

Dear parents,

As we round the bend of winter and begin dreaming of warmer days and new beginnings, remember that we are praying for you and your family during every season.

Whether your kids are in pre-school or about to enter middle school we are here for you. Raising children is challenging and exciting, scary and amazing. But we are standing with you as you guide your children from the early years to being youth and beyond.

Thanks for continuing to influence their faith walk. It's an honor to support you—and it's a responsibility we take very seriously. Know that we love, admire, and pray for you. We love being part of your family!

Youth Ministry Team of St. Paul Lutheran Church



February 2016

## Show Love With Your Words

### POWERSOURCE

#### ASK GOD:

1. To help you and your children use positive, joyful, God-honoring words.
2. To remind your family members to use their words to praise God and lift up other people.
3. To help you resist the temptation to use your tongue unwisely.

James 3 tells us that our tongues can do quite a bit of damage. Name-calling, bickering, whining, and put-downs tear people apart. But, our tongues can also be used for good. They have the power to heal, encourage, and restore relationships. Our tongues can speak words of praise to God, too.

Here are some helpful reminders for using words in a positive way:

- Set an example by using appropriate, uplifting words and by apologizing when you mess up. Little ears are always listening—even before children can talk—so choose your words wisely.
- Know when to *stop* talking. Proverbs 10:19 says, "Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut." Help



## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

### Crystal Clear

You'll need cardboard tubes, clear tape, and a slip of paper for each person with one of these directions on it: "Say the opposite of what you mean," "Remain silent and use no body language," "Use hand gestures but don't talk," "Ask questions only," and "Talk in baby talk."

Have each person take a slip but not say what's on it. (Read directions to young kids.) Say: **Let's build a tower as high as we can. You can only communicate in the way your paper slip says you can.** After three minutes, ask: **What did you think about communicating this way? When have you had similar thoughts about the way we communicate as a family?**

Read Genesis 11:1-9. Ask: **Why do you think God confused the people's languages?** Say: **These people wanted to bring glory to themselves and build themselves up. But God wants us to use words that build up other people and give him glory.** Close in prayer, asking God to help you speak uplifting words to others and to give him praise.

## Speak No Evil

All parents face the challenge of how to respond when kids say bad words. Resist the urge to display shock or anger. Calmly explain in age-appropriate language why certain words aren't acceptable. Preschoolers often just repeat what they hear. When they do use a bad word, share that certain words can hurt people's feelings. For children ages 6 to 9, explain that words are "bad" when they're intentionally used to hurt others. Preteens often use profanity to get a reaction from adults and impress friends. Tell them that you won't allow obscene words and gestures, and help them develop the discernment to censor their own language. You can also try some of these activities at home:

**Catch Your Words** Give family members each a small piece of rope, and let them tie a lasso. (Help small children.) Talk about a lasso and how it's used. Set out some stuffed animals and try to lasso them. Read James 3:2 and discuss the importance of controlling your tongue. Then talk about what it would be like to "lasso" your words.

**Stay Away, Sin!** Fill a cup with water and set it on a table. Take turns sprinkling pepper on the water and sharing some of the bad ways Satan tempts us to use our words, such as lie, gossip, or swear. Ask: "How does the water look with all the pepper on it?" Read aloud James 4:7-8. Say: "When we come close to God, he helps us resist the devil." Add a drop of dishwashing liquid to the water. Say: "Just as the pepper 'ran' away from the soap, Satan runs away when we focus on God."

**"Cheerful" Words** As a family, brainstorm catchy cheers for praising God. Also create a personalized, encouraging cheer for each family member.

**Sign It** Check out a library book or video about sign language. Learn how to sign phrases such as

"Jesus loves me" and "Jesus is our healer." Discuss how the motions

"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."  
—Ephesians 4:29

## MEDIA MADNESS

### MOVIE

**Title:** *The Great Gilly Hopkins*

**Genre:** Comedy, Drama, Family

**Rating:** Not yet rated

**Cast:** Julia Stiles, Kathy Bates, Glenn Close, Octavia Spencer

**Synopsis:** This is an adaptation of Katherine Paterson's Newbery Award-winning novel from 1979. Gilly, a tough 12-year-old girl, moves from one foster home to another—stirring up trouble at each one. When she lands with the strange Maime Trotter, Gilly schemes to get away but eventually realizes she's landed in a place she loves.

**Our Take:** With the mischief involved, this movie will be better for older kids and preteens. By all appearances, it could lead to some good discussions about family roles and responsibilities—and why God puts us in the families he does.

### BOOK

**Title:** *Magnus Chase*

**Author:** Rick Riordan

**Synopsis:** With this book, popular author Rick Riordan launches a new series about humans and gods—this

## Games, Sites & Apps

### Adventure Time: Finn and Jake Investigations

This point-and-click game, available on numerous platforms, is based on the Cartoon Network's popular *Adventure Time* TV show. Players "live" in five episodes, solving fun logic puzzles.

**Children's Book Site**

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.

parenting  
CHRISTIAN kids

## CULTURE & TRENDS

**Valentine's Shift** February 14 is no longer just for couples, according to a survey of more than 600 women. People are planning more family- and friend-focused celebrations rather than an evening of romance. 79 percent of respondents plan to bond with their kids on Valentine's Day, and 62 percent will have their celebration dinners at home. (*marketingprofs.com*)

**Safe or Sorry?** Vault apps store questionable texts, photos, and social media behind passwords that kids can set. The apps themselves are often hidden or disguised as other kinds of apps. Parents can guard against this trend by utilizing app store settings to screen and approve the apps their kids download. (*nytimes.com*)

## QUICK STATS

**Born to Learn?** A study involving more than 13,000 twins found that when it comes to kids' motivation at school, genetics plays a larger role than shared environments such as parents and teachers. (*news.osu.edu*)

**Saving Sight** Forty percent of people in Britain are diagnosed with near-sightedness. Experts say that number is rising due to screen use and indoor activities. At the same time, some schools in China now teach children in large glass boxes and outdoors—and they've noted a reduction in myopia. (*metro.co.uk*)