

VICTORY AT HOME

DECEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER



Does Your Child Really Need That Smartphone for Christmas?

Christmas is right around the corner and if you are like millions of other parents, your pre-teen, tween or even teen has probably started asking for either a new smart device or a replacement for the one they already have. It's never too late to take some personal inventory of how that is working out. So ask yourself this one simple question: are your children comfortable in having tough conversations with you?

The irony is that this time of year is supposed to be about connecting with your kids and family, sharing the laughter and joy of time together, yet the very things that are supposed to keep us connected will be the very things that keep us disconnected - from each other.



Familyshare.com (famifi.com), reports that the average child will view pornography **is age 9**. That should be shocking and sobering. Internet capable devices, like the smartphone your child has been begging for will put him or her at risk for and not limited to:

- **Pornography exposure**
- **Cyberbullying**
- **Child predation**
- **Inappropriate photo-sharing**

It's an understatement to say that life gets busy, especially as we are raising our children. But as the gatekeepers of our homes, we need to **take time to make time** and get educated about how to help our kids with these devices.

There is a significant investment in any smart device. If we are not careful the return on that investment can be distraction, addictions and an attitude coming from our child that may be difficult to handle. The relationships that you have built with your children will be a huge factor in how the conversations go when it comes to establishing and enforcing boundaries around these devices. So how do we prepare ourselves and family for the traps of new technology in the house?

First, let's examine our own usage of these devices. How disciplined are you when it comes to using tech? **Do you have the right boundaries established?** How often do you really need to check your device? Do you get irritated if you don't have your phone close to you and easily accessible? If so, **you are probably addicted to your tech and you need to make some changes.**

Next, let's ask ourselves a few questions about allowing your child to have a smartphone. **Will it make life easier?** It may make life more *convenient*, but few parents will tell you it has made their parenting job "easier". If you are not prepared, the relational complications will outweigh that convenience. Then ask yourself, **is the device REALLY for safety?** Families have been making safe decisions for years prior to smartphones. The perceived "need" for this device is a much bigger conversation. And lastly, **is your child mature enough for that device?** There is a lot more under the hood of today's phones than 10 years ago. It doesn't take long for your child to figure out how to use the camera, or click on a link from a friend. It's a slippery slope.

The Bible tells us that the greatest thing we can do is "love". So the most important thing we can do for our kids is to show them Who and what to love. If we are spending more time on our devices than with them, that tells them all they need to know and see. If we are telling our kids that God loves them more than anything else, how are we demonstrating that to them, as His representatives? Are we leading the way when it comes to confessing and repenting of our sin? Are we following the technology principles that we expect of our kids? Have we even communicated these principles to them? We can give our children the best boundaries in the world, offer the most helpful advice, and implement the strongest filters—and all of that means nothing if they don't trust us.

So, for this Christmas, let's think about a different sort of gift to our family. If any of this resonates with you, consider having a humble and honest conversation with your kids. It may be difficult to start, but your humility, being Like Jesus, could be the greatest gift you can give them. It will last long after that smartphone becomes obsolete and will be remembered as one of the most important conversations you've ever had with them! **And that smartphone they have been hounding you for, it can wait.**

Merry Christmas!

"Let us examine and probe our ways. And let us return to the LORD." Lamentations 3:40

JESUS IS A SPECIAL GIFT

PRESCHOOL

WEEK 1

AN ANGEL BRINGS GOOD NEWS - MATTHEW 1:18-24, LUKE 1:26-38

READ Luke 1:26-38 Today we learned an angel brought a special message to Mary and Joseph.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Fold a piece of construction paper in half for your child. Let your child decorate the card with markers, crayons, or stickers. Talk to your child about what message he or she wants to put on the card. Help your child give the card to someone special, like an aunt, cousin, or grandparents. Talk about the special message the angel had for both Mary and Joseph. Mary was going to have a very special baby. That baby was Jesus!

Pray - God, Thank You for Your special gift, Jesus. Help us to remember to tell others about Him. We love You. Amen!

WEEK 2

MARY AND JOSEPH TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM - LUKE 2:2-5

READ Luke 2:2-5 We are learning that Jesus is a special Gift. Today we learned Mary and Joseph traveled a long way to Bethlehem.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Make a family tradition of setting out a nativity scene together. Start with the angel, Mary, and Joseph. Act out the story of the angel telling Mary she was going to be Jesus' mother. Continue acting out Mary, Joseph, and the donkey traveling to Bethlehem and having to stay with the animals. As your child learns more about the Christmas story each week, add on the shepherds.

Pray - God, Thank You for taking care of Mary and Joseph. We know You take care of us too. Thank You for your special Gift. We love You. In Jesus name Amen!

WEEK 3

BABY JESUS IS BORN - LUKE 2:6-7

READ Luke 2:6-7 This week in VickKids we learned Baby Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Talk with your child about why we celebrate Christmas. Explain to your child that it is okay to give gifts to others, hang stockings, and make cookies. But the real reason we celebrate is because Jesus came to earth as a tiny baby so He could one day become our Savior and make a way for us to go to Heaven. This is the reason we say Jesus is a special Gift. God gave us this gift because He loves us. Emphasize this to your family throughout the Christmas season.

Pray - God, Thank You for Your special gift and Son, Jesus. Help us to remember it is His birth we celebrate this month. In Jesus name Amen!

WEEK 4

THE SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS - LUKE 2:8-20

READ Luke 2:8-20 Today we learned an angel told shepherds Jesus had been born, and they went to see Jesus.

EXPLORE TOGETHER After the angel told the shepherds where to find baby Jesus, the sky was suddenly full of angels praising God. One of the ways we can praise God is by singing. Sing some of your child's favorite worship songs or Christmas songs. Talk about why it's important that we praise God. Jesus is God's Son, and He is so special. Jesus Is a Special Gift.

Pray - God, thank You for the angel who told the shepherds about Baby Jesus. Help us remember to tell others about Your special Gift. We love You. In Jesus name Amen!

WEEK 5

THE WISE MEN VISIT JESUS - MATTHEW 2:1-12

READ Matthew 2:1-12 This week in VickKids we learned the wise men followed a star and gave Jesus some special gifts.

EXPLORE TOGETHER Spend time making cookies with your child. Place the cookies in a decorative tin. Let your child draw a picture to attach to the tin. Find a neighbor or shut-in who would like to have a visitor. Have your child bring the gift of cookies and the picture he or she made. Your child will get to experience firsthand the blessing that comes from giving to others. Remind your child Jesus Is a Special Gift and we are to share the gift of Jesus with others.

Pray - God, Thank You for Your special gift and Son, Jesus. Help us to show others Your love and tell others about Your special gift. We love You. In Jesus name Amen!

THANKFUL IN CHRIST

ELEMENTARY

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE WISE MEN - LUKE 2:8-20, MATTHEW 2: 1-12

WEEK 2

READ Luke 2:8-20 and Matthew 2: 1-12 This week in VicKids your student will be learning about the Wise Men that came from far away to see the birth of Jesus.

EXPLORE with your student these passages of Scripture and what it means to "pursue". The Shepherds and the Wise Men were on a pursuit to meet Jesus. Just like they pursued Him we get to pursue Him also. What are ways they we as a family pursue Jesus? What obstacles do we find that try to prevent us from our relationship with Jesus? How can our family overcome these obstacles?

PRAY - As a family, ask God for direction and guidance when it comes to seeking after Jesus and the things that get in our way from spending more time with Him. Ask for a greater discipline as we grow in our "pursuit" of God.

THE NATIVITY - LUKE 2:1-7

WEEK 3

READ Luke 2:1-7 This week in VicKids your student will be learning about the Nativity and the birth of Jesus.

EXPLORE - As a family try to find a Christmas light nativity and have your student tell the story of the birth of Jesus! Depending on where you live, there are many places that have these scenes set up for you to visit.

If you wish to see one of these amazing scenes before our own Nativity scene at service on the 22nd & 23rd, go here for a great list of additional places to see live nativities. www.365atlantatraveler.com/live-nativity-scene/

JESUS' BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION - MATTHEW 1:21

WEEKS 4 & 5

MEMORIZE Matthew 1:21 together as a family!

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

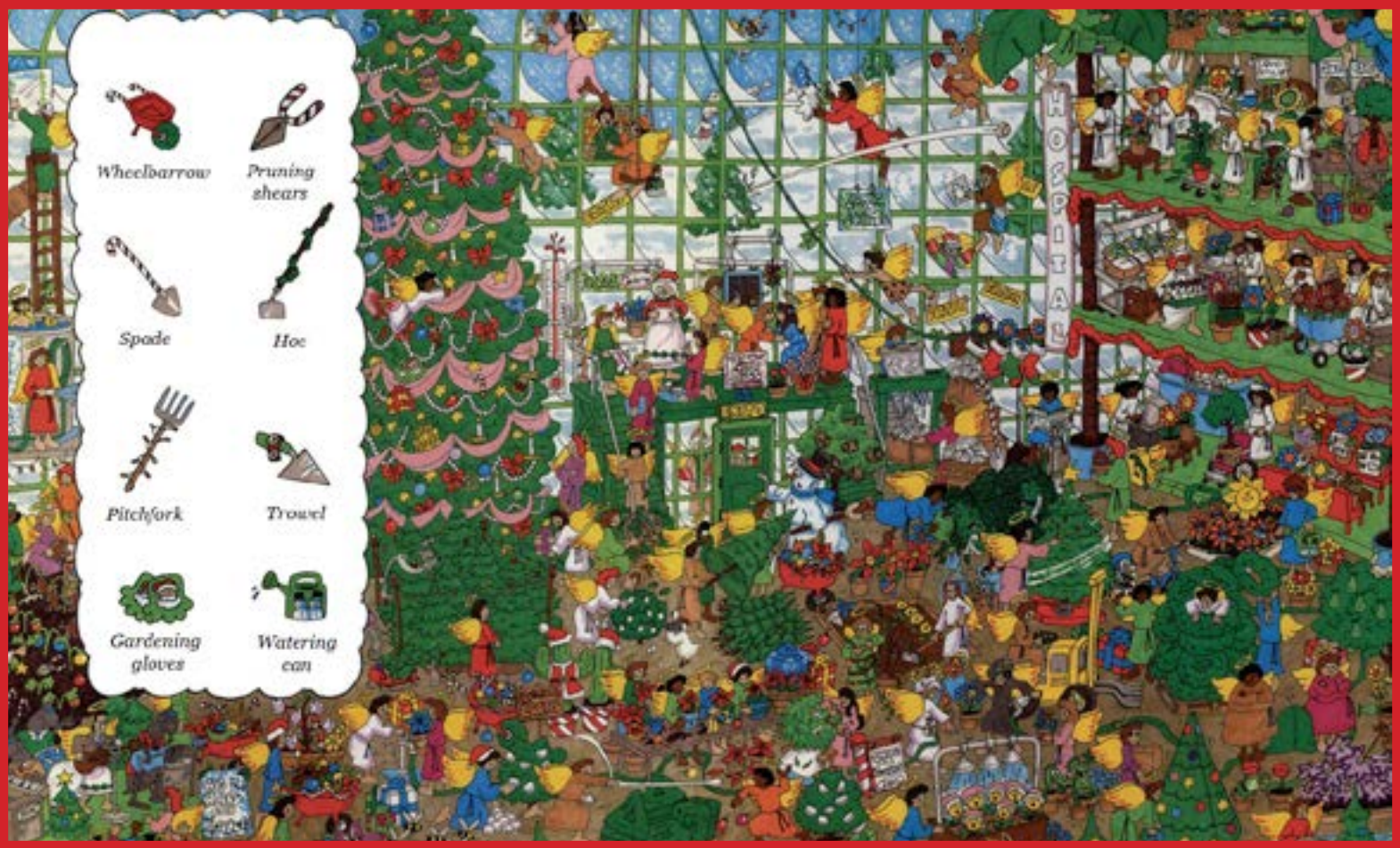
CELEBRATE Jesus' birthday as a family! Here are a few ideas:

- Bake a birthday cake as a family for Jesus and sing Happy Birthday to him!
- Jesus helped those in need. Find a way to help out another family:
 - Fulfill a Christmas Wish at www.thefishatlanta.com
 - Check out family service projects at www.handsonatlanta.com
 - Stop by a local Senior Living Community and go Christmas caroling.
 - Meals by Grace - help food-insecure families (those that don't have enough to eat) and children by packing meals for those in need.
 - Holiday Taxi - Maybe you know someone that needs help getting around this holiday season.
 - Helping Foster Kids - There are over 12,000 kids in Georgia Foster care. Every year, radio personality Clark Howard collects toys and gifts for foster kids across Georgia. Find a location that is hosting the drive or give on-line. Check it out at Clark.com.
 - Check with your local community food bank or family shelter for more ways to serve together!



CONNECTING AT HOME

Can you and your family find all the Christmas angels' gardening tools? How many Christmas angels can you find?



M-E-R-R-Y C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S

How many words can you make from the letters in "Merry Christmas?"

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Christmas Service Times December 22nd & 23rd

NORCROSS - SAT 4 & 6 PM, SUN 9 & 11 AM, 1 PM

HAMILTON MILL - SAT 6PM, SUN 9 & 11 AM, 1 PM

MIDTOWN - SUN 9 & 11 AM, 1 PM

Follow us on:



VICKIDSATL

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." - **Matthew 1:21 NIV**

Additional Resources

victoryatl.com/athomenewsletter/