THE PARENTING TABLE · JESUS & PARENTING

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Follow Jesus first. Then invite your children to walk with you.

Fourteen guided sessions alongside Jesus & Parenting. Walk through it on your own, with your spouse, or alongside other parents. Each person keeps their own copy.

New here? Choose one session. Read its Scripture and teaching together; take turns with the questions. Each person writes one small thing they will try and when. Pray and agree when to meet again. Next time, return to that written step: what did I try, and how did it go? At your first meeting, skip this check-in. If a step is untried, begin again without a score. Each person keeps their own notes and chooses what to share.

Abide. Become. Be Sent.

A free discipleship resource from MSSNL.
For individual parents, couples, mentors, and small groups.
mssnl.org/table/parenting

Begin with grace, not a score.

This is discipleship, not a test of your parenting.

1. **Read:** prepare with the chapter and Scripture in context.
2. **Reflect:** look at your own heart first; write only about yourself.
3. **Practice:** choose one small action you can take, not a plan to change your child.
4. **Pray:** ask Jesus for grace to live what you have learned.

On your own or with your spouse: allow 40 to 60 minutes. Read and write by yourself first. For a group: meet for 60 to 90 minutes. Everyone can pass.

Each person owns their reflections. Online notes belong only to the signed-in account; nothing is shared automatically with your spouse, mentor, or group. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose. Store printed notes securely. Never collect or circulate anyone's private worksheets.

> **Children's safety comes first**
>
> Follow Jesus with patience, kindness, and care for the children entrusted to you. This is a discipleship resource, not counseling, therapy, or legal advice. Share only what you choose, and respect each family's privacy. If you are concerned about a child's safety or well-being, seek help promptly from a qualified professional. In an emergency, contact local emergency services.

One small step between sessions.

Learn it. Try it. Talk about it next time.

Your next step is one small way you will put this session's teaching into practice before you meet again. Choose something you can do yourself. Write what you will try and when in the My next step box.

> Example: Before our next session, I will put my phone away and listen for five minutes on three evenings.

1. Choose: use the session's suggested practice to pick one small thing you can do. You may adapt it or pass.
2. Write: in the My next step box, say what you will try and when. Be specific, such as on three evenings before our next session.
3. Try: practice it in everyday life between sessions. Notice what you are learning about following Jesus as a parent.
4. Last time: at the next session, read that same note and reflect on how it went. Share only if you wish.
5. Continue: keep the step, make it smaller, or choose a new step after today's discussion. End with prayer.

If you did not choose a step, missed a meeting, or did not try it, say not yet or pass. You can try it again, make it smaller, or choose a different step. There is no score and no catch-up test.

Your first session: At your first meeting, there is no earlier step to discuss. Begin with what you hope to learn. You will choose your first step before you finish.

Your session guide.

Go at a pace that leaves room to practice. Read the book alongside this workbook. The following page numbers lead to each session's teaching.

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Free book, audiobook, and EPUB: mssnl.org/jesus-and-parenting

Introduction: Entrusted

Prepare: Read the Introduction, Entrusted.

Listen to Scripture

Psalm 127:3 calls children a heritage from the Lord. Genesis 1:27 says God made people in his own image, so a child has worth before they do anything. Mark 10:14 records Jesus saying, let the children come to me and do not hinder them. Mark 10 also says he took the children in his arms and blessed them.

The teaching

A child changes the shape of a life. Children depend on others for food, shelter, protection, direction, comfort, and truth. The book says our children have been entrusted to us. A heritage is something we receive. It has value before we add anything to it. Your child bears the image of God before they earn a grade, win a game, or do anything the world can measure. Jesus welcomed children when his own disciples tried to push them away. He made room for them and gave them his attention. That picture sits at the heart of Christian parenting. We also have limits. We cannot become Jesus for our children. We cannot force faith into their hearts or promise every choice will be wise. So we teach, correct, protect, and pray with open hands. Faithful parenting begins with following Jesus, and then inviting our children to walk with us. Entrusted never means owned. A child is a person to protect and love, never a person to control, hurt, or use.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Introduction: Entrusted

First session: At your first meeting, there is no earlier step to discuss. Begin with what you hope to learn. You will choose your first step before you finish.

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What do I feel when I think that my child was entrusted to me? Is it joy, weight, fear, or something else?
2. Where do I treat my child's worth as something they have to earn?
3. Where am I hoping to control the outcome instead of being faithful today?
4. What would make this a safe and honest place for me to learn as a parent?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Before you read any further, write one sentence that begins, I am thankful that God gave me a child who... Say a short prayer of thanks over it. Then name one way you want to follow Jesus more closely as a parent.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you for welcoming children. Help me to receive my child as a gift, to tell the truth, and to follow you first. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 1: Live It Before You Lead It

Prepare: Read Chapter 1, Live It Before You Lead It.

Listen to Scripture

Luke 6:40 says a student who is fully trained will be like their teacher. 1 Corinthians 11:1 says, be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. Luke 6:45 says the mouth speaks from the fullness of the heart. Psalm 139:14 says we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Ephesians 4:29 calls us to speak words that build up and give grace.

The teaching

Children learn long before they know they are learning. They watch how we talk about our bodies, our work, our spouse, and other people. They watch how we handle stress and what we do when we are wrong. The book says parents do not need to be perfect. When a parent fails, the best thing to do is come back and say, I was wrong, I should not have spoken that way, will you forgive me? An apology matters, but it does not erase a harmful pattern. A parent who keeps losing control of their anger needs wise help, new habits, and support from others. Words matter too. Sarcasm, constant criticism, and public embarrassment teach children that people are not safe. Gratitude for how God made us teaches something better. The book's call is simple: live what you want to multiply, and let your children watch you follow Jesus.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 1: Live It Before You Lead It

Last time: Last session was: Introduction: Entrusted. Open the My next step box on page 6, from session 1. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What is one thing my child sees me do that I hope they copy? What is one thing I hope they do not copy?
2. What do I say about my own body, my work, or my mistakes when my child can hear me?
3. When did I last say, I was wrong, to my child? What got in the way?
4. Is there a pattern in my anger or my words that I need help with from a pastor, friend, or counselor?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

This week, notice one moment when you could model honesty, patience, or kindness on purpose. If you speak harshly, go back later and say a short, honest sorry. If a pattern keeps happening, tell a trusted adult or professional that you want help.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Father, make my life a safe place for my child to learn. Forgive my failures, change my words, and help me follow Jesus in plain sight. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 2: Children Are Received

Prepare: Read Chapter 2, Children Are Received.

Listen to Scripture

Psalm 139:13 says God formed us in the womb. Psalm 24:1 says the earth and everyone in it belong to the Lord. 1 Samuel 1:27 records Hannah saying the Lord gave her what she asked for. Luke 2:52 says Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature. Luke 16:10 says whoever is faithful in a little will be faithful in much. Mark 8:36 asks what it profits a person to gain the whole world and lose their soul.

The teaching

A child is known by God before a parent fully knows that child. So parenting is stewardship. A steward cares well for something that belongs to someone else. Children belong first to God. Hannah is the picture: she received Samuel with thanks and gave him back to the Lord. Possessive parents begin to treat a child's choices as a report card on themselves. That puts a heavy and unfair weight on the child. Children are not blank pages. Each one comes with a different personality, strengths, and struggles, so parents learn each child with careful attention. A child can lie without becoming a liar for life. Labels like difficult or lazy can stick. Children also grow in stages. A four-year-old and a fourteen-year-old need different kinds of instruction. Parents begin with outside rules and slowly help a child build inside responsibility. Control can feel safer, but control alone does not make a faithful heart. Let children do small things for themselves. Measure success by character, not just grades and trophies. And keep open hands about your hopes for them.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 2: Children Are Received

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 1: Live It Before You Lead It. Open the My next step box on page 8, from session 2. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What are three things I have noticed about how God made my child? What are they like when they are at their best?
2. Is there a label I use about my child that I need to drop? What would I say instead?
3. Where do I do things for my child that they could start learning to do for themselves?
4. What hope do I have for my child that I may be holding too tightly?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Pick one small job your child can learn to do for themselves, and teach it step by step with patience. Also write down one strength you see in your child and tell them about it this week in a specific way.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, this child is yours. Help me to see who you made them to be, to be faithful with today, and to hold my hopes with open hands. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 3: The Way of Honor

Prepare: Read Chapter 3, The Way of Honor.

Listen to Scripture

Exodus 20:12 says, honor your father and your mother. Ephesians 6:2 repeats it and calls it the first commandment with a promise. Proverbs 15:33 links the fear of the Lord with humility and honor. James 1:19 says to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Luke 2:51 says Jesus went home with his parents and was obedient to them. Matthew 20:26 teaches that greatness in God's kingdom comes through serving.

The teaching

Honor goes deeper than obedience. Obedience is what a child does. Honor also includes the attitude and the way a child speaks. A child may say, fine, but make it clear they are not happy. Children need help to learn what an honoring answer sounds like. Disagreement is allowed. A child can say, may I tell you what I think? and say it with respect. Parents should want children who can think, ask questions, and tell the truth. The book is also very clear about safety. Honor never means a child must obey a sinful or unsafe instruction. Children should know they can tell when something is wrong. If someone hurts them, frightens them, crosses a boundary, or tells them to keep a secret about harm, they need to know that telling the truth is right and necessary. Godly authority does not fear the truth and does not need secrecy. Parents should also guess what may be under a hard response: tiredness, hurt, confusion, or fear. Correction should not begin with a wounded ego. Notice honor when you see it, and say so. Parental authority is for a season, and our goal is to prepare children to live under Jesus.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 3: The Way of Honor

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 2: Children Are Received. Open the My next step box on page 10, from session 3. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. When my child answers in a way that feels disrespectful, what do I usually feel first? What might be going on under their response?
2. How do I show my child that disagreeing respectfully is allowed in our home?
3. Does my child know for sure that they can tell me if anyone hurts or scares them? How do I know?
4. When did I last notice and name a time my child showed honor?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Say one clear sentence to your child this week: you can always tell me if something is wrong, even if someone told you to keep it a secret. Also catch your child doing something honoring and tell them exactly what you saw.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Father, teach us to honor you first. Make me an authority who is safe, humble, and truthful, and give my child a heart that listens and speaks up. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 4: Four Words That Form a Child

Prepare: Read Chapter 4, Four Words That Form a Child: obey, self-control, honor, and patience.

Listen to Scripture

Colossians 3:20 speaks of children obeying their parents. John 6:38 records Jesus saying he came to do the will of the one who sent him. Galatians 5:22-23 lists self-control in the fruit of the Spirit. Proverbs 25:28 compares a person without self-control to a city with broken walls. Ephesians 4:26 says, be angry and do not sin. Matthew 23:12 says those who humble themselves will be lifted up. Proverbs 19:11 praises slowness to anger. Romans 8:25 speaks of waiting with patience. Psalm 103:8 says the Lord is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and full of steadfast love.

The teaching

Four words deserve a place in the language of a Christian home: obey, self-control, honor, and patience. They are simple enough for a young child and wise enough to last a lifetime. Obey means responding to rightful authority and learning to trust. Children need clear expectations, loving guidance, and the freedom to tell a trusted adult when something concerns them. Self-control means learning to express strong feelings with respectful words and actions. You can say, you are angry because the game did not go your way, and still hold the line. Self-control is best taught by practicing it ourselves. A calm response helps a child learn what calm looks like. The adult carries more responsibility. Honor means doing it with a respectful heart, and a calm, short phrase like, try that again with honor, can help. Patience means learning to wait, take a turn, and overlook small offenses. These words grow slowly. Children will fail, and parents can respond with patience, hold a clear boundary, and help them try again. Good behavior alone is not the gospel. A child can look impressive and still need Jesus.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 4: Four Words That Form a Child

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 3: The Way of Honor. Open the My next step box on page 12, from session 4. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. Which of the four words is hardest in our home right now: obey, self-control, honor, or patience? Which is hardest for me?
2. What do I do when I lose my own self-control with my child? What would a better response be?
3. What expectation have I repeated many times but never made clear, calm, and simple?
4. How do I help my child feel big feelings without letting those feelings turn into harm?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Choose one of the four words. Teach it calmly at a time when nobody is upset. Practice one small example together, and notice it when your child uses it. If you lose your temper, take a short break before you say anything else.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord Jesus, you obeyed your Father with patience and love. Grow these four words in my child and in me, and make our home a safe place to learn them. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 5: Four Paths to Wisdom

Prepare: Read Chapter 5, Four Paths to Wisdom.

Listen to Scripture

Proverbs 9:10 says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 16:23 says the wise heart makes speech wise. Luke 14:28 has Jesus asking who builds a tower without first counting the cost. The chapter also draws on wisdom teaching about listening and about joy in the home.

The teaching

Every parent wants a child who can make wise choices. Wisdom starts with respect for God and grows over time through teaching, experience, correction, and example. The book names four paths. First, think before speaking, plan more, and prepare earlier. A pause can protect a relationship from words you cannot take back, and a packed backpack the night before lowers stress. Second, slow down, learn to listen, and consider others. A child learns to hear another person out before they answer. Third, learn to say no, toughen up, and act now. The book is careful here. Toughen up never means ignore pain, bury feelings, pretend you are fine, or put up with harmful treatment. It means a child can say a wise no to a harmful invitation, finish a hard task, and tell a trusted adult when something is wrong. Parents should not remove every disappointment. They must step in when safety or serious harm is involved. Fourth, loosen up and open up. A home needs play, laughter, thanks, and honest talk. Planning without room for flexibility becomes control, and strength without joy turns hard.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 5: Four Paths to Wisdom

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 4: Four Words That Form a Child. Open the My next step box on page 14, from session 5. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. Which of the four paths does my child need most help with right now? Which do I need most help with?
2. Where do I rescue my child from a small disappointment that could help them grow?
3. When would I step in right away, because of safety or harm? How do I tell the difference?
4. What does joy look like in our home? When did we last laugh together on purpose?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Choose one path to practice with your child. For example, prepare one thing the night before, practice a calm pause, or role-play saying a kind but firm no. Plan one simple fun thing for the family this week.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, give my child wisdom that starts with you. Help me teach them to pause, listen, say a wise no, and enjoy the life you give. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 6: Correction That Leads Somewhere

Prepare: Read Chapter 6, Correction That Leads Somewhere: Positive Direction and the IDEAL Response.

Listen to Scripture

Proverbs 16:21 says the wise of heart is called discerning and sweet speech increases persuasion. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says to encourage one another and build one another up. Ephesians 4:26 says, be angry and do not sin, and do not let the sun go down on your anger. John 1:14 speaks of Jesus as full of grace and truth. Ephesians 6:4 tells fathers not to provoke their children to anger.

The teaching

Every parent corrects. The question is what the correction produces. Many homes fill up with, stop that, quit it, and how many times have I told you. The book offers Positive Direction first. A parent teaches a better response (this is how we handle this), lets the child practice it, and then notices and encourages it when it shows up on an ordinary day. Encouragement is sincere and specific, not empty praise. The IDEAL Response then helps when behavior must be addressed. It stands for Immediate, Direct, Even, Actionable, and Loving. Immediate means respond while the link between action and correction is clear, but a short pause is fine when you are too upset: I need a moment first. Direct means go to the child, get their attention, and ask, what happened? Even means a steady, calm tone. Actionable means the child learns what to do next and gets to practice it. Loving means the child stays secure in the relationship. Correction may include a calm consequence or making things right. Keep your words clear, your expectations fair, and your love steady. Respect a child's need for a little space before closeness returns.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 6: Correction That Leads Somewhere

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 5: Four Paths to Wisdom. Open the My next step box on page 16, from session 6. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What do I most often say to my child when I am correcting them? What does it teach?
2. What good behavior have I stopped noticing because it is quiet? How can I name it this week?
3. Which letter of IDEAL do I most need to practice: Immediate, Direct, Even, Actionable, or Loving?
4. What do I do when I am too angry to correct well? What is my pause plan?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Pick one repeated problem. Write a short, calm sentence that shows the better response. Practice it with your child when things are calm. Then notice and encourage it once a day for a week. Make a pause plan for yourself: breathe, step away for a minute, then return.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Jesus, you are full of grace and truth. Teach me to correct without anger or shame, and to point my child toward what is good. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 7: Discipline That Ends in Restoration

Prepare: Read Chapter 7, Discipline That Ends in Restoration.

Listen to Scripture

Hebrews 12:11 says discipline seems painful at the time but later produces the fruit of righteousness. Proverbs 28:13 says whoever hides sin will not prosper, but one who confesses and turns from it will find mercy. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says to encourage one another. Ephesians 6:4 says to bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord and not to provoke them to anger. Ephesians 4:32 says to be kind and forgiving as God in Christ forgave you. 1 John 1:9 says if we confess our sins he is faithful to forgive.

The teaching

Correction should have an ending, and discipline should lead toward restoration. The book names three movements: accountability, encouragement, and forgiveness. Accountability tells the truth about what was wrong in specific words, such as, you lied about where you were. It is not the same as shame. Accountability says a choice was wrong. Shame says you are the problem. A child learns that truth is safer than hiding. Encouragement keeps hope alive. It says, I believe you can do better, and it does not pretend the wrong was fine. Forgiveness is learned by seeking it and giving it. A child can ask, will you forgive me? And parents must ask this too. Forgiveness does not always remove every consequence, and children should not be pushed to pretend that serious harm is gone. Where abuse, violence, coercion, or other serious harm is involved, protection comes first. Forgiveness never asks a child to stay in danger, hide wrongdoing, or go back to an unsafe place. Do not end the process too early, and do not drag it out. When it is finished, let the moment end. Discipline that is humiliating, painful, or cruel has no place in this book's picture of restoration.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 7: Discipline That Ends in Restoration

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 6: Correction That Leads Somewhere. Open the My next step box on page 18, from session 7. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. When my child does wrong, what do they hear from me: that the choice was wrong, or that they are the problem?
2. How do I help my child tell the truth even when they are afraid?
3. When did I last ask my child to forgive me? What would it take for me to do that?
4. What is one way I can end a hard moment with warmth and hope?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

The next time a correction is needed, follow the three steps: say clearly what was wrong, say one thing that gives hope, and offer or ask for forgiveness. Then let the moment end. If you feel you went too far, go back and make it right.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Father, you forgive us fully in Jesus. Help me to tell the truth without shame, to give hope, and to forgive as I have been forgiven. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 8: Prepare Before the Moment

Prepare: Read Chapter 8, Prepare Before the Moment, including the Five-Minute Warning.

Listen to Scripture

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells parents to keep God's words on their hearts and teach them diligently to their children. Proverbs 22:3 says the prudent see danger and hide, but the simple go on and suffer. Luke 22:31-32 records Jesus telling Peter that Satan had asked to sift him, and that Jesus had prayed for him. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says there is a time for everything.

The teaching

Some of the hardest parenting moments begin before anyone knows. A child walks into a store tired. A family arrives at a gathering with no talk of what is expected. Screen time ends suddenly. Then pressure comes, the child reacts, the parent reacts, and everyone is upset. Parents need to know how to correct, but also how to prepare. Preparation has simple steps. Talk about what is coming and what is expected. Check for understanding by asking, tell me what you need to remember when we go inside. Then make connection before action: get close, make eye contact, and give your child real attention. The Five-Minute Warning is one example. Before an activity ends, say calmly, we have five minutes before we put this away and get ready for bed. Keep your word. If five minutes keeps turning into more minutes, the warning teaches that complaining works. Not every moment allows notice, and emergencies happen. Jesus prepared his disciples for what was ahead, even for Peter's failure, and spoke hope about his future. Preparation also includes safety talks: which adults are safe, how to ask for help, and what to do when something feels wrong.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 8: Prepare Before the Moment

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 7: Discipline That Ends in Restoration. Open the My next step box on page 20, from session 8. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What is the hardest regular moment in our day? What could I talk about with my child before that moment starts?
2. What do I do to check that my child understood what I asked?
3. Do I keep my word when I give a warning? What happens when I do not?
4. Does my child know which adults are safe and what to do if something feels wrong? How could I bring that up gently?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Choose one hard daily moment, like leaving the house, bedtime, or screen time ending. Prepare ahead: talk it through, ask your child to tell you what they remember, and then use a calm Five-Minute Warning. Keep your word. Also pick a calm time to ask, who are the grown-ups you could talk to if something felt wrong?

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, you go ahead of us. Help me to prepare my child with patience and care, and keep my word so my child can trust me. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 9: Teach Them Who God Is

Prepare: Read Chapter 9, Teach Them Who God Is: six truths and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to Scripture

The chapter draws on Scripture about God's goodness, love, and word. Prayer is shown as a gift. Jesus says in John 14:6 that he is the way, the truth, and the life. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says the body of a believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139 shows God making and knowing us.

The teaching

Parents cannot give a child saving faith or produce spiritual life in them. They can teach what is true, answer questions honestly, open Scripture together, and show what it looks like to follow Jesus. The book names six truths to teach. One, God is good. Two, God loves them, and his love is shown most clearly in Jesus. Three, God made them on purpose. Four, God's Word is true. Five, God hears when his people pray. Prayer is not a way to force God to do what we want. It is how we come to him. Six, Jesus is the only way to the Father. The chapter also teaches about the Holy Spirit, who helps believers understand Scripture, resist sin, and grow. We should not tell every child automatically that the Spirit lives in them. The Spirit is for those who trust Jesus. Also, not every strong feeling is the Spirit's leading. Parents must also keep God's name separate from fear and control. A child should never be told that God is angry at them to make them behave. Because God is good and loving, a child can bring questions, fears, and failures to him.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 9: Teach Them Who God Is

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 8: Prepare Before the Moment. Open the My next step box on page 22, from session 9. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. Which of the six truths about God do I find easiest to say to my child? Which is hardest, and why?
2. How might my child be picturing God based on how I act when I am upset?
3. What honest question about God has my child asked? How did I respond?
4. What is one simple way I could pray with my child this week?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Pick one of the six truths. Say it in plain words to your child in a calm moment, with a short Bible verse or story. Pray a short, honest prayer with them, and let them speak too if they want to.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

God, you are good and you love us. Help me to show and tell my child who you are, and to trust you with what only you can do. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 10: Tell Them Who They Are

Prepare: Read Chapter 10, Tell Them Who They Are.

Listen to Scripture

Proverbs 18:21 says death and life are in the power of the tongue. Luke 6:45 says the mouth speaks from the heart. Psalm 139:14 praises God for making us wonderfully. Genesis 1:27 says God made people in his image. Proverbs 31:30 says charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. John 1:12 says to all who received Jesus he gave the right to become children of God. Colossians 3:3 says your life is hidden with Christ in God.

The teaching

Every child is learning a story about themselves. They ask without words: am I valuable, do I belong, is something wrong with me, do I have what it takes? Parents' words carry great weight. Children learn from what we say about them and about ourselves. The book roots identity in Genesis: every child bears God's image, and that dignity comes before any achievement. Children grow up surrounded by messages about appearance, so parents can speak of food as a gift, movement as something to be thankful for, and rest as care. Beauty is not evil, but it cannot carry a person's worth. A father who measures himself by income and winning can teach his son that manhood must be proven. A husband who speaks about his wife with gratitude teaches sons and daughters how people should be honored. Even good labels, like the responsible one, can become a burden. The book also keeps two truths apart: every child has dignity as someone made by God, and a child becomes a child of God through faith in Jesus. Do not blur them. Tell your child who they are in a way that is true, warm, and specific.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 10: Tell Them Who They Are

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 9: Teach Them Who God Is. Open the My next step box on page 24, from session 10. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What story about themselves might my child be learning from my words?
2. Is there a label, good or bad, that I give my child that could become a burden?
3. What do I say about my own body, success, or failures that my child could be copying?
4. What is one true and specific thing about my child that I can say out loud this week?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Choose one true thing about your child's character, not appearance or performance, and say it clearly this week, ideally at a calm time like bedtime. Also notice one thing you say about yourself and change it to something grateful and true.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, you made my child and you know them. Let my words tell them the truth about who they are to you. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 11: Prepare Them for When

Prepare: Read Chapter 11, Prepare Them for When.

Listen to Scripture

Proverbs 4:23 says to guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says God is faithful and will provide a way of escape in temptation. 1 Corinthians 6:18 urges flight from sexual immorality. Romans 12:2 says not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed. Mark 9:24 records a father saying, I believe, help my unbelief. Romans 3:23 says all have sinned and fall short. 1 John 1:7 says if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another. John 17:15 has Jesus praying for his followers to be kept from the evil one.

The teaching

There are conversations parents wish they never had to have. Children may meet pornography, sexual pressure, drugs, or a friend who asks them to lie. They may also have doubts about what they believe, or make a bad choice. Preparing them ahead of time is part of love. The book calls parents to teach honestly and in ways that fit the child's age, including God's design for sexuality, and to talk more directly as teens grow. Children should practice words for pressure, such as, no thanks, I have to go, and learn that leaving a harmful situation is wise and strong. The chapter is very clear about harm. If a child is pressured, exploited, touched inappropriately, or abused, it is never their fault, and the promise about a way of escape must never be used to blame a person who was harmed. Exposure can happen by accident, and a child must be able to tell a parent without fear of a frightening reaction. If a child thinks telling will bring humiliation, they may hide it, and secrecy lets harm continue. When a child tells you something hard, stay calm, thank them for telling you, check immediate safety, and do not demand every detail. If abuse or exploitation is disclosed, protect the child and follow reporting duties. Family image is never more important than the child. Questions and doubts can be asked honestly. It is fine to say, I do not know yet, but we can look for the answer together.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 11: Prepare Them for When

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 10: Tell Them Who They Are. Open the My next step box on page 26, from session 11. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What hard topic have I been avoiding with my child, and what is making it hard for me?
2. If my child told me something frightening or shameful tomorrow, what would my face and first words be? What do I want them to be?
3. Does my child know that if someone harms them, it is never their fault, and that I will protect them?
4. How do I respond to my child's questions and doubts about faith?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

At a calm time, tell your child in simple words: you can tell me anything, and I will not be angry that you told me. If someone hurts you, it is not your fault. Practice one short phrase they can use to leave a bad situation. Keep contact details for a qualified professional and local emergency services where you can find them.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, you are with my child where I cannot go. Give me calm and courage for hard talks, and keep my child safe. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Chapter 12: Clothe Them in the Armor of God

Prepare: Read Chapter 12, Clothe Them in the Armor of God.

Listen to Scripture

Ephesians 6:10-18 describes the armor of God. Verse 14 names the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. The chapter also draws on 2 Corinthians 5:21 for righteousness through Christ, Matthew 5:9 for peacemakers, Hebrews 11:1 for faith, and Ephesians 6:18 for prayer. 1 Corinthians 16:13 says to stand firm in the faith. Mark 10:45 says the Son of Man came to serve. Romans 12:1 invites us to offer our whole lives to God.

The teaching

Paul calls believers to stand strong in the Lord's strength. We can talk about evil without being consumed by fear. God is in charge, Christ has won over sin and death, and believers are told to stay alert. The armor gives children a picture. The belt of truth: know what is true about God, about themselves, and about the world, so they can hold onto it when others say something else. The breastplate of righteousness: right living matters, and when they fail, their hope is in the Savior who forgives and restores. The shoes of peace: children can be peacemakers who speak hard truth, set boundaries, and still look for peace. Peace does not mean being passive. The shield of faith: confidence rests in the Lord, who is trustworthy when the path is unclear. The helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: knowing Scripture and who they belong to gives them a steady mind. Finally, prayer. Children do not need fancy words. They can tell God about fears, sins, and thanks. Armor is not magic and does not replace safe adults. It is a way to point children to God while parents keep watching, protecting, and listening.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Chapter 12: Clothe Them in the Armor of God

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 11: Prepare Them for When. Open the My next step box on page 28, from session 12. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. Which part of the armor does my child need most right now? Which do I need most?
2. How can I talk about evil and danger in a way that is honest but not scary?
3. Where do I teach my child to stand up for what is true, and where do I also teach them to ask a safe adult for help?
4. What is one way I can help my child pray in their own words?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Choose one piece of the armor each day for a week and talk about it for two minutes, such as at dinner or bedtime. Ask your child, what would that look like for you this week? End by letting your child pray in their own words, or by praying for them.

My next step: one thing I will try, and when:

Pray

Lord, make my child strong in you, not in me. Fill them with truth, peace, faith, and your Word, and keep safe adults close to them. Amen.

Try your step before the next session. Then return to this box and reflect on how it went. You may pass or choose a smaller step. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Conclusion: Release Them to Jesus

Prepare: Read the Conclusion, Release Them to Jesus.

Listen to Scripture

Psalm 127:3 calls children a heritage from the Lord. John 17:17 records Jesus praying, sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth. 2 Timothy 1:5 mentions the sincere faith that lived first in Lois and Eunice before Timothy. 1 John 1:7 speaks of walking in the light. The book remembers that Jesus restored Peter after failure and received Thomas in the midst of his questions.

The teaching

Parenting begins with receiving and ends, in a way, with releasing. Love naturally wants to hold close, and that is not wrong. Children need protection, affection, and presence. Over time they enter rooms we cannot enter and make choices we cannot make for them. Parents learn to release. Our deepest hope cannot rest on control of their future. A well-run home cannot create saving faith. Family devotions cannot guarantee devotion to Christ, and clear rules cannot change a heart. We cannot believe for our children. That should not make us passive. It should make us faithful in teaching and steady in prayer. A child may wander from what they learned. The book offers a way to keep loving without confusing faithfulness with control. Release the joy of good moments with thanks. Children do not need a performance of perfect parenting. They need parents who say what is true about failure, receive correction, and return to Jesus for forgiveness. Guilt says, I did something wrong, and can lead to confession. Shame hides. The gospel leads into the light. The same Jesus who welcomed children still welcomes them, and he can meet our sons and daughters in places we cannot reach. We parent with open hands, and invite our children to walk with us.

Reflect. Practice. Pray.

Conclusion: Release Them to Jesus

Last time: Last session was: Chapter 12: Clothe Them in the Armor of God. Open the My next step box on page 30, from session 13. If you chose a step, how did it go? What helped or got in the way? If you have no step to review, skip this question.

How I responded (optional):

Reflect first; share by choice

1. What has this book and these sessions changed in me as a parent? What do I most want to keep?
2. Where is it hardest for me to let go of control? What do I fear?
3. Is there a child I am worried about? What can I faithfully do, and what must I leave with Jesus?
4. Who are the safe people who can support me as a parent after these sessions end?

My reflection: what is Jesus inviting me to notice about myself?

One faithful next step

Write a short closing plan: one habit from this book to keep, one person to tell about it, one safe adult or professional you can call when parenting is hard, and one prayer for your child. Then say a prayer of release: Lord, this child is yours.

My next step: one practice I will continue, and when I will review it:

Pray

Jesus, you welcomed children and you still do. I give my child back to you. Help me to be faithful, humble, and hopeful, and let them see you in me. Amen.

This is the final session. Choose one small practice to continue and a time to check in on it, on your own or with a trusted person. Another group meeting is not required. Talk naturally about family life, while respecting your child's privacy. Share what you are learning as a parent; leave sensitive stories and personal details out of group discussions and saved notes. Nobody needs to share more than they choose.

Keep walking with Jesus.

A finished workbook is a beginning, not a verdict.

Keep returning to Scripture, honest reflection, and small acts of care. Ask for wise help when a situation calls for more support. If a child's safety is a concern, seek qualified help promptly; in an emergency, contact local emergency services.

One practice I want to keep:

Trusted people or professionals I can call when parenting is hard:

A prayer of release for my child:

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