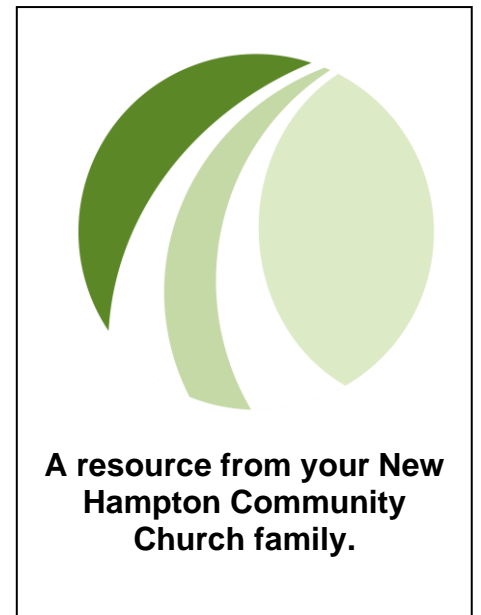




November

# parenting CHRISTIAN kids



## Help Children Hunger for God

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK JESUS:

1. To fill your family members with gratitude for God's blessings.
2. To help you all feel satisfied with everything you have.
3. To increase your hunger for Jesus and his Word.

Children, no matter their social class, often define themselves by their possessions and wants. Meanwhile, our materialistic culture insidiously distracts from what kids *really* need: to connect, to be satisfied, and to matter.

Ultimately, children want attention and relationships more than things. Through connections with Jesus and his followers, kids learn that they're special because of their identity in Jesus—and that only he offers eternal, priceless treasure.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says, "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." To give kids the wealth of God's kingdom in their hearts, we must let them

experience spiritual hunger. "I lose touch with my own body when I never allow myself to feel physical hunger," Phil Vischer writes in *Children's Ministry* magazine. The "VeggieTales" creator adds: "Likewise, our kids lose touch with their spiritual selves—their true selves—when they're never given the space to feel spiritual hunger. Space to ask big questions. Space to wonder. And space to feel (gasp!) *small*."

How do we help kids who are full of (or desirous of) earthly things hunger for the things of God? Parents can set a good example, have family devotions, pray with children, and engage in conversations that whet an appetite for Jesus. During this month of gratitude and "feasting" on God's blessings, use the food-themed ideas on the next page to satisfy kids' ultimate need.

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## Biblical Food for Thought

In 1930, missionary Frank Laubach sat on a hill overlooking a town in the Philippines where he felt called to share the Gospel. While reflecting on the task, he heard God say, “You must awaken hunger there, for until they hunger they cannot be fed.” That hunger, sometimes called a “God-shaped hole,” is a yearning for eternity and for answers to life’s biggest questions: What is my purpose? Is this world all there is? Our world and its stream of distractions is intent on reducing children’s hunger pangs for the divine, but you can remind them that Jesus wants our life to be otherworldly.



### TEACHABLE MOMENTS

#### Faith Food

You’ll need graham crackers, elf-shaped cookies, paper plates, vanilla yogurt, blue food coloring, and plastic knives. Put some blue food coloring in a large container of yogurt. Have everyone wash their hands.

Read aloud Matthew 14:22-33. Set out the blue yogurt and plastic knives. Give each person a plate with a graham cracker and an elf-shaped cookie. Show how to spread yogurt on the cracker to make a sea. Then have family members each place a cookie on the yogurt to represent Peter walking on the water. Pray to thank God for the snack and then eat it.

Ask: **Why do you think Peter wanted to walk on water? Why do you think Jesus let him sink? What helps you believe in Jesus?**

Say: **Jesus helps us believe in him. We can do important things for Jesus. But first, we need to have faith in him. Don’t doubt—believe!**

**Edible Garden** For discussions about God’s creation or being thankful for food, create a colorful display of vegetable flowers and plants. With some imagination, cucumbers become flower petals, a celery stalk is a stem, and spinach becomes the leaves. Set out ranch dip and consume the art.

**Tablet Treats** While learning about the Ten Commandments, make tablets out of graham crackers, vanilla frosting, and raisins. As kids add each raisin, see if they can remember each commandment. This snack also works with lessons about Jesus teaching in the temple and Paul’s letters to the church.

**Cross Talk** When discussing how Jesus died on the cross for us, make an edible object lesson with pretzel sticks and candy coating. Melt according to instructions and then dip pretzels. On paper plates or wax paper, connect sticks into cross shapes. When cool, enjoy.

**Gone Fishin’** Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on a paper plate. Fill another paper plate with Goldfish crackers and set it nearby. Have family members dip one end of a pretzel stick into the peanut butter or cream cheese. Then, using their pretzel “fishing rods,” have them “catch” fish by touching

the dipped pretzel ends to crackers and picking them up to eat. (Avoid double dipping.) Use this to talk about following Jesus and fishing for people.

**Prayer Necklace** For a fun reminder to pray, string circle-shaped cereal onto thin licorice whips. Tie the ends together to make necklaces. During devotions, encourage family members to eat a piece of cereal as each prayer request or praise is shared.

**Cheesy Blocks** Use cheese cubes to build structures from events in the Bible (tower of Babel, wall of Jericho, house built on the rock, and so on). Insert toothpicks to stabilize the structures, and let kids gobble up their creations later.

**Ultimate Nourishment** Prepare and eat slices of bread with honey. Read aloud Luke 10:38-42 and talk about Mary and Martha. Ask: “Which is more nourishing: bread or honey?” Say: “The Bible says Jesus is the bread of life. Jesus feeds our souls when we spend time with him. Busy bees make honey, which is sweet but not very nourishing. Being busy doesn’t feed our souls.” Ask: “How can you spend more time with Jesus, the bread of life, this week? How can we share his ‘food’ with others?”

Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

—John 6:35