

# ZION'S FAITH AT HOME MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER theParentLink<sup>SM</sup>



May 2011

## Live As Forgiven and Forgiving People

God created us perfect, in his image. But after sin entered the world, we needed a Savior. The good news of Easter is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and then rose again. Because of his victory, we can have the free gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

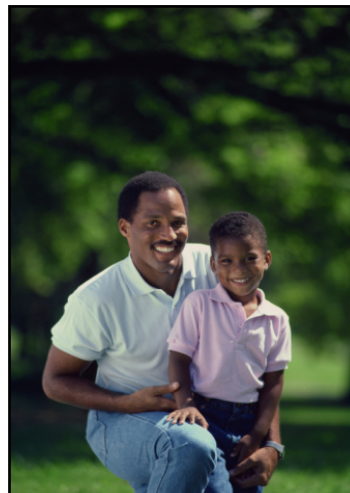
As forgiven people, God tells us to extend forgiveness to others who wrong us. That can be tougher than it sounds, especially when an offender doesn't seem repentant. But God will work on our hearts and give us a desire to forgive when we ask him for help.

Here are some insights about forgiveness from God and for others:

**Children first learn what forgiveness is by experiencing it firsthand.** As kids experience the feeling of being forgiven, they can begin to forgive those around them. Eventually compassion will compel them to forgive as Christ calls them to—whether or not the people who hurt them are sorry.

**Forgiveness is more than just saying "I'm sorry."** Forgiveness costs us something, just as it cost Christ dearly on the cross. When we forgive someone, we resist our urge to retaliate, to get even, to make someone pay for their mistakes. We become vulnerable as we allow that person back into our lives. And that's a big part of loving others.

As you help children understand forgiveness, let them know that they can fully experience Jesus' gift of forgiveness when they obey his command to forgive.



PowerSource

### Ask God:

1. To forgive sins that have been weighing you down.
2. To show your family the power of his forgiveness and mercy.
3. To help you all forgive each other, just as God forgives you.

## Parenting Insights

Because forgiveness is an abstract concept, children may have difficulty grasping it. Here's how their thinking develops:

### Ages 3 to 5

These children are concrete thinkers who understand life in literal terms. Ask questions to help kids make connections. Show forgiveness to a repentant child with hugs and smiles. Say, "I love you. I forgive you."

### Ages 6 to 8

Children this age are connecting new ideas to old information. Help them make associations. Model a relational Christianity, showing kindness.

### Ages 9 to 12

Some kids can now think abstractly. Older kids learn best by applying abstract concepts to familiar experiences. Let kids ask questions, and value their ideas.

## OpenTheBook

**"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."**

**Matthew 6:14-15**

God promises to forgive and forget our sins, but he also commands us to do the same thing for people who hurt us.

### Teachable Moments

✠ **Practice Sincere Apologies**—Learning to apologize, takes practice. Help children learn to say they're sorry through nonverbal means (drawing a picture, giving a hug, etc.). During family prayers, practice saying, "I'm sorry." Admit to Jesus that we make mistakes and are sorry; then ask for forgiveness together.

✠ **Find Healing**—Read aloud Psalm 32:1-7. Discuss what caused David's heart to be sick and how he got rid of it. Talk about times you've felt bad after doing something wrong. Say: "When we confess our sins and tell God we're sorry, he forgives us and makes our hearts well."

✠ **Be an Example**—When you do something wrong, let children see you apologize. Be specific about what you're apologizing for, and ask for forgiveness.

## Family Experience: **Freely Forgiven**

Dive further into the topic of forgiveness by using these easy but powerful activities from Group's *Hands-On Bible*.

- **Goodbye Sins!**—Say: "Think of a sin, or wrong thing, you've done." Then let each family member use a highlighter to write on a coffee filter a sin that he or she has committed. (Assist young children.) Say: "Now confess that sin to God and ask him to forgive you." Put a few drops of lemon juice on the writing, and watch as your "sin" disappears. Read aloud 1 John 1:8-9. Say: "The lemon juice made the writing disappear. When we tell God we're sorry for our sins, he forgives us. He makes our sins completely disappear from his sight! We may still have to deal with the consequences of our sins, but when God forgives a sin, it's gone." Close in prayer, thanking God for his amazing gift of total forgiveness.

- **Forgiveness Spelled Out**—Write the word *forgive* down the left side of a chalkboard (or down a piece of paper). Share with one another how it feels to be forgiven. Then write one of those feelings next to each letter; for example, Fresh, Optimistic, Relieved, Grateful, Invigorating, and so on.



Put the chalkboard in a place where everyone can see it during the coming week. Use it as a reminder to thank God often for his gift of forgiveness. Throughout the week, add to the list as you think of other words that remind you how forgiveness feels.



## Bible Bash Breakfast

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> 9:45am – 10:45am**

Join us the fellowship hall for some Breakfast & Bible 101! There will be different types of Bibles to explore, First & Fifth grade students will be receiving their Bibles, and the graduating Seniors Bibles will be out for signing.

This is sure to be an exciting event for all!

## Help kids take a stand against alcohol and drugs

With prom and graduation seasons here, teenagers may face more opportunities than usual to experiment with drinking and drug use. Kids turn to these substances not only to look cool and fit in with the crowd but also because they may help them feel good, ease their nerves, and make socializing easier.



Alcohol and drugs are addictive and harmful, as well as illegal. Using and abusing them can lead to everything from bad decisions to death. But there's much more for Christian teenagers to consider when they're faced with temptations of drugs and alcohol than just being "safe."

In the Bible, Jesus instructs his followers to stay awake and alert in our everyday lives. He said Satan is stalking us like a "roaring lion" (see 1 Peter 5:8), and he wasn't kidding. God instructs us to take up his armor (see Ephesians 6:13-17) so we can stand firm and resist temptation. He also tells us to walk in the light (see 1 John 1:7). Nothing neutralizes our impact for God's kingdom faster, broader, and deeper than shadow living. Whatever we do, we should train kids to live their lives in the light—away from the shadows that give Satan, God's enemy, room to operate and leverage to sideline us.

So when you talk to your teenagers about the physical and legal reasons to steer clear of drugs and alcohol, remember to mention the spiritual reasons as well. Then stop talking and set an example by how you live. God knows about all the temptations we face and wants to be the first place we turn during difficulties.



### Fun in the Sun!

#### SILENT AUCTION - MAY 15<sup>TH</sup>

Doors open at 4:30 pm for the Annual Faith at Home Silent Auction.

BBQ dinner featuring chicken & hamburgers will begin at 5pm.

An awesome **Live Dessert Auction** will again be featured for your bidding pleasure!

All auction donations are accepted through May 8<sup>th</sup>. Donation forms can be found in the church narthex.

See you at the Auction and for some  
**"FUN IN THE SUN"!**

## Senior High Youth

Happenings in the Faith Café:  
9:45am to 10:45am

**May 1:** Why God Created Sex

**May 8:** The Risky Side of Sex

**May 15:** Forgiveness From God

**May 22:** Faith at Home presents Bible Bash!

**May 29:** Memorial Day- No Sunday School!



# High School Retreat



**May 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>:** All High school students are welcome to join the Mission Trip Team at this retreat.

We will leave Zion at 7pm on Friday & return to Zion Saturday at 4pm. The cost is \$59 per person.

We sing, we fellowship, we worship, we play, we eat, we have fun!

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## Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Start conversations with your teenagers about drinking and drugs by using these discussion starters:

1. What motivates people to drink or do drugs? What's appealing about getting drunk or high?
2. Why do people believe drunkenness or drug use can fill their emptiness? Can you be both drunk (or on drugs) and filled with God's Spirit? Why or why not?
3. Why should Christians avoid drugs and alcohol? Is it merely because they're illegal or bad for you? Explain.
4. When everyone else seems to be drinking or using, how can you be clean and sober?

# Living Word

The focus of *Living Word* is to make Jesus the center of your life. We can do that through:

**inWord: Digging** deeper into God's Word,

**upWord: Living** life in daily worship and prayer,

**outWord: Serving** others in Christ's name and

**forWord: Sharing** Jesus Christ with other people.

During the month of May we will be learning more about the Psalms and Proverbs:

When you turn on the radio what kind of music do you listen to? Why do you like those bands?

Why do people use music to express emotions? Why do we use so much music at our worship services? (Did you know that the Psalms are music?)

Make a list of emotions that we express through song. Which human emotions do you think are the most difficult to express to God? Why?

## What's Coming Up?

Camp Lutherhaven: Sixth-Eighth Graders! We have a great group of 19 kids going to Lutherhaven. Do you want to go too? It isn't to late- just talk to Kelly Mullin ASAP! Zion is going July 10<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> and it will be a blast!



## Lutherhaven



✝ **May 1<sup>st</sup>:** "Sex has a Price Tag" preview for parents only, 6pm

✝ **May 8<sup>th</sup>:** Mother's Day.

✝ **May 15<sup>th</sup>:** Silent Auction & Dinner 4:30pm.

✝ **May 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Bible Bash Breakfast 9:45am - 10:45am in Fellowship Hall.

✝ **May 22:** 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm potluck Dinner and "Sex has a Price Tag" video for families of 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

✝ **May 29:** No School for Faith.