the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition

October 2011

Hillview Church
Living, Loving, Reaching, Growing

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POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you keep the "end goal" of eternity always in mind.
2. To guide your important work of raising children who love and serve God.
3. To grow and nurture your children's faith—and your own.

Maintain an Eternal Perspective

Many parents live in survival mode, being pulled from all directions and juggling ever-increasing responsibilities. In the rush of school, work, and household activities, it's easy to lose our focus on what really matters: the eternal future of our children and ourselves.

How can you be more tuned in to this "end goal" of spending eternity in heaven? Talk with your pastor or a valued friend to brainstorm what your kids need to know about God and when. Plan ways to incorporate Jesus into everyday life—and on an everyday basis. Make sure everyone's on the same page. Talk to your spouse, family members, and caregivers about your spiritual priorities, even if you think they already know them.

Then be intentional with your choices. Arrange your plans around the big-picture goal. If activities start to interfere with what's really important, re-evaluate and rework your family's schedule. When faith becomes the top priority for your family, it'll also become the top priority for your children.

INSIGHTS

• 85% of parents of children under age 13 say they believe they have the primary responsibility for teaching kids about religious and spiritual matters. (Just 11% said their church is primarily responsible.) Yet a majority of those parents "do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children."

• Most people become Christians by age 12 or 13.

(Barna Research Group)

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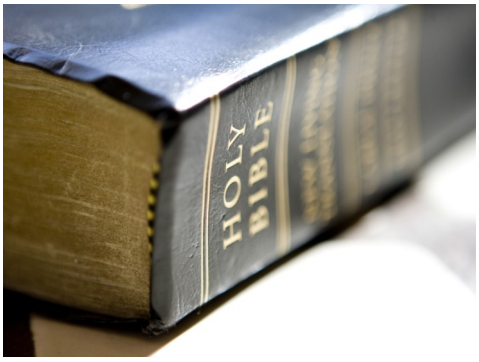

"I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us." (Philippians 3:14)

What are your goals? Are you trying to finish a project? potty-train a toddler? Today, take time to focus on the goal of spending eternity in heaven—a goal that's reachable thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

1. Before and After—Prepare for worship by playing the soft sounds of Christian music in your house. After church or Sunday school, ask children not only what they learned but how they can put the lessons into practice. Display and refer to take-home papers.

2. Pray Without Ceasing— Move prayer beyond the dinner table and bedroom. Pray for and with children as they head to school, when you're driving and see an ambulance, or when a family member is discouraged or facing a challenge.

3. What's Our Mission?— Together, craft a family mission statement. Decide what your worthy purpose, visions, and values are. Then have everyone commit to living that way, both privately and publicly. God will be placed at the center of your home not by chance but because you've purposed it to be that way.

Begin a conversation about goals for this life—and the life to come—by asking children these questions:

1. What are some things you want to accomplish or achieve during the next week, month, or year?
2. What are some ways to stay focused on a goal and not let obstacles get in your way?
3. What goals do you think Jesus wants us to set? How can he help us reach them?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Keep your family focused on Jesus with these activities.

• **Cleansed Hearts**—Together, carve a happy face into a pumpkin. Remove the seeds and place them in a bowl inside the pumpkin. Say: "This pumpkin represents our hearts before we accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness." Have family members take turns reaching inside the pumpkin. Say: "The cold, wet seeds are just as yucky as our cold hearts are before we join God's family. Once you invite Jesus into your life, though, he cleans out your sin, just like cutting open a pumpkin and scooping out the yucky seeds." Throw away the seeds. Say: "Jesus makes our hearts happy so God's love can shine out from us to a dark world." Place a candle inside the pumpkin and light it. Close by reading Matthew 5:16.

• **Goal Tenders—**You'll need some bowls and buttons. Try tossing the buttons into the bowls from 3 feet away. Then discuss your success with this goal. Say: "Sometimes we have to try several times to achieve our goals. But God gives us each a special goal to strive for. Listen to what it is." Read aloud Philippians 3:12-14. Say: "Our goal is to become what God wants us to be. We can't achieve that in one year, but we keep striving toward the goal." Move a bowl closer to you. Say: "Let's take turns tossing a button into this bowl and saying one way we'll try to become what God wants us to be; for example, reading your Bible, praying, singing songs to God, or showing love and kindness to others. Remember to strive for that goal every day, week, month, and year."

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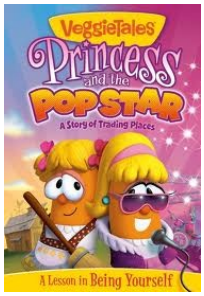
MEDIA MADNESS

MOVIES



Movie: *Princess and the Pop Star*

Genre: Christian cartoon

Running time: 50 minutes

Rating: Family-friendly

Synopsis: In this new "VeggieTales" DVD, farm girl Princess Poppyseed switches lives with her favorite pop singer, Vanna Banana. The girls realize that God lovingly designed each of their lives "as is" for a reason.

Our Take: Young "VeggieTales" fans will enjoy this lesson in being yourself. Preteens will gain perspective about trading places with musical heroes. All viewers will enjoy the high-energy music, including "You Never Are" by Dove Award-winning Artist of the Year Francesca Battistelli.

MUSIC

Artist: Needtobreathe

Album: *The Reckoning*

Artist Info: This rock band from South Carolina has had hits on mainstream and Christian charts, as well as several songs on TV shows and ads. They've been opening up for Taylor Swift on the North American leg of her sold-out *Speak Now* tour.

Summary: In their fourth studio album, Needtobreathe combines their powerful sound with experimental recording ideas. The first single, "Slumber," encourages listeners to wake up, sing, and dance.

Our Take: Needtobreathe is a good choice for fans of bluesy folk rock who want to hear a variety of heartfelt, positive messages in their music.

GAMES, SITES & APPS

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
Jerry Rice & Nitus' Dog Football	This family-friendly game features a team of canine athletes, led by a human quarterback. It's a fun way to introduce children to football.	E; Wii
Hole in the Wall	In this party game, which requires a Kinect motion-sensing device, players try to fit through shapes carved in a wall that moves toward them.	E; Xbox360
Savings Spree	This fun, age-appropriate app teaches kids to make smart decisions about money—and shows how those decisions will affect them in the future.	For ages 7-12; available at www.msgen.com for $2.99

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, listen to, and wear.

CULTURE & TRENDS

• Experts say it's more important than ever to nurture children's creativity. Researchers blame standardized testing for declines in children's ability to produce unique ideas and express humor and imagination. But there are encouraging signs that kids are expressing creativity outside the classroom, through digital media and free play. *(msnbc.com)*

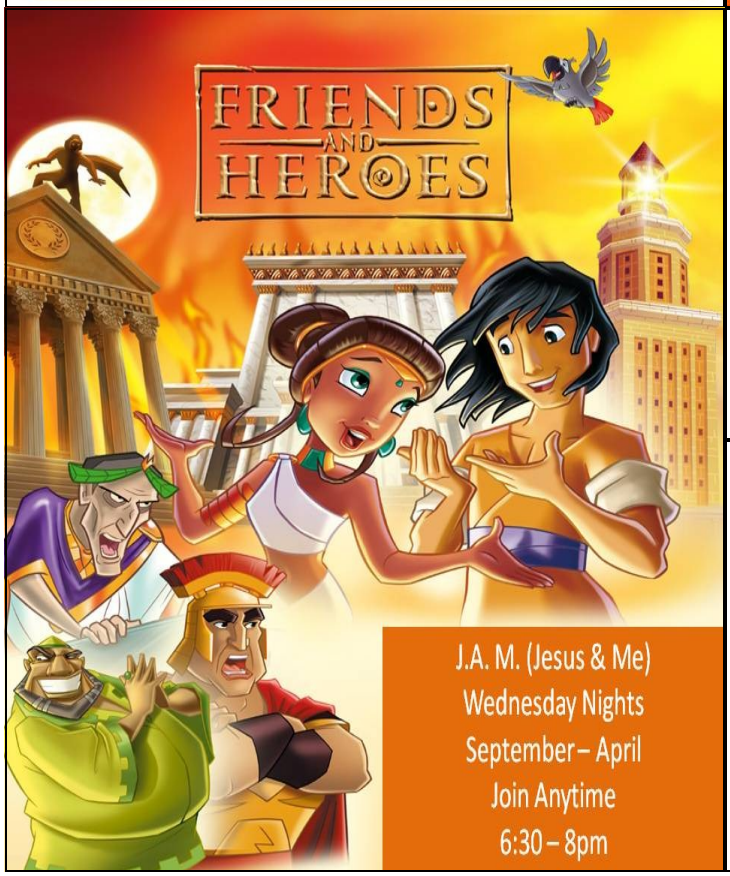
• Companies are turning kids into walking billboards. Disney hands out "Disney Baby" onesies in maternity wards, a California restaurant gives kids free arcade tokens for wearing its shirts, and a cereal company in the U.K. pays kids $400 to wear its clothing on their most-scheduled days. *(various Internet sources)*

QUICK STATS

• Kids ages 6 to 9 get an average of $4.45 a week for allowance. But out of 480 families surveyed, only four said they use allowance as a way to teach tithing and saving. *(kidsmoney.org)*

HBC Children's Music Program for Preschoolers

Saturday Mornings from 10:30 – 11:15
Contact Christina at 780-450-2681
Or email dougchristina@shaw.ca to register



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