

Tips  
From:

# 99 WAYS TO RAISE SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY CHILDREN

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Raising children can be one of the most joyful and stressful jobs you'll ever have! Check out a few of the 99 suggestions on ways to help your family grow spiritually:

- **Be a Pretty Good Parent:** You don't have to be a perfect parent. There's no such thing, in fact. Trust yourself to be a pretty good parent, good enough, not a perfect parent. You are the perfect parent for your child.
- **Keep a Gratitude Journal:** A gratitude journal is a blank book that you fill with daily expressions of gratitude. When you need a lift, go back and read through your list of "gratitudes." You'll see the pattern of a grateful heart that can always find something for which to give thanks. If this brief time of reflection fits your schedule better at the dinner table, do it then.
- **Pray Together:** Prayers don't have to be long, wordy and overly detailed. Prayer is a conversation with God. Tell God what's on your heart. Pour out your concerns. Thank God for blessings and challenges. Children accept the concept of prayer quicker than adults. Praying with your child is a powerful experience.
- **Do More Than Worship:** Attending worship is great, but it takes more than that to nurture the life of faith. A few suggestions of additional faith activities include: retell Bible stories you heard in church, pray together, volunteer, listen to Christian music and discuss current events in the context of faith. Every time you let your faith inform your words and actions, you teach your child that living a life of faith is a full-time job, but one that you are glad to have.
- **Admit That You Don't Have All the Answers:** You don't have all the answers. Nobody has all the answers. It is impossible. We don't need to answer all of our children's questions, but we do need to make our faith available to them as a source for their learning and growth.
- **Let Mistakes Happen:** The Christian faith does not say we have to be perfect. Isn't that a relief? That's God's specialty, not ours.
- **Ask for Help:** Parenting is a job where being the body of Christ makes a lot of sense. We can't be the eyes and ears and hands and feet and voices and hearts and do it all well all the time. Embrace the gifts and outreach of other people and accept their help as a gift of grace.
- **Put Faith First:** Children need to see that faith is not just preached but practiced. Place God at the center of all that you believe, think and do. Faith is not a chore when God is at the core.
- **Remember the Big Picture:** Some days are better than others. On the crazy days, remember the big picture. If you strive to put the elements of spiritual nutrition in front of your child on a regular basis, it will balance out as the days go by.
- **Give and Receive Forgiveness:** Forgiveness cannot be forced. It must be given and received by a willing heart. Forgiving doesn't always mean forgetting. It is an act of faith to be on either end of the exchange.
- **Say Thank You:** If the only prayer you ever said was thank you, that would be enough. Say thank you to God, your family, friends and strangers that you meet. Be sincere in your thanks.
- **Overflow with Grace:** Don't just say grace. Live it. Let it overflow.