



the Parent LINK

May 2011



Provides special needs ministry through our **SEA STARS** program at our Sunday 8:30 a.m. service. If you know families who could benefit from this ministry or for further information please contact us at (203) 479-7605!



POWERSOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. To help your children look beyond differences to see that God made everyone in a special way.
2. To give your children compassionate hearts and helping hands for people with special needs.
3. To show how you can assist families dealing with disabilities.

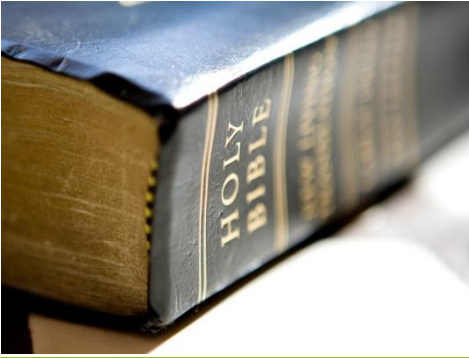
Emphasize Acceptance for All

According to the National Organization on Disability, 54 million Americans have a disability. That's one in every five people. And a significant number of them are children. Many churches now have special-needs ministries, and more kids with disabilities are being mainstreamed into school classrooms. That means your children likely spend time with kids they may consider "different." Use these tips to emphasize everyone's worth:

- **Build relationships.** Show your children that it's okay to talk to people with disabilities and to treat them as you would treat anyone else. Introduce yourself to parents of special-needs children and discover what types of assistance they could use.
- **Clarify misconceptions.** Children notice differences, so address their already-established stereotypes and oversimplified generalizations about groups of people. Watch and correct judgmental statements and actions. Be a role model by valuing diversity, celebrating individuality, and respecting differences.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

- About 90% of families with a special-needs child are unchurched. (*pastors.com*)
- According to various sources, divorce rates for couples who have a special-needs child are as high as 75% or 85%.
- In the United States, an estimated 100,000 children are waiting to be adopted, and many of them have special needs.



“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ... Our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. ... Some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary.”

(1 Corinthians 12:12, 18, 22)

God, our Creator, has a plan and purpose for every life.

Teachable Moments

1. Lovely Reflections—With babies and toddlers, hold up a mirror so they can see their reflection. Show them that everyone looks different in a mirror but emphasize that everyone is special—regardless of skin color or appearance.

2. Role-Plays—Help children practice what they might do or say in real-life situations. Propose various encounters with children who have different challenges. Then debrief each role-play to point out the positive things children did or said.

3. Special Friends—Seek out people in your family, church, or neighborhood who are coping with physical challenges. Spend time with them as a family, providing assistance and companionship. These low-key experiences will show children how much they have in common with people who appear to be different from them.



Discuss people’s unique needs by using these conversation-starting questions:

1. Why do you think God made people with different appearances, gifts, and abilities?
2. How do you feel and react to someone who’s different from you?
3. What’s the best way to respond when other people point out your weaknesses or flaws?
4. What types of things can we learn from people who are different from us? How can we get to know them better?

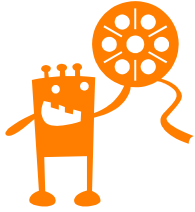
FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Learn valuable lessons with these fun activities:

• **In Full Bloom**—You’ll need chenille craft wires and various colors of tissue paper cut into 10x20-inch wide strips. Have family members stack six tissue paper strips and then smooth them flat. Fold the stacks lengthwise, accordion-style, in 2-inch sections, making five folds. Then twist a wire tightly around the center of the accordion-folded paper. To create the blossoms, spread the folds on both sides of the wire and gently pull each layer of tissue paper toward the center. When all the layers have been pulled, a beautiful flower blossom remains. Read aloud Psalm 139:13-14. Ask: “How are all our flowers like the people God made? What would it be like if every flower looked the same or if every person looked the same? What traits or characteristics set you apart from everyone else?”



• **Mixed Together**—You’ll need a bowl of cookie dough, some flour, an egg, a spoon, and a variety of chips and sprinkles. Hold up the flour and egg, and ask: “Who’d like to try these ingredients? How can these ingredients become something that tastes better?” Say: “We need to mix these with other ingredients.” Read aloud 1 Corinthians 12:14-17, 27. Say: “What would happen if we left out an ingredient from our recipe? What would happen if one of us wasn’t part of our family or church?” Hand out cookie dough so each person can add chips and sprinkles. Then bake the cookies. While enjoying them, discuss ways that all of you are important “ingredients.”



MEDIA MADNESS



MOVIES

Movie: *Kung Fu Panda 2*

Genre:
Animated comedy

Rating: To be determined

Cast: Jack Black, Angelina Jolie, Jackie Chan

Synopsis: This sequel features Po, the lovably transformed panda, who now has an awesome life protecting the Valley of Peace. When a new villain threatens to take over China, Po must deal with his mysterious past to protect his homeland, traditions, and friends.

Our Take: This sequel, slated for a Memorial Day weekend opening, is sure to be a hit with children and families. Parents can discuss other cultures and backgrounds, as well as good and bad ways to pursue dreams and face challenges.



MUSIC

Artist: Mandisa

Album: *What If We Were Real*

Artist Info:

Mandisa placed ninth on season five of *American Idol*. After some body-image struggles, she recently reached her goal of losing 100 pounds.

Summary: The theme of Mandisa's third album is taking off our "masks" as Christians so people can know the truth about Jesus. About the first single, "Stronger," she says, "God is able to take us through the difficult times and bring us out stronger."

Our Take: Mandisa's encouraging lyrics and catchy gospel-pop tunes will be popular with preteens. And her messages will hit home with kids struggling with their own self-esteem issues. As Mandisa sings in "Stronger," "God's right there, even if it's hard to see him."

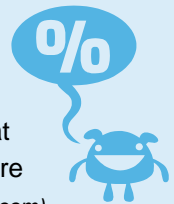


CULTURE & TRENDS

- Prosecutors say a rise in girl-on-girl violence (often caught on tape) may be attributed to reality shows such as *Teen Mom 2* and *Jersey Shore*. (today.msnbc.msn.com)
- Consumer groups have petitioned the Food & Drug Administration to study the effects of common food dyes on children. Research suggests some children with ADHD may be affected by these dyes.

QUICK STATS

- In a nationwide poll, only 25% of parents said they lie to their kids about what they did when they were their kids' age. (Parade.com)
- About 20 percent of American kids are only children, up from 10 percent 50 years ago. (Parents.com)



GAMES & SITES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars</i>	As movie buffs act out their favorite on-screen moments, they now have the ability to attack planets.	E; Wii, Xbox 360, PS3, Nintendo 3DS
<i>Rayman: 3D</i>	This remake uses stereoscopic 3D effects, which may cause vision damage in children under 6. Contains cartoon violence.	E; Nintendo 3DS
<i>Math Blaster</i>	Kids can sharpen their math skills while playing futuristic adventure games. Some play is free, but paid membership offers more options.	Mathblaster.com

This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, listen to, and wear.



