

CHRIS & CARRIE KALLAL'S



IDEAS OF
PARENTING
AWESOMENESS



THE KALLAL'S



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The Kallals love camp so much that they spend a lot of their free time teaching others about camp! They have taught camping classes at different conferences around the world and written a ton of books about the various aspects of camp life. As well, Chris co-hosts a podcast, Scamp Life - The Programming Side, where he talks all things Camp Programming.

They have a total of 4 children, Rowan, Emmalina, Autumn, and Aurora, as well as a couple dogs, cat, some hissing cockroaches, bearded dragon, leopard gecko, frog, turtle, and a pet skunk, named Stinkerbell!

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FAITH AND VALUES

PARENT-FESSION

I ONCE TOLD MY KIDS WE WERE
FASTING FROM SCREEN
TIME...MOSTLY BECAUSE I LOST
THE REMOTE

1. Model Your Faith Daily

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.- 1 Corinthians 11:1

- **Live what you teach.** Let your kids see you pray, read Scripture, and lean on God in everyday situations.
- **Show your struggles honestly.** Don't hide your flaws. Apologize when you're wrong and let your children see how you rely on God for strength
- **Integrate faith into routine.** Pray before meals, listen to worship music in the car, or share something God taught you during your day.
- **Serve with them.** When you volunteer, include your children so they see faith in action.
- **Be consistent.** A faithful example over time has a stronger impact than a thousand lectures.

Takeaway

Children will rarely rise above the example set for them. If you want your kids to grow into adults who love Jesus, love others, and live with integrity, then the best place to start is with yourself. Live the kind of faith you want to see in them.

Example

Instead of only telling your kids to pray when they're worried, let them overhear you praying aloud for your own fears, like before a big work meeting or a tough decision. They'll remember that far more than a lecture on trusting God.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What is one area of my faith I want my kids to notice more in me?

"Children are natural imitators. They may not always do what we say, but they almost always do what we do." - Anonymous

2. Teach Biblical Truth in Everyday Life

Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up - Deuteronomy 6:7

- **Make Scripture practical.** When your child faces a challenge, connect it to a Bible story or verse (David's courage, Joseph's forgiveness, Jesus' compassion).
- **Use everyday moments.** Turn car rides, dinner conversations, or bedtime into opportunities to point back to God's Word.
- **Keep it simple.** Don't overcomplicate. Use short verses and big truths are easiest for kids to remember.
- **Celebrate application.** When your child shows kindness, honesty, or courage, affirm it as living out what the Bible teaches.
- **Let questions be welcome.** If your kids ask "why" about Scripture, lean in. Explore answers together instead of shutting them down.

Takeaway

The Bible isn't just for Sunday mornings, it's a guide for everyday life. When you weave God's Word naturally into daily conversations and choices, you show your children that Scripture is alive, relevant, and trustworthy.

Example

While driving home, your child talks about a disagreement they had with a friend. Instead of only giving advice, point them to Ephesians 4:32 about being kind and forgiving. Talk together about what forgiveness could look like in that situation, then pray for wisdom and a loving attitude before they see their friend again.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What verse or story could I share with my kids this week

"Don't worry that children never listen to you;
worry that they are always watching you."

3. Practice Gratitude as a Family

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- **Model thankfulness.** Let your kids hear you thank God in prayer and thank others in daily life.
- **Create gratitude habits.** Start a family tradition like sharing one thing you're thankful for at dinner or writing in a gratitude journal.
- **Thank beyond stuff.** Help kids focus on people, experiences, and God's character, not just material blessings.
- **Highlight the small things.** Notice and give thanks for things like sunshine, laughter, or a meal together.
- **Use gratitude to reframe.** When challenges arise, look for something to be thankful for even in the struggle.

Takeaway

A grateful heart changes how we see the world. Teaching your children to give thanks in all circumstances helps them see God's goodness, live with joy, and develop resilience in every season of life.

Example

When your child is disappointed about not getting a toy or losing a game, pause with them and say, "I know this is hard, but let's think of three things we can thank God for right now." Over time, they'll learn that gratitude is possible even when life doesn't go their way.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one new family gratitude habit we could start?

"Gratitude turns what we have into enough."

- Anonymous

4. Serve Others as a Family

Serve one another humbly in love - Galatians 5:13

- **Serve together.** Volunteer as a family at church, a food pantry, or community event so kids see service as normal.
- **Look for small opportunities.** Rake a neighbor's leaves, bake cookies for a teacher, or write cards for someone sick.
- **Connect service to faith.** Remind kids that when we serve others, we are serving Christ.
- **Let kids lead.** Ask your children for ideas of who needs help. Many times, they'll often notice things adults overlook.
- **Make it joyful.** Treat serving like an adventure instead of a chore so kids look forward to it.

Takeaway

Service shapes hearts. When families make serving others a lifestyle, children grow up seeing kindness and compassion not as special events, but as the normal rhythm of following Jesus.

Example

One Saturday, instead of a normal outing, take the kids to deliver cookies and thank-you notes to local firefighters. On the way home, talk about how serving people is one way we shine God's love in the world.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Who is one person or family we could serve together soon?

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

- Mahatma Gandhi

5. Pray with and For Your Kids

Pray Continually - 1 Thessalonians 5:17

- **Pray aloud together.** Let your kids hear you pray for their needs and thank God for their blessings.
- **Pray in the moment.** Stop and pray when something comes up (fear, joy, or a need) so they see prayer as natural.
- **Let kids pray.** Encourage them to pray in their own words without worrying about "sounding right."
- **Keep a prayer list.** Track requests and answered prayers as a reminder of God's faithfulness.
- **Bless them daily.** Pray a short blessing over your kids before bed or as they leave for school.

Takeaway

Prayer is one of the greatest gifts you can give your children. By making it part of daily life, you show them that God cares about every detail and that they can always turn to Him.

Example

When your child is anxious about a big test, pause and say, "Let's pray about this together right now." Then pray a short, simple prayer asking God for peace and focus.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- When is the best daily moment to pause and pray with my child?

"Don't just talk to your kids about God; talk to God about your kids." - Unknown

6. Share Stories of God's Faithfulness

One generation commends your works to another, they tell of your mighty acts.
- Psalm 145:4

- **Tell your testimony.** Share with your kids how you came to faith and how God has worked in your life.
- **Point out God's hand.** When prayers are answered, pause and celebrate what God has done.
- **Share family faith history.** Talk about how grandparents, friends, or others trusted God.
- **Make it a habit.** Include stories of God's goodness during mealtime or bedtime talks.
- **Use the Bible as reference.** Connect your own experiences with stories of God's faithfulness in Scripture.

Takeaway

Children need to know that God is not only powerful in the Bible but also real and active in their own family's story. Passing down testimonies builds their confidence that He will be faithful to them too.

Example

Tell your kids about a time your family struggled financially, but God provided. Connect it to Philippians 4:19 and encourage them to trust God in their own worries.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What story from my life could I share with my kids this week?

"Stories are the currency of family life."
- Unknown

7. Celebrate Spiritual Milestones

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth - 3John 1:4

- **Celebrate big moments.** Recognize baptisms, first communion, or child dedications with family gatherings.
- **Highlight spiritual growth.** Encourage kids when they memorize verses, serve in church, or make faith decisions.
- **Create traditions.** Give a special Bible or gift for milestones like salvation or graduation.
- **Mark it visually.** Use photos, journals, or keepsakes to record spiritual turning points.
- **Speak words of blessing.** Affirm their faith journey with encouraging words and prayers.

Takeaway

Marking milestones reminds children that their spiritual journey matters. Celebrations help them look back with gratitude and look forward with confidence in how God is leading them.

Example

When your child is baptized, host a simple family dinner afterward where each person shares a Bible verse or blessing for them. That moment will stick in their memory for years.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Which milestone can I affirm or prepare my child for next?

"Mark the moment so the memory lasts."

- Unknown

8. Keep Christ as the Center of Your Home

But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord - Joshua 24:15

- **Make Christ visible.** Display Scripture in your home through art, decor, or memory verses on the fridge.
- **Center decisions on faith.** Ask, "What would honor God?" when making family choices.
- **Keep Sundays sacred.** Prioritize worship and rest together as a family.
- **Pray over your home.** Dedicate it as a place of peace, love, and Christ's presence.
- **Talk about Jesus naturally.** Weave His name into daily conversations, not just church times.

Takeaway

When Christ is the foundation of your home, everything else finds its proper place. Your children will grow up knowing that faith isn't an add-on to life, it's the heartbeat of your family.

Example

Before school starts each year, gather as a family in the living room to pray over the home and each child's school year. It sets a clear tone that Jesus is the center of all you do.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What change could make our home reflect Christ more clearly?

"Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." - Unknown

PARENT-FESSION
WE TRIED A FAMILY
DEVOTION. IT ENDED WITH
SPILLED JUICE, SIBLING
BICKERING, AND ME
PRAYING FOR PATIENCE
LOUDER THAN THE CHAOS

PARENT-FESSION
THEY PRAYED FOR THE
FOOD...AND THAT I WOULDN'T
BURN IT AGAIN.

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP

PARENT-FESSION

I SAID "I LOVE YOU NO MATTER
WHAT" THEN IMMEDIATELY ADDED
"EXCEPT WHEN YOU DRAW ON THE
WALL WITH A SHARPIE"

9. Be Fully Present with Your Kids

Be Still and Know that I am God - Psalm 46:10

- **Put devices away.** The easiest way to show your kids they matter is to silence your phone, close your laptop, and focus on them. Even 15-20 minutes of uninterrupted attention can mean the world.
- **Create margin.** If your schedule is always full, presence becomes impossible. Leave space in your day so you can stop and connect.
- **Engage fully.** Eye contact, asking questions, and responding thoughtfully shows your kids you aren't just near them, you're truly with them.
- **Use everyday opportunities.** Turn car rides, bedtime, or doing dishes into intentional connection moments. Ordinary time becomes extraordinary when it's undistracted.
- **Be interruptible.** Let your kids know they can approach you anytime. Stopping to listen communicates they are more valuable than what you were doing.

Takeaway

Your presence is one of the greatest gifts you can give your children. When you slow down and give them your full attention, you show them they matter deeply and are worth your time.

Example

When your child is telling you a story about their day, set your phone down, make eye contact, and listen with genuine interest, even if the story is long or silly. They'll feel loved because you're truly present.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- When do I most struggle to give my full attention?

"Children spell love T-I-M-E."

- Dr. Anthony P. Witham

10. Speak Life-Giving Words

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit - Proverbs 18:21

- **Affirm character, not just success.** Praise your child for honesty, perseverance, or kindness instead of only test scores or trophies. This builds inner strength.
- **Be specific.** "I'm proud of how you kept trying even when that was tough" is more powerful than "Good job."
- **Balance correction with encouragement.** A steady stream of uplifting words makes discipline easier to receive. Think of encouragement as the cushion that helps correction land in love.
- **Create traditions of blessing.** A birthday letter, a bedtime blessing, or a "first day of school" prayer are words your kids will never forget.
- **Guard your tone.** Even true words can wound if delivered harshly. Speak with patience so your encouragement doesn't get lost.

Takeaway

Your words shape your child's inner world. Speaking life into them plants seeds of confidence, security, and faith that will grow for years to come.

Example

At bedtime, tell your child, "I love how kind you were to your sister today. That shows the love of Jesus in you." Over time, those words will echo in their hearts.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What is one specific word of encouragement I can speak today?

"Be careful with your words. Once they are said, they can only be forgiven, not forgotten."

- Unknown

II. Show Affection Often

Let all that you do be done in love

- 1 Corinthians 16:14

- **Use physical affection.** A hug at bedtime, a pat on the back after practice, or holding hands on a walk builds deep security.
- **Say "I love you" daily.** Never let your kids wonder how you feel, say it often and in different ways.
- **Keep affection age-appropriate.** A toddler may want snuggles, while a teen may prefer a fist-bump. Both matter.
- **Make it playful.** Tickle fights, high-fives, and goofy moments make affection fun, not forced.
- **Respect their needs.** Pay attention to how your child best receives love. Some kids crave touch, others prefer words or time together.

Takeaway

Love isn't just something your children should feel, it's something they should see and experience. Physical and verbal affection builds security that lasts a lifetime.

Example

Before your teen heads out the door, give them a hug or pat on the shoulder and say, "I love you. I'm proud of you." Even if they roll their eyes, it still sinks in.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I show love in a way that speaks to my child's personality?

"Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are."

- Jim Henson

12. Listen More Than You Talk

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak
and slow to become angry - James 1:19

- Give your full attention. When your child speaks, stop what you're doing and look them in the eye. It tells them their words have value.
- Ask open-ended questions. "What was your favorite part of today?" invites more than "How was school?"
- Validate feelings first. "I can see that really hurt you" opens the door better than rushing to advice.
- Avoid rushing to solutions. Sometimes kids just need to process out loud without a parent "fixing" everything.
- Practice patience. Don't cut them off or finish their sentences. Silence often invites them to share more.

Takeaway

Listening communicates love. When you take the time to truly hear your children, you tell them their thoughts and feelings matter, and that builds trust that lasts.

Example

When your child says, "Nobody likes me at school," don't rush to fix it. Instead, respond, "That sounds really hard. Tell me more." Listening first opens the door for guidance later.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What question could I ask my child to spark a real conversation?

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

- Stephen R. Covey

13. Build Trust Through Consistency

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

- Proverbs 11:3

- **Keep promises.** From ice cream dates to showing up at games, reliability builds trust brick by brick.
- **Be dependable daily.** Kids should never wonder if you'll come through. Being dependable creates a sense of safety.
- **Stay steady in discipline.** If the rule changes every day, kids get confused and frustrated.
- **Show up at their events.** Cheering in the stands or clapping at recitals communicates volumes.
- **Own your mistakes.** When you admit you blew it, you model honesty and rebuild trust faster.

Takeaway

Children thrive when they know what to expect from their parents. Consistency builds trust, and trust creates a safe environment for love and growth.

Example

If you promised to play a board game after dinner, don't brush it off when you're tired. Keeping small promises builds big trust.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one promise I need to keep this week?

"Trust is built with consistency." - Lincoln Chafee

14. Celebrate Milestones, Big and Small

Rejoice with those who rejoice. - Romans 12:15

- **Mark achievements.** Whether it's learning to ride a bike or acing a test, stopping to celebrate makes growth memorable.
- **Celebrate effort.** Cheer persistence and bravery even if success wasn't reached. This teaches resilience.
- **Make traditions simple.** A special dessert, a silly family dance, or a cheer can become something kids look forward to.
- **Highlight spiritual growth.** Memorized verses, acts of kindness, or serving at church deserve recognition.
- **Capture memories.** Write down or photograph milestones so your kids can look back and remember progress.

Takeaway

Celebrations show your kids that their growth matters. By rejoicing in their victories, you encourage them to keep pursuing growth and remind them they are seen and valued.

Example

When your child finishes their first chapter book, surprise them with a trip to the library to pick out a "big kid" book. It turns an accomplishment into a lasting memory.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What small victory of my child's can I celebrate right now?

"What gets celebrated gets repeated."
- Andy Stanley

15. Create One-on-One Time with Each Child

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity - Psalm 133:1

- **Schedule it.** Life gets busy; putting it on the calendar ensures it happens. Even a short ice cream date is meaningful.
- **Rotate fairly.** If you have multiple kids, give each their turn so no one feels overlooked.
- **Use natural opportunities.** Bedtime tuck-ins or errands can turn into special one-on-one moments.
- **Enter their world.** Join them in what they enjoy, whether it's Legos, basketball, or drawing.
- **Speak their love language.** Some kids want to talk, others want to play. Match your time to what fills them up.

Takeaway

Every child longs to feel special and unique. When you carve out individual time, you affirm their worth and strengthen your bond with them.

Example

If you have three kids, plan a simple "Dad and Me" breakfast rotation. Even 30 minutes at the diner once a month makes each child feel valued.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- When can I set aside my next one-on-one time?

"The best inheritance a parent can give to his children is a few minutes of their time each day." - Orlando Aloysius Battista

16. Apologize and Forgive Quickly

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. - Colossians 3:13

- **Model humility.** When you lose your temper, own it and apologize. Humility shows strength, not weakness.
- **Teach forgiveness.** Walk your kids through what forgiveness means and why it heals.
- **Keep short accounts.** Don't let conflict linger. Quick apologies prevent resentment from building.
- **Explain forgiveness.** Help them see we forgive not because people deserve it, but because God forgave us.
- **Celebrate reconciliation.** When peace is restored, mark it with a hug, prayer, or kind words.

Takeaway

Families aren't perfect, but they can be places of grace. By apologizing and forgiving quickly, you teach your children that love is stronger than mistakes.

Example

If you lose your temper and yell, circle back later: "I was wrong to raise my voice. Will you forgive me?" Your humility will teach them more than perfection ever could.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one relationship in our home that needs forgiveness today?

"Apologizing does not always mean you are wrong. It just means you value your relationship more than your ego." - Unknown

PARENT-FESSION
QUALITY TIMES SOMETIMES
EQUALS A NAP WHILE THEY
CLIMB ON ME

PARENT-FESSION
I TELL MY KIDS TO USE
THEIR INSIDE VOICE...BUT
APPARENTLY MY INSIDE
VOICE IS YELLING FROM
THE KITCHEN

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

PARENT-FESSION
I'VE GROUNDED MY KIDS FROM
TV...AND THEN ASKED THEM TO
SHOW ME HOW TO USE NETFLIX

17. Set Clear Boundaries

Discipline your children, for in that there is hope;
do not be a willing party to their death
- Proverbs 19:18

- **Be clear and simple.** State expectations in short, age-appropriate language ("No phones at the table" works better than a long speech).
- **Explain the why.** Kids are more likely to respect boundaries when they understand it's about love, safety, and wisdom, not control.
- **Adapt as they grow.** Boundaries for a toddler will look very different from boundaries for a teenager. Keep adjusting.
- **Stay calm when setting limits.** Boundaries set in anger feel like punishment; boundaries set in calmness feel like guidance.
- **Post visible reminders.** A family rule list on the fridge or chalkboard helps everyone remember the expectations.

Takeaway

Boundaries aren't about control, they're about love. Clear limits create a safe framework where children can grow with confidence and security.

Example

Explain to your child: "We don't hit because God wants us to treat others with kindness." Linking rules to God's truth helps them understand the heart behind the boundary.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Which boundary in our home could I clarify this week?

"Children need boundaries to feel safe, not to feel restricted." - Unknown

18. Consistency Builds Trust

Let your yes be yes and your no, no
- Matthew 5:37

- **Mean what you say.** Don't give ultimatums you can't or won't follow through on, it undermines authority.
- **Keep routines steady.** Predictable rhythms (bedtime, chores, homework) give kids stability in a chaotic world.
- **Work as a team.** Parents should agree on rules and consequences so kids don't get mixed signals.
- **Be realistic.** Only enforce rules that matter enough to stay consistent with. Don't make dozens of rules you can't keep track of.
- **Use grace with steadiness.** Consistency doesn't mean harshness-it means children can rely on your word, tempered with love.

Takeaway

Kids thrive when they know what to expect. Consistent follow-through shows them you're dependable and teaches them the importance of responsibility.

Example

If bedtime is 8:30, stick to it. If exceptions happen, let them be special occasions, not everyday arguments.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Where am I tempted to bend rules instead of staying steady?

"Consistency is what transforms average into excellence." - Unknown

19. Let Life be the Teacher

Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows - Galatians 6:7

- **Don't rush to rescue.** If a child forgets their lunch or homework, sometimes the best lesson is the natural consequence.
- **Use mistakes as opportunities.** After the consequence, talk about what could be done differently next time.
- **Match consequence to action.** Missing recess because of forgotten work makes sense; losing dessert does not.
- **Let safety guide you.** Allow natural consequences unless they put your child in real danger.
- **Tie it to Scripture.** Point out how choices and results reflect biblical wisdom: "A man reaps what he sows."

Takeaway

Children learn best when they see how choices lead to results. Natural consequences help them understand responsibility in a real and lasting way

Example

If your child forgets their homework, resist the urge to run it to school. The missed grade teaches responsibility more effectively than a lecture.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one area I need to let my child experience natural consequences?

"Children learn more from the consequences of their actions than from the warnings of their parents." - Unknown

20. Model Forgiveness and Grace

Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other, just as in Christ God
forgave you. - Ephesians 4:32

- **Say the words.** Don't just "move on". Tell your kids directly, "I forgive you."
- **Forgive quickly.** Show them reconciliation is possible without days of tension.
- **Explain why.** Remind them that we forgive because God forgave us.
- **Balance grace with truth.** Forgiveness restores the relationship, but consequences may still teach responsibility
- **Model it with others.** Let your kids see you forgiving coworkers, friends, or family. They'll learn by your example.

Takeaway

Discipline shows kids what's wrong, but grace shows them what love looks like. Forgiveness teaches them that relationships matter more than mistakes.

Example

After your child apologizes for lying, let them still face the consequence, but also say, "I forgive you. I love you, and nothing you do can change that."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I show grace without removing responsibility?

"Grace means getting something you don't deserve. Mercy means not getting what you do deserve." - Unknown

21. Chores Grow Character

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord - Colossians 3:23

- **Start young.** Even toddlers can put toys in a bin or help carry laundry.
- **Frame it as teamwork.** Explain that chores aren't punishment, but part of being a family.
- **Praise effort, not perfection.** Don't redo their work behind them, show them how to improve
- **Add responsibility gradually.** As kids grow, give them bigger tasks to build responsibility and pride.
- **Connect it to life skills.** Remind them that learning to cook, clean, and care for a home prepares them for independence.

Takeaway

Chores aren't punishment, they're training.
Responsibility at home equips kids for
responsibility in life.

Example

Ask your 8-year-old to set the dinner table every night. Over time, they'll take pride in their role and see themselves as an important contributor to the family

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What new responsibility is my child ready to take on?

"Don't do for children what they can do for themselves." - Maria Montessori

22. Prepare Kids for Independence Step by Step

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when are old, they will not turn from it.

- Proverbs 22:6

- Give age-appropriate choices. Let little ones pick between two outfits, or teens decide how to spend allowance.
- Let them try, even if they fail. Confidence grows through trial and error, not perfection.
- Add freedoms gradually. More responsibility should unlock more privileges over time.
- Talk about real-world skills. Teach budgeting, conflict resolution, and responsibility before they face them alone.
- Encourage prayerful independence. Teach them to lean on God as they grow in freedom.

Takeaway

Independence isn't instant, it's learned over time. Teaching responsibility in small steps prepares your children to thrive when they eventually leave your care.

Example

When your teen gets a part-time job, let them manage their earnings and budget, even if they make mistakes. Experience is the best teacher

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one freedom I can give my child to practice independence?

"Prepare the child for the road, not the road for the child." - Unknown

23. Balance Rules with Relationship

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged - Colossians 3:21

- **Lead with connection.** Discipline is more effective when your child feels loved and secure.
- **Listen before correcting.** Hearing their side shows respect, even if it doesn't change the outcome.
- **Stay approachable.** If rules make you unrelatable, kids will hide things from you
- **Lighten the moment.** Use humor or gentleness to show discipline doesn't cancel love.
- **Affirm after correction.** Always follow discipline with a reminder of your love and belief in them.

Takeaway

Rules are necessary, but relationship gives them meaning. Children are far more likely to respect authority when they feel deeply loved.

Example

After correcting your child for breaking curfew, end the conversation with, "I love you. This rule exists because I care about your safety."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I strengthen my connection with my child this week?

"Rules without relationship lead to rebellion."

- Josh McDowell

24. Correct in Love, Not Anger

The Lord disciplines the ones he loves.

- Hebrews 12:6

- **Pause before acting.** A deep breath can turn harsh words into calm correction.
- **Lower your voice.** Gentle but firm words carry more weight than yelling.
- **Correct the action, not the child's worth.** Say, "That choice was wrong," not "You're bad."
- **Keep it brief.** Long lectures usually go unheard. Short explanations stick better.
- **End with love.** A hug, prayer, or gentle reassurance shows discipline is rooted in care.

Takeaway

Correction should build your child up, not tear them down. When done in love, discipline teaches truth without damaging their spirit.

Example

Instead of shouting when your child spills juice after being careless, calmly say, "Accidents happen, but next time let's be more careful." Then help them clean it up together.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What helps me stay calm when correcting my kids?

"Speak when you are angry and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret."
- Ambrose Bierce

PARENT-FESSION

I ONCE SAID "THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING" AND THEN SAID IT 3 MORE TIMES.

PARENT-FESSION

SOMETIMES "GO TO YOUR ROOM" IS JUST CODE FOR "I NEED LIKE FIVE MINUTES OF SILENCE"

GROWTH AND LEARNING

PARENT-FESSION

MY KID ASKED ME TO HELP WITH
MATH HOMEWORK. I GOOGLED IT
IN THE BATHROOM

25. Read Together Regularly

Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge - Proverbs 23:12

- **Make it a ritual.** Choose a regular time (bedtime, Saturday mornings, or Sunday afternoons) for family reading. A predictable rhythm signals to your kids that this matters.
- **Mix it up.** Read Bible stories, fiction, biographies, and even silly picture books. Exposing your kids to a variety of genres broadens their imagination.
- **Ask questions as you go.** "What do you think will happen next?" or "How would you have reacted?" keeps them engaged and builds comprehension skills.
- **Let them read aloud.** This builds confidence, fluency, and the joy of sharing their voice. Even struggling readers benefit when parents encourage them.
- **Model reading for yourself.** Kids who see their parents reading for enjoyment learn that reading is valuable beyond homework.
- **Create cozy moments.** A blanket fort with flashlights, or hot cocoa on a rainy day, makes reading feel like an adventure instead of an assignment.

Takeaway

Reading together plants seeds of curiosity, wisdom, and imagination. More than academics, it forges a bond and opens the door for lifelong learning.

Example

End each day with a chapter from a family read-aloud like *Chronicles of Narnia*. Over time, it becomes a cherished tradition. .

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What book or passage could we start reading together this week?

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." - Emilie Buchwald

26. Ask Good Questions and Welcome Theirs

Wisdom is supreme, so get wisdom. Though it costs all you have, get understanding

- Proverbs 4:7

- **Encourage curiosity.** When kids ask "why," resist the urge to shut it down with "because I said so." Instead, see it as an open door for growth.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** "What was the best part of your day?" or "How did that make you feel?" encourages them to think deeply and articulate their thoughts.
- **Let them wrestle.** When they ask a hard question about faith or life, admit if you don't know the answer. Look it up together, showing them how to seek truth.
- **Connect to Scripture.** If your child asks about fairness, talk about Jesus' parables. If they ask about courage, point to David or Esther.
- **Stay patient.** Sometimes questions will come at inconvenient times (like bedtime or on the way out the door). Make a note and circle back.
- **Celebrate their curiosity.** Thank them for asking and affirm that questions are a sign of growing wisdom, not disrespect.

Takeaway

Questions are the pathway to deeper thinking. When you engage your child's curiosity, you teach them that wisdom grows through exploration, not fear.

Example

When your child asks why the sky is blue, resist "just because" and instead say, "Great question! Let's look it up together."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I better respond when my child asks "why"?

"The important thing is not to stop questioning."
- Albert Einstein

27. Support and Value Education

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge

- Proverbs 18:15

- **Engage daily.** Ask your kids what they learned at school, not just "How was your day?" but specific prompts like, "What was the most interesting thing you heard today?"
- **Create a learning environment at home.** A quiet, organized space for homework signals that education is taken seriously.
- **Partner with teachers.** Attend conferences, respond to emails, and thank teachers. Your involvement encourages respect for authority and a love for learning.
- **Encourage perseverance.** Remind your kids that learning takes effort and mistakes are part of the process. Praise grit, not just grades.
- **Connect learning to real life.** Show them how math helps with cooking or budgeting, or how history connects to current events.

Takeaway

When you value your child's education, you teach them that learning matters. A love for knowledge shapes their character and opens doors for their future.

Example

If your child struggles in math, sit down and work through problems together, or find a tutor. Your involvement shows you care about their growth.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Is there something specific I can do that would help my child's learning right now?

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." - William Butler Yeats

28. Encourage Creativity and Imagination

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works - Ephesians 2:10

- **Provide open-ended tools.** Keep supplies like LEGOs, art materials, and costumes around to spark imaginative play. Avoid toys that only "do one thing."
- **Allow for unstructured time.** Not every minute needs to be scheduled. Boredom often becomes the seedbed of creativity.
- **Celebrate their creations.** Display artwork, listen to their stories, or watch their made-up plays. This shows you value their effort, not just the end product.
- **Encourage experimentation.** When they want to mix paints, try new recipes, or build forts, let them try, even if it gets messy.
- **Join in the fun.** Play along with their pretend restaurant, or build with them. Your participation validates their imagination.
- **Encourage problem-solving.** If they hit a roadblock in a project, instead of fixing it, ask, "What's another way you could try?"

Takeaway

Creativity nurtures problem-solving, confidence, and joy. Giving space for imagination helps children reflect the image of the Creator.

Example

Instead of buying a costume, encourage your child to create one from household items. Applaud their inventiveness!

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What space or time can I free up for my child's creativity?

"Creativity is intelligence having fun."
- Albert Einstein

29. Teach Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault.

- James 1:5

- **Break problems into steps.** Teach kids to pause, identify the problem, brainstorm options, weigh outcomes, and choose a solution.
- **Give safe opportunities.** Let them decide what to wear (within reason), how to spend allowance, or which family game to play.
- **Use real-life scenarios.** When they face a friendship conflict, talk through possible responses instead of telling them what to do.
- **Model your process.** Talk out loud as you work through decisions (like budgeting or fixing something) so they see how adults think it through.
- **Encourage prayer in decisions.** Teach them to ask God for wisdom, big or small. "Let's pray before we decide" makes decision-making spiritual, not just logical.
- **Debrief after.** If a decision worked well, celebrate it. If it didn't, talk about what they learned. Both outcomes build wisdom.

Takeaway

Good decision-making doesn't happen by accident, it's learned. Helping kids solve problems now prepares them for wise choices in adulthood.

Example

If siblings argue about a toy, guide them: "What are some ways we could solve this problem fairly?" Let them brainstorm solutions.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What decision can I guide my child to make for themselves?

"Don't prepare the path for the child. Prepare the child for the path." - Unknown

30. Help Kids Discover Their God-Given Gifts

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. - Romans 12:6

- **Expose them to variety.** Give them opportunities in sports, arts, academics, and service. Let them dabble before settling on a few passions.
- **Watch for joy and energy.** Notice where they light up. A child who hums constantly might have a musical gift; a child who builds endlessly may have engineering skills.
- **Affirm strengths.** When you see natural ability, call it out: "God has given you a gift for encouraging people."
- **Provide resources.** If they love drawing, give sketch pads. If they love sports, provide equipment or lessons when possible.
- **Encourage using gifts for others.** Help them see talents as tools to bless others, not just to benefit themselves.
- **Be patient.** Some gifts emerge slowly. Don't pressure them into your passions; let God reveal theirs.

Takeaway

Discovering gifts gives children a sense of identity and calling. Helping them see their talents as God-given anchors their purpose in Him.

Example

If your child loves building with blocks, introduce them to service projects like helping construct a birdhouse for a neighbor.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What gift or strength do I see in my child that I should affirm?

"Every child is gifted. They just unwrap their packages at different times." - Unknown

31. Celebrate Effort, Not Just Results

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. - Galatians 6:9

- **Praise perseverance.** Acknowledge when they stick with something hard, even if the results weren't perfect.
- **Reward practice.** Celebrate the hours they put in, not just the medal or grade at the end.
- **Avoid comparisons.** Encourage them based on their growth, not how they stack up against others.
- **Celebrate small wins.** Finishing a page of math, playing a new chord, or memorizing a verse is worth recognition.
- **Tell effort stories.** Share your own times of trying, failing, and eventually succeeding so they know hard work pays off.
- **Reframe failure.** Teach them to see mistakes as stepping stones, not dead ends.

Takeaway

When you celebrate effort, you build resilience. Children learn that success is not about instant results, but about perseverance and faithfulness.

Example

If your child doesn't win a race, say, "I'm proud of how hard you trained and that you finished strong." Effort is the real victory.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's an effort my child made recently that deserves praise?

"It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives. It's what we do consistently."

- Tony Robbins

32. Teach Financial Wisdom and Stewardship

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it
- Psalm 24:1

- **Start simple.** Use three jars (Spend, Save, Give) to show where money should go. Young kids understand visuals best.
- **Tie it to values.** Teach that giving comes first, saving second, and spending last (because God owns it all).
- **Use allowance or earnings as practice.** Let them budget their own small money rather than always managing it for them.
- **Talk openly about finances.** Share why you tithe, why you budget, and how you make financial choices.
- **Celebrate generosity.** When they choose to give, point out how it reflects God's heart.
- **Teach long-term vision.** As they grow older, introduce concepts like debt, interest, and wise investing so they don't learn the hard way later.

Takeaway

Money is a tool, not a master. Teaching stewardship early equips your children to use resources wisely for God's purposes.

Example

When your child earns \$10, help them set aside \$1 for giving, \$4 for saving, and \$5 for spending. This builds lifelong habits.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one money habit I want my child to learn from me?

"Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving."
- Warren Buffett

PARENT-FESSION
I'VE PROUDLY DISPLAYED
ART ON THE
FRIDGE... BUT COULDN'T
TELL IF IT WAS A HORSE
OR A SPACESHIP

PARENT-FESSION
MY CHILD ASKED ME HOW
ELECTRICITY WORKS. I SAID "IT'S
SCIENCE"

HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

PARENT-FESSION

I TOLD MY KIDS TO EAT MORE
VEGETABLES. THEN I ATE ICE
CREAM AFTER THEY WENT TO BED

33. Healthy Rhythms Build Healthy Kids

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way - 1 Corinthians 14:40

- **Prioritize sleep.** Children need more rest than most parents realize. Create a predictable bedtime routine that helps them wind down. No screens, instead a story, prayer, and lights out.
- **Eat together as often as possible.** Family meals not only provide nutrition but also give opportunities for laughter, conversation, and teaching. Even a few nights a week makes a big difference.
- **Make routines visible.** Post a simple chart of daily rhythms (bedtime, chores, school prep) so kids know what's expected without constant reminders.
- **Include rest and fun.** Rhythms aren't just rules, they should also include family fun nights, Sabbath rest, and downtime.
- **Keep Christ central.** Add small anchors like praying at breakfast, reading a short verse before school, or ending the day with gratitude.

Takeaway

Routines provide stability. Healthy habits give kids structure that fosters security, health, and peace of mind.

Example

A simple nightly rhythm (bath, story, prayer) helps your child settle, sleep well, and feel safe.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What routine in our home needs more consistency?

"Children thrive on routine. It gives them a sense of security in a world that can feel unpredictable." - Unknown

34. Teach Resilience Through Challenges

Though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again - Proverbs 24:16

- **Normalize failure.** Remind your kids that falling down is part of learning to walk, in life as much as in childhood.
- **Celebrate effort after setbacks.** If your child loses a game or struggles in class, point out the courage it took to try.
- **Tell your own stories.** Share a time you failed and got back up. It helps them see that setbacks aren't permanent.
- **Encourage perseverance.** Teach them phrases like "I can try again" or "This is hard, but I won't give up."
- **Point them to God's strength.** Remind them that resilience isn't just about willpower, but about leaning on the God who never leaves us.
- **Help them reflect.** After a tough moment, ask, "What did you learn? How will you do it differently next time?"

Takeaway

Resilience is one of the greatest gifts you can give your child. Teaching them to rise again after challenges builds courage and faith for adulthood.

Example

When your child loses a game, remind them: "It's not about winning, it's about trying again next time." Celebrate their effort and growth.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I encourage my child after their next setback?

"Resilience is not about never falling, but about getting back up each time." - Unknown

35. Model Healthy Conflict Resolution

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone - Romans 12:18

- **Stay calm under pressure.** Kids will imitate how you react in conflict. Lowering your voice and body language shows them peace is possible.
- **Listen first.** Demonstrate what it means to give someone else's perspective respect, even if you disagree.
- **Apologize openly.** If you lose your cool, own it. This shows kids humility is strength.
- **Seek solutions, not winners.** Teach them that resolving conflict means working together, not beating the other person.
- **Pray together afterward.** Ending disagreements with prayer invites God's peace into your home and shows that reconciliation matters.
- **Highlight peace in Scripture.** Remind them Jesus blesses peacemakers, and that living at peace is part of following Him.

Takeaway

Conflict is inevitable, but how you handle it teaches volumes. Healthy resolution shows your kids that peace is possible without avoiding hard conversations.

Example

When you and your spouse disagree, let your kids see you talk calmly, apologize if needed, and make peace. Model resolution instead of resentment.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I better model calmness in conflict?

"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."

- Ronald Reagan

36. Teach Kids to Notice Others

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others.

- Philippians 2:4

- **Train awareness.** Help kids look beyond themselves by noticing who is left out, struggling, or celebrating.
- **Practice observation.** Ask questions like, "Who looked lonely today?" or "Who encouraged you?"
- **Highlight empathy moments.** Pause when your child notices someone else's feelings and affirm that instinct.
- **Turn noticing into prayer.** Encourage short prayers for classmates, neighbors, or leaders they observe.
- **Model attentiveness.** Point out things you notice (a tired cashier, a helpful coach, a sad friend)

Takeaway

Compassion often begins with attention. When children learn to look beyond themselves and notice the needs, emotions, and experiences of others, they begin to reflect the heart of Christ in everyday moments. Teaching awareness shapes empathy, kindness, and deeper relationships.

Example

While leaving church or school, ask your child, "Did you notice anyone who seemed left out today?" If they mention someone sitting alone, talk about how a simple hello or invitation can make a difference next time. Pray together for that person on the drive home so your child connects noticing with action and faith.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Who is one person we could pray for today because we noticed their need?

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, or the smallest act of caring." - Lou Buscaglia

37. Balance Rest and Activity

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

- Matthew 11:28

- **Audit your calendar.** Look at your family's commitments and cut what isn't essential. Overcrowded schedules exhaust everyone.
- **Protect family time.** Say "no" to some good things in order to say "yes" to the best (shared meals, unhurried evenings, church involvement).
- **Teach kids to rest.** Help them understand that rest is not laziness; it's part of God's design for renewal.
- **Build Sabbath rhythms.** Dedicate time each week to worship, rest, and joy. Make it a gift, not a burden.
- **Balance activities.** Let each child choose one or two main activities instead of signing up for everything.
- **Model margin yourself.** If kids see you constantly frantic, they'll learn the same. Show them how to live with peace and balance.

Takeaway

A balanced life is a healthy life. When kids learn to balance activity and rest, they grow into adults who know how to live with peace and sustainability.

Example

After a busy week of sports and school, spend Saturday morning resting together with pancakes and a movie.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Where is our family overscheduled, and what can we let go of?

"You can do anything, but not everything."

- David Allen

38. Nurture Self-Confidence and Courage

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.

- 2 Timothy 1:7

- **Affirm identity in Christ.** Remind your kids that their worth doesn't come from grades, looks, or talents but from being God's beloved children.
- **Celebrate strengths.** Be specific in naming what they do well and how it blesses others.
- **Encourage risk-taking.** Let them try for the team, audition for the play, or meet a new friend, even if success isn't guaranteed.
- **Cheer bravery, not perfection.** Praise the step of courage, even if the outcome wasn't what they hoped.
- **Give them responsibility.** Trusting your child with real tasks builds confidence and shows you believe in them.
- **Speak belief often.** Simple words like "I know you can do this" build courage more than long speeches

Takeaway

Confidence grows when children know they are loved, capable, and secure in Christ. Courage equips them to step into God's calling without fear.

Example

When your child is nervous to try out for a play, say, "Even if you don't get the part, I'm proud of you for being brave enough to try."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one phrase of belief I can speak over my child today?

"Behind every young child who believes in himself
is a parent who believed first."

- Matthew L. Jacobson

39. Promote Physical Health and Activity

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 6:19

- **Make activity part of family life.** Bike rides, hikes, or evening walks can become fun traditions instead of "exercise."
- **Choose fun over fitness.** Frame movement as play. Water balloon fights, trampoline time, dance parties, etc. These burn energy while building joy.
- **Model healthy eating.** Fill your plate with fruits and veggies and let your kids see you enjoying them.
- **Teach moderation.** Candy or treats aren't evil, but kids should learn balance early.
- **Protect rest.** Remind your kids (and yourself) that good sleep is just as vital as good nutrition.
- **Limit screen time.** Encourage physical alternatives by planning activities in advance.

Takeaway

Healthy bodies support healthy lives. Teaching physical care early helps children honor God with their bodies and live with energy and joy.

Example

Plan a weekly family "active night" like basketball at the park or a walk after dinner.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one fun way we can be active together this week?

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." - Jim Rohn

40. Help Kids Master Their Emotions

Better is a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city
- Proverbs 16:32

- **Teach them to name feelings.** Help them use words like "angry," "frustrated," or "excited" instead of vague phrases like "I don't feel good."
- **Validate emotions.** Say, "It's okay to feel sad," before guiding them on how to handle it well.
- **Coach responses.** Role-play situations like losing a game or getting teased, showing healthy ways to react.
- **Practice calming techniques.** Deep breaths, short prayers, or taking a break can teach kids control.
- **Model your own.** Show how you manage frustration instead of exploding or shutting down.
- **Connect emotions to God.** Teach them to pray through feelings: "God, I'm scared, please give me courage."

Takeaway

Emotional maturity is a vital life skill. Helping kids manage their feelings gives them tools to face life's challenges with wisdom and grace.

Example

When your child is angry, guide them: "Take a deep breath and count to ten. Then we can talk about what happened."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- How can I better coach my child when they're upset?

"Feelings are much like waves: we can't stop them from coming, but we can choose which one to surf." - Jonatan Martensson

4. Let Kids See You Learn and Grow

Let the wise listen and add to their learning
- Proverbs 1:5

- Admit you don't know everything. Say "I need to learn more about that," and model curiosity.
- Share your growth areas. Let them see you reading, learning a skill, or improving a habit.
- Normalize lifelong learning. Explain that adults are still growing just like kids are.
- Celebrate progress publicly. Talk about what God is teaching you right now.
- Invite them into the journey. Learn something together, like a hobby, Scripture study, or even a new skill.

Takeaway

Your growth gives your children permission to grow. When they see you learning, changing, and seeking God's wisdom, they understand that maturity is a lifelong journey. A humble, teachable spirit shows them that following Christ means always becoming more like Him.

Example

Tell your kids, "I'm working on being more patient, so I've been reading Proverbs each morning." When they see you practicing what you're learning, they realize growth doesn't stop when you become an adult.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What new skill, habit, or Spiritual practice could we try together as a family?

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever" - Mahatma Gandhi

42. Equip Kids to Face the Future with Hope

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future
- Jeremiah 29:11

- **Point them to God's promises.** Remind them often of Jeremiah 29:11 and other verses that anchor hope in God's plan.
- **Pray for their future.** Pray with them about school, friendships, and their calling. Show them you trust God with what's ahead.
- **Teach life skills gradually.** Let them cook, budget, or fix things now so adulthood feels less intimidating.
- **Encourage confidence.** Remind them of past times they succeeded with God's help to boost courage for what's next.
- **Model hope.** Talk about your own trust in God's plan when facing uncertainty.
- **Release them with blessing.** As they grow older, speak words of affirmation about their future and God's faithfulness.

Takeaway

The best gift you can give your children is hope anchored in Christ. Preparing them with skills, faith, and confidence equips them to step into adulthood with courage and joy.

Example

As your teen heads off to college or their first job, pray over them and speak Jeremiah 29:11, reminding them that God's plans are good.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What word of hope can I share with my child about their future?

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." - John F. Kennedy

PARENT-FESSION
I TOLD MY KIDS, "YOU NEED TO
DRINK WATER" WHILE I WAS
DRINKING COFFEE

PARENT-FESSION
I ONCE TOLD EVERYONE
"WE'RE GOING TO BED
EARLY TONIGHT" AND THEN
PROCEEDED TO STAY UP
SCROLLING ON MY PHONE

JOY AND ADVENTURE

PARENT-FESSION
FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT: KIDS
FOUGHT OVER SNACKS. I
FELL ASLEEP.

43. Play Together Often

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones - Proverbs 17:22

- **Schedule play time.** Life is busy, but laughter and games shouldn't be an afterthought. Even 15 minutes of silliness can recharge everyone's spirit.
- **Get on their level.** Don't just watch, play tag, build Legos, or join their video game for a round. Kids remember when you enter their world.
- **Keep it varied.** Rotate activities so play doesn't get stale: board games, sports, crafts, and made-up adventures all count.
- **Let them lead.** Ask your kids, "What do you want to play?" and follow their creativity, even if it feels ridiculous.
- **Be silly.** Don't be afraid to look goofy, laugh loudly, or lose on purpose sometimes. Your willingness to let go builds closeness.
- **Treasure the memories.** Write down funny moments or keep a photo or video, it helps everyone relive the joy.

Takeaway

Play connects hearts. When you laugh and enjoy life with your kids, you remind them that family is a safe, joyful place where they belong.

Example

Instead of just watching, jump into the backyard soccer game, even if you're terrible at it. The laughter is what they'll remember.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one fun activity we can do together this week?

"Play is the highest form of research."
- Albert Einstein

44. Create Family Traditions

Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past - Deuteronomy 32:7

- **Start small.** Traditions don't have to be elaborate. Pancakes on Saturdays or a special bedtime song can become priceless memories.
- **Anchor holidays in meaning.** Read the Christmas story, hide Resurrection eggs, or light Advent candles to connect traditions with faith.
- **Make ordinary days special.** Declare the first day of school "Ice Cream Night" or have Friday pizza-and-movie night.
- **Include kids in planning.** Ask what traditions they'd like to start. Their ideas might surprise you and will give them ownership.
- **Honor heritage.** Share recipes, stories, or songs from grandparents and pass them down.
- **Adapt as they grow.** Traditions should evolve. What works for toddlers may need tweaking for teens.

Takeaway

Traditions anchor children in love and belonging. They remind kids who they are, where they come from, and that family is a treasure.

Example

Every Christmas Eve, read Luke 2 together before opening one small gift. Over time, your kids will look forward to that more than the presents.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Which family tradition do I want to start or strengthen?

"Traditions are the stories families write together." - Unknown

45. Plan Vacations and Adventures, Big or Small

Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest - Mark 6:31

- **Value experiences over things.** Vacations don't have to be expensive. Kids often remember a camping trip more vividly than a theme park.
- **Explore locally.** Day trips to a zoo, state park, or quirky roadside stop can be just as fun as cross-country travel.
- **Involve everyone in planning.** Let kids help choose activities or meals. It makes the trip theirs too.
- **Be flexible.** Plans don't always work out. Build in margin for rest, detours, or unexpected fun.
- **Capture the adventure.** Keep a family journal or scrapbook where everyone adds a memory or photo.
- **Look for teachable moments.** Adventures naturally open conversations about God's creation, gratitude, and family bonding.

Takeaway

Adventure builds memories that outlast possessions. Shared experiences bond families and give kids stories they'll carry into adulthood.

Example

Pitch a tent in the backyard for a "campout" with s'mores and flashlights. It costs little but feels magical to your kids.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's our next Adventure?

"Jobs fill your pocket, but adventures fill your soul." - Jaime Lyn Beatty

46. Share Hobbies and Passions

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God
- 1 Corinthians 10:31

- **Invite them into your world.** Let them stir the soup while you cook, hand you tools while you build, or strum along while you play guitar.
- **Enter theirs.** If your child loves video games, play with them and let them teach you. Showing interest in what excites them builds connection.
- **Create projects together.** Build a birdhouse, bake cookies, or plant a garden. Shared hobbies leave tangible memories.
- **Be patient with skill differences.** What takes you five minutes may take them thirty. Celebrate their effort, not the outcome.
- **Let them teach you.** Kids feel empowered when they get to be the expert. Ask them to show you their favorite trick or move.
- **Use hobbies for life lessons.** Cooking teaches patience, gardening teaches growth, and sports teach perseverance.

Takeaway

Sharing hobbies strengthens connection.

Whether through your passions or theirs, investing in what excites your kids builds joy and closeness.

Example

If your child loves drawing, sit down with them and sketch, even if you aren't good at it. Your interest shows them they matter.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- Which hobby of mine could I invite my child into this week?

"Children don't just want your presence, they want your participation." - Unknown

47. Explore Nature Together

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands. - Psalm 19:1

- **Take regular walks.** A simple stroll in your neighborhood or a park can spark conversations and wonder.
- **Make it an adventure.** Turn hikes into scavenger hunts for leaves, rocks, or bugs. Let curiosity drive the experience.
- **Observe God's handiwork.** Point out sunsets, stars, or the sound of birds, connecting creation to the Creator.
- **Camp together.** Whether in the woods or the backyard, camping breaks routines and creates bonding.
- **Limit screens outdoors.** Leave phones behind so the focus is on each other and creation, not distractions.
- **Celebrate discoveries.** A found feather or an unusual bug becomes a story your child will retell with pride.

Takeaway

God reveals Himself in creation. Exploring nature together helps kids marvel at His handiwork and develops gratitude for His world.

Example

Take your kids stargazing on a clear night. As you watch the sky, read Psalm 19 and talk about God's greatness.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What's one outdoor place we could explore soon?

"Children more than ever, need opportunities to be in their bodies in the world, jumping rope, bicycling, stream hopping, and fort building."
- Richard Louv

48. Celebrate "Just Because" Moments

Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again:
Rejoice - Philippians 4:4

- **Plan surprise fun.** Out-of-the-blue milkshake runs or blanket forts tell kids that joy doesn't always need a reason.
- **Recognize everyday wins.** Celebrate kindness, effort, or bravery, not just grades or awards.
- **Start silly traditions.** Declare a random "backwards dinner night" where dessert comes first, or a "pajama day" for no reason.
- **Write surprise notes.** Tuck encouragements in backpacks or lunchboxes just to brighten their day.
- **Keep it spontaneous.** Sometimes breaking routine is the best gift. Joy is memorable when it catches kids off guard.
- **Make it about them.** Focus on what delights your kids, not what seems easiest for you.

Takeaway

Life isn't just about big events, it's about daily joy. Celebrating small, spontaneous moments tells your kids that happiness is found in togetherness.

Example

One Tuesday night, surprise your kids with milkshakes and say, "We're celebrating how awesome you are just because."

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What random surprise could I plan for my child?

"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory." - Dr. Seuss

49. Laugh Daily - Be Silly

There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a
time to mourn and a time to dance
- Ecclesiastes 3:4

- **Tell jokes and stories.** A "joke of the day" at dinner keeps the table light. Let everyone participate.
- **Model laughter.** Don't take yourself too seriously. Show your kids it's okay to laugh at mistakes.
- **Find the humor in daily life.** Laugh at the spilled milk or the crooked cake instead of getting frustrated.
- **Encourage their silliness.** Let them tell jokes, do impressions, or make up funny songs.
- **Lighten conflict with humor.** A silly face or gentle laugh can diffuse tension before it escalates.

Takeaway

Laughter binds families together. A home filled with joy creates warmth and resilience that helps kids face life with confidence.

Example

During family dinner, go around the table and each share the silliest thing that happened that day. End the night in laughter together.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- When was the last time I laughed with my kids, and how can I spark more?

"A day without laughter is a day wasted."
- Charlie Chaplin

50. Capture and Retell Family Stories

"Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation." - Joel 1:3

- **Share your own childhood memories.** Kids love hearing about the time you got in trouble, played sports, or had silly adventures.
- **Retell family legends.** Keep alive stories of grandparents, holidays, or hard times when God provided.
- **Document memories.** Use photos, scrapbooks, or journals to preserve the stories you're living now.
- **Repeat favorites often.** Children love hearing the same funny family story again and again. It builds identity.
- **Invite kids to retell.** Ask your children to tell the story of last Christmas or a recent trip in their own words.
- **Tie stories to faith.** When sharing, point out God's faithfulness woven through your family's journey.

Takeaway

Stories connect generations. Retelling family history helps kids feel rooted in love, faith, and identity.

Example

At Thanksgiving, share the story of how God provided for your family in a hard time. Invite each person to add a story of God's goodness.

Questions

- How can I live this out in my family this week?
- What is one small step I can take today to grow in this area?
- What family story could I retell to my kids this week?

"A family with no stories soon loses its history"
- African Proverb

PARENT-FESSION
ZOO TRIP: ONLY ANIMALS WE
SAW CLEARLY WERE THE
SQUIRRELS IN THE PARKING
LOT

PARENT-FESSION
I PLANNED A FUN FAMILY
HIKE, THAT ENDED WITH
TEARS, BUG BITES, AND
CARRYING A CHILD UPHILL
LIKE A SACK OF POTATOES.

Key Questions to Ask Myself

- Do my kids know, beyond any doubt, that they are deeply loved by me and by God?
- Does our home feel like a place of joy, laughter, and belonging?
- Am I making time to be fully present, or am I too distracted by busyness?
- Do my children see me being the kind of human I desire for them to be?
- Go back through this book and choose 5 things to start TODAY!

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Steal This: Ideas of Awesomeness

(Updated: December 2018)

ST: Ideas for Outdoor Ed & STEMiness

(Updated: October 2019)

ST: 50 Ways to Be Awesome

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ST: Ideas of Portableness

(Updated: October 2019)

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