

the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition



February

Lynwood Kids
Children's Ministry



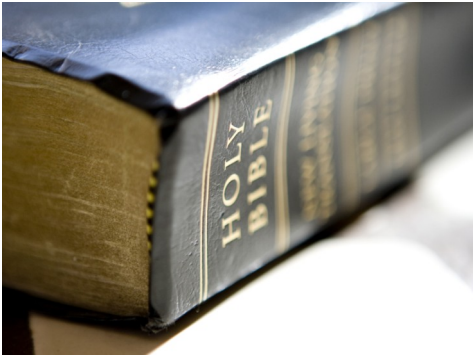
Charles Arn, president of Church Growth Inc., cited a recent research study that he participated in, to answer the question, "Who drops out of church?" He stated that the study showed that 82 percent of folks who drop out do so, in the first year. Interestingly, it also showed that there were 2 spikes during that first year where they left the most. One was at 6 months, the other at one year. Why? The six month people said, they couldn't make any new friends.

The folks who left after a year said that they were not as close to their new friends at church as their old ones. The issue there wasn't quantity, but quality. New believers especially have trouble pulling away from their old friends and habits.

What I found interesting was that these two comments did not change no matter what age group they surveyed. From 7 yr olds, to 77 year olds, the answer was the same! Bottom line is this: The first 12 months are critical in closing the back door of the church. Kids and adults alike need to feel they belong, are accepted, and have value in our church.

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I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
(Psalm 139:14 NIV)

Everything God created is good, including our amazing bodies.
One of the many things we can do with our bodies is praise
God for caring for us physically.



TEACHABLE MOMENTS

1. Turn to the Book—Read and discuss Bible passages about beauty (see 1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Peter 3:3-4) and strength (see Isaiah 41:10; Ephesians 6:10-11; Philippians 4:13; 1 Timothy 4:8).



2. Branch Out—Encourage children to try new things. These experiences help affirm kids' bodies in unexpected ways. Also look for activities that diversify children's experiences, fortify their emotional strength, develop their talents and interests, and widen their circle of peers and mentors. Your church or children's ministry is a good place to start.

3. Unique Creations—Make clay sculptures of things that are important to each of you. Then talk about why you cherish and care for that item. Remind children that God cherishes and cares for us—and wants us to do the same with our bodies.

Chat with your children about body image by using these discussion starters:

1. Why did God give us bodies? What are some special things you can do with your body?
2. What does God want us to do with our bodies? How does he want us to take care of them?
3. What are some ways we can be kind to our bodies—and to other people's bodies?

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

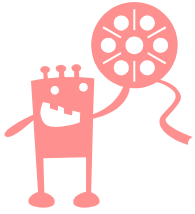
Try these activities to celebrate God's gift of our bodies. The first works well with younger children, and the second works well with preteens.

• **Hopping-Popping Bodies**—Help children draw a gingerbread-cookie-type person and then draw arrows from different parts of the body to the outer rim of the paper. From the head, help children write words that describe what they like to learn about. From the hands, write things they like to do. From the feet, places they like to go. From the stomach, things they like to eat, and so on.

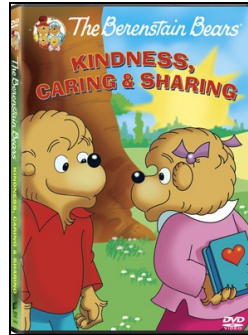
Read aloud Psalm 139:14 and use your bodies to express the information on the papers. Have children act like kernels of popcorn. Have family members "burst" open with their answers as you mention each body part. For example, say: "We thank God for our minds to think about...." After everyone has popped up and shared an answer, move on to the next body part.

• **Wonderfully Made**—Remind older kids of how wonderfully God has made them. Read aloud Psalm 139:14. Discuss messages that today's society communicates about beauty and body image. Then describe what God sees in each person. Together, create a poster that communicates either Psalm 139:14 or our worth and image in Christ. Hang the poster near a mirror as a reminder of how much God values each of us.





MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: Me Again

Genre:

Rating:

Cast: David A.R. White, Della Reese, Logan White, Ali Landry and Bruce McGill.

Synopsis: *Be careful what you pray for.*

From the outside looking in, Rich Chaplin has everything that any Pastor and family man could ever want. In reality he has lost sight of everything that matters the most, including his family. When he wishes for a life other than his own, he suddenly finds himself trapped within the lives of everyone his apathy has affected.

This unforgettable journey brings Rich to view life through the eyes of a diverse cast of characters including an elderly woman, a top fashion model, his own wife and even a goldfish! It might even take an encounter with a strangely familiar angel, to help him realize that he is wasting his chance to love and impact the most important people in his life.

MOVIES

Movie: The Berenstain Bears: Kindness, Caring & Sharing

Synopsis: *Warm, fuzzy feelings are on display in these classic Bear stories.*

Capture the wonder of growing-up as the bear cubs learn to keep a room clean without much effort, why birthdays are loads of fun, how to be a good friend, the truth behind secret valentines, and watch Papa discover that when it comes to kites, bigger is not always better. Share the good times with the Berenstain Bears!

CULTURE & TRENDS

- More new moms are getting inked to honor their offspring. Mothers say tattoos bearing their children's names leave little room for regret, unlike other types of tattoos. Tats also remind moms they're still "cool," even though they're parents. (babycenter.com)

- Last year at ClubPenguin.com, children adopted more than 25 million Puffles, or virtual pets. The *Club Penguin Times* is read as much as *The New York Times*. (Mashable.com)

QUICK STATS

- One-quarter of America's 16 million Latino children live in poverty. (pewhispanic.org)
- 80% of a person's brain develops by age 3. The intellectual, social, and spiritual information you instill early on sets an important foundation. (firststeps.us)
- 52% of families have been members of their current church for 10 years or more. (Children's Ministry)



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, listen to, and wear.





POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To protect your children from harmful messages about physical attributes.
2. To help your children view themselves as God's creation.
3. To heal any body-image struggles you've been facing.

Promote Positive Body Image

The topic of body image is usually associated with teenagers, but it's becoming an issue for younger children now, too. Media and advertising, toys, and peer pressure are among the many factors that make kids question their appearance and build.

But what's said and seen at home matters, too. Often parents inadvertently contribute to their child's body-image issues with their comments or through their own weight issues. A parent's focus on body image can make a child think his or her value is based solely on appearance. Here are tips for promoting healthy body image in your children:

- Emphasize that God created our bodies, which he calls "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- Model healthy eating. Show children how to make wise food choices, and don't require them to always clean their plates.
- Accept yourself. Resist an obsession with calories and pounds.

INSIGHTS

- 80% of girls in third- through sixth-grade report displeasure with their bodies. Young girls say they're more afraid of becoming fat than they are of cancer, nuclear war, or losing their parents. (U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services)
- 36% of third-grade boys have tried to lose weight, and "muscle dysmorphia," an obsession with body size and shape, is on the rise among young males. (Time)