

June 2018

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Make Time for the 3 R's: Rest, Renewal, Reflection

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help your family value rest and incorporate quiet time into daily life.
2. To help you model healthy boundaries between work and rest.
3. To bless your time spent with one another—and with God.

As the school year ends, most families with school-age children breathe a sigh of relief that hectic schedules are ending for a while. Before you fill the “lazy” days of summer with nonstop activities, take a much-needed break to consider the many benefits of rest.

Children and parents all need permission and space to unplug, reflect, and be renewed. Denise Pope at Stanford’s Graduate School of Education reminds parents that children of all ages need PDF—playtime, downtime, and family time—every day.

Younger children, Pope says, need free-form play, or “unstructured time when they can explore who they are, what kind of person they want

to be, what it means to be a good friend, [and] how to solve problems or navigate conflicts.” Older children need time to reflect and dream.

Rest is also key for children’s faith development. God commands us to set aside the Sabbath day for rest and worship. God also reminds us to “be still” (Psalm 46:10) so we can know him and his will—and hear his voice. When children and families spend quiet time with God, they grow closer to him and become more comfortable engaging with him through prayer.

Learn from Jesus, who made time for rest and reflection after dealing with needy crowds. Hit “pause” often so you and your children can be refreshed and renewed.

Read on for more “restful” ideas!

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Find Power in Powering Down

Being constantly on the go takes a toll on children and families. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that work is the only virtue or that rest is a waste of time. Joanne Kraft, author of *Just Too Busy*, says God created us with a "Sabbath DNA," or a need for rest as part of our routine maintenance. She urges parents to resist the culture's "busyness" mindset by finding ways to rest, laugh, and eat together. Ideas include creating forts or comfy "nests," going on nature walks and picnics, enjoying a meal of just finger foods, singing together, and unplugging devices regularly. Kraft says there's no better way to honor God than by showing children how to take time to care for our bodies and souls—and to focus on him.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Don't Work Your Socks Off!

Set out an assortment of clean, balled-up socks. Have family members each choose three socks and then sit across from one another.

Say: **Let's try to juggle. Start with two socks and then try three. If you drop a sock, keep trying.**

Allow time. Then say: **Now let's juggle with the person sitting across from us. Try to keep as many socks in the air at the same time as you can.**

Afterward, ask: **What was it like to juggle alone? together? What made it fun or frustrating? When do you have to juggle lots of stuff in life? How does that make you feel?**

Read aloud Mark 6:31. Say: **Jesus knew it was important to take time for quiet and rest. When he lived on Earth, he "juggled" a busy schedule but still took breaks to be alone and to spend time with God, his Father.**

Close in prayer, asking Jesus to help your lives be less of a juggling act.

Follow the Voice Have one family member stand in the center of a room and keep his or her eyes open. Have everyone else scatter around the room and close their eyes. The person whose eyes are open should silently move around the room while saying "Come to me" every few seconds. The other people, while keeping eyes closed, should try to reach the speaker. After playing, read aloud Matthew 11:28. Discuss who we should come to—and what he gives us.

Bubble Rush For this outdoor game, you'll need bubble solution and wands, cardboard pieces or paper fans, and "start" and "finish" lines. Choose one family member to blow bubbles at the start line. Have everyone else work together to move the bubbles across the finish line, using hands, cardboard, or fans to keep bubbles airborne. Set a time limit so people must rush. Afterward, talk about times when you feel rushed—and what that's like. Read aloud Psalm 46:10 and share ideas for being still.

Alone or Together Play Hide and Seek, asking the person who hides to say a silent prayer to Jesus while hiding. As people find the hidden person, they should stay there and all crowd into the same

spot. When everyone arrives, lead them in a short group prayer, such as "Thank you, God, for a beautiful day!" After playing several rounds, discuss what it was like to pray alone and together. Read aloud Luke 5:16. Say: "Jesus helped many people, but he also took time to be alone and talk to God. Let's remember to seek God every day."

Tune Out, Tune In At the same time, play a TV, a radio, and a phone—and try to have a conversation. Then shut everything off and enjoy the silence for a moment. Ask: "Why is it tough to focus when there's too much noise? Why is it tough to hear God when too much is going on? How can we turn down the noise this summer so we can listen to God?"

Safe & Dry Have one family member hold an umbrella outside while others toss water balloons at him or her from about 20 feet away. Give everyone a turn under the umbrella. Afterward, ask: "How did it feel to face the balloons? What was it like to have the umbrella for protection?" Read aloud Psalm 28:7. Say: "When we get bombarded by busyness, God can shield us from feeling overwhelmed. God gives us joy when we seek shelter with him."

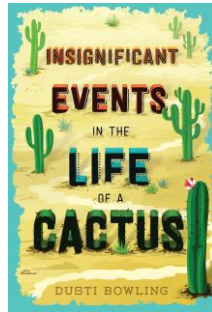
Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."
—Matthew 11:28, NLT

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *The Incredibles 2*
Genre: Animation, Action, Adventure
Rating: Not yet rated
Cast: Craig T. Nelson, Holly Hunter, Samuel L. Jackson, Sophia Bush
Synopsis: This long-awaited sequel picks up where the 2004 original left off, with the superhero Parr family going public and in danger. While Mom fights crime, Dad is at home with the three kids—and discovering baby Jack-Jack’s superpowers.
Our Take: The original Pixar film was a hit that presented mature themes in a family-friendly way. The sequel is sure to have cartoon violence and peril, as well. Parents and kids can discuss traits that make the characters—and real-life people—unique, as well as challenges families tackle together.



BOOK

Title: *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*
Author: Dusti Bowling
Synopsis: When her family moves to Arizona to run a theme park with a mysterious past, 13-year-old Aven must attend a new school and make new friends. Although Aven was born without arms, that doesn’t slow her down. She befriends a boy with Tourette’s syndrome, and the two support and encourage one another.
Our Take: This middle-grade book offers humor, inspiration, and a sense of optimism amid challenges. No matter what kids face, they’ll learn about courage and not hiding your “light.” Fans of *Wonder* and adventures such as *Holes* will especially enjoy this charming, memorable tale.

Games, Sites & Apps

Scribblenauts Showdown

This new entry to the “Scribblenauts” series is a multiplayer party game. Players create in-game objects that interact virtually. The games involve Wordy and Speed challenges. Eight sandbox areas let players have fun just getting creative. Rated E10+.

IcebreakerIdeas.com

Filled with games and a wide variety of discussion questions, this site will get families talking. Some activities are for children, some for adults, and some for mixed groups. Topics include holidays, vacations, faith, hobbies, and more. Children are sure to enjoy the “Would you rather?” questions.

Fruit Punch Music

This app, called Spotify for kids, is the first music-streaming platform for children. It offers a large library of kid-friendly songs from a variety of genres. Parents can block certain stations and set a daily listening limit. After a free 7-day trial, an ad-free subscription costs \$3.99 per month.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Free to Roam Parents are starting to get legal protection for letting kids run free. More states are expected to follow Utah’s lead of legalizing “free-range parenting” so kids can be unsupervised when appropriate. Parents won’t face neglect charges for allowing kids to go places alone, wait in a car, and stay home by themselves. (*s1trib.com*)

Rinsta vs. Finsta If your kids have a real Instagram account, or “rinsta,” they also might have a fake account, or “finsta.” The fake account is under a different name and has a limited number of followers. While a rinsta is one’s public persona, a finsta reveals photo fails and more unfiltered information. Experts advise caution when posting to social media, no matter the account. (*usatoday.com*)

QUICK STATS

Pack Your Bags Almost 40% of families have used vacation-rental sites, and 16% use them often. Millennials—about half of whom already have kids—use travel agents more than any other demographic. (*2017 U.S. Family Travel Survey*)

Safety First Some 3-year-olds are strong enough to fire a gun, and 75% of school-age kids can do so. Yet some states have gag laws that prevent doctors from discussing gun safety during well-child visits. (*time.com*)

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