



January 2014

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



Bethel International
United Methodist
Church

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Online: Knowledge Is Power

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help you discern when to protect and when to empower your kids in their use of technology.
2. For opportunities to model positive technology use for your kids.
3. To help your child grow in awareness of Internet and social media usage and safety.

"BRB," he said as he gave me a hug and dashed out the back door. "C U soon," I said back, spelling it like that in my head as I spoke. Like knowing the code to gain entry into the tree fort, having this shared language felt empowering. I mean, I know LOL means "laugh out loud" and not "lots of love." (And that's an important one, because giving your child an affectionate LOL in front of his teammates after a tough loss would be scarring.)

But more than just not wanting to mortify our kids in front of their friends, we don't want to be shut out from their most significant form of communication today. As we strive to protect, educate, and empower them, we need to not fear the technology

that could threaten to divide us. Knowledge is power here, so it's best to have a basic understanding.

Along the way, we must keep in mind that it's not the devices but the hearts of our kids that keep us up at night. *Is he making good choices? Is she seeking affirmation in the wrong places?* These are timeless concerns for parents. We want to help our kids to live in the light. When kids have knowledge of God's love for them, they'll have the power to shine in even the darkest of places and make choices for our never-changing God in this quickly-changing digital world.

Ann Diaz Loveland, Colorado



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Sometimes the Internet brings out the worst in people. The negativity can be contagious (but so can positivity!). Illuminate how true this is for your family with this simple activity. First, discuss the following:

- Why do you think people treat each other differently online?
- Explain who you think can be hurt by such activity and why.

Then read together Matthew 5:13-16 about how we are to be the salt and light of Jesus in our world.

- How is posting something nice or encouraging online like being salt and light?

Then gather around a computer screen and locate some public discussions. Try a Facebook fan page of a reality TV show or a news story from a site that offers a comments section, such as aol.com or your local newspaper. Then post a series of sincere, uplifting comments. Return an hour later.

- What impact did your comments have on others? On yourself?

Bridging the Digital Divide

The “digital natives” (kids born into a culture of technology, who know this world in no other terms) are unique in many ways, and researchers are gathering notes. Here are some of the latest findings about characteristics of this young generation from learning experts Marc Prensky (*Teaching Digital Natives*), Don Tapscott (*Growing Up Digital*), and Josh Spear (Undercurrent.com), along with suggestions on how to best bridge the digital divide and keep God at the center of kids’ lives.

Today’s Kids . . .

1. Expect freedom of choice in everything. The myriad of choices might be overwhelming to adults, but kids take this for granted. They’re capable of cutting through the clutter.

2. Enjoy customizing. Remember when Burger King promised we could have it our way? Today’s kids can’t imagine an alternative.

3. Scrutinize and seek integrity. Based on their online experience, kids are continually assessing, reviewing, and expecting more from providers of online content and products. They can quickly access interviews and opinions of others.

4. Want to be entertained, whether it’s for education or fun.

5. Desire constant collaboration and relationship. From texting to multiuser games to file sharing and social media, kids connect with others for advice at any moment.

6. Have a need for speed. Their world is instantaneous. They’re not used to waiting for information.

7. Actively pursue innovation. New gadgets and features help them collaborate, be entertained, and learn in new ways.

Sounds privileged, but it’s the world kids were born into. So what does all this mean for how we are to raise them to be like Jesus, who was born in a stable?

Parenting Today’s Kids . . .

1. Be unshakable in your family’s core values. Like a skinny iced mocha latte with no foam, spiritual truths today are also perceived as customizable. Make space for inquiry, research answers together, and help your child critically evaluate messages—and the value of an unchanging God. If your child sees how the family’s core values are a positive bedrock, he or she won’t stray far.

2. Encourage kids to evaluate their own integrity in their social media interactions. The Internet has turned us all, young and old, into armchair quarterbacks to a large degree. While kids are assessing others’ opinions, remind them that others will be scrutinizing what they write in the same way. Encourage them to think of their entire audience of friends—including God—before posting a message. If they seek first his approval, they’re less likely to worry about anyone else’s.

3. Share interesting online finds together. Funny videos and games are excellent bonding tools. Let your kids show you some of the latest apps. Ask them to help you find ways to combine technology and the Word of God, like prayer apps, and how to download last Sunday’s sermon.

“Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.”

—Proverbs 22:6

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

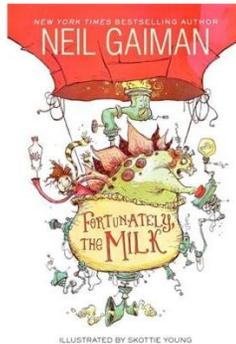
Title: Noah

Genre: Adventure/Drama/Epic

Rating: Not yet rated at time of publication.

Cast: Russell Crowe, Anthony Hopkins, Emma Watson, Jennifer Connelly
Synopsis: Paramount Pictures is hoping to make a splash on the big screen with *Noah*. The film's writer, director, and producer Darren Aronofsky (*Black Swan*, *Requiem for a Dream*) says he hopes to breathe new life into the biblical epic.

Our Take: Before your families flood to the theater, know that it's been reported that in preliminary screenings, Christian viewers were allegedly worried about the creative liberties the film takes with the source material. Also, remember that the events were grim (the death of most of humanity). Expect the film to be rated accordingly.



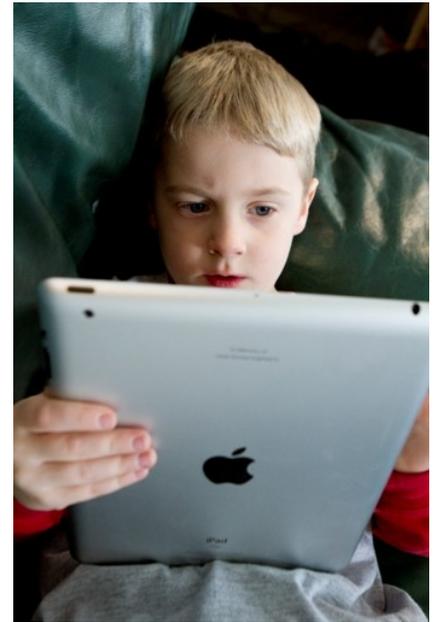
BOOKS

Title: *Fortunately, the Milk*

Publisher: HarperCollins Publishers

Summary: Neil Gaiman (author of *Coraline*), returns with a story just as strange, if not stranger, than its title. A father who's gone to buy milk for his children comes back with a story that's hard to believe. Readers will hear the father's tale of aliens, pirates, and more on his quest to bring home the milk.

Our Take: It's a simple but fun read. The wonderful illustrations, done by Skottie Young, will keep readers turning the pages for more. Although some may take issue with the volcano god the father encounters, it offers a great opportunity for discussion about what the Bible says about false gods.



CULTURE & TRENDS

According to a new survey on Internet use conducted by the Safe and Secure Online program, almost one in five young children, many between the ages of nine and 11, have met somebody they only knew previously from the Web. Only half of these kids took someone they knew with them. (zdnet.com) What online safeguards have you established with your kids?

QUICK STATS

Researchers in the U.K. say video games have no negative impact on kids' behavior later on in life, but television viewers of more than three hours a day saw a small increase in conduct problems later in life. (forbes.com)

A third of parents say they fear their own child is bullying others online, while half of parents say they've broken rules to allow their children on social media sites before the appropriate age. (telegraph.co.uk)

Almost twice as many children have used mobile media compared to two years ago, according to Common Sense Media, and the average amount of time children spend using mobile devices has tripled. (huffingtonpost.com)

Games, Sites & Apps

Wii Party U

Wii Party U is the sequel to 2010's *Wii Party*. Like the original, this game keeps the party going with over 80 new family-friendly mini-games. *Wii Party U* is rated E for everyone noting mild cartoon violence. (wiipartyu.nintendo.com)

ConnectSafely.org

Geared toward parents, teens, educators, and policy makers, this site provides unbiased news and opinion on the impact of the social web. Find safety tips, ways to preventing cyber-bullying, and analysis of the latest research. Sign up to receive their newsletter in your inbox.

My First Hands-On Bible app

Teach with hands-on lessons—like Jesus did. Preschoolers, Pre-K and Kindergartners can experience God's Word, not just read it! Titles available now include "God in the Beginning" and "The First Christmas Story." (group.com/at-home)

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.



January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day Welcome 2014!	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Dress Up Your Pet Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	21	22	23	24 Compliment Day	25
26 Safe Sanctuary Training 12:30 p.m. Room 16	27	28	29	30	31	Feb. 14th Movie Night! 7:00 p.m. FLC

SAFE SANCTUARIES

Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth



Joy Thornburg Melton

Safe Sanctuary Training and Refresher Class

January 26, 2014

12:30 p.m.

Room 16

If you are volunteering or planning to volunteer your time working with children, infants, teens or older adults you are required to attend a Safe Sanctuary Training.

You will need to attend if it has been a few years since your last training.

Come find out about safety instructions for each age group and some updates.

Please bring information that might help as you are filling out your Safe Sanctuary papers. We might need driving identification, address information for people you are using as references.

Help with planning by sending an RSVP to Lana Turner at ltturner@mybethel.org

Pizza & Movie Night!



FEBRUARY 14, 2014

7:00—9:00 P.M.

PIZZA AND MOVIE

FAMILY LIFE CENTER

DISNEY MOVE

RATED PG

**INVITE FRIENDS, FAMILY
AND NEIGHBORS!**

Help me plan for pizza and drinks by filling out a movie ticket at the Children's Ministry table by Feb. 9th or e-mail Lana Turner at ltturner@mybethel.net

Check out the Children's Ministry table located in the FLC for more information.