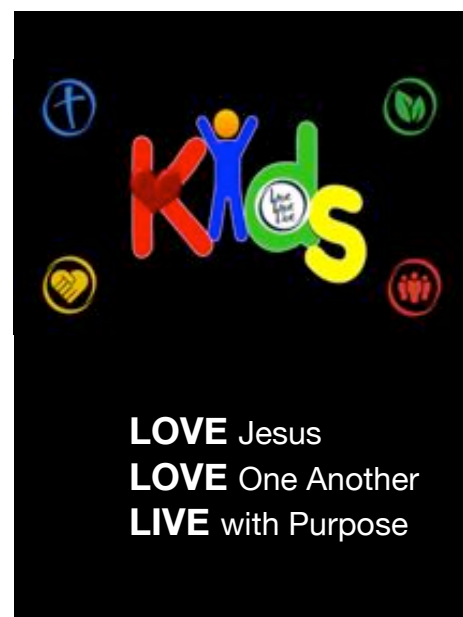




April 2018

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Teach Children to Care for God's Creation

POWERSOURCE

PRAY TO GOD:

1. Thank God for his amazing, diverse creation.
2. Ask God to show your family how to take care of his earth.
3. Ask God to remind you to worship him, not his creation.

The word “stewardship” often has a financial connotation. But Jesus calls his followers to be wise, faithful stewards of *everything* he blesses us with, including our planet and its natural resources.

Although the yearly celebration of Earth Day in April isn't based in Christianity, its focus is something we can encourage. When God created the world—which he repeatedly called “good”—he told us to care for it and for all the creatures in it. That doesn't mean we worship nature; instead, we make an effort (sometimes involving sacrifices) to protect our earthly home.

And we do that not just to preserve the world for future generations. As author Tim Mascara writes, “Earth

Day should matter, not because of some cliché saying that it belongs to our kids and we are just borrowing from them. It doesn't belong to my kids any more than it belongs to me.” He adds, “We are just stewards. But that sells it short also. We are not just stewards. We are the Creator's stewards. We are his stewards.”

When your family takes steps to recycle and “go green,” remind children about the reasons behind those efforts. Also let kids know that small actions play a big role in caring for the environment. Remember to set a good day-to-day example as you shop, make transportation decisions, do indoor and outdoor chores, and so on.

Read on to discover family-friendly activities that emphasize creation care.

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Become Stewards of the Earth

News about a changing climate and its consequences can be scary for people of all ages. Protect toddlers and preschoolers from distressing images as much as possible. If you show concern and anxiety, children will become fearful, too. By kindergarten, children realize that outside events affect them and their families but still may have trouble distinguishing between reality and fantasy. Don't belittle their fears; instead, assure them of God's love and protection. By ages 7 to 10, kids are interested in news about the world around them. Answer their questions starting at a simple, basic level. Preteens begin to understand long-term implications of events, such as environmental issues. Present relevant facts, prepare for back-and-forth discussions, and remind kids that God is always in control.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Crystal Creation

Find a recipe online for making rock candy, and start growing sweet crystals on sticks. (Adult supervision is required.) When the sugar solution is set up, have a devotion about God's presence—and impact.

Read aloud 2 Corinthians 3:18. Say: **God influences our world and our lives in very powerful ways. He helps us grow and change, or “transform,” over time. God also changes our hearts, showing us how to love him, other people, and ourselves. He gives us wisdom and strength to care for everyone and everything he made.**

Say: **This solution we made has two items we use every day: sugar and water. It looks pretty plain now, but let's put it in a safe place in the kitchen. Each morning, we'll check to see what changes are happening.**

Within a week, dramatic changes will occur. The longer you let the crystals grow, the larger they'll get. You can eat the candy if the container is kept in a clean, dry area.

The World God Made As you read aloud Genesis 2:15-20, have family members act out the account. Then ask: “What do you think the Garden of Eden was like? What job did God give Adam?” Explain that when people sinned, God made them leave the garden, and now we have God's whole world to take care of. Discuss how well you do that as individuals and as a family.

Favorite Things Hand out paper and crayons or markers. Read aloud Psalm 104:24. Have family members each divide their paper in half. On one half, have them draw a picture of their favorite thing from nature. On the other half, have them draw or write one thing they'll do this week to help take care of God's wonderful world. Afterward, share what you all drew and wrote.

Hug a Tree Go to an area with several trees. One at a time, blindfold family members, spin them around, and lead them to a tree. Have them carefully feel the tree to learn about it. Then lead them back to the starting point, spin them again, and remove the blindfold. See if they can identify the tree they touched. Discuss how trees are a gift from God, who put them in the first garden he made.

Nature Seekers Prepare a nature-related scavenger hunt, and have family members and friends pair up to search for all the items.

Litterbug Chase Visit a littered field or park. Race to collect the most cans, the oldest paper item, and the biggest piece of trash. Create wacky stories about how a piece of trash ended up where it did. Then choose a few unique items to create a garbage sculpture. Display it as a reminder to keep God's earth clean.

Crafty Recyclers As a family, make fun crafts using a variety of recycled items. Get started with the five ideas posted here: childrensministry.com/articles/5-earth-day-crafts-using-recycled-material/

Read All About It For family devotions or bedtime reading, choose some books about God's world and how to care for it:

- *All Things Bright and Beautiful* by Cecil Alexander (ages 0-5)
- *Let's Explore God's World* by Debby Anderson (ages 3-5)
- *God Made It for You!* by Charles Lehmann (ages 4-8)
- *I Love God's Green Earth* by Michael Carroll (ages 9-12)

“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.”
—Psalm 24:1

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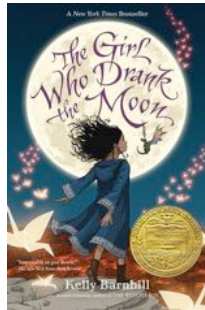
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MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *Sherlock Gnomes*
Genre: Animation, Adventure, Comedy
Rating: Not yet rated
Cast: Emily Blunt, Johnny Depp, James McAvoy, Chiwetel Ejiofor
Synopsis: As Gnomeo and Juliet prepare their garden for spring, they realize gnomes are being kidnapped throughout London. They call famous detective Sherlock Gnomes to investigate the case, which leads to adventures throughout the city.
Our Take: This sequel to 2011's *Gnomeo & Juliet* capitalizes on the humor of cute pint-sized garden ornaments. But the trailer contains some questionable language and suggestive situations. If you watch the movie with your kids, discuss the impact of words and behaviors.



BOOK

Title: *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*
Author: Kelly Barnhill
Synopsis: This fairy tale, winner of the 2017 Newbery Medal, is set in a village that sacrifices one baby each year by leaving it in the forest. The goal is to appease a witch who might destroy the community. But the witch, who's actually kind, makes sure the babies are raised by loving families elsewhere. When she accidentally gives one baby magic, she decides to raise it herself.
Our Take: Although a central character is a witch, this book is full of positive messages and role models. Readers discover that love is the "magic" that holds things together in this story. The book can open the door for discussions about good and evil as defined by the Bible.

Games, Sites & Apps

Nintendo Labo

Robot kits and other interactive components are adding new levels of creativity to the popular Nintendo Switch console. Using cardboard pieces, players build items that can then be used in-game or via remote control. Kit prices start at \$69.99.

You Are Here

consumer.ftc.gov/media/game-0020-you-are-here-consumer-education-mall

This interactive site from the Federal Trade Commission helps older children and preteens become financially savvy. Games in a virtual mall teach about supply and demand, privacy, false advertising, and more.

Tortuga Racing

This educational game lets children practice math skills while their character, a turtle, races through various tracks. Incorrect answers decrease one's speed, while eight correct answers in a row spark a turbo boost. Rated E for Everyone, this app game is ideal for early-elementary students.



CULTURE & TRENDS

More Moms Despite reports of a declining fertility rate, more women in the U.S. are having children. They're just waiting longer to do so and aren't necessarily getting married first—or at all. More white and/or highly educated single women are now choosing to become mothers. (*time.com*)

Bully-Free Ballet Hoping to reduce the stigma associated with taking ballet lessons, more dance studios are offering boys-only classes. Teachers say it's more comfortable for boys when they don't stand out among a sea of pink tutus. (*today.com*)

QUICK STATS

Packing Heat Almost half (45%) of adults say they're in favor of letting K-12 teachers carry guns. These responses seem to be influenced more by political party than by whether the person is a parent. (*pewresearch.org*)

Tech Troubles In *The Tech-Wise Family*, Andy Crouch reveals that technology is the #1 reason parents say it's harder than ever to raise children. (*barna.com*)

Dubious Honors America has been named the worst country for parents' work-life balance. The culprit is a lack of laws for paid annual leave and paid maternity and paternity leave.

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This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.