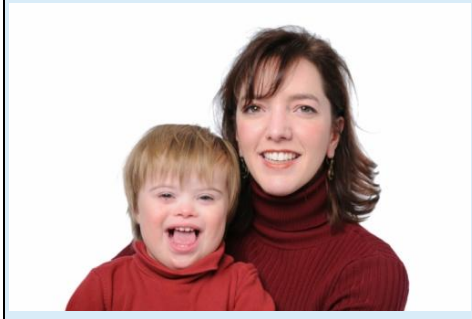
the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition

November 2011

Church Logo and Info Here



POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you recognize and nurture your children's talents and gifts.
2. To assure each of your children that God has made them special.
3. To show all family members how they can best use their gifts to glorify God.

Be Grateful for God-Given Gifts

God has blessed each of us with traits, talents, and spiritual gifts that make us special. Just as we thank God for our material and physical blessings, we should also offer gratitude for our unique gifts and abilities.

As Thanksgiving approaches, take time to consider which spiritual gifts God has given each of your family members. Observe them as they interact with others and perform tasks. What excites and satisfies your kids? What challenges them or makes them proud? Offer choices and don't compare children's strengths or interests to other people's. Finally, provide varied opportunities for kids to use their gifts and to grow passionate about serving. Evaluate what they like best about each experience and why.

For a biblical primer on spiritual gifts, read passages such as Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; and Ephesians 4:11-16. Share some of these verses with your children and get their opinions about which gifts they think they have—or would like to develop.

INSIGHTS

• 68% of Christians say they've heard of spiritual gifts.

• The most commonly claimed spiritual gifts are teaching (9%), service (8%), and faith (7%). The least commonly claimed spiritual gifts are leadership (2%) and evangelism (1%).

• Gifts people claim that aren't listed in Bible passages about spiritual gifts include singing, patience, happiness, creativity, and health.

(Barna Research Group)

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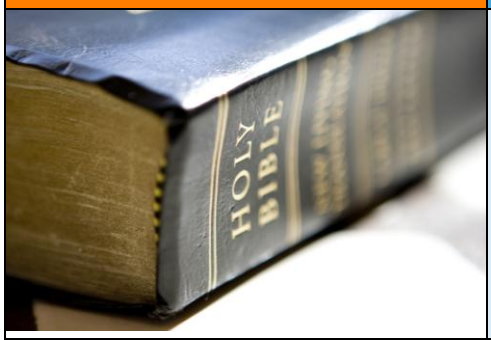

"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. …Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 4:10-11)

Instead of burying our talents (see Matthew 25:14-30), we should be grateful for them and use them to serve God and other people.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

1. Variety Is the Spice of Life—During family outings at museums, concerts, and sporting events, discuss the wide range of talents that people have. Emphasize that all gifts are special—and that the world would be boring if everyone excelled in the same areas.

2. Use 'Em or Lose 'Em—After you help children identify their talents and spiritual gifts, help them put them into practice. Especially watch for ways kids can apply their gifts at church, such as singing in a children's choir, helping in the nursery, or preparing goodies for homebound members.

3. Thank the Giver—During prayer times, encourage children to thank God not only for their physical blessings but also for their spiritual gifts. Ask God for wisdom to use the gifts in ways that honor him.

Start a conversation about gifts and gratitude by asking these questions:

1. What special talents and abilities do you think God has given you? How do you thank God for those gifts?
2. What are some ways you can praise God by using your talents?
3. How can you express gratitude for other people's talents—and encourage them to use their gifts wisely?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Try these fun activities to express gratitude for the gifts God has given each of your family members.

• **Grateful Game**— Play a game of Hot Potato with a twist. Sit in a circle, play praise music, and pass around a gourd or other Thanksgiving decoration. Pause the music at varying intervals. When the music stops, the person with the object must say one talent or gift he or she is thankful for. Play until everyone has several chances to thank God, the giver of all good things.

To add more challenge, throw the object across the circle instead of passing it. This adds an element of surprise because people won't know if they'll have the object when the music stops. For even more excitement, use three or four objects rotating in assigned directions. Players will have to stay sharp—and think of even more gifts for which to be grateful.

• **Amazing Bodies—**Have each family member draw a gingerbread-cookie-type person and draw arrows from different parts of the body to the outer rim of the paper. Say: "From the head, write words or draw pictures that describe what you like to learn about. From the hands, things you like to do. From the feet, places you like to go. From the stomach, things you like to eat, and so on." Read aloud Psalm 139:14.

Form a circle and link arms. Have family members say in unison, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!" Then have everyone raise their hands and close in a prayer of thanks for the wonderful bodies God has given us.

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MEDIA MADNESS

MOVIES

Movie: *The Muppets*

Genre: Family comedy

Rating: PG (for some mild rude humor)

Cast: Jason Segel, Amy Adams, Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy

Synopsis: The beloved Muppets reunite—and recruit some fans—to save their old theater from oil tycoon Tex Richman.

Our Take: Parents who grew up with the Muppets will enjoy introducing their children to these colorful characters. Some humor will likely be over young viewers' heads; for example, Animal is now at an anger-management rehab center for celebrities.

MUSIC

Artist: Jamie Grace

Album: *One Song at a Time*

Artist Info: This 19-year-old singer and songwriter from Atlanta is the newest addition to Toby Mac's Christian music label. She's a featured artist and speaker on Women of Faith's Revolve Tour. Grace also is studying children's ministry. She was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome at age 11.

Summary: Grace's sound is a combination of pop, folk, and hip-hop. In her first single, "Hold Me," Grace sings about loving God "more than the words in my brain can express."

Our Take: Preteens (and their parents) will enjoy Grace's refreshing sound and heartfelt lyrics about relating to God.

GAMES & SITES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
Tetris Axis	This new release of the classic shape-stacking game contains more than 20 game modes, including marathon, fever, and tower climber.	E; Nintendo 3DS
Kirby's Return to Dreamland	The popular character returns with some new abilities. Players help Kirby rebuild an alien spaceship so the aliens can return to their home planet.	E10+; Wii
BAM! Body and Mind www.bam.gov	At this free site, kids learn about eating well, exercising, handling stress, and more. Content includes games, virtual tours, and a fitness calendar.	Geared toward kids ages 9-13

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

• Competitive carpooling is a hot topic in some neighborhoods. Status-conscious parents are racing to fill their minivans and SUVs with kids they want their children to be seen with. *(USA Today)*

• Professor Sheri L. Parks says the hit TV show *Modern Family*, which satirizes family dynamics and relationships, "sets the expectation that nothing is sacred or even sincere" about families. *(washingtonpost.com)*

QUICK STATS

• 85% of American parents feel it's important to tell their kids they're smart *(parenting.com)*

• 69% of families have moved to a new home at least once in their children's lifetime. When choosing a new home, 61% of parents say a safe neighborhood is most important. One-third of children want their own bedrooms, 27% wish for a neighborhood with kids their age, and 25% want a big backyard. *(Denver Post)*

November

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Thanksgiving	25	26
27	28	29	30			