

ZION'S FAITH AT HOME MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

theParentLinkSM



September 2011

Help "De-stress" Your Children

Back-to-school season, while exciting, can be unsettling for young students. They may worry about facing new teachers, classrooms, and classmates. Other children feel stressed because of busy schedules or high expectations that they or their parents set.

Preteens report that school, homework, and grades are their top causes of stress. Feeling like they have to be perfect just adds to some children's anxiety. Signs of perfectionism include being afraid to fail or take risks, never being satisfied with one's success, feeling insecure, and lacking flexibility. Here are some tips for helping children realize when "good enough" is good enough:

Encourage children to enjoy the process rather than just the outcome. Emphasize that the important part of school is to have fun learning, practicing, and doing, rather than being an immediate expert. It's okay to dream big, regardless of the outcome.

Provide age-appropriate tasks to build confidence. To prevent frustration and getting "stuck," show children how to tackle achievable tasks one at a time.

Accept "good enough" yourself. Try not to dwell on children's mistakes. Offer many more comments about what they're doing right than about what they're doing wrong. Talk about times you've done your best and been satisfied with a less-than-perfect outcome.

Me, Worry?

- 31% of children ages 9 to 12 say they "worry a lot," and 47% suffer from insomnia.
(Children's Ministry Magazine)
- Children whose family lives are stressful are nearly twice as likely as other kids to have low levels of school engagement and four times as likely to have behavioral and emotional problems.
("Stressful Family Lives" by Kristin Moore & Sharon Vandivere)
- About 14% of children ages 5 to 12 spend an average of about one hour alone at home after school. Kids left alone tend to have more difficulty handling school assignments.

(momdadchat.com)



Welcome to a new school year!
We have many exciting programs planned and encourage you to take the opportunity to participate in as many as possible.

September 11th is Rally Day!

Meet in the Sanctuary at 9:45 for music worship and to learn about Godly Play, LivingWord, as well as Senior High and Adult Education. Immediately following there will be an open house in the Education Building & Living Word House. After second service please join us for the Rally Day Carnival & BBQ!

OpenTheBook

**“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”
1 Peter 5:7**

Jesus warns that his followers will face earthly trials, but he also promises to protect and comfort us. Because our loving God is in control, we can put all our anxieties on his shoulders.

Teachable Moments

- **Under Pressure**—Give family members each an inflated balloon, and have them gradually step on it as everyone calls out stresses and pressures. When all balloons are broken, read aloud Philippians 4:6 and share ways that God helps us deal with stress.
- **Puzzled**—Work on a jigsaw puzzle and talk about the challenges of putting all the pieces of a puzzle—and life—together. Read aloud Luke 1:37 and discuss how Jesus helps us solve even the toughest problems.
- **Built to Last**—Together, use blocks or LEGOS to make as tall of a tower as possible. Talk about why your creation always falls down and why our efforts to be perfect will always fail. Then discuss ways that God is our sturdy foundation and how we can stand tall in him.

Middle School Retreat



October 1st & 2nd

We will meet at Zion at 10:00 and head to Camp Berachah for some fun!

We will return to Zion at 9:45 on Sunday in time for your first small group. Permission forms are available in the narthex.

Sixth-Eighth Graders

Living Word

is the place for you this fall!

The focus of Living Word is to make Jesus the center of our youth's life: **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.

September 18 - family orientation all parents and students are invited to come to the fellowship hall at 9:45 to learn more about Living Word and the activities planned for this year!

September 25 - our first large group session we will work on uncomplicating the Bible together with Kelly Mullin and get to know each other.

Help teenagers conquer stress and anxiety

Stress has become a way of life for most American teenagers. They're bombarded from every angle with pressures and expectations, leaving too little time for unwinding and resting. When *Group Magazine* asked 20,000 Christian teenagers about their top needs, the third most common response was "I need help managing or dealing with the stresses in my life." Pennsylvania youth minister Jana Snyder said of today's kids, "I sense an overwhelming burden to be successful and to be busy doing 100 different things every day."

In a recent Associated Press/MTV survey, 13- to 17-year-olds said school is their main worry. Stress, not relationships, is the hottest topic of conversation at school, says one teenager. Another adds, "I'm just really overwhelmed. I even compete with my parents about who's stressing more."

Child psychiatrist Thomas McCormack suggests several ways that parents can help ease teenagers' academic stress. First, discuss your expectations. Assure kids that you're proud of them when they try their best, no matter the outcome. Second, stay involved. Show interest in your teenagers' classes, extracurricular activities, and schedules. Be available to help or talk when needed. Finally, watch for sudden declines in academic performance. These could indicate a learning disorder or emotional distress (such as depression and anxiety) that requires professional evaluation.

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Tackle the topic of stress by asking your kids these discussion starters:

1. How stressed have you been lately? What things cause you the most anxiety, and why? Describe what your body and mind feel like when you're stressed out.
2. What are some ways you cope with stress? Which of these are productive, and which are destructive?
3. What amount of stress, if any, is necessary or helpful in life? Would you want to be stress-free? Why or why not?
4. Is it sinful to be stressed out? Why or why not? How we can give our anxieties over to God?

Senior High Youth

Who? All High school students

Serving: Drinks (mostly hot chocolate) and Scripture

When: Sundays from 9:45 to 10:45

Topics: "Live" Curriculum...you choose! Do you want to grow your faith? Do you want to have healthy relationships? How about understanding other religions?





The Offering focus for September will be

school supplies.

These items will go to support children in need attending school in the Kent school district.



PowerSource

Ask God:

1. To allow the beginning of school to be a positive and exciting time for you and your child.
2. To give you wisdom and discernment throughout the school year.
3. To help you set healthy boundaries with time management, social relationships, and extra-curricular activities as the school year begins.
4. To put your child in the class with the teacher and peers that He wants them to have.

Going Deeper: When Indiana youth worker Scott Greene realized he was getting out of touch with teenagers' lives, he decided to return to high school. Read his whole account at SimplyYouthMinistry.com.

Walking the halls of Warsaw High School as a 33-year-old sophomore for two weeks was pretty overwhelming at points. I faced fears and insecurities that I haven't felt since I was in high school myself (back when Michael Jackson and mullets were cool). However, I gained a newfound respect for kids and the pressures they face. Here are a few observations I made:

- Kids don't own their time. It doesn't belong to them. If I want to eat lunch at 11:30 instead of at noon, I eat early. I forgot what it was like to not make personal decisions about my time.
- Every day, kids spend a large portion of their hours trying to excel in areas that they aren't exceptionally good at and possibly don't enjoy. I know this is a necessary part of education, but I never thought about how frustrating that must be.
- Kids are getting pressure from everyone. One student told me he has 13 bosses: five teachers, one principal, two coaches, two employers, two parents, and a youth pastor. He said every one of these people has expectations for him, and none of those expectations is low. Kids may not have a mortgage or hungry mouths to feed, but their pressures are very real to them. We must keep that in mind, especially if they let us down or don't live up to the standards we set.
- Kids all want to excel, even if it means excelling at being bad. Adults run so fast and hard ourselves that we have to ration the attention we give teenagers. They're longing for our love, attention, and focused time. They're longing to be known—and known well. We must carve out serious time and emotional energy for kids and create environments and schedules that encourage biblical community.



✝ **September 11th:** 2011 Rally Day & BBQ!

✝ **September 18th:** Living Word Orientation.

✝ **October 1st & 2nd:** Middle School Retreat at Camp Berachah.

✝ **October 9th:** Faith at Home Swimming Party – Covington Aquatic Center.