



July 2008



## Summer Faith-Building Ideas

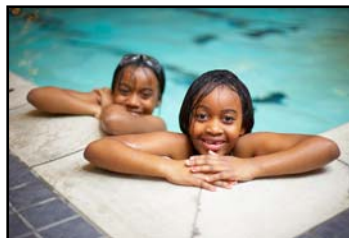
The summer months provide a much-needed break from many day-to-day routines. Unfortunately, it can be tempting to take a break from God and church, too. Thankfully, God never takes a vacation from us, which is an important concept to share with your children.

Most churches provide fun summer faith events such as vacation Bible school, camps, outdoor worship, service projects, and more. But summer also comes with many built-in opportunities to discuss God with your family.

On trips and adventures, share how God is our guide and road map. While exploring the outdoors, talk about God's amazing creation. And fill summer's long, carefree days with some fun faith-building activities. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

**Go on a "quiet hike."** Listen for how many sounds you can hear. Then talk about the variety of ways we can praise God (Psalm 150).

**Tie the Bible into water fun.** At a swimming pool, play a game of Tag with the Big Fish chasing Jonah. Have a family fishing derby and talk about how Jesus calls us to fish for people (Mark 1:17).



**Enjoy a family picnic.** Fill a picnic basket together and then find a relaxing spot to eat. During your meal, talk about how your family works as a team. Discuss the variety of talents in your family and church. Wrap up the picnic by talking about the work ethic of ants (Proverbs 6:6-8).

### The Importance of Parents

A recent Barna Group study revealed that while 85% of parents believe they have the primary responsibility for their children's moral and spiritual development, 66% admit to handing off that responsibility to their churches.

Most respondents to a recent *Children's Ministry Magazine* poll agreed that parents have the biggest influence on their children's faith development—and that parents need to "own" that. But they also said churches must help empower parents to impact their kids spiritually. Talk to your pastor or children's ministry director for more help with fulfilling that important role.

PowerSource

#### Ask God:

1. To help you be proactive about nurturing your children's faith.
2. To protect your children physically and spiritually this summer.
3. To help your family openly discuss God and faith issues.

#### Fun + Faith

Summer evenings with your children can't be beat. Why not combine the fun with some faith-building? Try these ideas from *Children's Ministry Magazine*:

1. **Night-Sky Insight**—Camp out in your back yard under the stars and talk about Abraham's descendants (Genesis 22:17) and how God wants us to shine like stars (Philippians 2:15).
2. **Green-Thumb Visit**—Spend a cool evening at a community garden and marvel at the variety of plants, vegetables, and flowers. Discuss how God cares for plants—and us (Matthew 6:28-34).
3. **Meet and Greet**—Together, hand out ice water or ice cream treats to people at a local park and invite them to a special event at your church.

## OpenTheBook

"[Jesus] said, 'I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

**Matthew 18:3**

Jesus tells his followers to strive for a childlike faith—one that's pure, trusting, and real. When telling your children about God, simpler is usually better. For example, try these easy, no-prop summer games:

### Teachable Moments

1. **Bible Charades**—Act out Bible people and events. Examples include animals entering Noah's Ark, Daniel in the Lions' Den, any of Jesus' miracles, etc. After guessing each one, share what it means for us today.



2. **Follow the Leader**—Take turns leading one another around outside. Then talk about what it's like to follow God and trust him completely (Isaiah 42:16).
3. **Seek and Find**—Go on a scavenger hunt in your neighborhood or in a park. Afterward, gather to discuss how God searches for—and celebrates—us (Luke 15).



"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are **ON THE ROAD**, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." **Deuteronomy 11:18-19, NLT**

**Car trips provide great opportunities for family discussions. While you have a captive audience, share stories about your own summer memories. Then ask your children these questions:**

1. Talk about what you like most about summer. What are some of your favorite memories and outings?
2. Why is it important to sometimes take a break from our work? What are some things you've learned while having fun?
3. What might happen if God took a vacation from us? How does it feel to know that God will never leave us?
4. Why is Jesus so important to you? What are some ways you can show how much you love him?

## Family Experience: Creation Stations

**Celebrate summer—and faith—with these crafts and Bible connections. Then cool down with some sweet treats.**

- **One-of-a-Kind Kids**—Using kid-friendly tie-dye kits (available from craft and hobby stores), let each family member design a special T-shirt. Then talk about how God made each one of you unique (Psalm 139:13-14).
- **He's Our Rock**—As you go on adventures during the summer, have children collect interesting-looking rocks and pebbles. Then set up some nontoxic acrylic paints, glue, and markers so everyone can decorate rock creatures. Save your paperweights as reminders of Jesus, our Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4).
- **Scream for Ice Cream**—Have a blast creating Bible-based ice cream "Sundays." For example, make a Red Sea Split, complete with a banana trough and strawberry syrup. Use rainbow sherbet to make Joseph's Cone of Many Colors. Stack several ice cream flavors and add sprinkles to make a colorful Tower of Babel. For Noah's Ark, surround ice cream with a "flood" of chocolate syrup and top it with animal crackers. Make Samson by covering a giant scoop of ice cream with coconut "hair." Encourage kids to get creative and come up with their own Bible-based recipes!





## What's Playing at the Movies

**Movie:** *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl* (July 2)

**Genre:** Comedy, Drama, Mystery

**Rating:** G

**Cast:** Abigail Breslin, Julia Ormond, Chris O'Donnell, Joan Cusack, Stanley Tucci

**Synopsis:** Kit, an aspiring Depression-era reporter, stars in the first feature film based on the popular "American Girl" book series. Kit, 10, visits Cincinnati's "hobo jungle" to cover a crime spree, and her resulting article sparks community sympathy. When Kit's mom becomes a crime victim, Kit's loyalties are tested. She and her friends must fight to uncover a far-reaching plot.

**Discussion Questions:** Why do people like to know all the latest news and gossip? How might wanting to know everything about everyone lead to trouble? If you could live in any other time period, which would you choose and why?



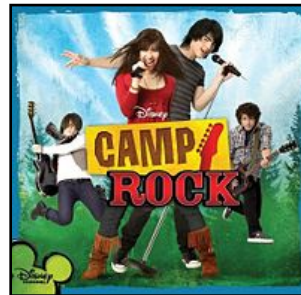
## What Music Is Releasing

**Album:** *Camp Rock* soundtrack

**Artist Info:** This compilation CD features artists such as the Jonas Brothers and Demi Lovato.

**Summary:** This is the soundtrack to the Disney Channel original movie musical, which premiered in June. The movie and songs are aimed at tweens (kids ages 10-13). The music has a pop-rock feel with fun beats. Like other recent Disney original movies, the *Camp Rock* songs are full of positive messages about being yourself and following your dreams. (In the movie, kids attending a prestigious music camp deal with competition and handling the spotlight.)

**Discussion Questions:** If you could attend any kind of camp this summer, what would it be, and why? Do you do better or worse when faced with pressure and competition? Explain. What would be the title track of your life's album right now?



## What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures</i>	Combines construction fun with movie action. Contains cartoon violence with LEGO characters breaking into pieces.	E10+; Nintendo DS, Wii, PS2, PS3, PSP, Windows, Xbox 360
<i>Kung Fu Panda</i>	Players master specialized fighting styles. Contains fantasy violence and mild language.	E10+; Nintendo DS, Wii, PS3, Xbox 360
<i>Hot Shots Golf: Open Tee 2</i>	This game supports online play on 12 courses. Contains mild suggestive themes, plus some mean-spirited preset comments.	Not yet rated; PSP

**GAME RATINGS KEY:** EC=Early Childhood, E=Everyone (ages 6+), E10+ (ages 10+), T=Teen (ages 13+)



## Culture & Trends

**What's happening right now that may affect your children and family:**

- In an effort to help their children build strong friendship networks, parents in Australia have begun buying kids their own business cards.
- New parents no longer have to rely on mass e-mails to keep family and friends in the loop. A hot trend for 2008 is personalized Web sites for babies, complete with updated photos and even blogs.

## Quick Stats

- 82% of parents say onscreen smoking should not warrant an "R" rating for movies. *(Shape magazine)*



- 80% of parents say they're fed up with the media's influence on their kids. *(Parents magazine)*

# July 2008

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		Canada Day!				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Missions Sunday						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Family Camp July 13 - 20						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
	Kids Rock Eastern Region July 28-30			Kids Rock Western Region July 31 – Aug 2		