

# MAGNANIMOUS

Kind, generous, helpful, responsible. The way you live shows love for God and others.



## Worship Activities for Families With Kids





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**THE STORIES IN THIS BOOK ARE BASED ON REAL PEOPLE AND ACTUAL EVENTS.** In some instances, names have been changed and certain details have been modified for clarity. With the exception of historical or Biblical accounts, Janice Matthews has shared her real-life experiences to teach kids how to become magnanimous stewards of their relationships, time, talents, money, health, and the earth in which we live.

Granny's story on page 234 was written by Ani Holdsworth.

*Magnanimous*

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## ANYTIME THOUGHTS

*Write Them Down or  
Draw a Picture*

*Magnanimous Me: What I'm Learning: How I'm Changing*



***Anytime Thoughts*** may be sketched or written on the blank pages throughout this book, those provided at the end, or on your own paper. *While working on a fun activity, or coming up with new ideas on a particular topic, invite children to write down their original thoughts, or draw a picture. As you progress through the book, review their contributions and ask: What have we learned? How have we changed?*

# Introduction



What does it mean to be truly *Magnanimous*? How do we encourage our children to grow into responsible, intentional stewards of our planet, their time, talents, possessions, and their physical and spiritual health? How do we generate practical ways to approach every aspect of our lives with kindness, generosity, and compassion? How do we coach kids who may or may not be struggling, who may or may not be happy, who may or may not be secure? And where does God fit in?

No one can fully understand another's unique family dynamic. Each is as complex and diverse as the variety we can imagine. Taking this into consideration, *Magnanimous* was created as a tool for positive engagement with the kids in your life, no matter what your "family" looks like. Whether your relationships are solid or in need of TLC, our stories and examples, games and activities are designed to engage children and help them to grow into kind, generous, helpful, responsible young adults, graciously serving God while seeking to help others.

With focus on building a strong connection with Jesus and an emphasis on Christian values, children will learn broad lessons in stewardship—or being responsible. They will learn how to be effective managers of what they have, and make the most of their opportunities with integrity. They will grow into God's love and understand how His Word, the Bible, can help them make conscious, healthy choices that will positively impact them, their families and others.

As they become magnanimous, they will understand how everything that exists belongs to God who has entrusted it to us to responsibly look after. Tangible aspects such as money, health, each other, our selves, the earth; and the intangible, our time, talents, and God's grace, are gifts to be shared to make the world a better place for everyone.

Teaching children these important life lessons will enhance not only their emotional and physical wellbeing but also help them grow into mindful, responsible adults. Here's at taste of what to expect:

1. Kids will learn they have the power to make the world better through gratitude and giving back.
2. Understanding and practicing the principles of healthful lifestyle choices as a family will enhance kids' mental and physical health.

3. Children's emotional wellbeing will improve as they learn to manage time wisely; Sabbath will become a cherished day.
4. Learning responsible money management will help everyone avoid the trappings of debt, consumerism, and the desire for more "stuff" as children practice contentment and generosity.
5. Kids who consciously tithe by returning 10% of their allowance and earnings to God will experience partnership with Him to help others.
6. Children will become role models as they learn to be trustworthy, dependable and generous.
7. Developing their talents will generate new skills, friendships, disciplines, and resilience, and pave the way to meaningful opportunities.
8. Children and families will be mindful to extend compassionate, conscientious care toward our planet now, knowing this will impact future generations.

Growing up with integrity while building healthy relationships requires guidance, support and coaching from the responsible adults in your children's lives. Practicing the Biblical principles in this book will enhance your family dynamic, while your children's magnanimous interactions at home, school, church, and at play, will spread like a beautiful ripple into our communities.

Let's get started with stories and activities designed to shape responsible, *magnanimous* kids, with devotionals and fun family time to grow your love for each other and strengthen everyone's relationship with Jesus, our friend.



**Magnanimous:** Kind, generous, helpful, responsible.

The way you live shows love for God and others.



## 1 PARENT PREP

# Magnanimous Relationships



*NOTE: Tips and ideas discussed in Parent Prep will help you prepare for Family Activities suggested after each story.*

When children are old enough to leave home for school, they spend more time with other adults than with their parents. These individuals have a powerful impact on your child's development. Children are great observers and imitators so it is important to surround them with adults who are good role models.

Before they can learn to be responsible themselves, kids need to learn how to develop healthy relationships with others, and how to achieve a closer relationship with Jesus.

## How to Help Your Child Love God

In the Bible, parents are encouraged to continuously educate their children to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

Six foundational keywords help guide us toward this goal: Teach, Protect, Replace, Watch, Pray, and Ask.

**1. Teach:** Use a variety of avenues to teach them.

- Teach by example that you love God as you enjoy family worship together. You may alternate working through this book, and using other activities such as children's songs, their Sabbath School lesson, a character-building story book, short Bible texts to memorize, charades—and lots of laughs and hugs.
- Take your children to Sabbath School as often as possible. Use the

Sabbath School lesson quarterly and the weekly magazine from their age-appropriate class at church.

- Make Christian education a priority. If they attend public school, teach Christian principles and perspectives at home. Encourage them to join church clubs such as Adventurers and Pathfinders.
- Provide Christian music, and Bible and character-building stories and audio books. Plan a quiet time for them to look at a Bible story picture book, or read Bible stories by themselves to develop the habit of a daily devotional—their personal, private special time with Jesus.
- Use online teaching resources. Voice of Prophecy and It Is Written have Bible studies for kids. Visit [voiceofprophecy.com/study/kidzone](http://voiceofprophecy.com/study/kidzone) and [myplacewithjesus.com/your-bible](http://myplacewithjesus.com/your-bible)

## **2. Protect.**

- Choose TV and movies that reflect Christian values. Set daily time limits for television and technology use by googling their age group and implementing healthy technology habits.
- Utilize built-in parental controls for all apps and streaming services your kids are able to access. Stay vigilant when they are permitted to use adults' phones. If they use a home computer, utilize web content filtering software.
- Experts suggest that children not be given their own smartphones until at least 8th grade. Consider location tracking for safety reasons, but don't do it secretly. Have a conversation with your child and explain why.
- Be aware of where your child is and what or who may be influencing them.

## **3. Replace:** Substitute detrimental activities with positive ones; include their friends.

- Plan outdoor activities in nature such as picnics, hiking, biking, camping, field sports, beach and lake recreation, or exploring historical sites.
- Plan indoor activities such as visiting a museum, or a family game night.
- Encourage hobbies.
- Participate in church, educational, and community activities.

**4. Watch.** Watch for teachable moments when they ask important questions or express interest or concern over spiritual themes. These may come up during worship, reading together at night, traveling in the car, meal times, or after special church events such as communion services or baptisms.

**5. Pray.**

- Pray privately for them, claiming Bible promises on their behalf.
- Teach them to pray with you—starting when they are just beginning to talk. Choose a short, rhyming blessing they can recite during meals, perhaps one you recall from childhood. Use a similar rhyme before bedtime, and encourage them to add to it in their own words. This may include praying for specific individuals, pets, or anything that may be on their minds.
- Make prayer conversational, as talking to their best friend. Always start with gratitude, then follow with requests. For example, “Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. Thank you for my family. Help me to always be kind to others. Help Sparky feel better. I love you Jesus, Amen.”
- Help them write down prayer requests and make note of God’s answers.

**6. Ask:** As children mature, watch for signals that indicate they are ready to intentionally and voluntarily accept Jesus.

- Consider a simple gospel conversion prayer they may repeat after you, such as, “Dear Jesus, I know that I don’t always do the right things. But you love me and died to forgive me and to save me. Help me live how you would like me to live. I love you and thank you. I accept you into my life. Amen.”

## How to Help Your Child Love Others

Good friends help you feel valued, and friendship is a gift children can extend to others. Matthew 7:12a NIV says, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”

There are many ways parents can be involved in helping their child develop healthy relationships.

1. The following suggestions come from the book, *What Kids Really Want that Money Can’t Buy*:<sup>1</sup>

- Provide your child with opportunities to associate with children, to get acquainted, share experiences, and to develop friendships.
  - Help them develop their friendships by inviting your child's friends into your home and making them feel comfortable and welcome. Allow the children to play by themselves. Provide food or a treat. With permission from their parents, take them with you and your child on outings.
  - Teach your child good manners, empathy, warmth and good sportsmanship. Show that a good friend is a friend even during tough times.
  - Get to know the parents of your child's friends. This can develop into adult relationships that can also strengthen the children's friendships.
2. Consciously model good friendships with others. Avoid negative or derogatory remarks about any person, race, ethnicity, gender or religion. Parents, teachers, and pastors play a key role in setting an example of what *love for all* means.
3. Involve children in helping to give to the community in need. For example:
- Hand out water on a hot day.
  - Put together snacks or personal items for the homeless.
  - Visit the elderly and "adopt a grandparent."
  - Notice classmates who do not have friends and make plans to help them feel included.
  - Share books and toys with others—not only for special occasions such as birthdays, but randomly throughout the year.
  - Find a mission project with your children and help them contribute their time and creativity to raise funds toward that goal.

# 1

## Magnanimous Relationships



### GETTING STARTED

1. Gather the children and read a story aloud each evening. If there are older kids in the group who are good readers, invite them to read the story clearly to the others. During story time, remain present and engaged with the children.
2. Try to memorize the key Bible verse together.
3. Oversee the teaching and activities following each story.
4. Glance ahead at the next day's activities and gather supplies, if needed. Most use materials commonly available in homes.
5. Develop a habit of daily family worship. Sometimes the complexities of life and other commitments may extend certain activities to the next day, but try to be consistent.
6. If you have to take a few days' break from the readings, do a quick recap with the children before continuing on to new material.
7. Most importantly, make spending time together and with Jesus a priority and a joy.



## Jack's Expensive Snack

*The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.*

**Psalms 24:1 NKJV**

Jack was a fluffy 60-pound goldendoodle dog. He belonged to Pastor Mike, who had trained Jack to help him teach "stewardship" to boys and girls. Stewardship means to take care of the possessions and opportunities God gives us.

Over the years, Jack had become quite famous by posing for pictures that were printed in the children's books Pastor Mike wrote.

Jack was a good dog. He stayed off the furniture and didn't scratch up chairs or tables. Whenever he got bored, he would bump his master with his cold wet nose to say, "Play with me," or, "Pet me," or, "Take me outside," or, "I'd like a treat."

Jack would get super excited over one particular trick he had learned. A piece of paper from the trash would be given to him, with permission to grab and tear it to shreds. Jack loved paper and this was his favorite trick—funny to watch, but maybe not such a good trick to learn. Even so, Pastor Mike wasn't worried because Jack only did this trick on command, with paper from the trash can.

One day, Jack was bored and wandered around the house looking for something to do. He walked into the bedroom. His chew stick was about gone and he finished chewing it up. Then he looked at all his toys, but nothing looked interesting to play with all by himself.

Jack left the bedroom, wandered into Pastor Mike's office and laid down. Right there on the floor were stacks of letters and documents and unpaid bills. On top of one of the stacks were four intriguing green slips of paper.

"Those look interesting!" Jack thought. So he stood and snuck up to sniff them.

"Ahhh! Such exotic smells!" He sniffed enthusiastically. "These smell so good, I wonder what they taste like. Maybe Pastor Mike will let me shred them so I can really enjoy the strange flavors!"

Pastor Mike was busy in another room. He did not give permission. He did not say anything. Until he heard the sounds of chomping and chewing and peeked into his office.

"Oh, no!!!! Jack! Stop that! Give me back my money! Those are \$100 bills!"

Jack had taken what he thought were harmless pieces of paper without permission and was happily munching on the most expensive snack ever!

Pastor Mike managed to take the remnants of the money out of Jack's mouth and gathered up the fragments. There were enough left that the bank was able to replace them and none was lost.

Jack did a very naughty thing, but his family still loved him.

It makes God sad when we are not good stewards. But He still loves us when we make mistakes. When we love God and others, we are thoughtful and considerate managers of our opportunities.



## Think About It

- Would Jack's master have been a better steward of possessions if he had taught his dog better habits?
- Can people help teach each other good habits of stewardship, or responsibility?
- How could Pastor Mike have been a better steward of his \$100 bills? [ANSWER: Made sure they were put away in a safe place.]
- Jack was not a good steward because he took and destroyed something that did not belong to him. Dogs don't always know better, but people do. If we love God and others will we be careful with other people's things?
- The most important point we can learn from this story is that God wants us to take good care of the things He gives us. But He does not get angry with us when we mess up. He loves and forgives us when we make mistakes. How can you be a good steward? [Have family members answer.]



## Fun Family Activity

Creating a Mystery Bag—or a box, if preferred. For this activity you will need:

- An brown paper grocery bag with handles, or a cardboard box a little larger than a shoe box.
- A selection of old magazines.
- Several safe scissors, one or more glue sticks, a thick, dark felt-tip marker.
- A copy of your family's photo, or the photo of a family cut out of a magazine.

The Mystery Bag will be decorated and used for some of the activities over the next several weeks. Today you will glue pictures to it, of things that God owns. You will end up with a collage of many different kinds of pictures.

- First, write Mystery Bag (or Mystery Box) prominently, using a thick marker.
- Next, glue on pictures of family members, or a group photo of your family.
- Cut out magazine pictures of things such as toys, cars, clothes, trees, flowers, mountains, church, money, food, water, an athlete, a musician, textbooks, etc., and glue these onto the bag.
- As the kids cut and affix the pictures, ask them what and who God owns.
- The Mystery Bag will be used to hold visual aids for future family activities.
- Close with a short prayer and ask God to bless each family member by name.



## Janice Finds God

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16 NKJV*

Janice first remembered going to church when she was a tiny little girl in Beginner Sabbath School. She hugged fuzzy stuffed animals, rang jingling bells, sang happy songs, and loved her teacher Esther, who helped her learn about Jesus.

Janice's church family helped her know God. She loved them because they loved her and paid attention to her even though she was a child. She was so happy to be chosen to be an angel for the Christmas pageant and proudly wore a tinsel halo, white robe—and wings!

Janice had a lovely singing voice and as she grew up, they let her sing in the big people's church choir. Sometimes she and her friends were invited to repeat Bible verses they had memorized in front of the whole church. Memorizing special verses helped Janice remember God's words in her mind.

Sometimes, she went with her mother to Wednesday night prayer meetings. During these meetings, whoever wanted to could stand up and say something. Janice took her turn and felt so happy after she shyly told everyone how much she loved Jesus. She was finding God.



One day, a big yellow and orange tent was set up in an open field. It was for an old-fashioned “camp meeting!” Church families from surrounding towns traveled there to enjoy each other’s company, hear special speakers, and sing songs to Jesus.

Inside that tent, the metal chairs were hard and Janice’s feet could only reach the floor if she stretched way down. There was no grass on the field, so they had used sawdust to cover the ground to keep the dirt from puffing up into the air. When Janice pointed her toes, she could gently make lines in the sawdust.

One night, the preacher asked anyone who wanted to accept Jesus into their hearts to come up front. Janice was a little kid but she understood. When she went forward she felt like she would burst from happiness. She was finding God.

Janice’s parents taught her that Sabbath was a special day. By Friday evening the house sparkled, everyone was squeaky clean, and the delicious scent of favorite foods filled the air. There were Sabbath toys and activities, too. Sabbath reminded Janice that God made and loved her. She was finding God.

Janice went to church school where she learned reading, writing, math, and Bible lessons. The most important lessons were about Jesus dying on the cross to pay for our sins because He loves us so much. She learned that baptism showed that Jesus washed her sins away and she was choosing to follow Him.

Janice’s dad was a minister and he baptized her when she was 10 years old. She was so happy. She found God.

Do you suppose Janice found God, or did God find Janice?



## Think About It

- How can you get to know God? [ANSWER: By spending time learning about Him from the Bible, going to church, and talking with Jesus any time. Same as how you get to know your friends better.]
- Does God make us love Him or does He let us choose? [ANSWER: God really loves us but he doesn’t force us to love Him back, He lets us choose.]
- How old do you have to be to love God? [ANSWER: You can start loving God right now!]
- Would you choose to love and obey Jesus today? [Encourage each family member to pray and thank Jesus for loving them.]



## Fun Family Activities

1. Gather paper, crayons, pens, or markers for everyone. Take turns drawing a picture of something that reminds you of God's love. Have the family guess what you drew, then explain why it reminds you of God's love.
2. Sing a song about Jesus, such as "Jesus Loves Me."
3. Hug each child and tell them how much you love them and how God loves them even more.



## Just Be Kind

*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12 NIV*

Something is always going on in the back yard around the bird feeders. Sometimes it is good, sometimes funny, and sometimes not so good.

Did you know that birds have unique personalities? Doves, for example, can be quite selfish. They fly to the feeders and eat so much that they have to be chased away so the smaller birds can have a turn.

Some birds are unkind. Wrens are very cute, but they will steal a bluebird's nest and throw away the eggs. House sparrows will steal the wren's nest and can sometimes be so mean that they will hurt other birds with their pointy little beaks.

Some birds are nice to have around. Bluebirds help us by eating bugs. They add color to the yard with their orange-red chest and lively blue feathers. Bluebirds also help each other. Mom and dad bluebird take turns feeding their babies. When the babies start growing feathers and get old enough to learn to fly, they are called fledglings. Mom and dad still feed them, but they can fly short distances and sit on tree branches or a fence. They like to take a bath, splashing water all over in the bird bath. When mamma bluebird lays more eggs and new baby birds hatch, the older brother and sister birds help their parents feed the babies.

Birds can be selfish and mean, or helpful and good.

People too can be like birds. Like, "Kind Keisha," "Prickly Perry," and "Brittany Beaver, the Paste and Pencil Eater."

"Brittany Beaver" was a little girl who needed friends. Sometimes she did strange things, like chewing pencils and eating glue, because she needed someone to notice her and care about her. But most of the kids didn't want to be her friend and did nothing to include her so she was always lonely.

Everyone wanted to be friends with "Popular Prickly Perry," but she was mean and said bad things behind people's backs.

"Kind Keisha" was a girl who had been taught to be good to others. She stood up for her friends and didn't believe Popular Prickly Perry's lies. Kind Keisha even included Brittany Beaver in group activities.

Life is so much better if we treat each other with kindness. You never know when your friendship will brighten someone's day.



## Think About It

- Which girl would you like to be friends with: Prickly Perry, Kind Keisha, or Brittany Beaver? Why?
- What does your best friend do that you like?
- In what ways could you be kinder to your friends, parents, brother, or sister?
- What kind of friend are you? Are you kind to everyone?
- Encourage each family member to pray and ask God to help them be kind.



## Fun Family Activities

1. Politeness and good manners show kindness. Role play good manners. [EXAMPLE: Say "Please" when you want something, and, "Thank you" when someone gives you something or does something for you. When would you say, "Excuse me," or "I'm sorry?"]
2. Ask the children to think of a child in your neighborhood or at school who doesn't have friends. Come up with three ways to help them feel included in the next week. [SUGGESTIONS: Ask them to eat with you, be on your team or play with you and your friends, or invite them to your home.]



## The Fudge Lady

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:16 NIV*

It was the week before Christmas and Nancy was very busy. The doorbell rang and she hurried to open the door.

There stood her neighbor, Vanessa, “the Fudge Lady,” holding on to her walker while her husband Diego kept a watchful eye. She wore dark glasses because she had recently become completely blind. Her eyes used to sparkle but it was impossible to see them behind those glasses, and she even wore a mask on her face to keep her from catching an infection.

It had taken a lot of effort to walk across the street and past two other houses to get to Nancy’s place.

“Here’s the fudge Diego and I made for you,” she said with a joyful chuckle in her voice, as she held out a pretty gift box tied with a red ribbon. She always gave her neighbors fudge for Christmas and everyone knew it was delicious. Nancy assumed that this time Diego had been promoted to chief fudge maker, while Vanessa helped as best she could.

Nancy thanked them both as she took the box from Vanessa’s hands and asked about her week in the hospital.

“Everyone was so nice to me,” Vanessa said, “I couldn’t ask for better doctors and nurses.”

While Nancy could see and walk easily, Vanessa was fighting cancer that had caused her recent blindness. Because of her treatments she was so weak that she had walked the half block to Nancy’s house with great difficulty. Yet here she was, smiling, bringing fudge.

Nancy listened to how Vanessa and Diego had made platters of fudge for her doctor’s office and the cancer treatment center.

Not only was Vanessa’s fudge famous, she was also known for her generously in sharing it. “Would you like vanilla-walnut, chocolate-pecan, plain chocolate, or a variety box?” she would ask before handing people exactly what they loved.

Vanessa had a spunky personality and a great sense of humor. She laughed and enjoyed a good joke. She had a warm attitude toward others. So much so that she had given her wheelchair to a family who needed it more. Her kindness and

interest in others, along with her joy of making and giving fudge had been going on for years, before she got sick, and she had made many friends in her church and neighborhood.

Vanessa certainly had reasons to feel unhappy and sad, but she trusted God with her life and focused her attention on others. No one heard her feel sorry for herself. Instead, she would laugh about her predicaments and looked forward to each day with all the blessings it would bring.

No wonder she was happy. No wonder she had friends!

The best way to make friends is to *be* a good friend. When you are cheerful, grateful, kind, generous and unselfish, you are being a good friend. You are being magnanimous.



## Think About It

- Why did Vanessa have friends? [ANSWER: She was kind, unselfish, generous, and pleasant.]
- What kinds of people do you like to be friends with?
- What can you do to be a better friend to others?



## Fun Family Activities

Choose how you can help others as a family this week. Come up with ways that you and the children can help or give to those in the community who are in need. For example:

- Hand out ice cold water or lemonade on a hot day.
- Put together packages for the homeless.
- Visit the elderly and “adopt a grandparent” who doesn’t have family or regular visitors. Bring them flowers, or homemade cards and treats.
- Share books and toys with those who need them.
- Call a family member or friend who might be lonely.



## Squabbles

*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you... Matthew 7:12a NIV*

### **"I WANT IT NOW!" SCREAMED FIVE-YEAR-OLD KATIE.**

"No!" said her nine-year-old sister, Rachel, with a smirk on her face. "Grandma said you can't."

"But you have one and I want to play with one too!" Katie screamed.

Katie's angry shrieks were deafening while Rachel, was simply making things worse. They made so much noise that Grandma finally came in and sent little Katie to the back yard until she could sort things out with Rachel.

■ ■ ■

**"MOM, TANISHA BIT ME!" MICHAEL CRIED.** He was five years older than his little sister and there seemed to be no end of trouble between the two.

"Well he hit me first and he won't let me play with him," Tanisha yelled.

Mama was very tired of their constant noise and quarrels. "Why don't you just be nice to each other?" she sighed. "I have had enough of your squabbling. Each of you are going to your bedrooms now. Get in bed and stay there the rest of the afternoon."

■ ■ ■

**HARRY WAS TWO YEARS OLDER THAN HIS BROTHER, BRADLEY.** If they arm wrestled and his little brother won, he wouldn't say, "Good job Brad, you are getting stronger!" Instead, he would pout. If they played a game and Brad won, Harry wouldn't play anymore.

Harry got better grades in school than Brad, but instead of helping his younger brother and encouraging him to try harder, he would taunt him, "I will always be smarter than you. Ha-ha-ha!"

■ ■ ■

Families are where we first learn how to treat each other. Most brothers and sisters actually love each other and would feel sad if something bad happened to them, so why do they squabble so much?

Because we are all born naturally selfish. We all have to learn how to be

considerate and how to care about each other and help each other. When God is in our families and home, when Jesus is in our hearts, we learn to treat each other like we would want to be treated.

Today's Bible text is called, "The Golden Rule." It is very important. God gave it to help us remember to be magnanimous toward others, and learn how to treat each other as *we* would like to be treated.



## Think About It

- Why be kind to your brother or sister? [ANSWER: It is a good way to show that even if you're angry at the moment, deep down you really love them.]
- If you tried to build a Lego castle with your brother or friends will it get completed if you are constantly fighting and arguing?



## Fun Family Activity

Get a glove for each family member and have them put it on. Ask them to wiggle their Fingers, then to point those fingers to their palm.

ASK: Could you wiggle your fingers if you didn't have a palm? The healthy palm of your hand has muscles and nerves that run through it that help your fingers work together.

Could you open a birthday present if the palm of your hand didn't tell your fingers what to do and help them work together?

SAY: When you love God and each other, then you can better work together to be kind, loving, and polite.



## Marcus and the Pipe Organ

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5,6 NKJV*

Once upon a time Marcus found himself *inside* a musical instrument *while it was playing!* Do you think it was a guitar? A piano? A tuba? No, it was a pipe organ!

What is a pipe organ and how did Marcus get inside?

Uncle Wilbur loved pipe organs and played them beautifully. He even built his house around a pipe organ, and then he installed another one in his garage!

Pipe organs have been called the king of musical instruments because they can be as big as a whole building, they can make many different powerful sounds, and they are very complicated. The very biggest pipe organs can be found in huge cathedrals or large church auditoriums.

Pipe organs are composed of at least two keyboards for the hands, and another keyboard on the floor that is played by the feet. The sound is made by air blowing into pipes from a machine. This is similar to when you blow air across the top of a soda bottle. The organist can make the pipes sound soft like a flute, loud like a trumpet, or like a whole orchestra. You can see why Uncle Wilbur loved pipe organs. But how did Marcus get inside one?

Uncle Wilbur knew so much about pipe organs that a church asked him to install one for them. There were hundreds of pipes of all different sizes that would need to be lined up in dozens and dozens of rows. Some of these rows would go in the front of the church, and some in the back.

When all the pipes and organ parts were delivered, Uncle Wilbur worked very hard for many days. Finally, the organ was completed. Oh, it sounded so powerful and so beautiful all at the same time.

The organ itself with its keyboards and pedals was located in the front of the church, along with a wide bench for the organist. There was a wall of pipes installed above the organ. These had tiny windows that would open and close. When Uncle Wilbur pressed a special pedal, the little windows opened up and the music would swell louder. He could also close them to make the sounds softer.

The other pipes were installed in the back of the church, in a big room upstairs behind the balcony. This room was called the “swell box” of the organ.

Uncle Wilbur took Marcus to the swell box, and then he went downstairs to play the organ. Standing in the swell box room, Marcus was actually *inside* the organ! He felt small as a mouse in the middle of the giant pipes. When his uncle began to play, the music was above, below, and all around him. It was breathtaking.

Marcus will never forget being inside that amazing musical instrument.

God can make your life even more incredible and spectacular than the pipe organ. If you let Him guide you and follow His instructions, it will be as though He is filling your life with beautiful music to bring happiness, purpose, and success to you and others. All you have to do is ask Jesus. He can fill your life with beauty and



power so that you can share it with others.



## Think About It

- How can you let God build a beautiful person in you? [ANSWER: By reading His instructions from the Bible, then asking, trusting, and obeying Him.]
- How can God make us more magnanimous? [ANSWER: By asking Jesus to help us be kind, generous, helpful and responsible.]

Conclude with a prayer on these themes.



## Fun Family Activities

- Play a YouTube recording of a pipe organ.
- Play a familiar children's Christian song, one that everyone can sing along to. Tell them that God wants to make their lives extra-special, just like beautiful music.



## Remember the Cloud

*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...* **Revelation 1:7a NKJV**

Twenty 9th- and 10th-graders were at Lone Star Camp located in the beautiful pinewoods of East Texas for one week of outdoor school that was a yearly tradition. The group was from a Christian school and they knew about God. However, there was not a lot that set them apart from anyone else. Many of them went to Bible class because they had to. Sometimes their jokes could be rude, and their relationships with their teachers disrespectful. They knew the Bible texts about Jesus coming back again, and that He would be coming in the clouds. They knew the story of Jesus dying on the cross to save them, but they weren't all that interested—until one day.

It was evening and everyone was on the dock at the lake. Twilight had come and gone and it was getting late. The stars were out and a full moon was casting a beautiful glow all around.

Suddenly Gary gasped. "Look at that cloud!"

Everyone looked up and they didn't need him to point it out. There was a cloud that was getting visibly bigger and brighter very quickly! It looked just like what they had learned in Bible class about when Jesus would return in the clouds.

Suddenly, everyone felt scared and guilty. Some faces went pale. Some were mumbling prayers. No one could look away. Their eyes were riveted on the sky.

The cloud came and went. It wasn't Jesus. And even though this dramatic cloud had been lit by the moon and moved by the wind, the experience had an impact.

Those students were grateful that it wasn't *the* cloud, because they knew for sure they weren't ready. Quietly, they headed back to their cabins where faculty joined them in prayer.

Things weren't the same in the classroom after that. Even months later they would nudge each other and say, "Remember the cloud." They now enjoyed singing Christian songs and listened carefully to the Bible teachers at school. One student wrote Christian songs that were performed and recorded. They organized a traveling Christian singing group to tell their story and share with others how much God wants to save them.

You can be excited about Jesus coming back in the clouds. He is preparing a place for you. Nothing in this world is greater or more important than being ready and helping others be ready for that amazing day.

Remember the cloud!



## Think About It

- Why were those students afraid that Jesus was coming? [ANSWER: They weren't ready for Him.]
- How can a person be ready for Jesus to come? [ANSWER: Ask Him to forgive your sins, accept that He will forgive you because He died for you, and then choose to trust, love, and obey Him.]



## Family Activity

Let everyone take turns asking Jesus to help them be ready to go to heaven when He comes in the clouds to take us with Him.

## SUM IT UP QUIZ

1. Why were Michael and Tanisha squabbling? [ANSWER: They weren't being kind to each other.]
2. Why did people love Vanessa the Fudge Lady? [ANSWER: She was a pleasant, generous, and unselfish friend. And she made great fudge!]
3. What made Kind Keisha a better friend than Prickly Perry? [ANSWER: Keisha chose to be kind.]
4. What kind of instrument did Uncle Wilbur like? [ANSWER: The pipe organ.]
5. How did Janice feel when she found God? [ANSWER: Happy.]
6. What was Jack's expensive snack? [ANSWER: \$100 bills.]
7. Why were the 9th and 10th graders scared when they saw the bright cloud? [ANSWER: They thought Jesus was coming and they weren't ready to meet Him.]



## ANYTIME THOUGHTS

*Write Them Down or  
Draw a Picture*

*My Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Today's Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 PARENT PREP

# Magnanimous Character



*NOTE: Tips and ideas discussed in Parent Prep will help you prepare for Family Activities suggested after each story.*

Magnanimous character traits motivate and guide stewardship in a positive direction. Luke 8:15 (NIV) says, ...“the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” Each child needs to hear, retain and persevere. A noble and good heart that exhibits magnanimous character traits is transformed through coaching, regular encouragement, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Teach Children to be Honest

An essential characteristic of a good steward is honesty. An excellent place to start is for children to learn how to be honest with God, and honest with others.

A key practice for teaching honesty is Biblical tithing. Though everything technically belongs to God, He asks us to return one-tenth of our increase as a demonstration of our faith and our accountability to Him as the Owner of all things.

Tithing is not only a foundation of stewardship, but it contains rich promises of blessing. “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!” (Malachi 3:10b NLT). As adults model integrity, children will learn how they, too, can willingly and cheerfully exhibit honesty with God and others.

1. Use family worship time to tell Bible and other character-building stories about honesty.

2. Be gentle with your children so they are not reluctant to be truthful.
3. Never allow a child to take something that doesn't belong to them; if they do, lovingly help them make it right.
4. Teach them how to tithe. Let them observe how you do it—whether by electronic means or inside a tithe envelope from your church. Younger children can practice tithing by counting 10 of their coins and placing one in a tithe envelope. Explain to your children what the tithe is and why we willingly return it to God. Remind them of God's promises of blessing.

## Teach Children to be Obedient

The Ten Commandments teach us how to treat God, and how to treat each other. Obeying them will help protect us and help us live happily with others. Teach children to look forward to God's commendation in Matthew 25:21 (NIV), ...“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!”

1. Start teaching obedience when the child is very young.
2. Expect children to obey. “Prompt and continual obedience to wise parental rule will promote the happiness of the children themselves, as well as the honor of God and the good of society.”<sup>2</sup>
3. Be consistent. When a child is asked to do something, always follow through so they know you expect it.
4. Be conscious of your example and the example of other adults who are loved and admired by your child. Show consistency in what you teach as they observe your own honest interactions with others.
5. Tithing teaches not only honesty but obedience to God. Start teaching as soon as they learn how to count.
6. Read Bible stories to them about obedience and faithfulness, such as the story of Noah, Joseph and Ruth. Books, audio, or video character-building stories on honesty can be found on sites such as [yourstoryhour.org](http://yourstoryhour.org), [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org), other online sources and local Christian bookstores.

# Teach Children to be Responsible

Teaching children responsibility equips them for a happier and more successful life. Responsible children learn to be accountable and take care of their possessions. They learn to make moral and rational decisions on their own. They are willing to work, get their chores done and are dependable. They develop their talents. They are respectful of other people and other people's possessions.

Children who feel entitled—who think they deserve anything they desire without having to wait or work for it—begin to exhibit attitudes of self-centeredness, lack of motivation, and dissatisfaction. Consequences of these traits lead to bad choices in the future, including addictions. Ignoring this discipline discourages independence and diminishes the opportunity to experience a sense of accomplishment (Eyre & Eyre, 2011).

"Children who have been petted and waited upon always expect it; and if their expectations are not met, they are disappointed and discouraged. This same disposition will be seen through their whole lives; they will be helpless, leaning upon others for aid, expecting others to favor them and yield to them. And if they are opposed, even after they have grown to manhood and womanhood, they think themselves abused; and thus, they worry their way through the world, hardly able to bear their own weight, often murmuring and fretting because everything does not suit them."<sup>3</sup>

Responsible children experience the joy of a job well done, and a sense of self-worth. They have grit and perseverance to reach goals and overcome obstacles. They choose to achieve a goal and their focus centers on that objective even if they face failure or difficulties along the way (Tough, 2012).

1. Continue to teach the discipline of tithing. Remind them that God is the owner of everything and as magnanimous individuals we are privileged to be responsible and accountable to Him.
2. Share Bible stories of responsible young people: Joseph, Daniel, Esther and Ruth. These stories teach responsibility, grit, and accountability. A great time to incorporate these stories into their lives may be when you tuck them into bed. Read from a simplified children's Bible, a Bible story book, or choose from online audio and visual platforms such as Your Story Hour, YouTube, or children's Bible story podcasts. (Be sure to review online material for accuracy and appropriateness before choosing to use it.)

3. Expect children to complete school assignments. This teaches them perseverance and to do their best even when an assignment is difficult.
4. Expect kids to help with age-appropriate home and school chores. Encourage and complement them on a job well done. Let them enjoy a sense of accomplishment, while ensuring that their individual, intrinsic value is not solely based on achievements.
5. Plan for punctuality. Teach by your own example. Some children's personalities will require more planning to encourage this trait.
  - Prepare to be ready to leave for school on time the next day. Before bedtime, help them lay out their clothes, make sure their schoolwork is in their backpacks, and their lunches are ready.
  - Use creativity to wake them in the morning, such as a funny alarm clock, a morning song, or some favorite music.
  - Plan to be at least 10 minutes early for every appointment to allow for the unexpected.
6. Teach respect for their own and others' property by expecting them to take good care of it. Reinforce this by holding them accountable, using their own money, time or work to repair or replace what was damaged, lost or wasted.
7. Encourage them to develop their talents and opportunities.
8. Have them design a poster using the text: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Eccl. 9:10a NIV). Put it in a prominent place in the house.
9. Explain that there are many things we do for each other out of kindness, and expect no money in return for it. However, to teach responsibility, allow them now and again to work for certain things designated by you to earn money.
10. Teach them the joy of work. Responsibility can be fun. Help them use their imaginations to make chores fun. This is especially helpful for the younger children. For example, dish washing offers many scenarios for creativity, such as saving ship wreck victims, or cleaning up animals caught in an oil spill.
11. Utilize the Bible story of Moses' simple wooden walking stick and the miracles God performed with it, to teach them that God can do big things with little things when we follow His guidelines.



12. Let them experience how it feels to share, and to do good things for others.
13. Have children make a list of 25 ways to serve. Discuss them at family worship or at bedtime. Plan to try one the next day. Some examples:
  - Make greeting cards to give to sick friends or neighbors, for birthdays, or just to wish their teacher a happy day.
  - Help bake cookies to give away.
  - Watch for opportunities to hold doors open for people, or pick up items someone might drop.
  - The Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons are an ideal time to give a gift from themselves to those in need, or to simply express love and gratitude to someone special.
  - Gather food for food pantries, and help to assemble or distribute the food; hand out food baskets during holiday times.
  - Put together goody bags for people who need cheering up.
  - Invite a new classmate to accompany them on a family outing, or to come home with them.
  - Help a neighbor bring in the newspaper, the trash can, or to carry groceries.
  - Visit elderly shut-ins and plan programs for them. Consider “adopting” an elderly person who has few visitors or family.
  - Help children lead out in a story hour for neighborhood kids and adults.
  - Look for people who seem lonely at church or school and say a friendly hello.
  - Offer to help hand out programs before church, or to clean up after church.

## Teach Children to be Grateful and Generous

Magnanimous stewardship leads to gratitude for what we have, and a recognition that it is to be used to serve the Owner. Gratitude helps children keep the allure of self-centeredness at bay, while empowering them to use good judgment.

Gratitude is the source of true generosity. For the Christian, it begins with intense gratitude to the ultimate Giver for the ultimate Gift. This is why the first step of stewardship is a relationship with God and Jesus. When children experience giving out of gratitude, it is life-changing.

1. **Exemplify gratitude by reflecting it in how you treat others.** Show priorities by the distribution of your time and resources. The adults in children's lives have the privilege to emulate Christ's example in self-sacrifice and generosity.
2. **Explore simple pleasures,** such as making homemade gifts or playing games.
3. **Allow for children to do extra chores to earn money** for items you are unable to afford, advising them to make sensible decisions with their own money.
4. **Initiate traditions of thankfulness.** Send thank you notes to people who sometimes go unnoticed—a teacher or aide who has been extra-helpful, the mail delivery person, the garbage man. During meal times or in the car, begin a tradition of naming four things each family member is thankful for that day. Make thankfulness a regular theme in your prayers.
5. **Encourage children to express appreciation** for what people do for them, such as when handed something they dropped, or for the meal a parent or grandparent prepared. Mention how helpful it is to have policemen, doctors, store cashiers and others. Make a game of who can think of the most things other people did for them that day.
6. **Do not negotiate with a nag.** Nagging is one way children try to get what they want. Teach them that a firm, "No," should suffice in public places, that sometimes you'll be unable to discuss, "Why?" right away. Follow up with, "It isn't healthy food," or, "It's too expensive," or, "It is not a safe toy or activity." Though sometimes painful, you are teaching them how to make good decisions.
7. **Celebrate holidays and birthdays with more simplicity.**
  - Focus on activities you can do together rather on how many gifts they'll get.
  - Decrease extravagant gift-giving. Recognize birthdays, Christmas and special holidays by wrapping up a mix of "fun" toys, games and treats, and "useful" gifts—such as clothes, art supplies, books, hobby materials the family can enjoy together, or a gift relating to your child's individual passion. Strike a healthy balance. Extend birthday celebrations by inviting your child

to a special treat in their honor—as a family, or just with you.

- Create homemade gifts or experiences within your means: Hand painted wooden blocks, an outside fort or tree house, a doll house, or a coupon for their favorite meal to be prepared as a special treat for them.
- Depending on what your child enjoys, and what is available in your area, wrap the gift of an event, or excursion: A park, a beach, a river, ice skating, roller blading, bike trip, camping trip, a pizza party for their friends in your home, a train ride, a visit to the zoo or aquarium, or to the local children's museum.
- Simplify birthday parties to be less elaborate or expensive, by planning them around a general theme, rather than a commercial one. Stick to a budget. Keep party favors simple, utilizing the dollar store for these, tableware, and decorations. Though celebrating with all of their classmates may sometimes be appropriate, suggest getting together with a couple of friends for a planned activity, instead.
- Give gifts of time to each other. Offer to play a child's favorite game with them, and encourage siblings to play each others' favorite games during the holidays.
- Encourage children to create a homemade card, or prepare a handwritten note for a grandparent's birthday, or a special holiday.

## **8. Encourage generosity.**

- Volunteer as a family through various organizations in the city to help sort clothing, deliver holiday food baskets, or participate in Meals on Wheels.
- Have children pick out a child to sponsor through organizations that provide educational services and humanitarian aid.
- Designate a Giving Jar—a clear container where family members can add loose change before they decide where to donate it.
- Create a Generosity Box. Discuss and choose a project to donate to as a family. Add items to it yourself, and encourage the children to do the same. Take care to not use this as a place to discard old or impractical items that may insult the recipient.

- In addition to their tithe, encourage children to give an offering to support a specific church program. Giving clarifies priorities and generates ownership in a particular cause that is meaningful to them. This helps them develop emotionally and spiritually. It draws attention to who really owns this world, the meaning of life, our purpose in life, and the ultimate joy of eternal life.

Teaching and practicing these concepts initiates the spirit of generosity among all family members and generates magnanimous hearts predisposed to gratitude.