations:
 - Cinnamon rolls for breakfast
 - Christmas brunch
 - Hot Chocolate Bar with different toppings and flavors of chocolate
- Food Traditions from Around the World – Did you know in Japan, many people like to eat chicken from KFC? Or in Costa Rica, they like to make tamales for Christmas? Pick a country and try a favorite Christmas food that they enjoy.

- Gift Opening – Make it more interesting with a scavenger hunt, singing songs, or a quiz game.
- In with the New/Out with the Old – For each new gift a person receives, they must donate that many items.



MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

Thoughts to Consider

As your child grows and becomes more active, the temptation to use screen time greatly increases. Experts recommend limiting the amount of screen time for little ones.

Screen Recommendations

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and World Health Organization, they recommend avoiding screen media until 18 months. The exception is video chatting. They see nothing wrong with using your phone or tablet to talk with grandma and grandpa across the country. Talk away!

You may begin introducing digital media to children between 18-24 months. The length of the time in front of the screen, should be no longer than an hour per day, although less is preferred, and should be high quality media. Video chatting with family members is still seen as beneficial and is not included in the hour per day.

Children between the ages of 2 and 5 are to limit the amount of time in front of a screen to no more than one hour per day. Parents should closely monitor what their child is watching and should encourage high quality media. Video chatting with friends and family members is allowed and not included in the hour per day.

What are good activities that you might provide for your child instead of screen time?

- Reading books
- Listening to music
- Playing with them
- Creating a screen free zone in your house with toys and activities

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

To enhance the conversation, here are a few conversation starters and activities your family can try:

Have screen-free time. Grab a bin or box that can become “home” for all technology when it’s not in use. Help your preschooler decorate whatever container you choose. Show them how the technology goes inside the bin and how to remove it (if it requires taking off a lid, unzipping a zipper, etc.). Let them help you decide where to store the bin. Talk to your preschooler about when they can and cannot access the technology from its “home.”

Create screen-free zones. Keep activities in your car, diaper bag, or purse that are not technology-related. It’s so easy to default to a tablet or phone to entertain your preschooler when you’re out and about. Giving your child another option may curb the impulse for technology to be your kid’s go-to. Ideas: a coloring book and crayons, an Etch A Sketch, tracing paper and pencils, books, a cookie sheet with magnetic letters, a dry erase board with markers, magnetic puzzles, etc.

Teach with Technology. Technology isn’t just for entertainment, it’s an important tool for learning. Introduce early reading and math concepts through websites and apps that involve matching games or associating words with images. There are even some apps that will read books aloud to you and your child. Spend some time investigating some of the best, and get recommendations from friends.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your preschooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



For more information on The Phase Project and other great parent resources, visit theParentCue.org
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TECHNOLOGY

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Are you blown away that your preschooler can swipe and click even faster than you can? How did they figure out how to find that Disney video in the sea of app icons on your screen? These keen abilities are exactly why it’s a great time to start a conversation about the big world of technology. Your preschooler is a long ways from having their own phone and social media accounts, but every day they are watching, listening, and learning. They need you to guide their introduction into this world and set them up for success. Remember your role in the preschool phase is to help them

ENJOY
The advantages



So your child will . . .
**EXPERIENCE BOUNDARIES & HAVE
POSITIVE EXPOSURE**

This guide is designed to help you connect with your child in the phase they are in, by giving you some words to say to navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal for your preschooler in mind:

TECHNOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

IN THE NEW BABY PHASE, (YOU) THINK THINGS LIKE . . .

"Does it really matter if I forgot to record the last feeding in the app?" *(Answer: No. As long as the baby ate, she doesn't care.)*

"Is there anyone out there who can relate?" *(Use technology to connect to other adults.)*

"Look at this baby!" *(Take as many photos as you like. You will enjoy seeing them later.)*

"I put my phone away when we are eating so we can talk to each other." *(Set limits for screen time.)*

"You need to ask before you use the computer." *(Know when they are on a device and what they are using it to do.)*

"Let me show you what a galaxy looks like." *(Use technology to enhance your conversations.)*

"Let me see what you did." *(Show interest in what they do with technology.)*

"It's time for you to put the tablet away."

IN THE FOLLOWING PRESCHOOL YEARS, SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"No juice by the computer."

"Tablets don't go in the bathtub."

"Let's turn off the TV now."

"I'm texting Grandma to ask a question." *(Talk openly about technology as you use it.)*

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The preschool years are the years you want to embrace their physical needs. They need to be physically close to you so use screen time as opportunities for 'lap time' where you can cuddle and share the experience. In this phase, your child thinks like an artist, and you can help them learn by engaging their senses through what they see and hear. Remember that screen time doesn't have to be isolating but can be used to stimulate great moments together. Stay informed. Stay involved. Start the conversation.