

Why Did God Make Parents?

Theme:

God gave us
parents to love
and watch over
us.

Bible Reference:

Ephesians 6:1-3

Simple Supplies:

You'll need a Bible

Today we're going to talk about parents. To understand why God gave us parents, let's play a game. *Have the children form two equal groups, the Parents and the Children. Then have the two groups stand back-to-back. Tell kids to stay standing back-to-back and not to look behind them.*

Stand in front of the Parents. OK Parents, look at me and do what I do. *Show Parents how to make a large imaginary stitch several times, and lead them in the action.* Great! Children, now do the same action. What's the matter? Why can't you do the same motion the Parents just did? That's right! You need someone to show you what to do. You need a model!

Parents, stand in front of the Children. Now show them the action. Now let's do the action together. Congratulations! Shake hands with the person in front of you, then sit down.

It was an easy action to follow, once someone showed you how to do it. That's one of the reasons God gave parents to children—to show them how to do things. *Open your Bible to Ephesians 6:1-3.* Listen to the plan for families that God gives us in Ephesians 6:1-3. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'"

Honoring our fathers and mothers by doing what they teach us helps us to learn about God. What have your parents taught you about God?

What can you do to honor your parents? **OBEY THEM!**

Now let's pray to our heavenly **Father**. Dear God, thank you for giving us parents to show us how to live. Help us to honor them by obeying them, just as you planned. In Jesus' name, amen. ♥

THE BOSS' BOSS~RESPECT

"Someone's always bossing me around," grumbled Tim. "My school teacher said I had to stay in at recess and finish my work. Dad told me to clean the garage. Mom says I have to make my bed every day. My Sunday school teacher says I should learn my Bible verse."

"That's quite a list of bosses," observed Grandpa Hill.

"Yeah . . . and Pastor Green says I have to obey all of them!" added Tim.

"And so you do," Grandpa agreed, "because that's what the Bible says, too."

"Well, I'll be glad when I grow up," said Tim with a sigh. "Then I'll be my own boss."

Grandpa chuckled. "That's just what I thought when I was ten or so, but now I have more bosses than ever."

"You do?" asked Tim. "Who's your boss?"

"Well, first of all, there's God," said Grandpa. "Second, your pastor is my pastor, too. And then . . ."

"But does Pastor Green tell you what to do?" asked Tim in surprise..

"He certainly does!" said Grandpa. "Oh, he doesn't say, 'Sweep the floor.' Or, 'Pay your tithes.' Or, 'Visit the nursing home.' But lots of times he preaches sermons that tell me I need to do those kinds of things. God placed him in the church to lead me."

"Who else tells you what to do?" Tim asked.

"My employer gives me orders at work," said Grandpa. "The city council tells me if I can build a new house and if I can keep chickens. The police tell me where I can park my car." He smiled. "I think I have as many bosses as you do."

"I guess you're right," said Tim. He sighed. "You sure take the fun out of growing up."

"Homer!" called Grandma. "Please come and take out this trash."

Grandpa stood up. "Coming, Sarah." He grinned at Tim as he spoke. "Even your grandmother tells me what to do," he joked.

Tim laughed. "Right," he said, "but I know you both well enough to know that neither of you is bossy!"

HOW ABOUT YOU? Do you get tired of being bossed around? You probably do-but remember . . . it's God who has placed people in authority over you. You will never be

sorry for being obedient. In fact, you will be blessed because you'll be doing what God says you should do.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE: (Hebrews 13:17)

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority."

THE WAY YOU SOUND ~ LOVING OTHERS

Jacelyn ran into the living room and flung herself onto the couch, sobbing. "Nobody, absolutely nobody, will do anything I want to do," she wailed.

Mom followed her into the room. "Jacelyn, I know you've been unhappy all day," she said. "Why don't you record on a cassette tape all the things that made you unhappy. I'll be back as soon as I get my cookies out of the oven, and we'll listen to it." Sniffing, Jacelyn agreed, and she went to get the equipment.

Before long, Mom and Jacelyn were listening to the recording Jacelyn had made. "Well, I wanted Mitch to go for a bike ride," came her voice from the tape, "but he wanted to shoot baskets. I told him I wouldn't. I wanted Amy to go with me instead. She said no and asked me to roller blade with her, but I didn't want to. Eva came over and I wanted to play jacks, but she wanted to play hopscotch, so I told her to find somebody else to play with. I wanted Sid to play, but he got bossy with me. I wanted Ellen to come out and play jacks, but she wanted to help Mom bake cookies, and I didn't. Then I wanted to go out, and Mom made me clean my room. When I did go out, I wanted . . ." Click! Jacelyn stopped the tape. "Oh, Mom, this sounds awful," she cried.

"Yes, it does," agreed Mom, "but this is the way you sounded to others. It's also the way you sounded to God. You weren't trying to please anybody except yourself this morning. You mentioned a lot of things you wanted, but the other kids wanted to have fun, too. You didn't show them a good time or try to please them, and you didn't have a good time, either, did you?"

"No, I didn't! I guess I wasn't very nice," confessed Jacelyn. "I . . . I'm going to do better-honest!"

Mom smiled. "You'll need God's help, honey," she said.

"Confess your need, and then ask God each day to keep you from being selfish."

She gave Jacelyn a hug as she added, "When you start to say something selfish, think of how it will sound to others, and with God's help, don't say it.

Instead, think of what the other person would want. You'll be happier when you're willing to put others ahead of yourself."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Is "I want" too much a part of your vocabulary? Would a recording of what you say show that you are selfish and always want your own way? A selfish person is not generally a happy person. Each day ask Jesus to help you put others ahead of yourself.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE: (Philippians 2:3)

In humility consider others better than yourselves.

Giving and Receiving

Trent wanted some extra money for a new baseball. He wrote his mom a note and put it on her plate at supper-time. It said:

Mother owes Trent:	
For helping around the house	\$1.50
For making his bed	\$1.00
For picking up his clothes	\$1.00
For loading the dishwasher	\$2.00
For practicing piano	\$2.00
Total	\$7.50

At breakfast the next morning Trent found \$10 on his plate. There was also a note that said:

Trent owes Mom:	
For three good meals a day	Nothing
For washing his clothes	Nothing
For taking care of him when sick	Nothing
For a good home and lots of love	Nothing
For teaching him	Nothing
Total	Nothing

How do you think Trent felt when he read his mother's note? He probably was ashamed of what he had written. The Bible says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This means that it's better to give than to get. Giving makes us happier than getting.

Did you ever notice how unhappy people are who always get everything and never learn to give? People who share what they have and try to help others are happy people. Jesus came to give everyone His love and help. He even gave His life to save us all. That's why He is such a wonderful Savior. We show Jesus how thankful we are for His good gifts when we give to others instead of just getting.

Let's talk: How did Trent try to get some extra money? What was his mother giving Trent for nothing? What does the Bible verse say about giving? Which people are happier—those who give or those who receive? What did Jesus give to all people when He died on the cross? Why does giving make us happy?

Older children and adults may read: Acts 20:32-38

Let's pray: Dear heavenly Father, we're glad that You have given us Jesus as our Savior. Help us to be happy by giving instead of only trying to get things. For Jesus' sake we ask this. Amen.

THE WHOLE CLOCK~TEAMWORK

"Is this a clock you've already fixed?" asked Kyle, pointing at a large clock standing on the counter. He always enjoyed visiting Uncle Ramon's shop-especially when his uncle was repairing clocks. "This one seems to be ticking all right."

Kyle's uncle laughed pleasantly. "Yes," he agreed, "it's ticking all right, but that's all it's doing."

Kyle looked at the clock more closely. "Oh-it doesn't have any hands on it," he remarked, feeling embarrassed at not having noticed that.

"That's right." Uncle Ramon nodded. "So even though the clock is ticking, it isn't doing its job-it isn't giving the correct time, is it?"

Kyle shook his head. "Not without the hands it isn't."

"I use my clocks as illustrations when I teach Sunday school," Uncle Ramon told Kyle. "The inside of a clock is made up of all kinds of different parts, and each one is needed. But you can have all of those parts clean and running good, and the clock still doesn't give you the time. Or you can pick up the hands or face of the clock and look at them closely, but you won't learn the time of day that way, either."

"Get all the parts of a clock working together, and you've got it made, right?" asked Kyle. He frowned. "What does that have to do with Sunday school?"

Uncle Ramon smiled. "The clocks show that it takes a lot of different pieces working together to get the job done. That's the way it is in the Lord's work, too," explained Uncle Ramon. "Sometimes kids-or adults-think they're the important ones in a project. They seem to think they can handle things by themselves. But pastors, Sunday school teachers, musicians, nursery workers, janitors-all are important. To do the best job and accomplish the most, all those working on a project need to work together as each one depends on the Lord."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you sometimes try to be the "whole clock" in your youth group or Sunday school class? Or do you go to the opposite extreme and decide that your small part is not important? Remember, it takes many parts to complete the job. Do your part faithfully and allow each other member of the group to do his. Work together for the Lord.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE:

"You are the body of Christ, and members individually." 1 Corinthians 12:27

OUT OF CONTROL

Mom! yelled Joel as he ran up on the porch. "Mrs. Ward left Dylan in the car when she went back into the house. He must have put it into gear!" Mom looked out and saw a neighbor's car careening out of control down the street. "Look at it go!" gasped Joel breathlessly.

"Oh, Lord," prayed Mom, "please stop it before it gets to the intersection." They watched as the car turned sharply, veered onto the curb, and ran into a tree. Mom grabbed her cell phone so she could call for help, and she and Joel quickly ran to the car. They found the little boy frightened, but not hurt.

When the excitement was over, Joel and Mom returned to the house. "I see that you didn't take the trash out this morning, Joel," said Mom. "Please take care of it." Joel shrugged and didn't move. "Right now!" said Mom. Joel frowned and angrily threw down a sports magazine. He grabbed the wastebasket and stomped out of the room, slamming the door behind him. "Come back here!" ordered Mom. Joel returned to the kitchen and stood scowling at his mother. "You go back out that door and close it quietly!" said Mom sternly. The scowl on Joel's face deepened. He glared at his mother when her back was turned, but he did as he was told.

When Joel returned to the kitchen, he picked up a newspaper. "Look at this article," he said. "It says this guy shot his neighbor in a fit of anger over a dog! That was a stupid thing to do."

"Yes, it was," agreed Mom. "Most fits of anger are stupid and dangerous." She looked at Joel thoughtfully. "An uncontrolled temper is like a car out of control," she added. "That man's problem may have started when he was a boy who slammed doors and threw temper tantrums."

Joel frowned. "Just because someone slams a door doesn't mean he's going to be a murderer," he objected.

"Just because a car careens down a street out of control doesn't mean it will kill anyone, either, but it could," replied Mom. "It's a dangerous situation. We need God's help and power for self control. Are you willing to let God help you?"

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you have a problem with your temper? Do you get angry quickly and talk back, scowl, or throw things? If so, you are being very foolish. When you feel angry, talk to

someone about why you are angry, and seek God's help. Ask Him to help you develop more patience.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE: (Proverbs 14:17)
A quick-tempered man does foolish things.

THE OLD TIN CAN

Dena slammed the door. "I don't care if I never talk to Ginny again," she stormed. "She invited me over and then forgot I was coming and went to the mall."

"Look!" Danielle pointed to a tin can at the curb. "Somebody is a litterbug."

"Yeah," agreed Scott. "Let's kick that old can all the way home and then dump it." As he drew back his foot to give it a kick, he noticed something sticking out of the end of the can. "What's in here?" he wondered as he picked it up. He pulled the contents out of the can. "Money! There's money in here!" Sure enough-the can was stuffed full of money!

That evening, Scott and Danielle eagerly discussed all the things they could do with the money they had found. "Hold on!" said Dad. "I'm sure someone will claim this money. It has to be returned, you know."

Danielle and Scott looked at one another in dismay. They had been afraid Dad would say that! "Let's pray about it," suggested Scott hopefully. "Maybe the Lord will show us that we should keep it. After all, why would He let us find it if He didn't want us to have it?" They could see from the look on Dad's face that he didn't think much of the idea.

The newspaper that evening had an article about an old hermit who claimed to have lost a tin can containing his life savings. According to the article, people who knew him didn't believe his story. They thought he should be placed in a state home for the elderly.

Danielle and Scott looked at each other sadly-they knew the owner of the money had been found. Scott had an idea. "Dad, this must be the answer to our prayers!" he exclaimed. "That crazy old man is almost ready to die-he doesn't need this money. We'd use it for good things and put a lot of it in the church offering."

Dad shook his head. "Look what that money is already doing to you," he said. "I've never heard you talk so selfishly and so heartlessly. You're Christians-and if a Christian is anything at all, he should be honest."

Danielle and Scott looked at each other. "Yeah, I guess so," said Scott.

"I know we'd never be comfortable keeping it anyway," added Danielle. When Scott nodded in agreement, Dad smiled.

HOW ABOUT YOU? When you find something that isn't yours-perhaps a pencil, a piece of candy, or money that someone dropped on the floor-do you try to find the owner? God wants His children to be honest, and He rewards those who do the right thing.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE: (Romans 12:17) Be careful to do what is right in the sight of everybody.

A MUCH NEEDED PUSH ~ HELPING OTHERS

Lucy and Nick helped their dad load groceries into the car. "I hope it stops snowing soon," said Nick as he closed the trunk. Hearing the sound of spinning tires, he looked around to see who was stuck. He saw that a car a few rows over was having trouble moving.

"Let's give that driver a hand," said Dad, and the three of them walked across the snow-covered parking lot to a gray car. The elderly driver rolled down the window. "I don't think you're stuck too bad," said Dad. "We'll give you a push." As the man stepped on the gas, the others pushed. The car moved slowly ahead, and the driver was gratefully on his way.

"You know what our Sunday school teacher said a few weeks ago?" asked Nick as they walked back to their car.

"How would we know what your teacher said?" teased Lucy. "Do you think we're mind readers?"

Nick ignored her. "My teacher said that sometimes people get stuck in life and just spin their wheels."

Dad nodded. "I guess we all have times when we need a little push in the right direction," he said as they started for home. "Can you think of some practical ways we might give that kind of help to someone? Besides giving them a shove when they're stuck in the snow, that is?"

No one spoke for a few minutes. Then Lucy had a suggestion. "I know," she said. "Nick gave me a push when he helped me with my homework the other day."

"Good," said Dad, "and you gave me a push when you told me your friend's parents enjoyed my Sunday school class. I was getting a little discouraged about my teaching."

As they turned into their driveway, Nick had one more idea. "I guess Mom gave me and Lucy a push when she made us take a time out from fighting yesterday," he admitted.

Dad smiled. "I think you're right," he said.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Can you "give someone a push"? Can you give a little help or a word of encouragement to someone who seems to be "spinning his wheels"? God is pleased when you encourage and help others.

TODAY'S KEY VERSE: (1 Thess. 5:11)

Encourage one another and build each other up.

How Do I Know That God Forgives Me?

Theme:
God sent Jesus to die for our sins, so we're forgiven.

Bible Reference:
Ephesians 1:7

Simple Supplies:
You'll need a Bible.

Today we're going to talk a little about forgiveness. Have you ever done something that you needed to be forgiven for? The Bible tells us that when we're sorry for something wrong we've done, we can ask God to forgive us. And when we do, God forgives us!

But some people have a hard time believing that God really forgives them. They may feel so bad about what they've done, that they can't believe that God will actually forgive them.

How can we be sure that God forgives us? To find out the answer, I have a project for you all to do. I want you to find someone in the congregation whose birthday is in the same month as yours. So if your birthday is in January, you'll need to find one person who has a birthday in January. When you find a person, ask his or her name, then come back here.

Send children out into the congregation. Encourage adults in the congregation to help children by calling out their birth months or helping the younger children on their searches. After several minutes, call all the children back, whether they've found someone or not.

Who found someone with a birthday in the same month as yours? Who did you find? *Let several children tell who they met.* How do you know the person you met has a birthday in the same month as you? *Let children answer.*

The only way you could know is because that person told you so. It's the same way with God. How do we know that God forgives us? Because the Bible tells us so! *Open your Bible to Ephesians 1:7.*

Listen while I read Ephesians 1:7: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." We know that God forgives us because the Bible tells us so. God sent Jesus to die for our sins. That means we're forgiven! What wonderful news!

Let's close with a prayer. ♥ Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to die for our sins so we can be forgiven. In Jesus' name, amen. ♥