



the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition



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Help Your Kids Be Faith Heroes

Children's heroes can be fictional or real, from cartoon and movie characters to pop singers and fire fighters. The Bible is filled with faith heroes whom God used to fulfill his plan of salvation. But not all of these heroes were adults. David, a shepherd boy, defeated the giant Goliath, and Mary was a teenager who gave birth to our Savior. God doesn't put an age limit on being a faith hero. Kids of all ages are doing—and can do—mighty things for God's kingdom.

Sometimes children have trouble thinking of people in the Bible as anything more than fictional. They may show more interest in celebrities or athletes and strive to be like them. So it's important to help children put themselves in biblical people's shoes. Together, explore their lives and times, consider their fears and emotions, and try to get inside their skin. Ask children how they would feel and react in similar situations. This is a great way for kids to apply the Bible to their lives—and to show them that as Christians, they themselves figure in the great history God is writing. Read on for more tips about raising young faith heroes.

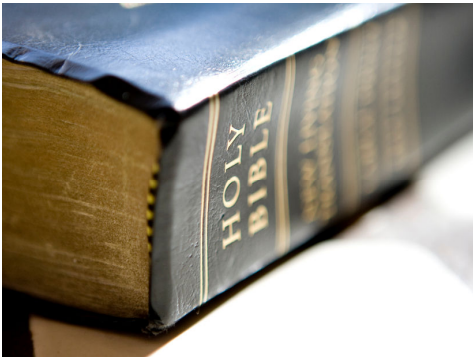
POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help your children follow Jesus as the ultimate hero and role model.
2. To strengthen you to be an example of heroic faith for your family.
3. To guide you as you share news of Jesus' "heroism" with others.

INSIGHTS

- In a 2010 U.K. poll, children listed their fathers as their top hero. Moms came in at number three. Also making the list were Hannah Montana, their teacher, SpongeBob SquarePants, and Grandpa. (*Children's Mutual*)
- 77 percent of Americans say celebrities and athletes have far too much influence on kids. (*Newsweek*)
- Only 25% of kids report that adults talk with them about their personal values. (*Search Institute*)



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

1. Hero Journal—This summer, help children see how God is using them. First, list the talents and abilities God has given each child. Then write ways that kids can use their talents to honor God. Whenever you or kids notice that God is using them, jot down the date and what happened. At summer's end, have a Hero Party (complete with hero sandwiches) and share journal excerpts.

2. Read All About It!—Be alert for stories of young heroes in your neighborhood and beyond. Share the accounts with your children to give them ideas about the incredible things they can accomplish.

3. Big-Screen Heroes—With older kids and preteens, watch movies that feature faith heroes; for example, *Soul Surfer*, about Bethany Hamilton, and *Chariots of Fire*, about Olympian Eric Liddell. Then discuss how the characters faced fears, made decisions, showed heroism, and trusted in God's plans.



“Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12)

The apostle Paul assured Timothy that even though he was young, God could use Timothy in a big way.

Use these conversation starters to get kids thinking about the ways they can be heroes for God:

1. Who are your heroes, and why? How do you try to be like them?
2. In what ways is God or Jesus your hero? What has he done for you that's special and unique?
3. What can you do or say to be a hero for God at home? at school? at church? How can God help you with this goal?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

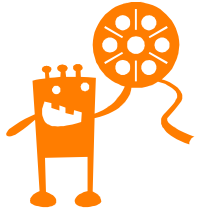
These activities will help your family members explore what it means to live heroically and confidently for God.

- **Excellent Examples**—Write the words *speech, life, love, faith,* and *purity* on index cards. Then put the cards in a bag or hat. Have family members take turns picking a card and acting out a situation of being a good example of what's on the card. Keep the cards in a visible location. Throughout the week, encourage family members to share new ways they've lived out their faith.
- **Confidence Carryall**—Collect and clean some empty containers, such as tall potato chip cans. Set out construction paper, markers, and stickers and have each family member decorate his or her own can. Ask: “On a scale of one to 10, how bold would you say you are, and why? What are some things that frighten you? Do heroes always have to be bold? Why or why not?”



Read aloud Hebrews 4:16. Say: “When we're afraid, we can always talk to God, who makes us strong and helps us.” Have family members brainstorm things they're confident about and write or draw them on slips of paper. (Help younger children.) Ideas can range from riding a bike and tying a shoe to knowing that Jesus loves me and hears my prayers.

Have everyone put the slips in their containers. Say: “Any time you feel shy about talking to God or being a hero for him, open your Confidence Carryall. Then remember what it feels like to be bold, with God's help.”



MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: *The Smurfs*

Genre: Live-action/animated 3D

Rating: PG (for some mild rude humor and action)

Cast: Neil Patrick Harris, Jayma Mays, Hank Azaria, Katy Perry

Synopsis: When the evil wizard Gargamel chases the Smurfs, they get scattered and are transported to modern-day New York. The Smurfs hide out with a married couple while they figure out how to return to their Middle Ages village.

Our Take: Although this movie isn't filled with profound take-away messages, parents who grew up with the Smurfs may enjoy introducing their children to the cartoon characters.



MUSIC

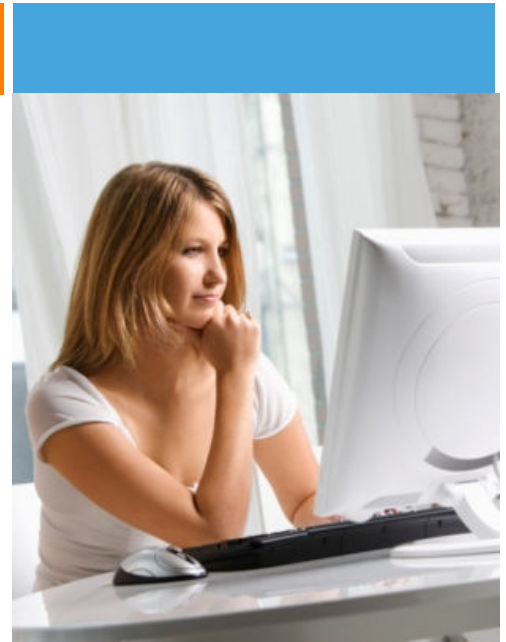
Artist: Steven Curtis Chapman

Album: *re:creation*

Artist Info: Chapman, 48, is a multi-platinum contemporary Christian musician, as well as an adoption advocate. His 5-year-old daughter, Maria Sue, died in a driveway accident in 2008.

Summary: Chapman's 17th album contains five new songs, as well as "reimagined" recordings of his eight biggest hits. The first single, "Do Everything," emphasizes that everything we do is an act of worship and should glorify God.

Our Take: Chapman's hope-filled lyrics are set to upbeat tunes that aim to strengthen relationships with God. His music is beloved by Christians of all ages.



CULTURE & TRENDS

- Birth mothers are using Facebook to track down children they put up for adoption—sometimes before the children have been told they're adopted. (*New York Times*)
- Many states are halting Medicaid coverage for circumcision, and private insurers are expected to follow suit. Meanwhile, some upcoming ballot measures aim to ban the procedure.

QUICK STATS

- 50% of parents say that having children has had no influence on their decision to attend church on a regular basis.



(*Children's Ministry Magazine*)

- 101 million Sony PlayStation Network accounts, mostly owned by kids, have been hacked into, putting personal info at risk.

GAMES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Fruit Ninja Kinect</i>	Players move their arms to "slice" through assorted produce in this popular gaming phenomenon.	E; Xbox 360
<i>Junior Mystery Quest</i>	By solving problems, players become detectives who reveal the true identities of various characters.	E; Nintendo DS
<i>Riddler.com</i>	This online site features trivia, card games, word puzzles, and multiplayer online games. Membership is free, but parents must set up the account.	Most games are appropriate for ages 10+.

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.

