



parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Help Children Hunger for God

POWERSOURCE

ASK JESUS:

1. To fill your family members with gratitude for God's blessings.
2. To help you all feel satisfied with everything you have.
3. To increase your hunger for Jesus and his Word.

Children, no matter their social class, often define themselves by their possessions and wants. Meanwhile, our materialistic culture insidiously distracts from what kids *really* need: to connect, to be satisfied, and to matter.

Ultimately, children want attention and relationships more than things. Through connections with Jesus and his followers, kids learn that they're special because of their identity in Jesus—and that only he offers eternal, priceless treasure.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." To give kids the wealth of God's kingdom in their hearts, we must let them

experience spiritual hunger. "I lose touch with my own body when I never allow myself to feel physical hunger," Phil Vischer writes in *Children's Ministry* magazine. The "VeggieTales" creator adds: "Likewise, our kids lose touch with their spiritual selves—their true selves—when they're never given the space to feel spiritual hunger. Space to ask big questions. Space to wonder. And space to feel (gasp!) *small*."

How do we help kids who are full of (or desirous of) earthly things hunger for the things of God? Parents can set a good example, have family devotions, pray with children, and engage in conversations that whet an appetite for Jesus. During this month of gratitude and "feasting" on God's blessings, use the food-themed ideas on the next page to satisfy kids' ultimate need.

Biblical Food for Thought

In 1930, missionary Frank Laubach sat on a hill overlooking a town in the Philippines where he felt called to share the Gospel. While reflecting on the task, he heard God say, “You must awaken hunger there, for until they hunger they cannot be fed.” That hunger, sometimes called a “God-shaped hole,” is a yearning for eternity and for answers to life’s biggest questions: What is my purpose? Is this world all there is? Our world and its stream of distractions is intent on reducing children’s hunger pangs for the divine, but you can remind them that Jesus wants our life to be otherworldly.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Faith Food

You’ll need graham crackers, elf-shaped cookies, paper plates, vanilla yogurt, blue food coloring, and plastic knives. Put some blue food coloring in a large container of yogurt. Have everyone wash their hands.

Read aloud Matthew 14:22-33. Set out the blue yogurt and plastic knives. Give each person a plate with a graham cracker and an elf-shaped cookie. Show how to spread yogurt on the cracker to make a sea. Then have family members each place a cookie on the yogurt to represent Peter walking on the water. Pray to thank God for the snack and then eat it.

Ask: **Why do you think Peter wanted to walk on water? Why do you think Jesus let him sink? What helps you believe in Jesus?**

Say: **Jesus helps us believe in him. We can do important things for Jesus. But first, we need to have faith in him. Don’t doubt—believe!**

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Edible Garden For discussions about God’s creation or being thankful for food, create a colorful display of vegetable flowers and plants. With some imagination, cucumbers become flower petals, a celery stalk is a stem, and spinach becomes the leaves. Set out ranch dip and consume the art.

Tablet Treats While learning about the Ten Commandments, make tablets out of graham crackers, vanilla frosting, and raisins. As kids add each raisin, see if they can remember each commandment. This snack also works with lessons about Jesus teaching in the temple and Paul’s letters to the church.

Cross Talk When discussing how Jesus died on the cross for us, make an edible object lesson with pretzel sticks and candy coating. Melt according to instructions and then dip pretzels. On paper plates or wax paper, connect sticks into cross shapes. When cool, enjoy.

Gone Fishin’ Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on a paper plate. Fill another paper plate with Goldfish crackers and set it nearby. Have family members dip one end of a pretzel stick into the peanut butter or cream cheese. Then, using their pretzel “fishing rods,” have them “catch” fish by touching

the dipped pretzel ends to crackers and picking them up to eat. (Avoid double dipping.) Use this to talk about following Jesus and fishing for people.

Prayer Necklace For a fun reminder to pray, string circle-shaped cereal onto thin licorice whips. Tie the ends together to make necklaces. During devotions, encourage family members to eat a piece of cereal as each prayer request or praise is shared.

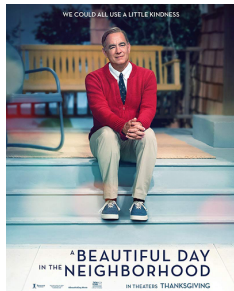
Cheesy Blocks Use cheese cubes to build structures from events in the Bible (tower of Babel, wall of Jericho, house built on the rock, and so on). Insert toothpicks to stabilize the structures, and let kids gobble up their creations later.

Ultimate Nourishment Prepare and eat slices of bread with honey. Read aloud Luke 10:38-42 and talk about Mary and Martha. Ask: “Which is more nourishing: bread or honey?” Say: “The Bible says Jesus is the bread of life. Jesus feeds our souls when we spend time with him. Busy bees make honey, which is sweet but not very nourishing. Being busy doesn’t feed our souls.” Ask: “How can you spend more time with Jesus, the bread of life, this week? How can we share his ‘food’ with others?”

Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

—John 6:35

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*

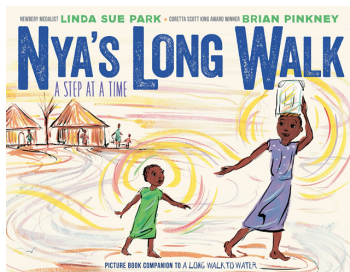
Genre: Biography, Drama

Rating: not yet rated

Cast: Tom Hanks, Matthew Rhys

Synopsis: *Frozen 2* is sure to thrill many young moviegoers in November, but this heartwarming biopic will inspire older kids and parents. Beloved children's-TV host Fred Rogers, also an ordained minister, developed a real-life friendship with a reporter who profiled him for an article about heroes.

Our Take: With its timeless messages of acceptance, encouragement, and understanding, this film can spark conversations about embracing our neighbors and their needs. It reminds viewers that feelings are important and that "every person is precious."



BOOK

Title: *Nya's Long Walk*

Author: Linda Sue Park

Synopsis: This picture book for ages 4 to 7 describes the two-hour journey a girl in South Sudan endures—with her younger sister—to obtain water for her family. It ends with the community receiving a clean-water well. Park, a Newbery Medalist, wrote the middle-grade novel *A Long Walk to Water*.

Our Take: Nya's ordeal introduces children to common struggles faced by people outside their own communities. Use it to discuss our blessings from God—including those we often take for granted—and how we can express gratitude. With older children, you can connect this story to Jesus being the water of life. Your family may want to donate to a clean-water charity.



CULTURE & TRENDS

New Recipe for Togetherness

Family breakfast is replacing family dinner, according to many busy parents and kids. Factors include people's availability in the morning and the limited menu options for breakfast. Experts say gathering around the table matters more than *when* it actually happens. (*time.com*)

Storytime Under Fire Public libraries have received backlash for offering Drag Queen Story Hour, with dressed-up folks reading to children. While the readers say they're celebrating the "gender fluidity" of childhood, critics say it's an attempt to indoctrinate young minds. (*various sources*)

QUICK STATS

Faith 101 Almost 70 percent of parents say they attend church to introduce their children to faith. (*reachrightstudios.com*)

Top Role Models Although one-third of children ages 6 to 17 consider social-media stars to be role models, the top spot still belongs to parents. (*Mintel.com*)

Keep It Down! Up to 40% of people have noise sensitivity, which is hereditary and has physical and emotional effects. (*various sources*)

Games, Podcasts & Apps

Pokémon Sword & Pokémon Shield

Set in the Galar Region, this pricey double-pack for the Nintendo Switch has new characters, new "battle mechanics," and even Poké jobs for gaining experience. The next-generation game is reportedly geared toward the franchise's growing number of younger fans.

Spare the Rock, Spoil the Child

Featuring "Indie Music for Indie Kids," this family-friendly syndicated show aims to "raise another generation of radio nerds." Bill Childs and his two children host and produce this podcast, where you'll hear everything from They Might Be Giants to Ella Fitzgerald.

Plague Inc.

In this bleak simulation game, the goal is to infect the entire world with a sickness before doctors can find a cure. Although the app doesn't contain any vulgarity, sexuality, or gore, the concept is quite dark and intense. Rated E for everyone, the app does have some educational aspects.

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