

December 2017

parenting CHRISTIAN kids



The Woodlands Community
Presbyterian Church

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Teach Children What to Treasure

POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To bless your family's Christmas preparations and reflections.
2. To help your children feel satisfied with what they have.
3. To show your family the value of spiritual things rather than material things.

Despite Christians' efforts to honor the true meaning of Christmas, each December we must do battle with our consumer-oriented culture. The temptation to overindulge our children isn't limited to the holiday season, either. All year long, kids are bombarded by ads for "must-have" items. Parents often give in, either because they can or because they don't want their kids to feel deprived or left out.

From a spiritual standpoint, materialism shifts our priorities and dependence from God and heavenly things to what the world offers. From a developmental standpoint, overindulged children are less able to cope with stress, often lack self-control, and are at risk for being self-centered and depressed,

researchers say. As the Christmas season approaches, keep these tips in mind.

Don't rely on gifts as substitutes.

Children desire time with you and emotional security. Deep down, they want relationships more than things.

Emphasize the importance of nonmaterial values. Prioritize spending time together as a family, whether you're engaged in experiences and activities or spending quiet time at home. Watch the example you set regarding shopping and spending.

Help children explore their values.

Instead of just saying "no" to every request, use the moment to discover what's important to kids.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

The Greatest Gift

Beforehand, wrap a small gift for each family member. (Choose a variety of items that anyone would enjoy.) Sit in a circle and give each person one gift to hold.

Say: **As I read the Christmas story, pass your gift to the person on your right every time I say “God,” “Lord,” or “Jesus.” When I’m done, I’ll say “amen,” and you’ll keep the gift you’re holding at that time.**

Read aloud Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 1:26-38; and Luke 2:1-20. Then say “amen.” Have family members hold their gifts while you ask these questions: **What did you have to do to receive the gift you have? What did we have to do to receive the gift of Jesus? What is most exciting to you about the Christmas story, and why?**

Say: **Jesus is the greatest gift of all! He freely gave his life for us out of love. Because of Jesus, we’ll live forever with him—and so will everyone else who loves him.**

Close in prayer and open your gifts.

Nurture Generous Hearts

Jesus gave us the best guidance for living in a culture that overflows with materialism. In Matthew 6:33 (NLT), he challenges us to “seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” When we trust Jesus to provide, we can be generous and find joy in giving to others. Helping children develop a heart of gratitude is the best cure for a sense of entitlement. Gratitude moves the focus off ourselves so we can consider other people’s needs and act generously in response. Start by talking with your children about sharing. Then discuss why God wants us to be generous—and how sharing our blessings with others becomes a blessing for them. Try these ideas to nurture generosity and a giving spirit this Christmas.

Hearts for Jesus Make a big stocking with the name “Jesus” in glitter. Let children make felt or paper hearts with their names on them and give their “hearts” to Jesus. (After all, that’s what he wants the most at Christmas!)

12 Days of Serving As a family, come up with 12 acts of service you can perform together during December. For example, shovel snow for a neighbor, donate extra blankets to a homeless shelter, and deliver cookies and hot cocoa to homebound senior citizens.

Try Tithing When children receive money for Christmas, have them use 10 percent to help someone else, whether they donate it or buy a small gift. Together, keep a journal detailing how children use that 10 percent—and see how the blessings add up!

Adopt a Family Purchase gifts and a holiday meal for a family in need. Then deliver everything on (or right before) Christmas Eve. You can do this anonymously.

All-Night Anticipation Curl up in sleeping bags beneath your tree on Christmas Eve. Before going to sleep, talk about what Mary and Joseph experienced on the journey to

Bethlehem and in the stable. Before opening gifts in the morning, emphasize that Jesus is the first—and best—Christmas gift.

Baby Blessings Older kids can throw a baby shower (complete with birth announcements!) for Jesus and then donate items to a local crisis-pregnancy center.

Anonymous Angels On Christmas morning, have family members draw names. During each of the next 12 days, angels should anonymously do something special for their person (do a chore, leave a note or drawing, make a treat, etc.). On January 6 (Epiphany), have an Angel Party and reveal your identities. Serve angel food cake and discuss what it was like to bless others—and to be blessed by others.

Bearing Gifts Fill lunch sacks with small treats and tape them shut. Read aloud Matthew 2:1-12 and say: “After Jesus was born, wise men traveled a long way to bring him gifts. Let’s pretend to be wise men and camels!” Take turns being wise men who guide camels on all fours—carrying a sack on their back. Then talk about what gifts the wise men gave Jesus and what gifts we can give him.

“Store your treasures in heaven ...

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

—Matthew 6:20-21

MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIE

Title: *The Star*

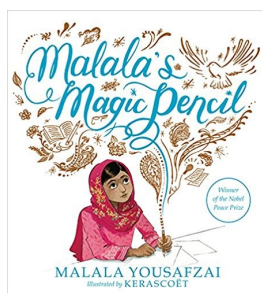
Genre: Animation, Adventure, Comedy

Rating: PG

Cast: Tyler Perry, Oprah Winfrey, Kristin Chenoweth, Zachary Levi

Synopsis: A brave donkey yearning for adventure teams up with some eccentric stable animals. When the new friends follow a star, they become unlikely heroes of the first Christmas.

Our Take: This major Sony Pictures release includes lots of big-name talent, including a title song by Mariah Carey. Based on the trailer, the movie seems to offer more comedy and animated antics than religious insight. It is refreshing, though, to have a holiday release that actually focuses on the reason for the season—Jesus.



BOOK

Title: *Malala's Magic Pencil*

Author: Malala Yousafzai

Synopsis: The 20-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner, who advocates for human rights and education, offers inspiration in this new picture book. While sharing her vision for equality and opportunity, she encourages young readers to change the world.

Our Take: Despite Malala's experience surviving an attempted murder, this book remains age-appropriate for kids ages 4 to 8. There's a suggestion of danger and hardship, but Malala's message about educational ideals and the goodness of people is positive. Older kids may wonder what the author endured, and the book may provide a great opportunity to discuss the basics of Christian faith versus other faiths.



CULTURE & TRENDS

An Eye-Opener Spending more time playing outdoors has a protective effect on children's eyesight, say researchers. Lots of exposure to outdoor light may also reduce kids' chances of needing glasses for nearsightedness. (cnn.com)

Moods Are Catchy Children whose friends deal with bad moods are more likely to report being in bad moods themselves, according to a new study. The opposite is true for children whose friends are generally happy. (time.com)

QUICK STATS

"Spoiled" Alert! 46% of parents say they've gone into debt buying something their children want. (cnbc.com)

Tipping the Scales The number of obese children and teens worldwide now tops 124 million. That's more than 10 times the number from four decades ago. ([The Lancet](http://TheLancet))

Pardon Me About half of parents say they're interrupted by their smartphones at least three times a day while talking with their kids. These interruptions contribute to negative behavior among children, research reveals. (telegraph.co.uk)

Games, Sites & Apps

Anaxi

In this lighthearted card game, which won a "best family fun" award, players make creative connections between words. The goal is to brainstorm people, places, and things that have qualities in common. Answers can be challenged. For ages 8 and up.

AutismHwy.com

This site, launched by the mother of an autistic boy, features fun games for children who are on the autism spectrum. It's also filled with lots of helpful information for parents, including a blog, articles, resources, events, and specialists. Users must create an account to access site material.

Leela Kids

This free educational app for kids ages 3 to 15 curates podcast content based on topics and age groups. Topics range from science and space to music and animals. Kids and parents can rate and share any episode or story. Parents can hide certain age categories as desired.

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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.

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Tween First Friday Fun 6-8 pm in FH – Making candy	2
3 1st Sunday of Advent <u>Festival & Alternative Market 9:30 – 11 & after worship</u> Worship 8:30 & 11:00	4 Mom's Mtg 9:30-12:00 in 204 nursery CHEB rms. 307-309	5	6 WAM 4:15-5:15 chimes 4:45-5:30 choirs 5:30 dinner FH ELP Night Tree	7	8	9 <u>Women's Brunch 10-11 pm FH</u> Parent Night Out 4-8 pm childcare reservations to sduncan@wcpc-tx.org
10 2nd Sunday of Advent Worship 8:30 & 11:00 Sun Sch. 9:45 Caroling 3-5 pm courtyard	11 Mission Monday 9:30-12:30 nursery CHEB rms. 307-309 ELP Staff Party 12-2:30 pm	12 ELP Live Nativity Dec 12, 13 & 14	13 WAM 4:15-5:15 chimes 4:45-5:30 choirs 5:30 dinner FH by Under 18 Team, Breakfast for Dinner	14 Woodlands Concert Band 7 pm	15 Parent of Preschoolers Fellowship 6:30-9 pm	16 Woodlands Chorale Concert 7 pm
17 3rd Sunday of Advent Sunday Sch. 9:45 Worship 8:30 & 11:00 All Choirs Music Program 6:30 & Dinner 5 pm	18 Mom's Book Study 9:30-11:30 am ?	19	20 No WAM ELP Last Day CISD Half Day	21 First Day of Winter 	22 Children's Team set up risers, stable & costumes in FH	23
24 4th Sunday of Advent Worship 8:30 & 11 am Children's Sun Sch. & Pageant Rehearsal 9:45 am	25  Christmas Day Church Office closed for Christmas Holiday	26	27	28	29	30
31 1st Sunday after Christmas Worship 8:30 & 11 am Children's SS combined 9:45 am			<h2>Christmas Worship Schedule</h2> <p>Sunday, Dec 24th (Christmas Eve)</p> <p>8:30 & 11 am 4th Sunday of Advent Worship</p> <p>9:45 am Sunday School & Children Christmas Pageant Rehearsal</p> <p>5 pm Family Service with candle lighting</p> <p>7 pm Service of Carols with candle lighting, communion</p> <p>Sunday, Dec. 31st</p> <p>8:30 & 11:00 am Worship</p> <p>9:45 am Combined Children's Sunday School</p> 			



Children's Sunday School 9:45-10:50 beginning and pick up in CE building rooms 204, 106 and 101. 5th and 6th grade SS classroom in 205. Childcare for worship and under 3 Sunday school in Charles Hendricks Ed. Building rooms 307-309.



"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING!"

All Church Fellowship December 10th Caroling

Everyone is invited to gather in the WCPC courtyard to spread some Christmas cheer with our neighbors at the Forum on **Sunday December 10th from 3-5 pm**. We will form groups here at church and walk over to Regent Care and the Forum caroling in the hallways as we search for our member's apartments to sing a special song for each of them. Children, youth, tweens and adults, single or in groups all are welcome to join us and no special music talent is necessary either! Jingle bells and the combination of lots of voices makes it beautiful! Please dress warmly for outside walking between the buildings. We will have song sheets and building maps for each group. We will return to the Fellowship Hall Welcome Center for hot chocolate and cookies!



Epiphany Ice Skating Party!

Join us on **January 7th** for Ice Skating from **3-5 pm** at Woodlands Town Center Rink. It is located at **2005 Lake Robbins Drive**, The Woodlands, 77380, near the north gate entry of **The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion** and the intersection of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines Drive. Bring \$5 for children 5 and under, everyone else is \$10.50 for admission including skate rental (scholarship funds are always available!) Children's Ministry will provide water and snacks and rent a table for home base. Helmets and walkers are available to rent for a fee or you can bring your own helmet and safety pads; wear layers, bring socks and expect to get wet and have fun!



DECEMBER

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School
Rotation Bible Topic this month:
Advent & Christmas

Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-12; Luke 2:26-58;
2:1-20



December 24th During Sunday School at 9:45 the children will rehearse for the 5 pm Family Christmas Eve Service. Every child is invited to participate in the retelling of the Christmas story on Christmas Eve at 5 pm!



The Children's Sunday School offering goes Heifer International. Children and Tweens will sell items to support these at the Alternative



Market on Dec 3rd during the Sunday school hour. The 3rd & 4th grade working on their Soup Jar's in Sunday school is pictured below.



No Children's Worship
Class in December
so families can enjoy
the special time of



Advent Worship together!

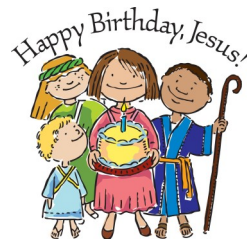
Dec 3rd Children meet in Fellowship Hall for the Advent Festival, during Sunday school time.

Dec 17th Worship4Kids (3rd-5th graders) is after the children's message 11 am service only.



Parent Night Out December 9th 4-8 p.m.

Join us for **Christmas Fun** from **4-8 pm** on **Saturday Dec. 9th** in the Hendricks Building nursery rooms 307-309. We are extending the time this month to allow for some shopping. Bring the kids in their pajamas! We will be serving pizza and a healthy side for dinner. *You may also bring a sack lunch for any non-pizza eaters.* We will explore the true meaning of Christmas while we make Christmas crafts, play holiday games, decorate cupcakes and sing songs. Meanwhile, you can shop and have dinner in peace! We will finish by watching selections from **A Muppet Christmas Carol!**



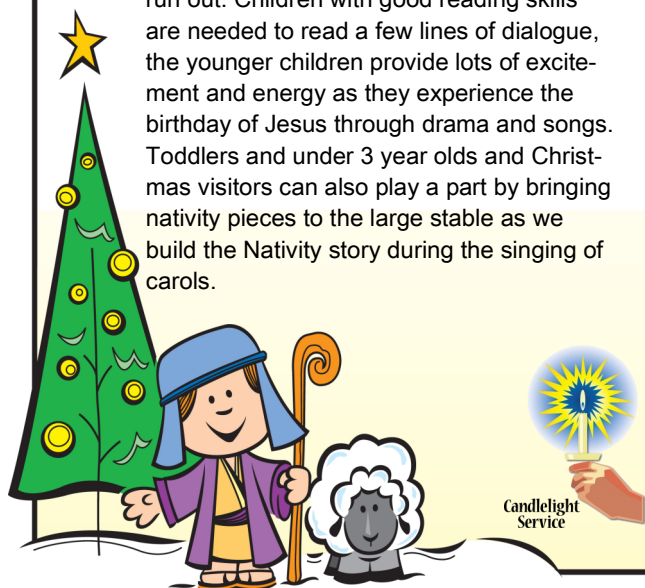
Children's Ministry Mission Statement: To nurture all to experience the unique joy of being a "child" of God.

... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign to your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates.
Deuteronomy 6:4-8

Children's Ministry Continued

SIGN UP FOR 5 PM CHRISTMAS EVE!

Signup sheets are available in Sunday school if your child is interested in being a part of the Christmas Eve retelling of the Nativity Story. Some of the parts will be picked by a drawing, but there are lots of others left. We try to accommodate every child and will make more costumes if we run out. Children with good reading skills are needed to read a few lines of dialogue, the younger children provide lots of excitement and energy as they experience the birthday of Jesus through drama and songs. Toddlers and under 3 year olds and Christmas visitors can also play a part by bringing nativity pieces to the large stable as we build the Nativity story during the singing of carols.



Preparing for Christmas

Godly Play classes on Sundays will be hearing about the beginning of the church year, called Advent. They will light the purple, rose and white candles as they journey to Bethlehem with the prophets, shepherds, Mary and Joseph and the Magi.

The Beginning of the Church Year



Advent



Advent Festival & Alternative Market

December 3rd

An Intergenerational event for entire church family!

Join us in the Fellowship Hall during Sunday school and after 2nd worship on Dec. 3rd for shopping and crafts. We will have supplies to make ornaments & clay pot nativity figures. Advent devotional books will also be available along with taper candles to refresh our Advent wreaths. Children's classes will be offering Merry Minestrone Soup Jars and Peppermint Bark to benefit Heifer International the children's offering this year. Other mission teams will offer gifts ideas that also give back to some of the missions of our church.



Nursery News

Preschool children's nurseries will be making lots of Christmas crafts this month to prepare for Jesus' Birthday.



Filling jars for the 3rd & 4th grade Soup Jar sale at Alternative Market.



Tweens last month at First Friday Fun at Game Stop.