

ParentPause

Ideas to Grow Your Preschooler's Faith at Home

FEBRUARY 2012

FAMILY VALUES

It will almost certainly happen someday. You'll send your son or daughter off to the home of a friend, believing that the friend's parents have the same standards you have. But when your child returns home, you'll discover that he or she was allowed to watch a movie or TV show, or listen to music, that you never would allow.

Even among parents with conservative values, there are two very different approaches to raising children. Some, believing sincerely that much of what the world has to offer is corrupted by sin, attempt to isolate their children from exposure to culture. Others, equally sincerely, believe that isolation is impossible in the long run and that their children will, eventually, be confronted. Their response is to allow controlled exposure and attempt to insulate their children from the effects.

Beyond the differing approaches, there is simply a wide range of opinion on what is acceptable and what isn't. Some families go to movies after the parents have researched and decided that a particular picture is within their boundaries. Others stay



away because they feel attending any theater opens the door to attending any movie. Some think all music with a strong beat is wrong. Others pay more attention to the lyrics and make their decision on that basis.

We're not telling you whether your approach to parenting is right or wrong. That's something you have to decide for yourself. Nor are we talking about issues that clearly cross the line into sin. Sin is sin, and wrong is wrong.

You have every right to decide what the standards in your family will be.

But you need to be aware that not all families will set their standards

the same way. Even strong, solid Christian families that are involved in your church might not agree with you on what's appropriate. You very well may even run into a situation in which a relative has decidedly different standards.

How should you deal with this?

Discuss your values with the parents of your child's friends in advance. Most parents, no matter what their approach, will respect yours. Decide together what is OK for your kids.

Talk to your children about your standards. As they get old enough to understand, ask them to check with

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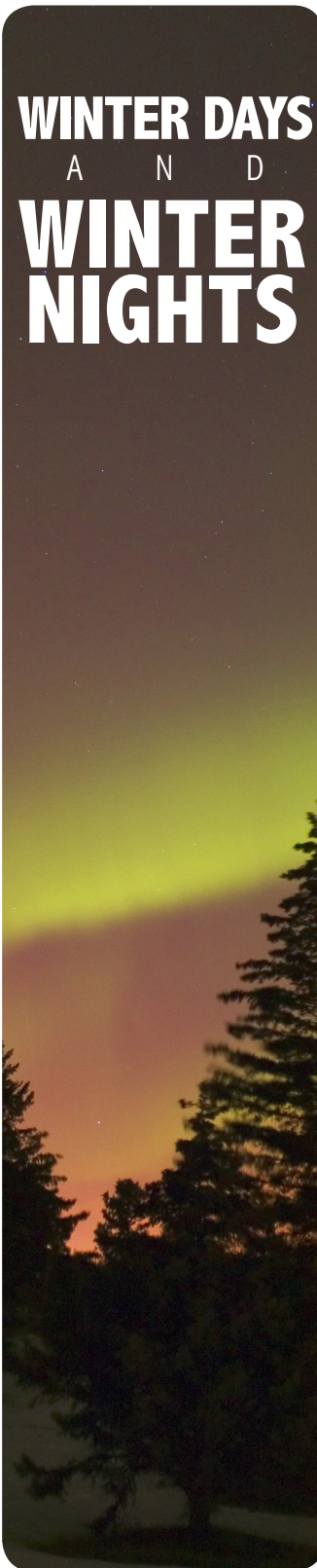
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you if they have doubts and instruct them to politely say to their friends or their friends' parents, "I'm not sure my parents want me to do that. I should check with them first."

If your child has been exposed to something you would not have allowed, sit down and explain the situation. Tell your child how you feel about what they have seen or heard. Be honest — keeping in mind the age of your son or daughter and their capacity to understand.

Don't judge. The apostle Paul dealt with this very issue in Romans 14 and 15. He was writing specifically about whether it was OK to eat meat that had been offered to idols and whether it was important to observe religious days in a special way. His conclusion? That those who thought it was OK to eat the meat and unnecessary to observe the days should not be stumbling blocks to those who felt differently. In other words, if there was any chance of offending those with stricter standards, they should put aside their own views and not offend. On the other hand, those with stricter standards should not judge those with whom they disagree. Individuals, or families, should do what they are convinced is right as long as it doesn't offend or tempt anybody else.

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. (Romans 14:12-13)



Although February is not a wintry-weather month everywhere, many are in the deeps of cold, short days, and maybe snow and ice, right now. Here are some winter ideas to cheer and get you and your child enjoying February and spending time together.

WINTER TREASURE WALK

All you need is a bag or sack – any type will do. One day this month spend a couple of hours outdoors. If it is very cold where you live, be sure to dress warmly. Your child might also need a pair of sturdy boots for “tromping.” If you live in an urban neighborhood, you could go to a park or a nature preserve.

STOP AND OBSERVE THINGS THAT YOU WOULD NORMALLY PASS BY OR TAKE FOR GRANTED.

COLLECT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU FIND ALONG YOUR WALK – those things that you can display at home that remind you of winter:

- » Pinecones – of all sizes and shapes
- » Holly or winter berries
- » Evergreen branches
- » Acorns
- » Dry, bare sticks

When you get home, arrange your “treasures” on a table or somewhere where they can be admired for a few weeks. Look up any plants, nuts or cones that are unfamiliar to you in a nature handbook. (You can usually find these at a library.) Enjoy them!

PARENTS, have your Cubbie draw a line from the star (★) to the moon (☾) by following the path. (Offer help if necessary.)



Parents, have your child color this snowman. Talk with them about some of the fun activities that can happen during winter.

