

December 2013

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



faith baptist church



'Tis the Season to Give

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help your family grow in giving.
2. To transform your hearts to be selfless instead of selfish.
3. To guide you into ways to lead your family to serve others.

Christmas is the season of giving. But let's be honest, it's also the season of getting. After all, the question everyone asks kids this time of year is "What do you want for Christmas?" So why wouldn't children think getting is the most important thing?

Acts 20:35 says "**it is more blessed to give than to receive.**"

But in our culture of "gimme, gimme, gimme," we have to work even harder as parents to help our children believe that it's more blessed to give than to receive. What can you do?

Encourage your children to consider the great gift that God has given us in the birth

of our Savior. Remind them that God could've selfishly held onto his son. But instead, God gave lavishly to us.

Share with your children the great joy you get in giving to others. Tell them about times you were more blessed to give than to receive. Your personal example is a powerful teaching tool for your children.

Edit your own "wants" list at this time of year. If your children perceive that you really value getting more than giving, no words will make up for your role model. Instead, search for ways you can lead your family to give to others and truly enjoy the blessing of giving.

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TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Opportunities to serve others abound at Christmastime—and many are quite easy. Try these ideas with your family.

Pay for the person's order in line behind you. Ask the cashier to tell the person it's a gift from God.

Lines, lines, lines. People are in such a hurry with Christmas shopping. Encourage your children to help spot someone you'll let go in front of you in line.

Volunteer to help an elderly neighbor or friend gift-wrap presents. Then deliver the wrapped packages to the person with a plate of baked goodies.

If your family drives around to look at Christmas lights on houses, choose one "winning" house to give a handmade certificate. Then say thanks for all their hard work to brighten up your Christmas.

Give a gift card to the people on your church staff who work overtime at this time of year.

Serving Changes Kids

Children today want to serve others. Christian children have an added motivation to serve. They serve the same God and have the same spiritual gifts as the rest of us. And they've been given the same challenge and promise from God. For children, Acts 1:8 might sound something like this: "You'll be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere -- at home and school, throughout your town, across the country, and to the ends of the earth." As children serve others, they're a light for Jesus.

Kids benefit from serving others, according to Gordon and Becki West, founders of KidZ Kan!—a ministry of KidZ At Heart International (www.kidZatheart.org). The Wests cite Children for Children (www.children4children.org), a non-profit organization promoting hands-on volunteerism and giving for kids, that identifies several benefits children reap when they serve. They learn traits such as responsibility, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-respect, self-discipline, self-motivation, and tolerance.

When you teach your child to serve, you're also teaching that child to become a servant for life because children who serve become adults who serve. Consider these statistics from Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service (Independent Sector).

Adults who volunteered as children give more money and volunteer more time than adults who began serving later in life.

Two-thirds of adult volunteers began serving as children.

Across incomes and age groups, those who volunteered as children

give and volunteer more than those who didn't.

Use these ideas to cultivate a heart for service in your children.

Love Language Discuss with your kids how service is doing what someone else needs, not simply doing what we like to do for others. Then ask kids to identify meaningful ways they can show love to your family. Have kids create a service plan for the following week. Share reports at the end of the week.

Birthday Party for Jesus Have an "after Christmas" party where your children give their gently used toys to your church's children's ministry or a shelter in honor of Jesus.

Toy Wash Your family can help your church's nursery staff by washing toys. Preschoolers and preteens can work together to scrub plastic toys according to your church's nursery policies.

Prayer Aware When kids pray for other children, they make a deeper connection to those in need. Have kids choose a world region to learn about and pray for the children there regularly.

"I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"

—Luke 2:10-11

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MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Title: *Free Birds* (Released 11/1/2013)

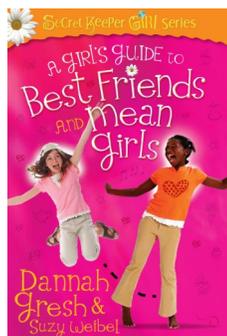
Genre: Animated

Rating: PG

Cast: Woody Harrelson, Amy Poehler, Owen Wilson

Synopsis: Two turkeys from opposite sides of the tracks must work together to travel back in time to get turkey off the Thanksgiving menu.

Our Take: This movie debuted to less than stellar reviews. The most unappealing elements are the lame wordplay, confusing plotline, forced emotional elements, and weak attempt at social commentary in the end. The movie attempts to compare turkey slayings to the cruelties Native Americans have suffered. This is a movie to say “pass” on.



BOOKS

Title: *A Girl's Guide to Best Friends and Mean Girls* (Released 8/2013)

Publisher: Harvest House Publishers

Summary: Bestselling author Dannah Gresh and youth educator Suzy Weibel have developed this resource that targets the hearts of preteen girls as they grow in and pursue friendships.

Our Take: Healthy relationships don't come naturally—but with God's Word we learn to love others and create healthy boundaries. Use this book from the *Secret Keeper Girl Series* to direct your daughters to Jesus' example, using interactive activities and practical applications on how to be a good friend.

Games, Sites & Apps

Super Mario 3D World

This multiplayer Wii game brings Mario fun into a whole new dimension. As with many Nintendo games, the difficulty is scalable so preteens can play alongside adults. Rating Pending—RP.

Plants vs. Zombies

This free app is rated for ages 9 and up in iTunes for infrequent mild cartoon violence and mild fear themes. This app is available for almost every system and Smartphone. Caution: In-app purchases can add up quickly.

Sonic: Lost World

In this Nintendo Wii U and 3DS game, Sonic rescues small animals trapped in machines, all while saving the world from “The Deadly Six” villains. The art style is cute and kid friendly, featuring levels such as Candy Stage. Expect E-rated, fast-moving fun.



CULTURE & TRENDS

Volunteering Is Good for Your Family (and Heart)

A study of 1,100 adults ages 51 to 91 found that those who volunteered at least 200 hours per year were 40 percent less likely to have high blood pressure than those who didn't volunteer. (*Relaxnews*)

QUICK STATS

Kids who tend to be more generous begin the trend at age 2, suggesting a genetic preference for giving. But you can help preschoolers without a generous inclination—talking with kids about giving raises the probability of giving 18.5%. (*Science Daily*)

Seventy-three percent of kids believe they can make a difference in their communities. We only need to provide opportunities for children to act on this belief. (*Children's Ministry Magazine*)

Those who volunteered as youth and whose parents volunteered became the most generous adults when it comes to giving their time. (*Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service--Independent Sector*)

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