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31 Questions to Help You Be a Better Parent

Answer these questions with honesty, humility, and dependence on God's power.

By Janel Breitenstein

Feeling passionate about parenting? If you'd genuinely like a shot in the arm for your parenting, perhaps these questions can get you started. But remember: Their effectiveness is proportionate to your level of honesty, humility, and most of all, dependence on God's power to make His presence a reality in your children's lives.

1. What are the most significant cravings of each of my kids' hearts?
2. How am I doing at building a relational bridge with my children? Do I "have their hearts"? Do they feel connected with and encouraged by me? Do I feel connected with them?

3. When I'm honest, what top five values do I feel most compelled to instill in my children? Would those line up with the top five values God would want my children to have?

4. What are each of my children's greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses?

5. Am I being faithful to pray diligently, deeply, and watchfully for my kids? (For a great

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Teen Fast Stats

Three times as many teens died from a heroin overdose in 2015 than died from a heroin overdose in 1999.
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

70% of recent and soon-to be college grads said they wouldn't bother keeping social media accounts anonymous out of fear of putting off potential employers.
(Red Bull Wingfinder)

In the News: Social Media and Increased Anxiety

Recently, Fortune Magazine ran this headline which offers insight into an alarming adolescent reality: "Social Media is Fueling a Scary trend for Teen Anxiety." The article cites the mix of current cultural factors which are feeding the anxiety epidemic. Along with perfectionism and over commitment, researchers have found that social media creates negative mental health consequences. For example, Britain's Royal Society for Public Health found that Instagram was the social media platform with the worst consequences fueling teen insecurity. Kids see photos of their peers depicting themselves as happy and carefree. When comparing these photos of others with the realities of their own lives, kids feel the anxiety of not being able to measure up. As Teddy Roosevelt once said, "comparison is the thief of joy." Parents, we need to push back so that our kids will become resilient. Help them to find their identity, value, and worth as children of God who have been showered with his grace and acceptance.

Latest Research: Sports Parenting

Here's a suggestion for parents whose kids are involved in organized sports: next time you attend one of your kids' games, spend less time paying attention to what your son or daughter is doing out on the field, and more time examining your own sideline behavior. Researchers are telling us what we should have noticed about ourselves a long time ago. That is, we're increasingly becoming a bunch of bad sports, so much so that many youth leagues are issuing written and verbal announcements prior to games warning that inappropriate gestures and profanity will not be tolerated and will result in the expulsion of violators from the game. Research from the University of Maryland indicates that fifty-three percent of parents report getting angry at their child's game, and forty percent report yelling at the ref. Parents, your Christian faith and love for Christ should stretch to and through every area of your life. Does your sideline behavior bring honor and glory to God?



Decline in Physical Activity

For several years now, developmental and health care experts have been sounding a warning regarding the relationship between the use of media, and a steady downturn in physical activity and play among our children and teens. New research confirms the fact that our kids are becoming more and more sedentary. The study, published in the *Journal of Preventive Medicine*, found that physical activity appears to reach its highest point at the age of six. New data shows that there seems to be a sharper than expected decline in physical activity during childhood. The decline begins in elementary school and continues through middle school and high school. In fact, in today's world, by age 19 the average American is already as sedentary as a 60-year-old. Parents, we should take note of this trend and look to facilitate the kind of healthy play and activity that will keep our kids on a trajectory to caring for their God-given bodies in ways that promote God-glorifying physical flourishing.



Source: CPYU

Trending: Gray Death

Here is a clear warning about a dangerous new drug trend that's sweeping through our nation along with the growing opioid epidemic. It's called gray death. It looks like a chunk of concrete and it can kill in just one small dose. Gray death is actually a drug cocktail consisting of heroin, the painkiller fentanyl, and a powerful and deadly animal tranquilizer known as carfentanil. This drug concoction is so deadly that law enforcement and first responders have had to be trained in how to handle the drug so as

not to cause their own death through simple exposure through skin contact. Parents, we encourage you to love and nurture your kids in the faith, not only because that is right, but as a way to steer them away from substance abuse. Talk about the many dangers of illicit drugs. Talk specifically about the deadly nature of drug abuse. And above all, point them to Jesus Christ as the answer to their pain, heartache, and brokenness. Be aware, and teach your kids to beware.

Sologamy

Just when you thought the changing landscape of marriage and family couldn't get any stranger, the news is reporting that a 40-year-old woman in Italy married herself in an elaborate and expensive wedding ceremony and reception that included a white dress, a large wedding cake, bridesmaids, and several dozen guests. While she's not the first person to marry themselves, Laura Mesi is part of a growing movement that's known as sologamy. Who knows where all of this will go next. This story and this growing trend toward sologamy should cause us to become more diligent and direct in teaching our children and teens about the God-ordained institution of marriage. Marriage is given to us by God to be experienced by one man and one woman in an exclusive, life-time commitment. Parents, the culture is catechizing your kids into beliefs and behaviors that run counter to the word of God. Take your kids into the Scriptures to learn the purpose, place, and parameters for marriage.



Featured Films: Coming this Fall

Opens Jan. 26, 2018



Cast: Rosa Salazar, Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Dylan O'Brien, Kaya Scodelario, Walton Goggins

Unrated

Plot Summary

In the epic finale to the Maze Runner saga, Thomas leads his group of escaped Gladers on their final and most dangerous mission yet. To save their friends, they must break into the legendary Last City, a WCKD-controlled labyrinth that may turn out to be the deadliest maze of all. Anyone who makes it out alive will get answers to the questions the Gladers have been asking since they first arrived in the maze.

Opens Feb. 16, 2018



Cast: Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira, Forest Whitaker

Not rated at time of publication

Plot Summary

After the events of Captain America: Civil War, King T'Challa returns home to the reclusive, technologically advanced African nation of Wakanda to serve as his country's new leader. However, T'Challa soon finds that he is challenged for the throne from factions within his own country. When two foes conspire to destroy Wakanda, the hero known as Black Panther must team up with the C.I.A and members of the Dora Milaje, Wakanadan special forces, to prevent Wakanda from being dragged into a world war.

Check out www.pluggedin.com for more information on new movie releases

Other Movies coming to Theaters This Fall

Title	Rating	Red Flags	Genre	Starring
Molly's Game Opens Jan. 5	R	Language, drug content and some violence	Drama	Jessica Chastain, Idris Elba, Michael Cera, Kevin Costner, Chris O'Dowd
Insidious: The Last Key Opens Jan. 5	PG-13	Disturbing thematic content, violence and terror, and brief strong language.	Horror	Lin Shaye, Josh Stewart, Kirk Acevedo, Bruce Davison
Peter Rabbit Opens Feb. 9	N/A	N/A	Family	James Corden, Rose Byrne, Daisy Ridley, Elizabeth Debicki
A Wrinkle in Time Opens March 9	PG	Thematic elements and some peril	Sci-Fi/ Family	Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, Mindy Kaling, Storm Reid, Zach Galifianakis, Chris Pine
Pacific Rim: Uprising Opens March 23	PG-13	Sequences of sci-fi violence and action, and some language	Action/ Adventure	John Boyega, Scott Eastwood, Jing Tian, Nick Tarabay, Zhang Jingchu
The New Mutants Opens April 13	N/A	N/A	Sci-Fi/ Action	Anya Taylor-Joy, Maisie Williams, Charlie Heaton, Henry Zaga, Blu Hunt, Alice Braga

6. Which child in our family is most likely to be overlooked, and why?

7. Which child tends to receive most of my attention? Why?

8. How do I believe other people see each of my children? How do I feel about that? What portion of others' opinions could I learn from, and what should I set aside?

9. Are my children developing more into givers than takers?

10. What life skills would I like my children to develop this year?

11. What are the events on the timeline of my children's lives that have the most impact?

12. In what ways have my children exceeded my expectations?

13. Do I have any expectations of my children that have become demands that I clutch out of fear, rather than hopes that I seek from God by faith?

14. In what ways do I feel disappointed by my children? What can I learn from this? (For example, about what is valuable to me, about how God has made my children, about loving as God loves, etc.) What should I do about this in the future?

15. What is my greatest area of weakness as a parent? My greatest strength? What are my spouse's?

16. In what ways are my children totally unlike me?

17. What did my parents do particularly well? In what ways do I hope to be different? (Is there any forgiveness that needs to happen there?)

18. What events from my childhood are important for me to shield my own children from? Are there ways that this has led to excessive control?

19. In what areas are my children most vulnerable?

20. What do I love about my kids? About being a parent?

21. How well do my spouse and I work as a team in our parenting?

22. How am I doing on preparing my children to be “launched” as thriving servants for God in the real world?

23. What can I do to equip my children to love well? To be wise? For successful relationships?

24. How is my children’s understanding of the Bible? How would I describe each of their relationships and walks with God?

25. Who are the other influential people in my kids’ lives? As I think of my children’s friends, teachers, coaches, etc., how can I best pray that they will complement my parenting and my kids’ needs?

26. Am I replenishing myself and taking adequate rests, so that my children see the gospel work of grace, patience, and peace in my home?

27. What are each of my kids passionate about? How can I spur on and develop their God-given passions?

28. How am I doing on teaching them biblical conflict resolution? Am I teaching them to be true peace-makers ... or peace-fakers, or peace-breakers?

29. How authentically do I speak with my kids? Am I building a bridge of trust and security through my honesty and openness with them?

30. Am I striking a good balance between protecting my kids and equipping them for whatever they may encounter when they step outside of my home, now and in the future?

31. What great memories have I recently made with my kids?

Article found at www.familylife.com

FlipSide Events this Winter

January

6th– Perfect North– We will be meeting at FFC at 5 pm. Cost is \$20 for tubing. Bring additional money for dinner at a fast food place. A waiver must be signed for all participants. Those can be found online at www.perfectnorht.com or in the youth room. Make sure to dress appropriately for winter temperatures and being in snow. We will return around 10 pm.

14th-15th– FlipSide Lockin– Our annual FlipSide Lockin will take place on January 14th starting at 6 pm and going til January 15th at 6 am. The cost is \$10. We will have an inflatable obstacle course, Velcro wall and Hoops game. We will also have a photobooth, games, food and more! Youth should sign up in the youth room. They are encouraged to invite friends and sign them up in the youth room also!

February

16th-18th– Disciple Now Retreat: Together– The DNow retreat starts on Friday night and goes through Sunday morning. The students will stay with FlipSide leaders in host homes of members from FFC. Our theme this year is Together. We will be studying how we are united together in Christ. We will also take time to worship together, serve and play group games. It's an amazing weekend of growth individually and together. Cost is \$30. Sign up in the youth room. All students must have a registration form completed and turned in.

18th– No FlipSide– There will be no FlipSide Feb. 18th due to the retreat weekend.

March

24th– Movie Night– We will be having a movie night. Movie, time and place TBD.

April

27th– Laser Tag– We will be going to Scallyway Tag to play laser tag on April 27th. We will meet at 6 pm. Scallyway Tag also offers games and mini golf. Cost of laser tag is \$13 for two rounds. Youth are encouraged to bring additional money for food. If they want to play any of the additional games, send money for that. You can look at prices at www.scallywagtag.com.

Coming in 2018

Grad Banquet– May 12

Mission Trip– July 8-13

***Note– Grad Banquet was previously promoted for May 19. Scheduling conflicts occurred, which resulted in the date change.**

What are we learning at FlipSide?

Jan. 7: Get to Know the Leader Night
Jan. 14: Lock-In– Who is this Jesus guy?
Jan. 21: Do You Even Lift? - Being Holy
Jan. 28: Do You Even Lift? - Controlling Desires
Feb. 4: Do You Even Lift? - Humiliation
Feb. 11: Do You Even Lift? - Place God's Rep as Priority
Feb. 18: No FlipSide– Disciple Now Weekend
Feb. 25: The Valley of Gaints– Character, Adversity
March 4: The Valley of Gaints– Facing Giants
March 11: The Valley of Gaints– Opp. to Change, to Grow
March 18: The Valley of Gaints– God's Plans for You
March 25: The Resurrection– Easter Lesson
April 1: No FlipSide– Easter
April 8: Romance, Relationships and Worthiness– Dating
April 15: Romance, Relationships and Worthiness– Sex
April 22: Romance, Relationships and Worthiness– Purity
April 29: Romance, Relationships and Worthiness– Respect

JANUARY 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Perfect North
7 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide Lockin @ 6 pm	15 FlipSide Lockin til 6am	16	17	18	19	20
21 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	12	13	14	15	16 Disciple Now Retreat	17 Disciple Now Retreat
18 No FlipSide	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	26	27	28			

MARCH 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	19	20	21	22	23	24 Movie Night
25 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 SS @ 9:30 am No FlipSide	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	23	24	25	26	27 Lazer Tag	28
29 SS @ 9:30 am FlipSide @ 6 pm	30					