

Discipling Your Kids in the Time of Coronavirus

It is important to remember that much of what our children come to believe about God, His Word, and the Gospel and how it applies to their lives is “caught” rather than simply taught. Your children will be watching you closely in the coming days and weeks to see if your actions in these next days will match the words and ideas you have taught them about who God is.

This is a unique moment in history! It is likely that someday our kids will be telling their grandkids how they spent their time at home with their family during the Coronavirus Pandemic. What do you hope they’ll say about these days? These days of quarantines, cancelled events, and extra time at home are a wonderful opportunity to help your children see the amazing mighty and loving God in a more personal way! Here are some ideas to help you do this:

FREE ONLINE FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

The organization that produces our elementary Sunday school curriculum has graciously provided free online resources for families during these weeks when many churches (such as ours) will not be meeting together in person. They have provided a video and a downloadable activity page and conversation starters for you to use as a family! Just follow these steps:

To access LifeWay Kids at Home, please have each of your families follow the steps below.

Step 1: Go to my.lifeway.com/redeem

Step 2: Register if you are a new user or log in if you already have an account. This is completely free.

Step 3: Enter this redemption code: VZMD4SSQ38

Step 4: Click “Access” (if prompted to sign in again, sign in) and then click “My Dashboard,” and go to LifeWay Kids at Home

Step 5: Download your Activity Page and One Conversation Sheet to use as you watch the video session.

Content will be updated weekly as needed. Free to all churches and the families they minister to.

TALK ABOUT COVID-19 AS A FAMILY

Kids pick up more than you think, and chances are that even if you haven’t been directly talking with your child about the pandemic, they know something is going on and have questions. Here are some ways to talk about the pandemic in a helpful and God-honoring way.

1). *Talk about why we aren’t going to church.*

This is a great way to lead into the conversation. Your child will likely be interested in why you are “watching” church online and not going there. Talk about how there are germs going around and that many people are getting sick. These germs spread very easily because it takes awhile for people to realize they are sick and by then they have spread the germs to lots of other people. Explain that this sickness is very dangerous for some people whose bodies are already sick, have trouble fighting sickness, or who are elderly. The Bible tells us that we are to love our neighbor (Mark 12:31) and to consider the best interests of others, not just ourselves (Philippians 2:4). One way we can do this is by not meeting together so that the germs do not spread to as many people and everyone can stay healthier. For more information on talking to your kids about COVID-19 check out this article: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/children-coronavirus/>

2). *Remind your child who God is and what He is like*

We can all use the reminder of how big our God is in times like these. At VBS last year we learned (and rapped) that *From tiny germs to mighty kings - God's in charge of everything; thunder, lightning, and disease - God's in charge of all of these*; and we also sang that *Our God is in control! He is unshakeable! He is the Lord of all!* (check out our song "Sovereignty Rhapsody" and "All Creation Obeys" for full songs). Your kids have heard these truths but this is an opportunity to really trust in them! Ask your child questions such as: *Who made our bodies? Who healed people and even brought people back to life? Who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and always good?* We may not understand the full picture as to why God has allowed so many people to get sick, but we can trust that not one germ has spread anywhere that God is not in control of! If we, or someone we love, gets sick, we can trust that God has a good and right purpose even in that sickness.

3). *Talk to God about it*

Pray about it! If we truly believe all the things about God that we wrote above then we can pour out our hearts before him about all that we are feeling during these days. Be diligent in the coming days to pray together as a family. Here are some prayer ideas to get you started:

- Acknowledge who God is and that He is in control
- Confess to God your own fears, frustrations, and feelings about the virus and the circumstances that have come about because of it.
- Pray for those who have been infected
- Pray for the doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who are working long hours
- Pray for government and law enforcement officials who are having to make big decisions about how to keep our communities safe

4). *Discuss how you can shine the light of Jesus during these days*

These days hold wonderful opportunities to show the world where our hope is found! Here are some ideas of things you can do to share your hope with others. Feel free to come up with your own ideas too:

- Make cards and mail them to those who are sick or elderly and may be feeling particularly scared or lonely.
- Invite a family or friends who may not know Jesus to your home. Simply be hospitable, share a meal, a game, or just play. We need to be mindful of large gatherings, but maximize this opportunity to deepen relationships in smaller settings.
- Make care packages of toilet paper, soap, hand sanitizer, bottled water, and/or own food from your own supplies to share with your neighbors or the needy. We can freely share these things and don't need to hoard them because we trust in the ultimate Provider! Consider attaching a Bible verse.

5). *Remember what God has told you*

An excellent way to both bond as a family and keep your focus on God during these days is to memorize Scripture together and remind each other about the truth it communicates. You can put it up around your house, quiz each other, see who can memorize the most, make your own song, etc. Here are some ideas of verses to commit to memory that can specifically help you or your child battle fear and/or anxiety:

- Psalm 56:3
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Isaiah 41:10
- Philippians 4:6-8
- Joshua 1:9
- Psalm 23
- Matthew 6:34

