



How to Handle Doubt & Questions

"Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith," wrote Frederick Buechner. "They keep it awake and moving." This runs contrary to most people's assumptions about doubt—that questioning your faith proves you're a weak Christian. But when we have doubts about something, we're forced to examine its truthfulness and consider how much of ourselves we wish to invest in it. If we (and our children) are going to truly own our beliefs, we must critically evaluate them first.

Teaching your children that it's okay to express doubts and ask questions is crucial for their faith development. "When the doubts get ignored, it could eventually result in serious skepticism of one's worldview and personal faith," says professor Dean Hardy. Use these tips to help kids wonder and open up:

Don't feel threatened when children want to ask questions. These queries help kids verbalize their doubts. View tough questions not as a sign of rebellion but as opportunities to teach and learn.

Listen intently, and don't shame kids for asking questions. Reflect on what children say and affirm their feelings with phrases such as "You seem afraid" or "You look like you have a question."

Make your family a "safe zone." Foster attitudes that say it's okay to question and doubt. That will encourage children to feel free to think critically and explore honestly.



PowerSource

Ask God:

1. To help your children know it's okay to have questions.
2. To help you be a good listener when kids share their doubts.
3. To reassure your whole family of God's presence and love.

Parenting Insights

These age-level insights from *Children's Ministry Magazine* track how young Christians' thoughts and questions change over time.

Ages 3 to 5

Older preschoolers begin to ask "why?" and "how?" Miracles, symbolism, and God's nonphysical nature are often confusing for kids this age. Answer their questions simply with words that mean exactly what they say.

Ages 6 to 8

Children this age begin to distinguish between fantasy and reality and begin to use logical thinking. Give them answers that allow them to use these skills; otherwise, they'll get frustrated.

Ages 9 to 12

Older children tend to question some basic beliefs they previously accepted. They want to explore an issue from many perspectives. Share your own doubts and help kids find a niche to put their faith into action.

When Doubts Arise

In *Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do About It* (Master Books), Ken Ham and Britt Beemer explore the epidemic of young people leaving the traditional church in droves. They cite a George Barna study showing that 61% of young adults had been churched at one point during their teen years but are now spiritually disengaged. They also discovered that of young adults who no longer believe that all the Bible accounts are true:

- 40% first had doubts in middle school.
- 44% first had doubts in high school.
- 11% first had doubts in college.

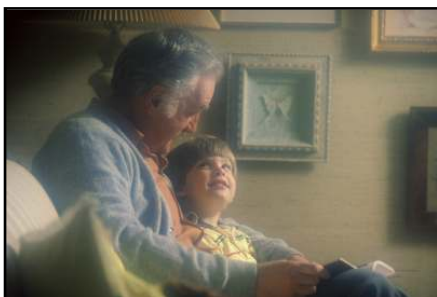
OpenTheBook

**"You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."
John 20:29**

Jesus said these words to "Doubting Thomas," the disciple who wouldn't believe that Jesus rose unless he saw and touched him. When our faith is unsteady, we can find answers in God's Word.

Teachable Moments

- 1. Establish the Bible as the authority for truth.** Affirm that whatever God's Word says has either happened or will happen. Tell Bible accounts with enthusiasm so your children will believe them, too.



- 2. Let your children know that you also doubt sometimes.** Share the ways that your faith is a work in progress. Tell how God has worked in your life today. Be an example of how to grow through positive doubting.
- 3. Celebrate your children's faith journeys.** Recognize that kids' images of God expand as they struggle with life's complexities. Accept their immature perceptions and challenge them as their ability to think abstractly develops. Mark important milestones such as baptism, first Bible, Sunday school promotion, confirmation, etc.



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are ON THE ROAD, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT

Support children's faith development by talking to them about their doubts and questions. Start by asking:

1. How much proof or evidence do you need before you believe something or someone?
2. What things about God and the Bible are hardest for you to believe, and why?
3. Why do you think God asks us to believe without visual "proof"?
4. How might doubts and questions actually make our faith stronger?

Family Experience: Faith Adventures

Many people in the Bible struggled with doubt. Use these experiences from Group's Hands-On Bible to explore faith.

- **What You Know**—Read aloud John 20:24-31 to meet a doubting disciple. Then say: "When you have doubts, it's helpful to separate what you *know* from what you *feel*. For example, you may doubt that God loves you because you didn't make the soccer team. You feel alone and unloved. But the Bible says that God loves you and that he'll take care of you. Because the Bible says it, you know it's true, even if it doesn't feel that way right now."

Together, divide a sheet of poster board into two columns. Label one "What I Feel" and the other "What I Know." List some feelings, and across from each feeling, write a Bible verse in response. For example, across from "loneliness" you can write "God is with me. Matthew 28:20." Use a Bible index to help you find relevant passages.

- **Childlike Faith**—Say: "When you were littler, you trusted your parents about everything. Jesus says everyone should have faith like little kids—even grown-ups! We *all* need Jesus, *all* the time." Read aloud Luke 18:15-17. Then make something to remind you that Jesus wants you to trust him the same way little kids trust their parents. Have each family member draw a heart on a piece of construction paper. Write "Jesus" inside it. To the left, tape a picture of when you were little. To the right, tape a recent picture of yourself. Decorate and hang the paper as a reminder of your faith.





What's Playing at the Movies

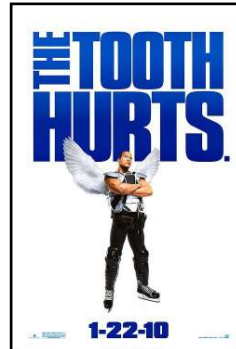
Movie: *The Tooth Fairy* (Jan. 22)

Genre: Family comedy

Rating: PG

Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Ashley Judd, Julie Andrews

Synopsis: A tough minor-league hockey player with a reputation for doing facial damage to opponents gets busted for some insensitive comments to a child. His lousy attitude earns him a sentence working for a week as a real-life tooth fairy. After getting used to his new role, he starts to rediscover some of his own long-lost dreams.



Discussion Questions: What type of attitude do you usually have? Think of a time you've hurt someone with your words: Were you able to undo the damage? If so, how? Read aloud Matthew 18:4. What does it mean to have a childlike faith?

What Music Is Releasing

Artist: Katharine McPhee

Album: *Unbroken*

Artist Info: This 25-year-old pop singer was the runner-up on *American Idol* season five. Her self-titled debut album reached number two on the Billboard top 200 chart. McPhee has been upfront about her struggle with bulimia.



Summary: McPhee's sophomore album highlights her versatile, elegant vocal style. Several songs deal with broken relationships. In the first single, "Had It All," McPhee sings, "Why did I believe that little voice that led me down the path to this bad choice? Why don't I listen to the angels when they sing?"

Discussion Questions: How aware are you each day of your conscience? How much do you rely on it to help you choose between right and wrong? Read aloud 1 Kings 19:11-13. How and when does God speak to you? When are you most likely to listen to him?

What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Ultimate I Spy</i>	Players navigate 3D screens to solve riddles and complete puzzles.	E; Wii
<i>Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box</i>	In this adventure game, players can work on more than 150 logic puzzles. Clues help players solve a mystery.	E10+; Nintendo DS
<i>James Cameron's Avatar: The Game</i>	This shoot-'em-up fantasy game offers a prequel version of the hit movie, introducing the alien moon Pandora. Contains non-bloody combat violence.	T; PSP

GAME RATINGS KEY: EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



Culture & Trends

What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:

- "Helicopter parents" who are overinvolved with their children's lives face a growing backlash. Kids grow best when parents let go, experts say.
- The recession is slowing such "hyperparenting." One-third of parents say they've had to cut their children's extracurricular activities—and most families admit they like the results.

(CBS News Poll)

Quick Stats

- An estimated 13% of U.S. children walk or bike to school these days, compared to more than 50% of children 40 years ago. (Science Daily)
- A study shows that children burn about three times more calories playing some exercise-oriented video games than they do just sitting on the couch watching television. (USA Today)



January 2010

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
SS 10:00 am			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 MPKids 6:00-7:00 pm Portable#3 Zone 56 6:30-8:00 pm Portable #6			
13	11	12	9	14	15	16
SS 10:00 am CC 11:15 am			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 Zone 56 6:30 - 8:00 pm Portable #6			
20	18	19	16	21	22	23
SS 10:00 am CC 11:15 am			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 Zone 56 6:30 - 8:00 pm Portable #6			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
SS 10:00 am CC 11:15 am			KM2 5:00-5:45 pm Portable #2 Zone 56 6:30 - 8:00 pm Portable #6			
31						
SS 10:00 am CC 11:15 am						

SS= Sunday School

CC= Children's Church: Children's Ministry after the children's sermon for children 4 years to 2nd grade

KM2: Music ministry for 1st thru 4th graders

Zone 56: Ministry for 5th and 6th graders

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AUMC

June 21-25, 2010 Vacation Bible School 2010

Liz Edwards, Director of Children's Ministry
 9033 Ft. Worth Dr. Argyle, Texas 76226
 940-464-1333 liz@argyleumc.org



This ministry for 5th & 6th graders includes Sunday school and weekday praise, missions, Bible study, snack supper, & fun. We meet Sunday mornings at 10 am & Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8pm in portable # 6. If you have a 5th or 6th grader be sure they come get in the ZONE! Parents, please contact Liz Edwards to sign up as a Zone 56 helper. 940-464-1333 or liz@argyleumc.org



Our Mission Possible Kids and Zone 56 have joined hands with tens of thousands of other children around the world who share the vision and dedication to empower communities through education in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our students are embarking on a Pennies for Peace campaign to broaden their cultural horizons and become members of a global family dedicated to peace.

How can a penny bring peace? A penny doesn't buy much in Argyle. But in the villages of Pakistan and Afghanistan, a penny can buy a pencil, start an education, and transform a life. In a region where terrorist organizations recruit uneducated, illiterate children, that pencil can empower a child to read, write, and learn. The Pennies for Peace program goal is to encourage children, who are ultimately our future leaders, to learn the value of philanthropy by collecting pennies for global peace.

MPK agents and Zone 56ers will be collecting pennies during the months of January and February. The pennies that they collect can add up to make a real difference in the lives of other children. What can a penny do?

- 1 penny = a pencil
- 2-3 pennies = an eraser
- 15 pennies = one notebook
- \$20 = one child's school supplies for one year
- \$50 = one treadle sewing machine and supplies
- \$100 = maternal healthcare supplies for one year
- \$300 = one advanced student's annual scholarship
- \$600 = one teacher's annual salary
- \$5,000 = support for existing school for one year
- \$50,000 = one school building and support for up to five years

Children in over 400 mountain villages in remote northern Pakistan and Afghanistan are on the waiting list, hoping to learn in a new school. We hope to help build a bridge of peace, one penny at a time, offering alternatives to the cycle of terrorism and war.

About Pennies for Peace

The Pennies for Peace campaign is a program of Central Asia Institute (CAI), founded by Greg Mortenson, author of the #1 New York Times best seller, *Three Cups of Tea*. CAI is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that promotes and provides community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Central Asia. Founded in 1996, CAI has built, to date, nearly 100 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which serve more than 28,000 students, 14,000 of whom are girls. Greg's story and more information about CAI can be found on the web at www.ikat.org.



The Good Samaritan

Rotation Sunday School

January 10-31, 2010

Scripture: Luke 10:25-37

Memory Verse: *Who is my neighbor? The one who showed mercy. Go and do likewise.*

Luke 10:29, 37

We begin the month of January celebrating Epiphany, the coming of the Magi to worship Jesus.

On January 10th, we begin exploring Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. This story is written as a parable, a story that uses elements that are commonly understood by the audience hearing it to teach a specific lesson. In this parable, the themes of kindness and prejudice are explored; issues that transcend time and place. Jesus' parable reminds us that God's grace is for all people, and calls us to overlook our stereotypes and to do kindness to all people, even those with whom we would rather not associate.

Rotation Schedule

	K	1 st & 2 nd	3 rd	4 th
January 3	Movie-108	Movie-108	Games-105	Games-105
January 10	Movie-108	Cooking-105	Drama-106	Computer-100
January 17	Drama-106	Movie-108	Computer-100	Cooking-105
January 24	Cooking-105	Computer-100	Movie-108	Drama-106
January 31	Computer-100	Drama-106	Cooking-105	Movie-108

Teachers: Older 2's and 3's (3 by Dec.31, 2009), Rm. 103, Kelly Perritt, Kelly Hawkins & Carly Hawk. Pre-K, Rm 104, Cyne Hindman & Jennifer West. Rotation shepherds: Kindergarten, Nicole Hackett & Kristy Johnston; 1st grade, Dona & Bill Perkins; 2nd grade, Jo Ellen Bergstrom; 3rd grade, Kathy Wright & Tammra Allison; 4th grade, Tracey Portz & Chris Funck. Movie: Darren & Stacie Schnabel, David & Jennifer Bullock, Steve & Shannan Christo, Roger & Sue Santone; Computer, Steve & Mary Betzhold, George & Kelly Dunham, Drama, Harold & Dana Ratcliff, Jeff Bergstrom; Game, Mike Livingston; Cooking, Jennifer Lillis & Cheryl Lavelle; Zone 56, Portable 6, Tom & Pam Keenan, Julie Sheridan.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH DECEMBER SCHEDULE

	11:15 Service
January 3	Communion
January 10	Scott & Cassandra Krumme 940-380-8264
January 17	David & Denise Fuller 940-464-2299
January 24	Jay & Bonny Haynes 940-464-3090
January 31	Bryan & Michele Langley 940-725-0128



Our awesome Mission Possible Agents are having their monthly meeting on **January 6th from 6-7 pm** in Mission Possible Headquarters, aka Portable #3. We will be working on our Pennies for Peace outreach project. Learn more about our Pennies for Peace project later on in this month's Parent Link. All kids in grades 1-4 are invited to join us as we help change the world. For more information contact Beth Ward at 940-725-0291 or cbem@verizon.net