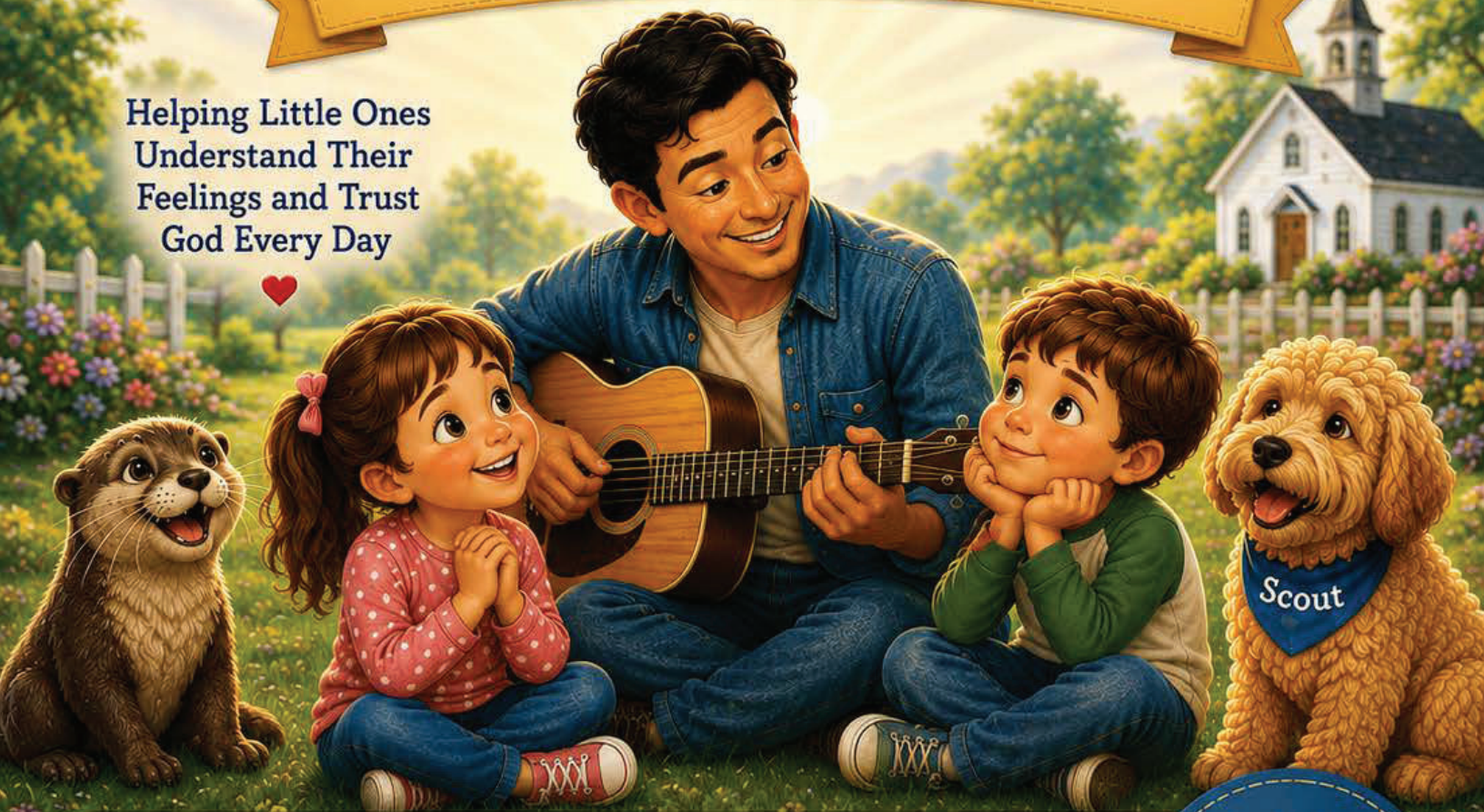


The Shepherd's Meadow™

♥ Little Hearts, Big Feelings ♥

A Companion Guidebook for Parents, Grandparents,
♥ and Caregivers ♥

Helping Little Ones
Understand Their
Feelings and Trust
God Every Day



Understand Big Feelings

Help children
recognize and
name what they
are feeling.



Biblical Truths Made Simple

Each song is
rooted in Scripture
and teaches
God's truth.



Practical Tools for Everyday Life

Activities,
conversations,
and ideas you can
use right away.



Stronger Faith. Stronger Hearts. Stronger Families.

Growing together
in God's love—
one song at a time.

Includes
12 Song
Devotions,
Activities &
Discussion
Starters!



Based on the Little Hearts, Big Feelings album
Songs for Little Hearts and Big Emotions

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

Learning to Bring Our Feelings to God

A Companion Guidebook for Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers

Based on the 12-song album

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

The Shepherd's Meadow

Helping little ones understand what they are feeling, bring those feelings to God, believe His Word, and learn to respond in ways that are right.

The Heart of This Guide

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

Children do not need to pretend they are never afraid.

They do not need to pretend they are never angry.

They do not need to hide sadness.

They will experience disappointment.

They will have to wait.

They will want their own way.

The purpose of this guide is not to teach little children that feelings are bad.

It is to begin teaching something much more important:

My feelings are real, but my feelings do not decide what is true or what I should do.

God's Word gives us truth.

Prayer gives us somewhere to bring what we are feeling.

And with help from the adults who love and care for us, we can learn to respond wisely.

For little hearts with big feelings.

Joe Soares

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Little Hearts, Big Feelings

Learning to Bring Our Feelings to God

Companion Guidebook for Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers

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Scripture

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the **King James Version (KJV)**.

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Educational Use

This guidebook is designed to help parents, grandparents, caregivers, and families use the songs as starting points for biblical teaching and everyday conversations about emotions, choices, prayer, and trust in God.

It is not intended to replace the Bible, pastoral guidance, professional counseling, medical care, mental health care, legal advice, or the judgment and responsibility of a child's parent or legal guardian.

Parents and caregivers should adapt activities and discussions to the age, development, abilities, and individual needs of each child.

A Note About Feelings

This guidebook does not teach children to ignore, deny, or hide their feelings.

Fear, anger, sadness, disappointment, frustration, and other emotions are real experiences.

The goal is to help children begin learning that:

Feelings are real, but feelings do not determine truth.

Children can learn to recognize what they are feeling, talk about it with a trusted adult, bring it to God in prayer, believe what God says in His Word, and choose an appropriate response.

Child Safety

Nothing in this guide concerning obedience, patience, kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, trust, or prayer should be interpreted as requiring a child to hide unsafe behavior, keep harmful secrets, accept unwanted contact, obey dangerous instructions, or remain in an unsafe situation.

Children should be encouraged to tell a parent, guardian, or trusted caregiver whenever something frightens, hurts, confuses, or concerns them.

The Shepherd's Meadow

The Shepherd's Meadow is a Joe Soares Music children's music and teaching project.

Joe Soares Music & Publishing LLC

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A Note to Parents and Grandparents

Little hearts can carry very big feelings.

A child may be laughing one moment and crying the next. A favorite cup is unavailable. Someone else has the toy. Thunder shakes the windows. The bedroom looks different after the lights go out. It is time to leave the playground. A promised activity has to be canceled.

To an adult, some of these things may seem small.

To a little child, they may not feel small at all.

That is one reason these early years give us such a wonderful opportunity to teach.

Feelings Are Not the Enemy

This guide is not about teaching children to stop feeling.

We do not want a frightened child to think, "I shouldn't be scared."

We do not want a sad child to believe, "I shouldn't cry."

And when a child becomes angry, simply having the feeling does not mean that child is bad.

Instead, we want to begin teaching a distinction that will become increasingly important as the child grows:

What I feel and what I do are not the same thing.

A child can feel angry without hitting.

A child can feel disappointed without demanding his or her own way.

A child can feel afraid and ask for help.

A child can feel sad and cry while being comforted.

A child can become frustrated while waiting and still learn patience.

These are lessons that take time.

We should not expect a two-year-old to respond with the maturity of a ten-year-old, or a ten-year-old with the maturity of an adult.

We are planting seeds.

Bring Those Feelings to God

One of the greatest habits we can begin teaching a child is remarkably simple:

Talk to God about it.

The Bible does not present God's people as people who never experience fear, sorrow, anger, trouble, or disappointment.

David wrote:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Notice what David did not say.

He did not say, “I am never afraid.”

He said, “**What time I am afraid...**”

Then came the response:

“I will trust in thee.”

That little verse captures the heart of this entire album and guidebook.

The feeling was real.

But the feeling did not get the final word.

God did.

A Simple Pattern for Little Hearts

Throughout this guide, we will return to four simple ideas:

Feel it.

Help your child recognize what is happening.

“You look sad.”

“That frightened you.”

“You're disappointed because we can't go today.”

“You're angry because you wanted another turn.”

We do not have to exaggerate the emotion, but neither do we need to pretend it isn't there.

Bring it to God.

Teach children that prayer is not reserved for church, bedtime, or meals.

They can talk to God when thunder frightens them.

They can pray when they are angry.

They can pray while waiting.

They can pray when plans change.

They can pray when their heart hurts.

Believe His Word.

Feelings can change quickly.

God's truth does not.

As children grow, we want their confidence to rest increasingly upon what God has said rather than upon whatever they happen to feel at that moment.

Respond rightly.

Then comes the practical question:

What should I do now?

Maybe I need gentle hands.

Maybe I need kind words.

Maybe I need to wait.

Maybe I need to accept that I cannot have my way.

Maybe I need to tell Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, or another trusted caregiver what happened.

Maybe I simply need to pray.

This is where biblical truth begins becoming part of everyday life.

You Do Not Have to Teach Everything at Once

Please don't turn every emotional moment into a long lesson.

Sometimes your little one needs a hug more than a speech.

Sometimes one familiar line from a song may be enough:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

“I don't have to have my way.”

“Wait, wait, wait.”

“Gentle hands.”

“I can pray.”

Over time, those little phrases can become familiar reminders of truths you have already taught when everyone was calm.

That is one of the reasons we use music.

A song can put truth into a little heart in a form that is easy to remember.

And one day, in the middle of a very big feeling, you may hear your child begin singing the answer.

That is what *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* is all about.

Joe Soares

The Shepherd’s Meadow

How to Use This Guide

You do not need a classroom.

You do not need a complicated lesson plan.

You do not need to turn your home into a school.

You need a song, a few minutes, an open Bible, and a willingness to talk with your child about what God says.

That is enough.

Start With the Song

Each chapter in this guide corresponds with one song from *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*.

Listen together.

Sing along.

Let your child learn the hook.

Do the motions when they fit the song.

If your little one wants to hear the same song again, play it again. Repetition is one of the ways young children learn.

The goal is not simply for children to know the words.

We want them to begin understanding the truth behind the words.

Then Open the Bible

Every song is connected to Scripture.

The song is not the authority.

God's Word is.

The songs simply help little children remember truths we find in the Bible.

You may discover that some of the verses used in this guide contain words or ideas that are beyond a preschooler's understanding. That is all right.

Read the Scripture anyway.

Then explain one small truth from it in words your child can understand.

For example:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

A little child may not understand everything about biblical faith and trust.

But the child can begin learning:

“When I'm scared, I can trust God.”

That little truth can grow with them.

Use the Grandpa and Child Conversations

The songs often include simple conversations between Grandpa and a child.

That is intentional.

Young children learn through interaction.

You can use the same idea at home.

Ask:

“What can you do when you're afraid?”

Let your child answer:

“I can trust God.”

Ask:

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

“What can you do while you wait?”

“I can pray.”

“Do you always have to have your way?”

“No.”

These little exchanges turn listening into participation.

You can substitute **Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, or another caregiver** for the Grandpa role. The important part is the loving interaction between an adult and child.

Talk About Real Moments

The best opportunity to use these songs may not happen while the music is playing.

It may happen later.

Thunder rolls outside.

Your child wants another cookie and the answer is no.

Someone grabs a toy.

It is taking too long to get ready.

A trip to the playground gets canceled because it is raining.

The bedroom is dark.

Someone's feelings get hurt.

Those are Shepherd's Meadow moments.

Instead of giving a long speech, you might simply ask:

“Do you remember our song?”

Then sing one familiar line together.

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

“I don't have to have my way.”

“Wait, wait, wait.”

“Gentle hands.”

“Kind words.”

“I can pray.”

The song becomes a bridge between the lesson and real life.

Keep the Lessons Short

Preschool children do not need a thirty-minute devotional after every song.

Five meaningful minutes may accomplish far more.

Read a verse.

Explain one truth.

Ask one or two questions.

Try an activity.

Pray together.

Then go play.

There will be another opportunity tomorrow.

Do Not Demand a Performance

Your child does not have to answer every question correctly.

They do not have to sing every word.

They do not have to sit perfectly still.

They do not have to demonstrate instant emotional maturity because they heard a song about patience.

We are teaching.

We are modeling.

We are repeating.

We are giving children words they can eventually use when their feelings become big.

Growth takes time.

Use the Activities Naturally

The activities in this guide are intentionally simple.

Some can be done at the kitchen table.

Some work in the car.

Some happen outside.

Some require nothing more than your hands, a toy, or a conversation.

You do not need to complete every activity.

Choose what fits your child and your family.

If an activity becomes frustrating, stop.

The activity serves the child.

The child does not serve the activity.

Pray Simply

A preschooler's prayer does not need to sound impressive.

“God, I'm scared. Please help me.”

“God, I'm angry. Help me use gentle hands.”

“God, I'm sad. Thank You for hearing me.”

“God, waiting is hard. Please help me.”

Those are meaningful prayers.

You are teaching your child that God is not Someone we talk about only on Sunday.

We can talk to Him throughout ordinary life.

Remember the Pattern

As you move through all twelve songs, keep returning to the same simple pattern:

Feel it.

Help the child recognize the feeling.

Bring it to God.

Teach the child to pray.

Believe His Word.

Show the child what God says.

Respond rightly.

Help the child choose what to do next.

You will see that pattern again and again throughout *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*.

The circumstances will change.

The feelings will change.

But God's truth will not.

And that is where we begin.

Understanding Little Hearts and Big Feelings

Before we begin the individual songs, it helps to understand what is happening when a little child experiences a very big feeling.

Adults have had years to learn words such as frustrated, disappointed, worried, embarrassed, impatient, lonely, and overwhelmed.

A preschooler may simply know:

I don't like this.

And suddenly there are tears.

Or yelling.

Or a toy gets thrown.

Or little hands push.

Or the child runs to Mom, Dad, Grandma, or Grandpa and wants to be held.

The feeling may seem much bigger than the event that caused it.

That does not mean we should let feelings control the home.

It means our little ones are still learning what to do with them.

Feelings and Behavior Are Different

This distinction is at the heart of *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*.

Suppose another child takes a toy.

Your child becomes angry.

The anger is one thing.

Hitting the other child is another.

Or suppose you tell your child it is time to leave the playground.

The child feels disappointed.

That disappointment is real.

But screaming, kicking, or refusing to leave is a response to the disappointment.

We want children gradually to understand:

I can feel something strongly without doing whatever the feeling tells me to do.

That is a very important lesson.

The Bible Gives Us a Helpful Example

Scripture does not pretend anger never happens.

The Bible says:

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Those few words give us an important distinction.

There is anger.

And there is what we do with anger.

That is something even a little child can begin learning.

You might say:

“I know you're angry because you wanted the toy. But we don't hit when we're angry. Let's use gentle hands.”

The child is not being told the feeling does not exist.

The child is being taught what to do next.

Fear Works the Same Way

A loud thunderstorm can be frightening to a preschooler.

And thunder really can be loud.

We do not need to respond:

“There's nothing to be afraid of.”

Your child just heard the windows shake.

To that little heart, there certainly seems to be something frightening happening.

Instead, Scripture gives us better words:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

We can say:

“That thunder was loud. It scared you. Come sit with me. Do you remember what our song says? When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

Now we have acknowledged what the child experienced while directing the child's heart toward truth.

Sadness Does Not Always Need to Be Fixed

Sometimes adults are so eager to make a child happy again that we rush past sadness.

A toy breaks.

A friend leaves.

A pet dies.

Grandma goes home.

A child gets hurt.

Something the child was looking forward to gets canceled.

Sometimes the appropriate response is simply to be there.

A child may need to cry.

A child may need a hug.

A child may need to hear:

“I know you're sad. You can tell me about it.”

And then we can begin teaching:

“You can tell God too.”

Prayer does not require us to pretend everything feels wonderful.

Wanting Is Not the Same as Needing

Preschoolers are also learning something adults still struggle with:

I can really want something without needing to have it.

A child may desperately want another treat.

Another turn.

Another television program.

A particular toy.

To stay at the playground.

To wear one particular shirt that happens to be in the washing machine.

The desire can feel enormous.

That gives us an opportunity to teach:

“You can want it and still accept no.”

That is the heart behind:

I don't have to have my way.

We are not teaching children that their wishes never matter.

We are teaching that wanting something does not automatically make it right, necessary, or available.

Waiting Is Something We Learn

Waiting is difficult when you have only been alive for a few years.

Five minutes can feel enormous.

“Tomorrow” may seem impossibly far away.

So when we sing:

“Wait, wait, wait,”

we are practicing something.

Waiting for a turn.

Waiting for food.

Waiting for someone to finish speaking.

Waiting for a special day.

Waiting while Mom or Dad finishes something.

Little opportunities to wait become little opportunities to practice patience.

Give Feelings Names

One of the simplest things an adult can do is help a child find words.

“You look disappointed.”

“That frightened you.”

“You're angry.”

“You're sad because Daddy had to leave.”

“Waiting is frustrating right now.”

Then give the child room to respond.

You may even discover that your first guess was wrong.

That is okay.

We are helping children learn to communicate rather than assuming every difficult feeling must come out through difficult behavior.

Do Not Make Prayer a Punishment

This is especially important for this album.

We repeatedly teach children to pray when feelings become big.

But prayer should never sound like:

“You're behaving badly. Go pray until you can act right.”

We do not want a little child to associate prayer with being sent away in disgrace.

Instead, come alongside.

“You're having a hard time. Let's pray together.”

Then keep the prayer simple:

“God, we're having a hard time right now. Please help us use gentle hands and kind words. Amen.”

Now prayer becomes what it should be.

Coming to God.

Sometimes the Adult Needs to Slow Down Too

Little hearts are not the only ones with big feelings.

A screaming preschooler can test the patience of the most loving parent or grandparent.

There may be moments when the adult needs to remember the same principle:

Feelings are real, but feelings do not have to determine my response.

Our children are watching us.

They are learning something about anger from the way we handle ours.

They are learning something about disappointment from the way we handle ours.

They are learning something about patience while waiting for us to demonstrate it.

We will not do this perfectly.

But we can model what we are teaching.

The Goal Is Growth

Do not measure the success of this guide by whether your preschooler stops having meltdowns.

That is not a realistic goal.

Instead, look for little signs of growth.

A child who once hit immediately pauses for a moment.

A child says:

“I’m mad.”

A frightened child remembers:

“I trust God.”

A child who does not get another treat says:

“I don’t have to have my way.”

A child waiting for a turn begins singing:

“Wait, wait, wait.”

A sad child crawls onto Grandma's lap and says:

“Can we pray?”

Those may seem like little things.

But little things are exactly where we are beginning.

Little hearts.

Big feelings.

And little by little, learning what to do with them.

Song 1: When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

Fear is one of the first big feelings a child learns to recognize.

A loud noise.

A dark room.

A strange place.

A bad dream.

A thunderstorm that suddenly shakes the house.

An unfamiliar person.

Mom or Dad walking out of sight.

For an adult, some of these things may seem ordinary. For a little child, they can feel enormous.

This first song begins *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* with an important lesson:

Being afraid does not mean something is wrong with me.

And being afraid does not mean I have forgotten God.

The question is:

What can I do when I am afraid?

The answer comes directly from Scripture.

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

The Big Truth

When I feel afraid, I can trust God.

Notice again what Psalm 56:3 does not say.

David did not say:

“I will never be afraid.”

He said:

“What time I am afraid...”

Fear was present.

Then came a choice:

“I will trust in thee.”

That distinction is important for little children.

We are not teaching them that good Christian boys and girls never become frightened.

We are teaching them where to turn when fear comes.

Start With the Song

Listen to **When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God** together.

Encourage your child to learn the main hook:

**When I feel afraid,
I trust God.**

You do not need to explain everything the first time.

Sing it.

Repeat it.

Let those words become familiar.

The goal is for the phrase to become something your child can remember when fear is no longer just part of a song.

When the Thunder Goes Boom

Thunder deserves special attention because it is a very real childhood fear.

A Florida thunderstorm can become loud quickly.

The sky darkens.

Lightning flashes.

Then:

BOOM.

A little child may run across the room and grab you.

That is not necessarily the moment for a lecture about meteorology.

Hold them.

Let them know they are safe with you.

You might say:

“That thunder was really loud. It scared you.”

Then, when appropriate:

“Do you remember our song?”

And together:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

You can even open the Bible and read:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Now the thunderstorm has become an opportunity to connect a song, a real feeling, and God's Word.

Trusting God Does Not Mean Ignoring Danger

This distinction matters.

We never want a child to learn:

“If I trust God, I should never ask for help.”

That is not what this song teaches.

If something frightens a child, we want that child to know he or she can tell a trusted adult.

Teach:

Trust God and tell me.

If your child hears something frightening at night, let them tell you.

If someone makes your child uncomfortable, let them tell you.

If something hurts, let them tell you.

If they are frightened and do not understand why, let them tell you.

Prayer should never become a substitute for seeking appropriate help.

Try the Grandpa and Child Questions

Use the call-and-response idea from the song.

You can be Grandpa, Grandma, Mom, or Dad.

Ask:

Adult: What can you do when you feel afraid?

Child: I can trust God.

Adult: What can you do when the thunder goes boom?

Child: I can trust God.

Adult: Can you tell me when you're scared?

Child: Yes.

Adult: Can we pray together?

Child: Yes.

Keep it light.

This is practice, not a test.

Activity: Boom, Then Trust

This is a simple way to practice the lesson when there is no actual storm.

You need nothing except your hands.

Tell your child:

“I'm going to make a pretend thunder sound.”

Gently clap your hands once.

Then say together:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

Clap twice.

Say it again.

You can let your child make the pretend thunder too.

Keep the activity playful rather than frightening.

The purpose is to connect the trigger:

Boom

with the remembered truth:

I trust God.

Then when real thunder eventually comes, those words may already be familiar.

Activity: What Can I Do?

Name several situations.

“It's dark in your room.”

Child responds:

“I can trust God.”

“You heard a loud noise.”

“I can trust God.”

“You had a scary dream.”

“I can trust God.”

Then add:

“You're scared and need Mommy.”

A good answer is:

“I can tell Mommy.”

This helps the child understand that trusting God and seeking comfort or help are not opposites.

A Little Prayer

Pray together:

Dear God, sometimes I get scared. Thank You that I can talk to You. Help me remember that when I am afraid, I can trust You. Help me tell someone who loves me when I am scared and need help. Amen.

For very little children:

God, I'm scared. Help me trust You. Amen.

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

Have you ever been scared?

Let your child answer without correcting the feeling.

Then ask:

What scared you?

Maybe the answer is thunder.

Maybe darkness.

Maybe a bug.

Maybe something that makes no sense to an adult.

Listen anyway.

Read

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Explain

Say:

“The Bible doesn't say we will never feel afraid. It tells us what we can do when we are afraid. We can trust God.”

Practice

Ask:

“When I feel afraid...”

Let your child finish:

“I trust God.”

Pray

“God, help us trust You when we are afraid. Amen.”

That is enough.

For Parents and Grandparents

Be careful not to shame fear.

Statements such as:

“Big boys aren't scared.”

“That's silly.”

“There's nothing to cry about.”

may stop a conversation you actually want your child to have with you.

A better response can be:

“I can see that frightened you. Tell me about it.”

Then you can determine whether there is actual danger, provide comfort, and bring biblical truth into the moment.

We want children eventually to understand that courage is not pretending fear does not exist.

Sometimes courage begins with admitting:

“I'm afraid.”

and then remembering:

“I will trust in thee.”

Memory Verse

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

This may be one of the easiest memory verses in the entire guidebook for a preschool child.

Say it at breakfast.

Say it in the car.

Say it before bed.

And when the Florida sky gets dark and that first big roll of thunder arrives, you may discover that your little one already knows what comes next.

When I feel afraid, I trust God.

Song 2: When I Get Angry

Anger can arrive very quickly in a little heart.

Someone takes the toy.

The answer is no.

A block tower falls down.

A sibling gets the first turn.

It is time to stop playing.

Something will not work the way the child wants it to work.

Suddenly a happy preschooler is very angry.

Anger itself gives us an important teaching opportunity. The goal is not to convince children that they must never feel angry. The goal is to begin teaching them that **anger does not get to decide what their hands, feet, or words do next.**

The Bible gives us a remarkably clear foundation:

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

The Big Truth

I may feel angry, but I can still choose what is right.

For a preschool child, we can make that even more practical:

When I get angry, stop and pray.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Those three little reminders can accomplish more in the middle of an angry moment than a long speech.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **When I Get Angry.**

The child will hear situations that are familiar:

Someone takes a toy.

Something does not go their way.

They feel like yelling.

They may want to push.

Then comes the response:

Stop and pray.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Practice the hook when your child is **not angry**.

That matters.

It is much easier to learn a new response while sitting happily with Grandpa than during a meltdown.

Later, when anger actually arrives, the words are already there.

“But I’m Mad”

Suppose your child wants another treat.

You say no.

The little face changes.

Then you hear:

“But I’m mad.”

You do not have to argue with that.

You might say:

“I know you’re mad. You really wanted another one.”

Then comes the boundary:

“You may be mad, but you may not hit.”

Or:

“You may be angry, but we still use kind words.”

That is an important distinction.

We can acknowledge a child's emotion without surrendering the responsibility to teach appropriate behavior.

Anger Is Not Permission

Young children sometimes behave as though a strong enough feeling changes the rules.

If I am angry enough, maybe I can hit.

If I am frustrated enough, maybe I can throw the toy.

If I scream loudly enough, perhaps the answer will change.

That is where loving consistency matters.

The answer does not have to become yes because the child became angry.

The boundary does not have to disappear because the child cried.

And the child does not have to be shamed for having the feeling.

We can calmly teach:

“I know you're angry. The answer is still no.”

Then:

“Let's remember what we do when we're angry.”

Stop and Pray

The song gives children a very simple interruption:

Stop and pray.

For a preschooler, stopping for even a few seconds can be significant.

We are beginning to create a little space between:

I feel angry

and

I act.

Prayer can become part of that pause.

Not as punishment.

Not as a formula that instantly makes anger disappear.

But as a reminder:

I can bring this feeling to God before I choose what to do next.

A child can pray:

“Jesus, I'm angry. Help me use gentle hands.”

That is enough.

Gentle Hands

Anger often appears physically before a preschooler has words for it.

Hands grab.

Hands push.

Hands hit.

Toys fly.

That makes **gentle hands** an especially useful phrase.

If you see little hands beginning to become rough, calmly say:

“Gentle hands.”

You may need to physically intervene to keep children safe. Biblical teaching does not mean standing across the room quoting a song while one child hits another.

Stop the unsafe behavior.

Then teach.

“You were angry. I understand. But we don't hit when we're angry.”

Later in this album we have an entire song devoted to **Gentle Hands**, so this phrase will become increasingly familiar.

Kind Words

Anger can also come through the mouth.

“I hate you.”

“You're mean.”

“No.”

“Mine.”

Preschoolers may repeat words they have heard without fully understanding their weight.

We can begin teaching:

“You can tell me you're angry without using hurtful words.”

Give the child better words:

“I'm mad.”

“I wanted a turn.”

“I don't like that.”

“Can you help me?”

Learning how to express anger appropriately is much better than simply demanding silence.

Activity: Stop, Hands, Words, Pray

Turn the song's lesson into four simple motions.

Stop

Hold up one hand like a stop sign.

Say:

“Stop.”

Hands

Hold both hands open.

Say:

“Gentle hands.”

Words

Point gently toward your mouth.

Say:

“Kind words.”

Pray

Fold your hands if that helps your child associate the motion with prayer.

Say:

“I can pray.”

Then put it together:

Stop.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

I can pray.

Practice it several times while everyone is having fun.

Activity: What Could You Say?

Give your child a situation:

“Someone has the toy you want.”

Instead of grabbing, what could you say?

“Can I have a turn?”

“Mommy says we have to leave the playground.”

What could you say?

Maybe:

“I’m sad we have to go.”

“Your block tower fell down.”

What could you do?

“Try again.”

The answers do not need to be perfect.

You are helping your child discover that there are choices between feeling angry and behaving badly.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try the song's call-and-response at home.

Grandpa: Is it okay to tell me you're angry?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Do angry hands hit?

Child: No.

Grandpa: What kind of hands?

Child: Gentle hands.

Grandpa: What kind of words?

Child: Kind words.

Grandpa: What can we do when we're angry?

Child: Stop and pray.

Mom, Dad, or Grandma can ask the same questions.

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“What makes you angry sometimes?”

Listen.

You may hear:

“My brother.”

“When you say no.”

“When I can't have candy.”

Do not be offended by the answer.

You asked.

Read

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Explain

Say:

“The Bible shows us that being angry and doing something wrong because we're angry are not the same thing. When we're angry, we still want to choose what is right.”

For a very young child:

“Sometimes we get angry. But we don't hit or hurt.”

Practice

Ask:

“When I get angry, what can I do?”

“Stop and pray.”

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

“What kind of words?”

“Kind words.”

Pray

“God, help us choose what is right when we are angry. Help us use gentle hands and kind words. Amen.”

For Parents and Grandparents

Be careful about teaching children that anger itself makes them sinful or bad.

Ephesians 4:26 gives us a more careful distinction:

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

At the same time, do not swing so far in the other direction that anger becomes an excuse for behavior.

“He hit because he was angry” may explain what happened.

It does not make hitting acceptable.

Our job is to help children connect the two:

“You were angry. Now let's learn what to do when you're angry.”

That is the heart of this chapter.

When the Adult Is Angry

This lesson becomes especially powerful when children see adults practice it too.

If you become frustrated, you might occasionally say:

“Grandpa is getting frustrated. I need to slow down and use kind words too.”

Imagine what that teaches.

The child discovers that these lessons are not rules invented only for little people.

Adults also have feelings.

Adults also make choices.

Adults also need God's help.

And adults sometimes need to apologize when they respond wrongly.

That example may teach more than a dozen lectures.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes I get angry. Help me stop before I hurt someone. Help me use gentle hands and kind words. Help me choose what is right even when I am mad. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

Jesus, I'm angry. Help me be gentle. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

You do not need to make a preschooler explain all the theology contained in that verse.

For now, one little lesson is enough:

I can be angry and still choose what is right.

And when that big feeling comes:

Stop and pray.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Song 3: Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

Gentleness is something little children can begin to understand because they can **see it and feel it**.

A gentle hand feels different from a push.

A gentle touch feels different from a grab.

A gentle voice sounds different from yelling.

A gentle child can still run, jump, laugh, play, and be excited. Gentleness does not mean being weak, timid, or silent.

It means learning to handle other people with care.

And because little children will not always find that easy, the title of this song is itself a prayer:

Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle.

The Big Truth

I can ask Jesus to help me choose gentleness.

The Bible includes gentleness among the fruit of the Spirit:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”
Galatians 5:22, KJV

A preschooler does not need a lengthy explanation of the fruit of the Spirit today.

For now, we can begin with one word:

Gentleness.

And then make that word something a little child can understand.

What Does Gentle Mean?

Ask your child:

“What does gentle feel like?”

Then show them.

Gently touch the back of their hand.

Say:

“That's gentle.”

Give a soft high-five.

“That's gentle.”

Pet Scout carefully.

“That's gentle.”

Hold a stuffed animal carefully.

“That's gentle.”

Now the word is no longer abstract.

The child can feel the difference.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle**.

Practice the main idea:

Gentle hands.

Gentle feet.

Gentle words.

Jesus, help me choose gentle today.

These are intentionally concrete.

A preschool child may not understand a long definition of gentleness, but the child understands hands, feet, and words.

Those are places where gentleness becomes visible.

Gentle Hands

Little hands can do wonderful things.

They can help.

They can hug.

They can build.

They can share.

They can hold another person's hand.

They can carefully pet an animal.

Those same little hands can also grab, shove, pinch, or hit when feelings become big.

When that happens, keep the correction simple:

“Gentle hands.”

If necessary, stop the child's hands to protect someone.

Then say:

“I won't let you hit. Let's use gentle hands.”

We can be both loving and firm.

Gentleness does not require adults to permit unsafe behavior.

Gentle Feet

Preschool feet are busy.

They run.

They jump.

They dance.

They climb.

They sometimes kick.

This gives us another very practical lesson.

Ask:

“What can our feet do?”

Walk.

Run.

Jump.

Dance.

Then ask:

“Do we use our feet to kick people?”

No.

The point is not that feet must always move slowly.

The point is that we do not use our bodies to hurt others.

Gentle Words

Gentleness is not limited to our hands.

Words can be rough too.

A child may not hit but may scream directly into someone's face.

Or say something intentionally hurtful.

That gives us another opportunity:

“Let's use gentle words.”

You might help the child replace:

“Give it to me.”

with:

“Can I have a turn?”

Replace:

“Go away.”

with:

“I want some space, please.”

Replace screaming with:

“Can you help me?”

We are not merely stopping behavior.

We are giving children better tools.

Gentleness Is Not Weakness

This is worth establishing even at this early stage.

Gentleness does not mean a child should allow another person to hurt them.

It does not mean they must remain quiet if something is wrong.

It does not mean they cannot say:

“No.”

“Stop.”

“I don't like that.”

“I need help.”

A child can speak firmly and still be taught not to hurt someone unnecessarily.

We want children who are gentle, not children who are afraid to speak.

Activity: Gentle or Rough?

Gather a stuffed animal, pillow, or other safe object.

Demonstrate two different ways of handling it.

First, gently hold the stuffed animal.

Ask:

“Gentle or rough?”

“Gentle.”

Then place the stuffed animal down more abruptly. Do not frighten your child or turn this into aggressive play.

Ask again:

“Gentle or rough?”

Let your child show you the gentle way.

Then try other examples:

Petting Scout.

Closing a book.

Putting away a toy.

Holding someone's hand.

Giving a high-five.

The lesson becomes:

I can choose how I use my body.

Activity: Feather Hands

Pretend your hands are as soft as feathers.

Slowly move them through the air.

Say:

“Feather hands.”

Then gently touch your own arm.

Let your child copy you.

You can turn it into a little game:

“Show me your feather hands.”

Later, when play becomes too rough, **“feather hands”** may become a familiar reminder.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try the call-and-response from the song.

Grandpa: What can your little hands be?

Child: Gentle.

Grandpa: What can your little feet be?

Child: Gentle.

Grandpa: What can your words be?

Child: Gentle.

Grandpa: Who can you ask for help?

Child: Jesus.

Then together:

“Jesus, help me be gentle.”

Mom, Dad, Grandma, or another caregiver can take Grandpa's place.

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“What does gentle mean?”

Let your child answer.

If they are unsure, show them with a gentle touch.

Read

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

Explain

Say:

“The Bible uses the word gentleness. When we're gentle, we don't use our hands, feet, or words to hurt people. We treat others with care.”

Practice

Ask:

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

“What kind of feet?”

“Gentle feet.”

“What kind of words?”

“Gentle words.”

Pray

“Jesus, help us be gentle with our hands, our feet, and our words. Amen.”

Then move on with your day.

When Your Child Is Too Excited

Not every rough moment comes from anger.

Sometimes children simply get excited.

Playing gets faster.

Voices get louder.

Bodies start bouncing.

Scout may suddenly have three children trying to hug him at once.

This can be a good time to say:

“You're having fun. Let's remember gentle hands.”

The child does not have to stop enjoying the moment.

They are simply learning how to enjoy it without hurting someone else.

With Animals

Animals provide an excellent opportunity to teach gentleness, but adults should supervise carefully.

A Goldendoodle such as Scout may look cuddly and inviting, but every animal has boundaries.

Teach children:

Approach calmly.

Do not pull ears or tails.

Do not climb on an animal.

Do not disturb an animal that is eating or sleeping.

Ask before petting an unfamiliar animal.

Listen when an adult says to leave an animal alone.

Gentleness protects both the child and the animal.

For Parents and Grandparents

One of the easiest ways to teach gentleness is to demonstrate it.

Children notice how we handle them.

If we demand gentleness while grabbing a child's arm roughly in anger, our actions may teach something different from our words.

There will certainly be moments when an adult must move quickly or physically stop a child from doing something unsafe.

But as a general pattern, let children experience gentleness from us.

A gentle correction can still be firm.

A calm voice can still say no.

A loving grandparent can still maintain a boundary.

Gentleness and authority are not opposites.

When Gentleness Goes Wrong

Be careful not to turn **“be gentle”** into **“never defend yourself”** or **“never tell.”**

If another child is hurting your child, teach them to move away and get an adult.

If someone makes them uncomfortable, teach them to tell you.

If they need to say:

“Stop.”

let them say it clearly.

The lesson is not:

“Everyone else matters more than you.”

The lesson is:

“We do not use our strength to hurt others unnecessarily.”

That is very different.

A Little Prayer

Jesus, thank You for my hands, my feet, and my words. Help me use them in ways that are kind. When I get excited or upset, help me slow down and choose to be gentle. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

Jesus, help me be gentle. Amen.

Memory Verse

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”
Galatians 5:22, KJV**

For now, emphasize just one word:

Gentleness.

Then give your child something they can carry into the rest of the day:

Gentle hands.

Gentle feet.

Gentle words.

And when those little hands forget, as little hands sometimes will:

Jesus, help me be gentle.

Song 4: When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray

Sadness is part of childhood.

A child may feel sad because a favorite toy broke.

A friend had to go home.

Mom or Dad left for work.

Grandma's visit ended.

A pet is sick.

Someone said something hurtful.

A special activity was canceled.

Or sometimes a child may simply cry without being able to explain exactly why.

Our first instinct is often to make the sadness disappear.

We distract.

We offer another toy.

We try to make the child laugh.

We say:

“Don't be sad.”

But sometimes sadness does not need to be hurried away.

Sometimes a little heart needs someone to sit close, listen, and say:

“I can see you're sad. You can tell me about it.”

Then we can teach another beautiful truth:

You can tell God too.

The Big Truth

When I feel sad, I can pray.

The Bible says:

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

A preschool child does not need a lengthy explanation of what it means to have a broken heart.

For now, the child can begin learning:

God is not far away when I am sad.

And because God hears us, we can talk to Him.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray**.

The main hook is intentionally simple:

**When I feel sad,
I can pray.**

**God will hear
The words I say.**

Let your child learn those words before trying to explain everything behind them.

Later, during a genuinely sad moment, you may be able to say:

“Do you remember what we can do when we feel sad?”

And perhaps your little one will answer:

“I can pray.”

It Is Okay to Cry

The song says:

“Sometimes I may cry.”

That matters.

Crying is one of the ways little children express sadness.

We do not want to teach:

Good children don't cry.

And certainly not:

Boys don't cry.

Scripture does not present tears as something shameful.

Jesus Himself wept:

“Jesus wept.”

John 11:35, KJV

That does not mean every episode of crying should change a parent's decision.

A child may cry because the answer is still no.

A child may cry because it is time to leave.

A child may cry because another child gets a turn.

We can comfort the child without changing a necessary boundary.

“I know you're sad. You wanted to stay. It's okay to be sad, but it is still time to go.”

Compassion and consistency can exist together.

“I Don't Know Why”

Sometimes a little child cannot explain the sadness.

You ask:

“What's wrong?”

The answer may be:

“I don't know.”

That can be okay.

Do not force an explanation simply because you want one.

You might say:

“You don't have to know right now. I'm here with you.”

Then, if appropriate:

“Would you like me to pray with you?”

We are teaching the child that prayer does not require perfect words or a complete explanation.

God already knows.

Prayer Is Not Pretending

Prayer does not mean:

“Now stop being sad.”

A child may pray and still feel sad afterward.

That does not mean the prayer failed.

This is an important lesson for adults too.

We are not teaching prayer as a button that instantly changes an emotion.

We are teaching relationship.

I am sad, so I bring my sadness to God.

I trust Him while I am sad.

I ask Him for help.

And I can continue talking with the people who love and care for me.

Tell Someone You Love

One of the lyrics says:

**“I can tell someone I love,
I can talk to God above.”**

That pairing is intentional.

We never want children to believe:

“I prayed about it, so I shouldn't tell anybody.”

If something has made your child sad, frightened, hurt, or confused, you want the child to come to you.

Teach both:

Talk to God.

Talk to someone who cares for you.

Those ideas belong together.

Activity: The Sad Face and the Listening Face

Sit facing your child.

Make a gentle sad face.

Ask:

“What do you think I'm feeling?”

Let the child guess.

Then say:

“Sad.”

Now make a listening face.

Say:

“If you're sad, you can tell me.”

Switch roles.

Let your child make a face and you guess the feeling.

Keep this playful.

The goal is not to teach children to diagnose everyone's emotions by facial expressions. It is simply to begin connecting feelings with words.

Activity: Tell Me About It

Use a stuffed animal.

You might say:

“Bunny is sad because his friend had to go home.”

Ask:

“What could Bunny do?”

Possible answers:

“Tell someone.”

“Get a hug.”

“Pray.”

Then ask:

“What could Bunny pray?”

Help your child make it simple:

“God, I'm sad. Please help me.”

Now let your child invent another situation for Bunny.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Use the song's conversation.

Grandpa: What if you feel sad?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: What if you need to cry?

Child: That's okay.

Grandpa: Can you tell someone you love?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Can you talk to God too?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Does your prayer have to be long?

Child: No.

Then practice:

“God, I'm sad. Please help me.”

That is a prayer.

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“What makes you feel sad sometimes?”

Let the child answer.

Do not immediately correct, explain, or solve it.

Listen first.

Read

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

Explain

Say:

“God cares when we're sad. We can talk to Him when our heart hurts.”

For a very young child:

“When you're sad, you can pray.”

Practice

Ask:

“When I feel sad...”

Let your child finish:

“I can pray.”

Then:

“Who else can you tell when you're sad?”

Help the child name trusted people.

Pray

“God, thank You for hearing us. When we're sad, help us remember that we can talk to You. Amen.”

When Someone Dies

Eventually, some children will experience a much deeper sadness.

A grandparent dies.

A family member dies.

A beloved pet dies.

This is not the time for cheerful phrases designed to make grief disappear.

Do not tell a child that someone **“went to sleep”** when you mean they died. Young children can take those words literally and become frightened of sleep.

Use simple, truthful language appropriate to the child's age.

Let them ask questions.

Let them cry.

Let them remember.

And do not feel that every question requires an immediate answer.

The song's little truth still has a place:

When I feel sad, I can pray.

But grief deserves patience and tenderness.

When Sadness Continues

Most childhood sadness comes and goes as circumstances change.

But parents and caregivers know their children best.

If sadness is persistent, unusually intense, associated with significant changes in sleeping, eating, playing, interacting, or functioning, or if something simply concerns you, do not assume a song or devotional is all the child needs.

Talk with an appropriate healthcare professional.

Prayer and appropriate care are not competitors.

For Parents and Grandparents

One of the greatest gifts you can give a sad child is your presence.

You do not always need the perfect words.

Sit beside them.

Hold them if they want to be held.

Listen.

Let silence happen.

Then, when the moment is right, remind them:

“I'm here.”

And:

“We can talk to God together.”

There may come a day when your child or grandchild is much older and the sadness is much bigger than a broken toy.

The habit you are beginning now can remain:

When my heart hurts, I do not have to hide from God.

I can pray.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes I feel sad. Thank You that I can tell You how I feel. Thank You for the people who love me and listen to me. Please help me when my heart is sad. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, I'm sad. Please help me. Amen.

Memory Verse

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

You do not need to make sadness disappear before moving forward.

Sometimes the lesson is simply this:

I am sad.

Someone who loves me is here.

God hears me.

And I can pray.

Song 5: God Is With Me in the Dark

The bedroom can look very different after the lights go out.

During the day, the chair in the corner is just a chair.

At night, that same chair may look like something else.

A jacket hanging on a door can become a strange shape.

The air conditioner clicks.

A branch brushes against the window.

The house creaks.

A child who was perfectly happy a few minutes earlier may suddenly call:

“Mommy.”

“Daddy.”

“Grandpa.”

“I'm scared.”

For a little child, darkness can make ordinary things feel unfamiliar.

This song gives us a simple response:

When it's dark, I trust God.

The Big Truth

God is with me in the light, and God is with me in the dark.

Darkness does not make God disappear.

The Bible says:

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

That entire verse contains more than a preschooler needs to understand right now, but the truth is wonderful:

God can see in the dark.

The child may not be able to see across the room.

God can.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **God Is With Me in the Dark**.

Practice the hook:

**When it's dark,
I trust God.**

**Night or day,
I can pray.**

This song deliberately connects with the first song on the album.

In Song 1 we learned:

When I feel afraid, I trust God.

Now we apply that truth to one particular fear that many little children understand very well.

The dark.

“There's Something in My Room”

Your child calls you back after bedtime.

“There's something over there.”

You know it is a pile of clothes.

Your child does not.

Instead of immediately saying:

“There's nothing there. Go to sleep.”

walk over and look.

Show the child.

“That's your blue shirt on the chair. See?”

Then you can reassure them:

“You're safe. I'm here. And God is with you too.”

We do not need to encourage imaginary fears, but we can help a child distinguish between what they imagined and what is actually there.

God Is Near, But So Are Mom and Dad

There is an important balance here.

We want children to trust God.

We also want them to know they can call a parent or caregiver when something seems wrong.

The song includes the idea of telling a grown-up for a reason.

If your child hears a strange sound, teach:

“You can tell me.”

If the child sees something that frightens them:

“Come get me.”

If they wake from a bad dream:

“You can call me.”

We should never teach a preschooler:

“If you really trusted God, you wouldn't need Mommy.”

God has given children parents and caregivers for protection, comfort, and guidance.

Calling for them is not a failure of faith.

Darkness Is Not Bad

Be careful not to accidentally teach that darkness itself is evil.

Night is part of God's creation.

The Bible begins by telling us:

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night...”

Genesis 1:5, KJV

Nighttime means rest.

Stars become visible.

The moon shines.

Families sleep.

Animals settle down.

The world becomes quieter.

The dark may feel unfamiliar, but darkness itself is not something a child needs to fear.

Activity: What Changed?

Try this during the daytime or early evening when your child is relaxed.

Sit together in a familiar room.

Look around.

Ask:

“What do you see?”

A chair.

A lamp.

A stuffed animal.

Scout's bed.

A door.

Then dim the lights slightly.

Ask:

“Did the chair change?”

No.

“Did your teddy bear change?”

No.

“Is Grandpa still here?”

Yes.

Then say:

“Sometimes things look different when it's dark, but they're still the same things.”

Do not make the room completely dark if that frightens your child.

This is reassurance, not a test.

Activity: Find the Light

Give your child a small flashlight with adult supervision.

Dim the room.

Ask them to find familiar things with the light.

“Can you find your teddy?”

“Can you find the door?”

“Can you find your pillow?”

Then say:

“We needed the flashlight to see those things. Does God need a flashlight?”

Let the child answer.

“No.”

Then remind them:

“God can see us even when it's dark.”

What About a Night-Light?

There is nothing spiritually superior about making a frightened preschooler sleep in complete darkness.

If a small night-light helps your child settle comfortably, use one.

We are teaching trust in God, not conducting a test of bravery.

As children grow and become more comfortable, their needs may change naturally.

The goal is not:

“Prove that you're not afraid.”

The goal is:

“When fear comes, let's learn what to do with it.”

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try these together:

Grandpa: When the light goes out, what can you do?

Child: I can trust God.

Grandpa: If you hear something that scares you?

Child: I can tell you.

Grandpa: Can we pray at night?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Can God see in the dark?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Is God only with us in the daytime?

Child: No.

Grandpa: When is God with us?

Child: Day and night.

Keep it warm and conversational.

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“What do you think is different when we turn off the light?”

Listen to the child's answer.

Then ask:

“Does God go away when it gets dark?”

Read

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

Explain

Say:

“We sometimes have trouble seeing in the dark. God does not. He knows exactly where we are.”

Practice

Ask:

“When it's dark...”

Let your child answer:

“I trust God.”

Then:

“Night or day...”

“I can pray.”

Pray

“God, thank You for being with us during the day and during the night. Help us trust You when the room is dark. Amen.”

When the Fear Comes at Bedtime

Bedtime fear can become difficult for the whole family.

The child asks for another drink.

Then another hug.

Then another trip to the bathroom.

Then another prayer.

Then:

“I heard something.”

Sometimes the child is truly frightened.

Sometimes the child simply does not want bedtime to end.

Often it may be a little of both.

You can offer reassurance without allowing bedtime to become an endless routine.

“I checked your room. You're safe. We've prayed together. It's time to rest.”

Comfort and boundaries can live together.

Bad Dreams

A frightening dream can feel very real to a young child.

If your child wakes frightened, comfort them first.

You might say:

“That was a scary dream, but you're awake now. You're here with me.”

Let them tell you about it if they want to.

Then remind them:

“God is with us. Would you like to pray?”

A simple prayer is enough.

Avoid turning dreams into predictions, spiritual messages, or frightening interpretations for a preschool child.

The immediate need is usually reassurance and safety.

Do Not Create the Fear You Are Trying to Remove

Sometimes adults unintentionally make nighttime more frightening.

Threats such as:

“The monster will get you if you get out of bed”

may produce obedience for the moment, but they also give a child's imagination something new to fear.

Likewise, frightening stories or media close to bedtime may create images a young child does not yet know how to process.

We do not need to fill the darkness with imaginary dangers and then try to teach children not to fear them.

Let nighttime be peaceful.

For Parents and Grandparents

One of the most comforting things about this lesson is that it can be demonstrated without many words.

Sit beside the bed.

Hold a little hand.

Pray.

Say:

“I love you. You're safe. God is with you. It's time to rest.”

Then allow the room to become quiet.

Over time, your child may begin saying the truth without your prompting:

“When it's dark, I trust God.”

That is the goal.

Not a child who never calls for you.

Not a child who never feels afraid.

But a little heart beginning to know where to turn when fear comes.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, thank You for being with me during the day and during the night. Sometimes the dark makes me afraid. Help me remember that You know where I am and that I can trust You. Thank You for the people who take care of me. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, it is dark. Help me trust You. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

And when the lights go out tonight, leave your little one with something easy to remember:

God is with me.

I can tell someone when I'm scared.

I can pray.

When it's dark, I trust God.

Song 6: I Don't Have to Have My Way

There are few sentences a preschooler understands more naturally than:

“I want it.”

I want that toy.

I want another cookie.

I want to go first.

I want to stay at the playground.

I want that cup, not this cup.

I want another story.

I want to do it myself.

Wanting something is not unusual. Children are learning that they are separate people with preferences, ideas, and desires of their own.

The difficult lesson comes next:

Wanting something does not mean I must have it.

That is the heart of this song.

I don't have to have my way.

I can trust God anyway.

The Big Truth

I can want something, hear no, and still choose what is right.

That is a significant lesson for a little heart.

The Bible says:

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

A preschooler will not understand everything contained in that verse.

But the beginning lesson is simple:

Life is not always about what I want.

Other people matter too.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **I Don't Have to Have My Way**.

The main hook is designed to stick:

**I don't have to have my way,
Have my way, have my way.**

**I don't have to have my way.
I can trust God anyway.**

Have fun singing it when nobody is upset.

That is the best time to learn it.

Then one day you may be standing in the kitchen when your little one asks for another treat.

You say:

"No, not right now."

The face changes.

Before the situation grows, you may gently sing:

"I don't have to..."

And your child may finish:

"Have my way."

Now the song has become useful.

"But I Really Want It"

Sometimes children seem to believe adults did not understand the first request.

"Can I have a cookie?"

"No."

"But I want one."

"I know."

"But I really want one."

"I know."

"But I really, really want one."

The child is discovering something important.

You can understand exactly what they want and still say no.

Try saying:

“I know you want it. You really do want it. The answer is still no.”

There is no need to become angry because the child is disappointed.

And there is no need to change the answer simply because the disappointment became louder.

No Is Part of Life

A loving home contains the word **no**.

No, you cannot run into the street.

No, you cannot hit your brother.

No, you cannot eat candy instead of dinner.

No, you cannot stay awake all night.

No, you cannot take someone else’s toy.

No, you cannot climb on that.

No is not automatically unkind.

Sometimes no protects.

Sometimes no teaches.

Sometimes no simply means that what we want is not available.

Children need the security of knowing that the adults caring for them can lovingly make decisions even when those decisions are unpopular.

Disappointment Is Not an Emergency

Your child hears no.

The tears begin.

That can make adults uncomfortable.

We may feel tempted to fix the disappointment immediately.

But disappointment is something children need to learn to experience.

You can remain close.

You can offer comfort.

You can acknowledge the feeling.

“You're disappointed because you wanted another turn.”

And still maintain the decision.

“I know. Your turn is finished.”

Your child is learning:

I can be disappointed and still be okay.

That lesson will matter far beyond preschool.

Trust God Anyway

The second half of the song's hook is what makes this more than a behavior song:

“I can trust God anyway.”

We are beginning to teach children that trust in God is not dependent upon getting what we want.

That is a truth they will need throughout life.

We do not trust God only when the answer is yes.

We do not worship God because everything happened according to our plans.

We trust Him when we are happy.

We trust Him when we are disappointed.

We trust Him when we understand.

And we trust Him when we do not get our way.

That lesson begins here in very small circumstances.

Activity: Want or Need?

Use ordinary objects around your home.

Hold up a favorite toy.

Ask:

“Is this something we want or something our body needs?”

A toy is something we may want.

Hold up water.

“Do our bodies need water?”

Yes.

Try several examples.

A favorite stuffed animal.

Food.

A new toy.

A coat when it is cold.

Another piece of candy.

Do not worry about making every example philosophically perfect.

The point is simply to introduce:

Wanting and needing are not always the same thing.

Activity: Practice Hearing No

This should be playful, not a trick.

Ask silly questions:

“Can Grandpa wear twelve hats at the same time?”

Child:

“No.”

“Can Scout drive the car?”

“No.”

“Can the otter eat all the cookies?”

“No.”

Then switch roles.

Let the child ask you questions.

Have fun with the word.

We do not want **no** to sound frightening.

Then say:

“Sometimes Mommy, Daddy, Grandma, or Grandpa has to say no too.”

And practice the song:

“I don’t have to have my way.

I can trust God anyway.”

Taking Turns

One of the most common places children encounter this lesson is while playing.

Two children want the same toy.

Both want it now.

This gives us an opportunity to teach:

“You can want the toy and still wait for your turn.”

Do not expect the desire to disappear simply because you explained sharing.

The child may still stand there watching the toy intensely.

That is okay.

The lesson is not:

“Stop wanting it.”

The lesson is:

“You don't have to take it just because you want it.”

Grandpa and Child Questions

Use the conversation from the song.

Grandpa: Do you always get what you want?

Child: No.

Grandpa: Is that always easy?

Child: No.

Grandpa: Can you still choose what is right?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: What if you don't get your way?

Child: I can trust God anyway.

Then say the hook together:

“I don’t have to have my way.”

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“Is there something you really wanted recently?”

Let the child answer.

Then ask:

“Did you get it?”

Maybe yes.

Maybe no.

Read

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

Explain

Say:

“God wants us to think about other people too. We don't always have to be first or get everything we want.”

For the youngest child:

“Other people matter too.”

Practice

Ask:

“Do I always have to have my way?”

“No.”

“Can I still trust God?”

“Yes.”

Then sing:

**“I don’t have to have my way.
I can trust God anyway.”**

Pray

“God, thank You for all You give us. Help us when we don't get what we want. Help us think about others and trust You anyway. Amen.”

When the Answer Can Be Yes

This song does not mean adults should say no unnecessarily.

Children have preferences, and when appropriate, allowing them to make choices is healthy.

“Would you like the blue cup or the green cup?”

“Would you like to wear this shirt or that one?”

“Which book should we read?”

“Would you like apples or strawberries?”

There are many times when a child can appropriately choose.

The lesson is not:

“You never get a say.”

It is:

“Having a preference does not mean everyone else must follow it.”

That is very different.

Be Careful With Obedience

There is another important distinction for parents and grandparents.

Teaching:

“I don’t have to have my way”

must never become:

“Adults always get their way with children.”

Children should never be taught to ignore fear, pain, inappropriate touching, unsafe requests, or behavior that makes them uncomfortable simply because an adult says they must obey.

Teach your child that they can tell you.

They can say:

“No.”

They can say:

“Stop.”

They can move away.

They can get help.

Biblical teaching about humility and obedience should never be used to make a child easier to exploit.

When the Tantrum Comes Anyway

You may sing this song twenty times and still have a child fall apart because the banana broke in half.

That does not mean the lesson failed.

A preschooler is still a preschooler.

If the child is safe, remain calm.

Use few words.

Maintain the boundary.

When the storm has passed and the child is able to listen again, that may be the better time to talk.

“You really wanted the whole banana. You were disappointed when it broke.”

Then perhaps:

“Do you remember our song?”

Teaching often works better after calm has returned.

For Parents and Grandparents

This song may challenge adults too.

Children learn a great deal from watching what happens when **we** do not get our way.

The restaurant is closed.

Traffic is terrible.

Someone is late.

Plans change.

The store is out of what we wanted.

Another driver does something irritating.

Our children are watching.

We can model:

“That's disappointing, but we'll be okay.”

Or even:

“That isn't what Grandpa wanted, but Grandpa doesn't always have to have his way either.”

Now the song becomes a family lesson rather than merely a rule for children.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes I really want things, and sometimes the answer is no. Help me listen, think about others, and choose what is right even when I am disappointed. Help me trust You when I don't get my way. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, help me when I don't get my way. Help me trust You. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

And when a little heart desperately wants the answer to change, bring back the simple truth:

I can want it.

I can be disappointed.

I can hear no.

I can still choose what is right.

I don't have to have my way.

I can trust God anyway.

Song 7: Wait, Wait, Wait

Waiting is hard when you are little.

A preschooler hears:

“In five minutes.”

But five minutes can feel like a very long time.

They are waiting for their turn.

Waiting for lunch.

Waiting for Mom to finish talking.

Waiting to open a present.

Waiting to go outside.

Waiting for a special day.

Waiting for everyone else to get ready.

And then comes the question every parent and grandparent knows:

“Is it time yet?”

Not yet.

A few seconds later:

“How about now?”

Still not yet.

That is why **Wait, Wait, Wait** is intentionally playful. We do not want patience to sound like a punishment. We want children to begin discovering that waiting is simply part of life and that they can learn what to do while they wait.

The Big Truth

Sometimes I have to wait, and that's okay.

The Bible says:

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

There is much more in that verse than a preschooler can understand today.

For now, we begin with two little words:

Wait patiently.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **Wait, Wait, Wait.**

The hook is deliberately repetitive:

**Wait, wait, wait,
Sometimes I have to wait.**

**I can smile,
I can pray.**

**Wait, wait, wait,
And that's okay.**

Let children move with this song.

Hold up a hand for **wait**.

Point to your smile for **smile**.

Fold your hands for **pray**.

Then repeat.

The more familiar the hook becomes during happy moments, the easier it will be to remember when waiting becomes difficult.

Why Waiting Is So Hard

Adults understand time differently from young children.

If someone tells us:

“Dinner will be ready in twenty minutes,”

we understand approximately what that means.

A preschooler may not.

They mostly understand:

I want it now, and it isn't happening now.

So instead of becoming frustrated when a child asks repeatedly, sometimes it helps to make waiting more concrete.

“After we put these toys away, it will be time.”

“When this song finishes, we'll put on our shoes.”

“First lunch, then playground.”

Those are easier for a young child to understand than an abstract amount of time.

Waiting for My Turn

One of the first places children practice waiting is with other children.

There is one swing.

Two children want it.

There is one favorite toy.

Three children want it.

A child may think:

If I want it, I should have it now.

Waiting for a turn teaches something different:

Other people matter too.

You can say:

“It's Emma's turn right now. Your turn is next.”

The child may still be unhappy.

That is okay.

Waiting does not mean we have to enjoy every second of waiting.

It means we learn not to take what belongs to someone else's turn.

Waiting Without Fussing

The song says:

“I don't need to fuss or shout.”

That does not mean children must never tell us waiting is difficult.

They can say:

“This is taking a long time.”

“I really want my turn.”

“Is it almost time?”

Those are words.

What we are teaching is that frustration does not require screaming, grabbing, pushing, or demanding.

Give children something better to do.

“Waiting is hard. Would you like to help me while we wait?”

“Let's sing our waiting song.”

“Would you like to color until it's time?”

We are teaching a skill, not merely demanding silence.

Activity: The Waiting Game

Place a favorite toy on the table.

Tell your child:

“We're going to practice waiting for ten seconds.”

Do not begin with an unnecessarily long time.

Count together slowly:

One.

Two.

Three.

Continue to ten.

Then say:

“Now it's your turn.”

Celebrate the accomplishment calmly:

“You waited.”

Try again later with a slightly longer period.

The purpose is not to test how long your child can tolerate frustration.

It is to let the child experience:

I waited, and then my turn came.

Activity: Red Light, Green Light

This familiar game is excellent practice for waiting.

Green light means move.

Red light means stop and wait.

Keep the pauses short for very young children.

Then connect the game to everyday life:

“Sometimes we get a green light and can go. Sometimes we have to wait.”

If your child enjoys the game, let them take a turn calling red light and green light.

Now waiting becomes something they can practice while having fun.

Activity: The Kitchen Timer

For situations where time really is the issue, a simple timer can help.

Suppose your child wants another turn with something in five minutes.

Set a visible or audible timer.

Say:

“When the timer rings, it will be your turn.”

Now the child is not repeatedly depending on an adult's vague:

“Soon.”

There is something concrete marking the wait.

When the timer rings, follow through whenever possible.

That helps build trust.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Use the playful conversation from the song.

Child: Grandpa, is it time yet?

Grandpa: Not yet.

Child: How about now?

Grandpa: Not yet.

Then ask:

Grandpa: What can you do while you wait?

Child: I can wait.

Grandpa: Do you have to fuss?

Child: No.

Grandpa: Can you pray while you wait?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Can you trust God while you wait?

Child: Yes.

Then sing:

**“Wait, wait, wait,
And that's okay.”**

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“What is something that's hard for you to wait for?”

Your child may say:

“My turn.”

“Christmas.”

“Dinner.”

“Going to Grandma's.”

Listen.

Read

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

Explain

Say:

“The Bible talks about waiting patiently. Sometimes we don't get something right when we want it. We can learn to wait.”

For the youngest child:

“Sometimes we have to wait, and that's okay.”

Practice

Ask:

“Is it always easy to wait?”

“No.”

“What can we do while we wait?”

“I can pray.”

“Can we trust God while we wait?”

“Yes.”

Pray

“God, sometimes waiting is hard. Please help us learn to wait patiently and choose what is right while we wait. Amen.”

Waiting for God

There is a larger truth behind this little preschool lesson.

Throughout Scripture, God's people had to wait.

They prayed.

They hoped.

They trusted.

And sometimes God's answer did not come when they expected it.

A preschooler does not need that entire lesson today.

But we are planting the first seed:

God does not have to do everything immediately for me to trust Him.

Today the child may be waiting for a turn on the swing.

Years from now, the waiting may be far more significant.

The little lesson can grow with them.

Do Not Make Children Wait Just to Teach Waiting

There is no need to manufacture unnecessary frustration.

If your child asks for water and you can give them water, you do not need to say:

“Wait five minutes because we're practicing patience.”

If your child needs the bathroom, that is not a patience lesson.

If a child is frightened, hurt, sick, or needs help, respond appropriately.

We teach patience through the ordinary waiting that life already provides.

There will be plenty of opportunities.

When Waiting Has a Promise

Be careful about promises.

If you tell a child:

“After lunch, we'll go to the park,”

the child may remember that promise very clearly.

If circumstances change, explain it.

“I told you we would go to the park, but now it is raining. I know that's disappointing.”

Do not casually dismiss what you said simply because the child is young.

Children are learning whether our words can be trusted.

Sometimes plans genuinely change.

When they do, acknowledge it.

That prepares us nicely for another song later in the album:

When Things Don't Go My Way.

For Parents and Grandparents

Sometimes the reason a child struggles with waiting is that we have unintentionally trained them not to wait.

The child asks.

We immediately stop everything.

The child interrupts.

We immediately answer.

The child becomes louder.

We respond faster.

Over time, a child can learn:

Louder makes things happen sooner.

We can lovingly teach something different.

“I hear you. I'm finishing this, and then I will help you.”

And then follow through.

The child learns:

I was heard.

I am cared for.

And I can wait.

Adults Wait Too

Let children see you wait appropriately.

At a long checkout line you might say:

“There's a long line today. We have to wait our turn.”

At a red traffic light:

“We're waiting until it's safe to go.”

At a restaurant:

“Our food isn't ready yet. We can wait.”

Now patience is not merely something adults demand from children.

It is part of ordinary life.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes I don't like waiting. Help me be calm while I wait. Help me remember that other people have turns too. Help me trust You while I wait. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, help me wait. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

The next time your little one asks:

“Is it time yet?”

you may still answer:

“Not yet.”

But now you have a little song to go with it:

Wait, wait, wait.

Sometimes I have to wait.

I can trust God while I wait.

And that's okay.

Song 8: I Can Be Patient

Waiting and patience are related, but they are not quite the same lesson.

In **Wait, Wait, Wait**, we practiced the act of waiting.

Now we are going a little deeper.

What happens **inside me while I wait?**

I can wait while complaining the entire time.

I can wait while repeatedly demanding:

“Now?”

I can wait while trying to push ahead of everyone else.

Or I can begin learning patience.

For a little child, patience does not mean sitting perfectly still with a smile while never becoming frustrated.

It means learning, little by little, to remain calm and choose what is right even when something takes longer than we want.

The Big Truth

I can be patient, even when waiting is hard.

The Bible says:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

The King James Bible uses the word **longsuffering**.

That may be a very big word for a very little child.

But we can begin teaching the idea behind it.

Sometimes things take time.

Sometimes other people go first.

Sometimes we have to keep waiting even after we are tired of waiting.

And God can help us respond rightly.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **I Can Be Patient**.

Practice the main hook:

**I can be patient,
I can wait.**

**God can help me
While I wait.**

This song is not promising that patience will always feel easy.

In fact, the words acknowledge:

“Even when it's hard to wait.”

That is important.

We are not pretending.

We are practicing.

Waiting and Patience

Here is an easy way to explain the difference to a young child.

Suppose two children are waiting for the slide.

Both are technically waiting.

One child is pushing from behind and saying:

“Go. Go. Go. Hurry up.”

The other child is standing behind the line waiting for a turn.

Both children have not gone down the slide yet.

But only one is practicing patience.

You can explain:

“Waiting is when it isn't our turn yet. Patience is how we act while we wait.”

That is enough for a preschooler.

Someone Else Goes First

This can be difficult.

Your child sees the cookies.

Another child gets one first.

Or everyone is lining up and your child wants to be at the front.

Or Grandpa is helping another grandchild.

The immediate response may be:

“Me first.”

Instead of simply saying:

“Be patient,”

give the phrase meaning.

“I'm helping your sister right now. You are next. This is a chance to practice patience.”

Then follow through.

“Thank you for waiting. Now I can help you.”

The child begins connecting the word **patience** with a real experience.

Patient Does Not Mean Invisible

There is an important balance here.

A child should not learn that being patient means never reminding an adult about a legitimate need.

Suppose you said:

“I'll help you after I finish washing these dishes.”

You finish the dishes and become distracted.

Your child says:

“Grandpa, you said you would help me.”

That is not necessarily impatience.

The child may simply be reminding you.

You can say:

“You're right. I did say that. Thank you for reminding me.”

Patience should not mean children must quietly accept being forgotten.

Activity: Who Goes First?

Gather two stuffed animals.

Place them in a pretend line.

Say:

“Bear wants to go first.”

Then:

“But Bunny was already waiting.”

Ask:

“What can Bear do?”

Help Bear say:

“I can wait.”

Move Bunny forward.

Then Bear.

Say:

“Bear waited patiently, and his turn came.”

Switch the order.

Let your child control the stuffed animals.

You can even add Scout and the otter to the line.

Soon the child is practicing the idea through play.

Activity: Growing Takes Time

If possible, use a seed, small plant, or flower.

Ask:

“Can we plant a seed this morning and have a big flower this afternoon?”

No.

A seed needs time.

It needs water.

It needs light.

It grows little by little.

Say:

“Some good things take time.”

If you have room, plant something simple together.

Check it each day.

The child will discover something adults already know:

Watching something grow does not make it grow faster.

We wait.

Activity: Build It Slowly

Use blocks.

Tell your child:

“Let's build a tower, but we're going to take turns.”

You place one block.

Then the child.

Then you.

Then the child.

If the child reaches for another block during your turn, gently say:

“Wait. Grandpa's turn. Then your turn.”

The finished tower becomes something you built through patience and cooperation.

And if it falls over, we have another opportunity to practice handling disappointment.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try this conversation:

Grandpa: When someone else goes first?

Child: I can wait.

Grandpa: When something takes a while?

Child: I can wait.

Grandpa: When waiting feels hard?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: What are you learning?

Child: To be patient.

Grandpa: Who can help you?

Child: God can help me.

Then together:

“I can be patient. I can wait.”

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“Is waiting always easy?”

Let your child answer.

Then ask:

“What is something that's really hard to wait for?”

Read

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

Explain

Say:

“The Bible uses the word longsuffering. It means we don't have to become angry or give up just because something takes time. We can learn patience.”

Keep the explanation appropriate to your child's age.

For a very young child:

“God can help us wait patiently.”

Practice

Ask:

“When someone else goes first?”

“I can wait.”

“When waiting is hard?”

“I can pray.”

“What am I learning?”

“Patience.”

Pray

“God, help us learn patience. When something takes longer than we want, help us wait and choose what is right. Amen.”

Patience With People

Sometimes we are not waiting for a thing.

We are waiting for a person.

A younger sibling is putting on shoes very slowly.

Grandma is walking more slowly than the child wants to walk.

Another child is struggling to finish something.

Someone is trying to tell a story and takes a long time to get the words out.

These are wonderful opportunities to teach patience with people.

Say:

“We don't need to rush her.”

Or:

“He's still talking. Let's listen until he's finished.”

Patience is not only about getting what we want later.

It is also one way we show care for other people.

When the Child Says, “Hurry”

Preschoolers sometimes become tiny supervisors.

“Come on, Mommy.”

“Hurry, Grandpa.”

“Let's go.”

And sometimes they are correct. Maybe Grandpa really is taking forever to find his keys.

But other times we can smile and say:

“We're getting ready. This is a good time to practice patience.”

Then perhaps sing:

“I can be patient, I can wait.”

The familiar melody can keep the correction light.

Adults Need Patience With Children

There is a little irony in demanding that a three-year-old learn patience immediately.

Learning patience itself requires patience.

Children will forget.

They will interrupt.

They will ask the same question again.

They will have days when they wait beautifully and days when thirty seconds seems impossible.

That is part of teaching.

We correct.

We remind.

We model.

We practice again.

Let Them See You Practice

Suppose you are waiting for someone who is late.

Instead of repeatedly complaining, say:

“I'm getting impatient. I need to practice patience too.”

Or perhaps you are waiting for a webpage to load, a traffic light to change, or a long line to move.

Say:

“Waiting isn't my favorite thing either, but I can wait.”

Your child begins to see that patience is not a rule adults invented for preschoolers.

It is something all of us need.

Patience Does Not Mean Ignoring Urgent Needs

As with our other lessons, wisdom matters.

A child who urgently needs the bathroom does not need a lesson about patience.

A child who is hurt needs attention.

A child who feels unsafe should not be told to wait quietly.

A child who needs help should be able to ask for it.

We teach patience in situations where waiting is appropriate.

For Parents and Grandparents

It is easy to praise the result:

“Good job. You got your turn.”

Try occasionally praising the process instead:

“I noticed you waited while your sister finished.”

“You wanted to go first, but you waited.”

“That took a long time, and you stayed calm.”

Now the child begins recognizing what patience looks like.

We are not merely rewarding them for finally receiving what they wanted.

We are helping them notice how they behaved while waiting.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes waiting is hard for me. Help me be patient when someone else goes first or when something takes a long time. Help me use kind words and make good choices while I wait. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, help me be patient. Amen.

Memory Verse

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

And when waiting begins to feel very long, remind your little one:

I can be patient.

I can wait.

I can pray.

God can help me while I wait.

Song 9: When Things Don't Go My Way

Sometimes nobody said no.

Nobody took the toy.

Nobody made the child wait for a turn.

Things simply did not happen the way the child expected.

It started raining just before going outside.

The ice cream shop was closed.

A favorite cup was in the dishwasher.

The block tower fell.

The cookie broke in half.

A friend could not come over.

The family planned to go somewhere, but the plans had to change.

For a little child, an unexpected change can produce a very big reaction.

That is what this song is about.

**Things don't always go my way,
But I can still be okay.**

The Big Truth

I can be disappointed without letting disappointment decide how I behave.

The Bible says:

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV

This verse does not mean we tell a crying child:

“You should be thankful instead of sad.”

Nor does it mean that everything that happens is good.

It teaches something deeper.

Even when circumstances are not what we wanted, God is still God.

We can still talk to Him.

We can still trust Him.

We can still find things for which to be thankful.

And we can still choose what is right.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **When Things Don't Go My Way**.

Practice the main hook:

**Things don't always go my way,
But I can still be okay.**

**I can stop,
I can pray.**

God can help me through my day.

This gives children something simple to remember when expectations and reality do not match.

Disappointment Is Different From Getting My Way

This song may sound similar to **I Don't Have to Have My Way**, but there is an important difference.

In that song, the child **wanted** something and needed to accept that the answer might be no.

Here, the child may have had every reason to expect something to happen.

Then circumstances changed.

Imagine telling your child all morning:

"After lunch, we're going to the playground."

Lunch ends.

Everyone gets ready.

Then you open the door.

Rain is pouring down.

Your child is disappointed.

That is not necessarily selfishness.

The child expected something good, and now it cannot happen.

We can acknowledge that.

“I know. You were really looking forward to the playground.”

Then comes the lesson:

“Sometimes plans change. Let's figure out what we can do now.”

The Broken Cookie Problem

Adults sometimes underestimate how upsetting small changes can be to young children.

You hand your child a cookie.

It breaks.

The child cries because they wanted a whole cookie.

Our adult brain says:

“It tastes exactly the same.”

That may be true.

It also may not help.

Try:

“You wanted it whole, and it broke. You're disappointed.”

Then perhaps:

“It's still good to eat, or you can choose not to eat it.”

We do not have to produce another cookie simply to eliminate the disappointment.

The child gets a small opportunity to learn:

Something changed, and I can handle that.

When Plans Change

Children often do better with changes when adults explain what is happening.

Instead of:

“We're not going.”

try:

“We planned to go swimming, but the weather isn't safe for swimming today. I know that's disappointing.”

Then tell the child what comes next.

“We're going to stay home and do something else.”

This does not guarantee happiness.

The child may still cry.

But clear information helps.

Activity: Plan A and Plan B

This can become a fun family game.

Tell your child:

“Plan A is to play outside.”

Then pretend it starts raining.

Ask:

“Can we think of a Plan B?”

Maybe:

Build blocks.

Color.

Read a book.

Dance to a Shepherd's Meadow song.

Make a blanket fort.

Then try another.

“Plan A is peanut butter toast, but we're out of peanut butter. What could Plan B be?”

Let the child suggest something.

The lesson is simple:

When one plan changes, we can find another way forward.

Activity: Oops, That Changed

Use blocks or another simple toy.

Build something small.

Change one part.

Say:

“Oops. That changed.”

Then ask:

“What can we do now?”

Fix it.

Build something different.

Start again.

You can use the phrase throughout ordinary life:

“Oops. That changed. What can we do now?”

That question moves the child from disappointment toward problem-solving.

Feelings Can Be Real Without Running the Day

Suppose rain cancels the playground trip.

Your child says:

“I’m sad.”

Good.

They have identified the feeling.

You can answer:

“I understand.”

The child does not have to immediately become cheerful.

But sadness does not need to control everything that happens next.

Eventually you can ask:

“Would you like to help me choose what we do instead?”

The feeling has been acknowledged.

Now we move forward.

That is exactly the pattern of this album:

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try this conversation:

Grandpa: What if our plans change?

Child: That's okay.

Grandpa: What if you feel disappointed?

Child: I can say so.

Grandpa: Can you tell me how you feel?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: What can you do next?

Child: Stop and pray.

Grandpa: Can you still choose what is right?

Child: Yes.

Then together:

**"Things don't always go my way,
But I can still be okay."**

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

"Has something ever happened differently than you wanted?"

Let your child tell you.

Perhaps:

“It rained.”

“My toy broke.”

“We couldn't go.”

“My friend went home.”

Read

“In every thing give thanks...”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV

Explain

Say:

“Sometimes things happen that we don't like. The Bible teaches us that we can still thank God. That doesn't mean we have to pretend we're happy about everything. It means God is still good, and we can still trust Him.”

For the youngest child:

“Plans can change, but God is still good.”

Practice

Ask:

“When things don't go my way, can I tell you I'm disappointed?”

“Yes.”

“Can I talk to God?”

“Yes.”

“Can I still choose what is right?”

“Yes.”

Pray

“God, sometimes things don't happen the way we want. Help us when we feel disappointed. Help us trust You, be thankful, and choose what is right. Amen.”

Gratitude Without Denying Disappointment

Gratitude can be very helpful after disappointment, but timing matters.

Suppose a child's special outdoor birthday activity has just been canceled because of severe weather.

Immediately saying:

“Well, you should just be thankful you have a birthday party at all”

may communicate:

Your disappointment does not matter.

Instead:

“I know how much you were looking forward to this. I'm disappointed too.”

Then later:

“Let's think about what we can still enjoy today.”

Now gratitude does not erase disappointment.

It helps us see beyond it.

Some Changes Are Much Bigger

Not every change is a broken cookie or canceled playground trip.

Families move.

Parents change jobs.

A child changes schools.

A family member becomes ill.

Parents may separate.

Someone the child loves may die.

Those are not moments to cheerfully announce:

“Plan B.”

Some disappointments are grief.

Some changes require time, repeated conversations, reassurance, and perhaps professional support.

Use wisdom.

The principle that children can bring their feelings to God remains true, but the response should fit the seriousness of what happened.

Give Children Some Predictability

Children generally benefit from knowing what comes next.

Simple routines can make life feel more understandable.

Breakfast.

Getting dressed.

Going somewhere.

Lunch.

Rest.

Dinner.

Bath.

Bedtime.

Life will not always follow the schedule perfectly.

That is actually part of what children are learning.

But predictable routines can make unexpected changes easier to handle.

Avoid Promising What You Cannot Control

Adults sometimes create unnecessary disappointment with careless promises.

“We'll definitely go tomorrow.”

Maybe it rains tomorrow too.

Instead:

“If the weather is good, we'll try to go tomorrow.”

That is truthful.

When you do make a promise that you can reasonably keep, make an effort to keep it.

Children learn trust from our consistency.

For Parents and Grandparents

Our response to changed plans teaches children too.

The restaurant is unexpectedly closed.

Do we become angry?

The traffic is terrible.

Do we complain for twenty minutes?

The weather ruins our plans.

Does the entire day become miserable?

Sometimes we can say aloud:

“Well, that's disappointing. This isn't what I planned.”

Then:

“Let's see what we can do instead.”

That is emotional teaching happening in real time.

Your child sees:

Grandpa was disappointed.

Grandpa did not pretend he liked it.

Grandpa did not fall apart.

Grandpa adjusted.

That is a powerful lesson.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, sometimes things do not happen the way I want. Sometimes plans change and I feel disappointed. Help me tell You how I feel, remember the good things You have given me, and choose what is right. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, I'm disappointed. Help me. Amen.

Memory Verse

“In every thing give thanks...”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV

When something does not work out, your little one does not have to pretend it does not matter.

We can teach:

I can be disappointed.

I can talk about it.

I can pray.

I can choose what is right next.

Things don't always go my way, but I can still be okay.

Song 10: Gentle Hands

Little hands are busy.

They build towers.

They turn pages.

They carry toys.

They hold crayons.

They wave hello.

They give hugs.

They help put things away.

They pet Scout.

They may even reach out to gently touch an otter at an appropriate animal encounter.

But those same little hands can become very different when a child is excited, frustrated, or angry.

They grab.

They push.

They hit.

They pinch.

They pull.

That is why **Gentle Hands** gives children something concrete they can remember.

Instead of only telling a child what not to do, we teach what those hands **can** do.

Hands can help.

Hands can share.

Gentle hands can show I care.

The Big Truth

God gave me hands that I can use to help instead of hurt.

The Bible says:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Kindness is more than something we feel.

Other people can often see kindness in what we do.

For a preschool child, our hands are a wonderful place to begin.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **Gentle Hands**.

Hold up your hands during the hook:

**Gentle hands, gentle hands,
I can use my gentle hands.**

Then practice the actions from the song.

Wave.

Clap.

Give a gentle pat.

Pretend to put toys away.

Pretend to help someone.

The song becomes more than words because the child's own hands participate in the lesson.

What Are Hands For?

Sit with your child and look at your hands together.

Ask:

“What can we do with our hands?”

Let your child think of answers.

We can color.

Build.

Eat.

Wave.

Hold.

Help.

Hug.

Share.

Pray.

Then ask:

“Should we use our hands to hurt people?”

No.

The point is not simply:

Hitting is bad.

The bigger lesson is:

God gave me hands that can do good things.

Give Children a Positive Instruction

Sometimes adults say:

“Don't hit.”

“Don't grab.”

“Don't push.”

Those instructions may be necessary.

But after saying what not to do, give the child something they **can** do.

“Don't grab. Ask for a turn.”

“Don't push. Use gentle hands.”

“Don't throw the toy. Put it on the floor.”

A positive instruction gives the child somewhere to go next.

When Hands Hit

If a child is hitting another person, safety comes first.

Stop the hitting.

You may need to gently block or hold the child's hands.

Say calmly:

“I won't let you hit.”

Then:

“Hands are not for hurting. We use gentle hands.”

This is not the time for a long lecture.

A very upset preschooler may not be able to process much language.

Once the child is calmer, you can return to the lesson.

“You were angry because you wanted the toy. What can you do next time?”

Perhaps:

“Ask for a turn.”

“Tell me.”

“Stop and pray.”

Now we have connected several lessons from the album.

Gentle Does Not Mean Weak

We addressed this earlier in the guide, but it is especially important here.

Gentle hands do not mean children should allow someone else to hurt them.

If another child hits your child, your child can move away.

They can say:

“Stop.”

They can get an adult.

If someone touches them in a way that makes them uncomfortable, they should tell a trusted adult.

We never want:

“Use gentle hands”

to become:

“You are not allowed to protect yourself or ask for help.”

Gentleness is about how we choose to treat others.

It is not permission for others to mistreat us.

Activity: What Can My Hands Do?

Have your child hold up both hands.

Ask:

“Can these hands wave?”

Wave together.

“Can these hands clap?”

Clap gently.

“Can these hands help?”

Pick up a toy together.

“Can these hands share?”

Pass a toy back and forth.

“Can these hands give a gentle hug?”

If the child wants a hug, hug.

Then say:

“God gave us hands that can do many good things.”

Activity: Helping Hands

Choose one simple helping job.

It might be:

Putting toys into a basket.

Carrying napkins to the table.

Putting books on a shelf.

Helping match socks.

Giving Scout fresh water with adult supervision.

When the job is finished, say:

“Those were helping hands.”

You can even sing:

“Hands can help, hands can share, gentle hands can show I care.”

This helps the child see that gentleness is not merely avoiding bad behavior.

Gentle hands can actively serve.

Activity: Gentle With Scout

If you have a calm family pet and the interaction is safe, this lesson becomes very easy to demonstrate.

Show your child how to pet gently.

Use an open hand.

Move slowly.

Do not pull fur.

Do not grab ears.

Do not touch eyes.

Do not climb on the animal.

Do not bother an animal while it is eating or sleeping.

Say:

“Scout can't use words to tell us everything he feels, so we need to be gentle and watch what he is telling us with his body.”

Always supervise young children around animals.

Even a familiar family pet can become frightened or uncomfortable.

Activity: Gentle or Not Gentle?

Give examples and let your child answer.

“Helping Grandpa carry something.”

Gentle.

“Pushing someone down.”

Not gentle.

“Giving a friend a toy.”

Gentle.

“Pulling Scout's tail.”

Not gentle.

“Helping someone who dropped their crayons.”

Gentle.

Keep the examples simple.

Then let your child give you examples.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try the conversation from the song.

Grandpa: Are hands for hitting?

Child: No.

Grandpa: Are hands for helping?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Can hands share?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: Can hands give a gentle hug?

Child: Yes.

Grandpa: What kind of hands do we use?

Child: Gentle hands.

Then sing together:

**“Gentle hands, gentle hands,
I can use my gentle hands.”**

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

Hold up your hands.

“What are some good things we can do with our hands?”

Let your child answer.

Read

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Explain

Say:

“God wants us to be kind to other people. One way we can show kindness is with what our hands do.”

Practice

Ask:

“Are hands for hurting?”

“No.”

“What can hands do?”

“Help.”

“Share.”

“Care.”

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

Pray

“God, thank You for our hands. Help us use them to help, share, and care for others. Help us remember to use gentle hands. Amen.”

When Play Gets Rough

Sometimes nobody is angry.

The children are simply having fun.

Running turns into chasing.

Chasing turns into wrestling.

Wrestling becomes too rough.

Someone gets hurt.

This is a good time to teach children to notice what is happening.

“Everybody was having fun, but now the play is getting too rough. We need to slow down.”

Teach children that if someone says:

“Stop,”

play stops.

That is an important lesson about respecting another person's boundaries.

When an Accident Happens

Not every hurt is intentional.

Two children reach for the same toy and bump heads.

A child turns quickly and knocks someone over.

Scout runs past and somebody falls.

Teach children to recognize the difference between an accident and deliberately hurting someone.

But even when something is accidental, we can care about the person who was hurt.

“Are you okay?”

“Can I help you?”

That is another use for gentle hands.

Saying Sorry

If a child intentionally hurts someone, an apology may be appropriate.

But avoid forcing a meaningless:

“Say you're sorry.”

followed immediately by:

“Sorry.”

Instead, when the child is calm enough, help them understand what happened.

“You hit him because you were angry. That hurt him.”

Then ask:

“What can you do now?”

Perhaps:

“Say sorry.”

Perhaps:

“Bring him his toy.”

Perhaps:

“Ask if he's okay.”

We want children gradually to understand repair, not merely repeat a required word.

For Parents and Grandparents

Children learn how to use their bodies partly from how adults use theirs.

Let them experience safe, appropriate, gentle affection.

A hand held while crossing the street.

A gentle hug.

A reassuring pat on the back.

A hand helping them stand after a fall.

And when physical intervention is necessary for safety, use only what is appropriate to protect the child or someone else.

The lesson becomes something the child experiences:

Strong hands can still be gentle hands.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, thank You for my hands. Help me use them to help people, share with others, and show kindness. When I am angry or excited, help me remember not to hurt. Help me use gentle hands. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, help me use gentle hands. Amen.

Memory Verse

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Throughout the day, you now have one of the simplest reminders on the entire album.

When little hands are helping:

“Those are gentle hands.”

When little hands begin getting rough:

“Remember, gentle hands.”

And eventually your little one may be able to say it without you:

Hands can help.

Hands can share.

Gentle hands can show I care.

Song 11: Use Kind Words

Words may be invisible, but children learn very quickly that words can have a powerful effect.

A cheerful:

“Thank you.”

can make someone smile.

A sincere:

“Can I help you?”

can show kindness.

But words can hurt too.

“You're mean.”

“I don't like you.”

“Give me that.”

“Go away.”

And when little feelings become big, little voices often become big too.

That is why this song teaches something children can begin practicing immediately:

**Kind words, kind words,
I can choose kind words.**

The Big Truth

I can choose words that are kind, even when I am upset.

The Bible gives us a beautiful picture:

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

A preschool child does not need to understand every part of that verse.

But the picture is easy to understand.

Honey is sweet.

And God says pleasant words are sweet too.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **Use Kind Words**.

Practice the main hook:

**Kind words, kind words,
I can choose kind words.**

Then practice some of the words from the song:

Please.

Thank you.

Can I help you?

Those are easy places to begin.

But kindness is bigger than remembering polite words.

A child can say **“please”** in a demanding voice.

A child can mumble **“thank you”** because an adult required it.

We want to teach something deeper.

Our words are one of the ways we show what is happening in our hearts.

Kind Words When I Am Happy

Kind words are usually easiest when everything is going well.

Someone gives your child a snack.

“Thank you.”

A friend shares a toy.

“Thank you.”

Your child wants something.

“May I have a turn, please?”

Someone drops something.

“Can I help you?”

These ordinary moments give children practice before kindness becomes difficult.

Kind Words When I Am Angry

This is where the lesson becomes more important.

A child can learn kind words while sitting happily beside Grandpa.

But what happens when someone takes the toy?

The feeling changes.

The words may change too.

Instead of demanding that the child pretend not to be angry, help them find appropriate words for the anger.

Instead of:

“You're stupid.”

try:

“I'm mad.”

Instead of:

“Give me that.”

try:

“I was playing with that. Can I have it back?”

Instead of screaming:

“No.”

try:

“I don't want that.”

Kind words do not mean children must hide what they think or feel.

They mean we learn to express ourselves without unnecessarily hurting other people.

The Pause Before the Words

One line from the song is particularly useful:

“Take a breath before I speak.”

A preschool child will not remember to do this every time.

Neither do many adults.

But we can practice.

When the child is calm, say:

“Let's take one slow breath.”

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

Then say:

“Now let's use our words.”

The breath is not magic.

It simply creates a small pause between feeling and speaking.

That little pause is something we have been teaching throughout this entire album.

Activity: Make It Kinder

Give your child an unkind or demanding sentence and ask how you could say it more kindly.

You say:

“Give me water.”

Ask:

“Can we make that kinder?”

Perhaps:

“May I have some water, please?”

Try:

“Move.”

Maybe:

“Excuse me, please.”

Try:

“That's mine.”

Maybe:

“I was using that. Can I have it back, please?”

Keep the examples simple and age appropriate.

Then let your child give you a sentence to make kinder.

Activity: The Honeycomb

If appropriate for your child, show them a picture of a honeycomb or some honey.

Read:

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb...”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Say:

“Honey tastes sweet. The Bible says pleasant words are like something sweet.”

Then think of some **sweet words** together:

“I love you.”

“Thank you.”

“Can I help?”

“Would you like a turn?”

“I'm sorry.”

“Are you okay?”

The child now has a visual picture connected with the verse.

Activity: Fill the Meadow With Kind Words

Pretend you are walking through The Shepherd's Meadow.

You meet Scout.

What kind words could you say?

“Hi, Scout.”

You meet the otter.

“Would you like to play?”

You meet another child who dropped some toys.

“Can I help you?”

Someone gives you a flower.

“Thank you.”

Someone is sitting alone.

“Would you like to play with me?”

You can make up a new Meadow situation each time.

Please and Thank You

Politeness is worth teaching.

But try not to turn these words into meaningless passwords.

A child asks:

“Can I have some milk?”

You respond:

“What's the magic word?”

The child says:

“Please.”

That can be fun occasionally, but ultimately we want the child to understand why we say it.

Explain:

“Please is one way we ask instead of demand.”

And:

“Thank you tells someone we appreciate what they did.”

Now the words have meaning.

When a Child Says Something Hurtful

Children sometimes say things that surprise adults.

“I hate you.”

The adult may immediately feel hurt or angry.

Before reacting strongly, remember that a preschooler may not understand those words in the same way an adult does.

You can say:

“Those words can hurt. Tell me what you're feeling.”

Perhaps the real message is:

“I'm angry because you said no.”

Now help the child say that instead.

“You can tell me, ‘I'm angry.’ You don't need to say, ‘I hate you.’”

We are giving the child better language.

Truth Can Still Be Kind

Kind words do not mean saying things that are not true.

A child does not have to say:

“I like it”

when they do not.

They can learn:

“No, thank you.”

They do not have to say:

“I want to play”

when they need some space.

They can say:

“I want to play by myself right now.”

They do not have to accept unwanted affection merely to be polite.

If someone asks for a hug, a child should be allowed to say no.

Kindness and honesty can live together.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try the song's conversation.

Grandpa: What do you say when you ask?

Child: Please.

Grandpa: What do you say when someone helps you?

Child: Thank you.

Grandpa: What can you say when someone gets hurt?

Child: Are you okay?

Grandpa: What can you do when you're angry?

Child: Stop and think.

Grandpa: What kind of words can you choose?

Child: Kind words.

Then sing together:

**“Kind words, kind words,
I can choose kind words.”**

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“Can words hurt?”

Let your child answer.

Then ask:

“Can words help?”

Read

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Explain

Say:

“God cares about the words we use. Our words can help people or hurt people. We want to learn words that are truthful and kind.”

Practice

Ask:

“What could you say when someone gives you something?”

“Thank you.”

“What could you say when you want a turn?”

“Can I have a turn, please?”

“What if you're angry?”

“I can say I'm angry.”

Pray

“God, help us use words that are true and kind. Help us stop and think before we say something hurtful. Amen.”

When Someone Uses Unkind Words Toward Your Child

This lesson applies in both directions.

We want our children to use kind words.

We also want them to know what to do when someone speaks unkindly to them.

Teach:

“You can tell me.”

They do not have to respond with another insult.

They can walk away.

They can ask an adult for help.

If another child repeatedly calls them names, threatens them, or bullies them, do not simply tell your child:

“Use kind words and ignore it.”

Adults may need to intervene.

Kindness does not require tolerating mistreatment.

Words and Secrets

There is another important lesson little children should learn.

Adults sometimes tell children:

“Don't tell.”

Most secrets are harmless, such as keeping a birthday present a surprise for a short time.

But children should know they can always tell a trusted parent or caregiver about something that makes them scared, uncomfortable, hurt, or confused.

No rule about being polite or kind should prevent that.

Teach:

“You can always talk to me.”

Those may be some of the most important kind words an adult ever gives a child.

For Parents and Grandparents

Children listen to how we speak.

They hear how we talk to our spouse.

They hear how we speak about neighbors.

They hear what we say in traffic.

They hear our tone when we are frustrated.

That makes this chapter uncomfortable in a useful way.

We are teaching:

“Use kind words.”

Our children may reasonably expect us to try too.

When we fail, we have another opportunity to teach.

“Grandpa spoke too harshly. I'm sorry. I should have used kinder words.”

That does not weaken adult authority.

It demonstrates humility.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, thank You for giving me words. Help me use my words to tell the truth, ask for help, encourage others, and show kindness. When I am angry, help me stop and think before I speak. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, help me use kind words. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Then carry one very simple reminder into the day:

My words can hurt.

My words can help.

I can tell the truth.

I can say how I feel.

And I can choose kind words.

Song 12: God Hears My Little Prayer

We have talked about fear.

Anger.

Sadness.

Disappointment.

Waiting.

Patience.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Throughout all of those lessons, one simple response has appeared again and again:

I can pray.

That is why **God Hears My Little Prayer** is the right song to close *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*.

We want a child to finish this album knowing something wonderfully simple:

Whatever I am feeling, I can talk to God.

The Big Truth

God hears me when I pray.

The Bible says:

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

Morning.

Noon.

Evening.

Prayer is not only something we do at bedtime.

It is not only something we do before eating.

It is not only something we do at church.

A little child can begin learning:

I can talk to God throughout my day.

Start With the Song

Listen together to **God Hears My Little Prayer**.

Practice the main hook:

**God hears my little prayer,
Anytime and anywhere.**

That is the truth we want children to remember.

Then connect it with the feelings we have already learned about.

When I'm happy?

I can pray.

When I'm sad?

I can pray.

When I'm scared?

I can pray.

When I'm angry?

I can pray.

When I'm waiting?

I can pray.

Prayer belongs in ordinary life.

A Little Prayer Is Still a Prayer

Adults sometimes make prayer sound complicated.

We use long sentences.

We use words children do not understand.

We may even change the way we normally speak.

A preschooler does not need to learn that prayer must sound impressive.

A prayer can be:

“God, I'm scared. Help me.”

Or:

“God, I'm mad. Help me be gentle.”

Or:

“Thank You for my food.”

Or simply:

“Thank You, God.”

The length of the prayer is not what makes it prayer.

The child is talking to God.

God Already Knows

Children sometimes struggle to find the right words.

That is okay.

Jesus taught:

“...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Matthew 6:8, KJV

That is a comforting truth.

We do not pray because God needs us to give Him information He does not have.

He already knows.

We pray because we are coming to Him.

You can tell your child:

“God already knows you're sad. But you can still tell Him.”

“God knows you're afraid. You can talk to Him about it.”

“God knows what happened. You can pray.”

Prayer When I Am Afraid

Remember Song 1:

When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God.

Now we can ask:

“What can you pray when you're afraid?”

A child might say:

“God, I'm scared. Help me trust You.”

That is enough.

The child may still want to hold your hand.

That is okay too.

Prayer does not mean a preschooler suddenly stops needing the comfort and protection of trusted adults.

Prayer When I Am Angry

Remember Song 2:

When I Get Angry.

Anger may not disappear immediately because we prayed.

But prayer can help interrupt the rush from feeling to action.

Teach:

“God, I'm angry. Help me use gentle hands and kind words.”

Then help the child make the right choice.

Prayer and action belong together.

Prayer When I Am Sad

Remember:

When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray.

A sad child may not have many words.

Perhaps all they can say is:

“God, I'm sad.”

Do not rush to add ten more sentences.

Let the little prayer be little.

Sit close.

Give the child time.

God does not require a preschooler to give a speech.

Prayer When I Don't Get My Way

Remember:

I Don't Have to Have My Way.

The prayer might be:

“God, I wanted it. Help me be okay when the answer is no.”

That is an important prayer.

We are teaching children that prayer is not simply asking God to give us what we want.

Sometimes prayer is asking God to help us respond rightly when we **do not** get what we want.

Prayer While I Wait

Remember:

Wait, Wait, Wait and I Can Be Patient.

Sometimes a child can pray while waiting.

“God, help me be patient.”

Short.

Simple.

Useful.

The waiting may continue after the prayer.

That is part of the lesson.

Activity: A Prayer for Every Feeling

Name a feeling and help your child make a one-sentence prayer.

Afraid

“God, I'm afraid. Help me trust You.”

Angry

“God, I'm angry. Help me be gentle.”

Sad

“God, I'm sad. Please help me.”

Impatient

“God, help me wait.”

Happy

“Thank You, God, for this happy day.”

Thankful

“Thank You, God, for taking care of me.”

Then let your child choose a feeling.

There is no need to memorize every prayer.

The goal is for children to discover:

I can talk to God about this.

Activity: Morning, Noon, and Night

Use Psalm 55:17 to create three simple prayer moments.

Morning

When the child wakes:

“Thank You, God, for a new day.”

Noon

Around lunchtime:

“Thank You, God, for our food and for taking care of us.”

Night

Before bed:

“Thank You, God, for today. Help me rest tonight.”

Then remind your child:

“Can you pray between those times too?”

Yes.

Anytime and anywhere.

Activity: The Shepherd's Meadow Prayer Walk

Take a short walk outside if appropriate.

Pretend you are walking through The Shepherd's Meadow with Scout and the otter.

Stop when you see something interesting.

A flower.

A bird.

A tree.

A cloud.

The sunshine.

Then say one simple prayer:

“Thank You, God, for the flowers.”

Walk a little farther.

“Thank You, God, for the birds.”

The point is not to create a formal prayer exercise.

It is to help children see that prayer can naturally become part of everyday life.

Grandpa and Child Questions

Try the final call-and-response of the album.

Grandpa: When you're afraid?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: When you're angry?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: When you're sad?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: When you're thankful?

Child: I can pray.

Grandpa: When can you talk to God?

Child: Anytime.

Grandpa: Where can you talk to God?

Child: Anywhere.

Grandpa: And who hears your little prayer?

Child: God does.

Then sing together:

**God hears my little prayer,
Anytime and anywhere.**

Five-Minute Family Devotion

Ask

“Do prayers have to be long?”

No.

“Do we have to be at church to pray?”

No.

“Can we pray when we're happy?”

Yes.

“Can we pray when we're sad?”

Yes.

“Can we pray when we're scared?”

Yes.

Read

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

Explain

Say:

“David prayed at different times during the day. We can talk to God throughout our day too.”

For the youngest child:

“You can talk to God anytime.”

Practice

Ask your child to choose one thing to tell God.

Do not correct the wording.

Let it be their prayer.

Pray

Finish together:

“God, thank You that we can talk to You. Help us remember to pray when we're happy, sad, scared, angry, thankful, or waiting. Thank You for hearing us. Amen.”

Prayer Is More Than Asking for Things

Young children naturally begin many prayers with requests.

“Please help me.”

“Please make me feel better.”

“Please let us go to the park.”

There is nothing wrong with bringing requests to God.

But gradually we can broaden prayer.

We can thank God.

“Thank You for my family.”

We can praise God.

“God, You are good.”

We can admit when we have done wrong.

“God, I'm sorry I hit.”

We can pray for someone else.

“Please help Grandma feel better.”

Little by little, children discover that prayer is much more than a list of things they want.

When God Does Not Give Us What We Ask For

This is an important part of teaching prayer.

If a child prays:

“God, please make it stop raining so we can go to the playground,”

and it keeps raining, we do not want the child to conclude that prayer failed.

You might say:

“We asked God. It is still raining. We can still trust Him even though we didn't get what we wanted.”

Now Song 12 connects directly back to Song 6:

I Don't Have to Have My Way.

Prayer does not put God under our control.

We bring our requests to Him and trust Him.

Prayer and Getting Help

This has been important throughout the guide, and it deserves to be repeated one final time.

Prayer does not replace telling a trusted adult.

If a child is hurt:

Pray and tell someone.

If a child is frightened:

Pray and tell someone.

If someone makes a child uncomfortable:

Tell a trusted adult.

If a child feels unsafe:

Get help.

We never want a child to believe:

“I already prayed, so I shouldn't tell Mommy or Daddy.”

God has given children people who are responsible for caring for and protecting them.

For Parents and Grandparents

Your child will learn something about prayer by listening to you pray.

That does not mean your prayers need to become performances for your children.

Quite the opposite.

Let them hear ordinary prayer.

“God, thank You for our food.”

“Please help us make a wise decision.”

“Thank You for keeping us safe on our trip.”

“We're disappointed today. Please help us trust You.”

Let children see that prayer belongs in real life.

Not just church life.

Not just bedtime.

Life.

When You Don't Know What to Say

There will be moments when the adult does not have an easy answer either.

Something hurts.

Something changes.

Something frightening happens.

A family is grieving.

You do not need to manufacture an explanation for God.

Sometimes you can simply say:

“I don't know why this happened. But we can pray together.”

That is honest.

And it teaches something important.

We do not have to understand everything before we come to God.

A Little Prayer

Dear God, thank You that I can talk to You. When I'm happy, sad, scared, angry, disappointed, or waiting, help me remember that I can pray. Thank You for hearing me and for caring about me. Help me trust You and choose what is right. Amen.

For the littlest ones:

God, thank You for hearing my little prayer. Amen.

Memory Verse

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

Bringing the Album Home

We began this album with a frightened little heart:

When I feel afraid, I trust God.

Along the way we learned what to do with anger.

We learned gentleness.

We learned that sadness can be brought to God.

We learned that God is with us in the dark.

We learned that we do not always have to have our way.

We practiced waiting.

We practiced patience.

We learned how to respond when things do not go according to plan.

We practiced gentle hands.

We practiced kind words.

And now we end with the truth that ties all of those lessons together:

Whatever I'm feeling, I can talk to God.

That is the journey of *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*:

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

And through every big feeling that comes into a little heart:

God hears my little prayer.

After the Songs: Helping the Lessons Become Everyday Habits

You have now walked through all twelve songs in *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*.

But the most important part of this guide does not happen while you are reading it.

It happens tomorrow morning.

It happens when someone takes the toy.

When the thunder starts.

When the answer is no.

When your child has to wait.

When plans suddenly change.

When little hands become rough.

When an angry voice becomes loud.

When bedtime comes and the room gets dark.

Those are the moments when the songs can move from something your child **heard** to something your child is beginning to **live**.

Don't Try to Use All Twelve Lessons at Once

Imagine your child is angry because another child took a toy.

This is probably not the moment to say:

“Remember Song 2 about anger, Song 3 about gentleness, Song 6 about not having your way, Song 8 about patience, Song 10 about gentle hands, and Song 11 about kind words?”

That is too much.

Choose the truth that fits the moment.

“Gentle hands.”

Later, after everyone is calm:

“You were really angry when he took that toy. Do you remember what we learned about being angry?”

One truth at a time is enough.

Create Family Phrases

One of the strengths of these songs is that they give your family a shared vocabulary.

Instead of explaining the entire lesson every time, you can use familiar phrases:

When I feel afraid, I trust God.

Stop and pray.

Jesus, help me be gentle.

When I feel sad, I can pray.

God is with me in the dark.

I don't have to have my way.

Wait, wait, wait.

I can be patient.

Things don't always go my way.

Gentle hands.

Use kind words.

God hears my little prayer.

Over time, you may only need to say two words:

“Gentle hands.”

And your child knows the lesson behind them.

Catch Them Doing It Right

Correction gets our attention because something needs to change.

But do not let correction become the only time you mention these lessons.

Watch for the good moments too.

Your child waits while another child takes a turn.

“You waited patiently.”

Your child becomes frustrated but does not hit.

“You were angry, but you kept gentle hands.”

Your child says:

“Can I have a turn, please?”

“Those were kind words.”

Your child wakes from a bad dream and asks to pray.

“I'm glad you remembered that you can talk to God when you're afraid.”

Your child accepts no without a meltdown.

“You really wanted that, but you accepted the answer.”

These moments help children recognize what they are learning.

Don't Turn Every Good Choice Into a Reward

Praise and encouragement are valuable.

But we also want children to learn that doing right is worthwhile even when nobody hands them a prize afterward.

If every act of patience earns candy, patience can quickly become another way to get candy.

Sometimes the encouragement is simply:

“You waited.”

“That was kind.”

“You told the truth.”

“You used gentle hands.”

The child begins to understand the value of the choice itself.

Practice Before the Hard Moment

The middle of a tantrum is not the ideal time to introduce a new lesson.

Practice while everyone is calm.

Before going somewhere where waiting will be necessary, remind your child:

“We may have to wait today. What can we do while we wait?”

Before friends arrive:

“What can we do if two people want the same toy?”

Before bedtime:

“What do we remember if the room feels scary?”

Before a thunderstorm arrives:

“What does our song say when we feel afraid?”

Preparation gives the child something familiar to reach for later.

Use the Music Again

Do not feel that you need to complete the album and move on.

Preschool children learn through repetition.

One week your child may be especially interested in **Wait, Wait, Wait**.

A month later, **God Is With Me in the Dark** may suddenly become important.

After a difficult morning, you might play **I Don't Have to Have My Way** in the car.

If siblings have been rough with each other, put on **Gentle Hands**.

If someone is having a hard day:

God Hears My Little Prayer.

Let the album live with your family.

Let the Child Choose a Song

Ask:

“Which Shepherd's Meadow song do you want to hear?”

Or:

“Which feelings song should we play today?”

A child's choice may tell you something.

Perhaps **God Is With Me in the Dark** keeps being chosen because nighttime has been difficult.

Perhaps your child loves **Wait, Wait, Wait** simply because the song is fun.

Do not overanalyze every choice.

But listen.

Music can sometimes open conversations that direct questions do not.

Keep Scripture Connected to the Songs

The songs are designed to help children remember.

But the songs should point beyond themselves.

Return to the Bible.

When your child sings:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God,”

show them again:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

When you talk about kindness:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

When you talk about prayer:

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

The child gradually learns:

These are not merely Grandpa's ideas.

God has spoken to us in His Word.

When Your Child Gets It Wrong

They will.

A child who can sing every word of **Gentle Hands** may still hit.

A child who loves **Wait, Wait, Wait** may still become impatient.

A child who can quote:

“I don't have to have my way”

may still have a spectacular meltdown when the answer is no.

That does not make the songs useless.

Knowing truth and learning to live according to truth are not the same thing.

Adults know that very well.

Correct what needs correcting.

Protect anyone who needs protecting.

Help the child make things right when appropriate.

Then keep teaching.

When You Get It Wrong

Parents and grandparents will have moments too.

You may become impatient while telling your child to be patient.

You may raise your voice while telling them to use kind words.

You may respond too quickly or too harshly.

When that happens, you have another teaching opportunity.

“Grandpa was frustrated, but I spoke too harshly. I’m sorry.”

There is something powerful about a child seeing an adult acknowledge a wrong response.

We are not teaching children:

“Grown-ups have mastered their feelings.”

We are teaching:

“All of us need God’s help to respond rightly.”

A Simple Daily Check-In

You can occasionally ask three simple questions at bedtime:

“What made you happy today?”

“Was anything hard today?”

“Is there anything you want to tell God about?”

Do not turn it into an interrogation.

Some nights your child may have a lot to say.

Some nights the answer may be:

“No.”

That is fine.

You are simply creating an open door.

The Four-Step Pattern

If there is one framework worth remembering after finishing this guide, it is the one we began with.

Feel it

What am I feeling?

Afraid?

Angry?

Sad?

Disappointed?

Impatient?

Bring it to God

Can we pray about it?

The prayer may be only one sentence.

Believe His Word

What has God said?

Feelings change.

God's Word remains true.

Respond rightly

What should I do now?

Use gentle hands?

Use kind words?

Wait?

Ask for help?

Accept no?

Tell someone what happened?

Try again?

This pattern can grow with your child.

The situations will become more complicated as the years pass, but the foundation remains useful.

Little Lessons That Can Last

Today the problem may be a broken cookie.

Tomorrow it may be waiting for a swing.

Years from now, disappointment will look different.

Fear will look different.

Anger will look different.

Waiting will become harder.

Prayer will become deeper.

That is why these little lessons matter.

We are not merely trying to make preschool days easier.

We are beginning to teach children something they can carry with them:

My feelings are real.

I can talk about them.

I can bring them to God.

God's Word tells me what is true.

And with God's help, I can choose how I respond.

That is what we hope will grow in every little heart.

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

Parent & Grandparent Quick-Reference Guide

Big feelings rarely arrive at convenient times.

You may not have time to find the right chapter in this guide while your child is crying, frightened by thunder, angry about a toy, or struggling with disappointment.

This page is designed for those moments.

You do not need a long lesson.

Find the feeling or situation, use a few simple words, and help your child remember the truth they have already been learning.

When My Child Is Afraid

Say:

“I know you're scared. I'm here with you.”

Then remind them:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

Scripture:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Try:

Stay close. Find out what frightened the child. Address any real danger. Pray together.

Little prayer:

“God, I'm scared. Help me trust You.”

When My Child Is Angry

Say:

“I know you're angry. You can be angry, but you may not hurt someone.”

Then remind them:

“Stop and pray. Gentle hands. Kind words.”

Scripture:

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Try:

Stop unsafe behavior first. Use few words until the child is calmer. Then help the child explain what happened.

Little prayer:

“God, I'm angry. Help me choose what is right.”

When My Child Is Being Rough**Say:**

“I won't let you hurt someone. Let's use gentle hands.”

Then remind them:

“Hands can help. Hands can share. Gentle hands can show I care.”

Scripture:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Try:

Show the child what gentle looks like. Give them something positive to do with their hands.

Little prayer:

“God, help me use gentle hands.”

When My Child Is Sad**Say:**

“I can see you're sad. You can tell me about it.”

Then remind them:

“When I feel sad, I can pray.”

Scripture:

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

Try:

Listen before trying to fix the problem. Let the child cry if they need to. Offer comfort.

Little prayer:

“God, I'm sad. Please help me.”

When My Child Is Afraid of the Dark**Say:**

“I know the room looks different when it's dark. I'm here, and God is with you.”

Then remind them:

“When it's dark, I trust God.”

Scripture:

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

Try:

Check the room if necessary. Identify unfamiliar shadows or sounds. Use a night-light if it helps.

Little prayer:

“God, it is dark. Help me trust You.”

When My Child Wants His or Her Own Way**Say:**

“I know you really want it. The answer is still no.”

Then remind them:

“I don't have to have my way. I can trust God anyway.”

Scripture:

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

Try:

Acknowledge the disappointment without changing an appropriate boundary merely because the child becomes upset.

Little prayer:

“God, help me when I don't get my way.”

When My Child Has to Wait**Say:**

“I know waiting is hard. Your turn is coming.”

Then remind them:

“Wait, wait, wait. Sometimes I have to wait.”

Scripture:

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

Try:

Make waiting understandable. Use a timer, a song, or a simple “first this, then that” explanation.

Little prayer:

“God, help me wait.”

When My Child Is Impatient**Say:**

“You're still waiting, and it's getting hard. Let's practice patience.”

Then remind them:

“I can be patient. I can wait.”

Scripture:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

Try:

Notice progress. If the child waits appropriately, say:

“You wanted your turn, and you waited.”

Little prayer:

“God, help me be patient.”

When Plans Change

Say:

“I know that's disappointing. We thought we were going to do something different.”

Then remind them:

“Things don't always go my way, but I can still be okay.”

Scripture:

“In every thing give thanks...”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV

Try:

Acknowledge the disappointment first. Then, when appropriate, help the child think about what can happen next.

Little prayer:

“God, I'm disappointed. Help me.”

When My Child Uses Hurtful Words

Say:

“You can tell me you're angry, but let's choose words that don't hurt.”

Then remind them:

“Kind words, kind words, I can choose kind words.”

Scripture:

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Try:

Give the child better words.

Instead of:

“Give me that.”

Try:

“Can I have a turn, please?”

Instead of:

“I hate you.”

Try:

“I’m angry.”

Little prayer:

“God, help me use kind words.”

When You Aren't Sure What to Do

You do not need the perfect response.

Start with four simple steps.

1. Feel it

Help the child name what is happening.

“You're scared.”

“You're angry.”

“You're disappointed.”

2. Bring it to God

Ask:

“Would you like to pray with me?”

3. Believe His Word

Use one short biblical truth the child already knows.

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

4. Respond rightly

Ask:

“What can we do now?”

Maybe the answer is:

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Wait.

Tell someone.

Ask for help.

Accept no.

Try again.

Pray.

One Important Reminder

If a child is hurt, frightened, unsafe, confused, or uncomfortable because of something another person has done, **do not treat it merely as a feelings lesson.**

Listen.

Protect the child.

Take what they tell you seriously.

Get appropriate help when needed.

Prayer should never be used to silence a child or replace the care and protection adults are responsible to provide.

The Phrase to Remember

If you remember nothing else from this page, remember the heart of *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*:

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

A Week in The Shepherd's Meadow

Seven Days of Practicing What We Learned

The songs do not have to stay in the music player, and the lessons do not have to stay in this guidebook.

Here is a simple seven-day family plan for putting *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* into everyday life.

This is not a schedule you have to follow perfectly. You can repeat a day, skip a day, or spend an entire week on one lesson your child especially needs.

Keep it simple.

One song. One Scripture. One conversation. One prayer.

That is plenty.

Day 1: When I Feel Afraid

Listen

Play **When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God.**

Sing the main line together:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

Read

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Talk

Ask:

“What makes you feel afraid sometimes?”

Listen to the answer.

Then ask:

“What can you do when you're afraid?”

Help your child remember:

“I can trust God.”

Remind the child that being afraid is also something they can always tell you about.

Practice

Make one gentle pretend thunder clap.

Ask:

“What do we remember when the thunder goes boom?”

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

Pray

“God, when we are afraid, help us trust You. Amen.”

Day 2: When I Feel Angry

Listen

Play **When I Get Angry** and **Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle**.

Read

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Talk

Ask:

“Do we sometimes get angry?”

Yes.

“Does being angry mean we can hit someone?”

No.

Then practice:

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

“What kind of words?”

“Kind words.”

Practice

Use the four motions:

Stop.

Gentle hands.

Kind words.

Pray.

Pray

“Jesus, when we are angry, help us be gentle. Amen.”

Day 3: When I Feel Sad

Listen

Play **When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray.**

Read

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

Talk

Ask:

“What makes you sad?”

Do not rush the answer.

If your child says something that seems small, remember that it may not feel small to them.

Then ask:

“Can you tell me when you're sad?”

Yes.

“Can you tell God too?”

Yes.

Practice

Make up a little situation:

“Scout's friend had to go home, and Scout feels sad. What could Scout do?”

Let the child answer.

Perhaps:

“Pray.”

“Get a hug.”

“Tell Grandpa.”

Pray

“God, thank You for hearing us when we're sad. Amen.”

Day 4: When I Want My Way

Listen

Play **I Don't Have to Have My Way.**

Read

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

Talk

Ask:

“Do we always get everything we want?”

No.

“Can we be disappointed when the answer is no?”

Yes.

“Do we still have to choose what is right?”

Yes.

Then sing:

“I don't have to have my way.

I can trust God anyway.”

Practice

Let Scout and the otter both want the same pretend toy.

Ask:

“What could they do?”

Take turns.

Wait.

Share.

Ask politely.

Pray

“God, help us trust You when we don't get our way. Amen.”

Day 5: Learning to Wait

Listen

Play **Wait, Wait, Wait** and **I Can Be Patient**.

Read

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

Talk

Ask:

“What's something that's hard to wait for?”

Then explain:

“Waiting is when it isn't time yet. Patience is how we act while we wait.”

Practice

Take turns stacking blocks.

Grandpa places one.

Child places one.

Grandpa places one.

Child places one.

No reaching ahead.

If waiting becomes difficult:

“Wait, wait, wait.”

Keep it fun.

Pray

“God, help us be patient while we wait. Amen.”

Day 6: Hands and Words

Listen

Play **Gentle Hands** and **Use Kind Words**.

Read

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Talk

Hold up your hands.

Ask:

“What good things can these hands do?”

Help.

Share.

Build.

Hug.

Wave.

Then ask:

“What good things can our words do?”

Encourage.

Thank.

Ask.

Comfort.

Tell the truth.

Practice

Give your child a little kindness mission:

Use your hands to help someone today.

Maybe they put away a toy.

Bring Grandma something.

Help set the table.

Carefully help with Scout's water.

Then:

Use kind words to encourage someone today.

Perhaps:

“I love you.”

“Thank you.”

“Can I help?”

Pray

“God, help us use our hands and our words to show kindness. Amen.”

Day 7: I Can Talk to God

Listen

Finish the week with **God Hears My Little Prayer**.

Read

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

Talk

Review the week.

Ask:

“What can you do when you're afraid?”

“Trust God.”

“What can you do when you're angry?”

“Stop and pray.”

“What kind of hands?”

“Gentle hands.”

“What can you do when you're sad?”

“Pray.”

“Do you always have to have your way?”

“No.”

“What can you do when you have to wait?”

“Be patient.”

Finally:

“When can you talk to God?”

“Anytime.”

“Where can you talk to God?”

“Anywhere.”

Practice

Let your child choose what to pray about.

Do not give them the words unless they need help.

Let the prayer belong to them.

It may be only five words.

That is okay.

Pray

End the week together:

“God, thank You for hearing us. Help us trust You with all our feelings. Help us use gentle hands, kind words, and make right choices. Thank You that we can talk to You anytime and anywhere. Amen.”

At the End of the Week

You are not finished.

There is no graduation from having feelings.

Next week, someone will still become angry.

Someone will still be disappointed.

Someone will still have to wait.

There may be another thunderstorm.

There may be another difficult bedtime.

And there will certainly be another moment when somebody wants their own way.

That is exactly why repetition matters.

Play the songs again.

Use the phrases again.

Read the Scriptures again.

Pray again.

Little by little, these truths can become familiar companions in your child's everyday life.

And when a big feeling arrives, perhaps a little voice will eventually remember:

I can trust God.

I can pray.

I can be gentle.

I can wait.

I can use kind words.

I don't have to have my way.

That is a very good beginning.

The Little Hearts Prayer Page

Simple Prayers for Big Feelings

Little children do not need long prayers.

They do not need special words.

They do not need to understand everything they are feeling before they talk to God.

Sometimes a child may know exactly what is wrong.

Sometimes all they know is:

“I'm scared.”

“I'm mad.”

“I'm sad.”

“I wanted it.”

“I don't want to wait.”

Those are moments when a parent or grandparent can help a child discover that prayer can be simple, honest, and part of everyday life.

The prayers on these pages are not scripts children must memorize. They are examples to help little ones begin finding their own words.

When I Am Afraid

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

God, I'm scared.

Please help me trust You.

Amen.

If your child wants to say more:

God, that scared me. Thank You for being with me. Help me remember that I can trust You. Amen.

When the Thunder Is Loud

God, the thunder is loud, and I'm scared. Please help me trust You. Thank You for the people who are here to keep me safe. Amen.

And sometimes the entire prayer may be:

God, I'm scared. Help me.

That is enough.

When It Is Dark

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

God, it is dark.

You know where I am.

Help me trust You.

Amen.

At bedtime, a parent or grandparent might add:

Thank You, God, for watching over our family tonight. Help us rest. Amen.

When I Am Angry

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

God, I'm angry.

Help me stop.

**Help me use gentle hands
and kind words.**

Amen.

The purpose of the prayer is not to deny the anger.

The child is telling God exactly what is happening.

Then comes the request for help choosing what to do next.

When I Want to Hit

Jesus, I'm really mad.

Help me keep my hands gentle.

Amen.

Then the adult still needs to help the child make the safe choice.

Prayer does not replace intervention when someone may be hurt.

When I Feel Sad

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

God, I'm sad.

You know why I'm sad.

Please help me.

Amen.

If the child does not know why:

God, I'm sad,

and I don't know why.

Please stay close to me.

Amen.

A child does not need to stop crying before praying.

When I Miss Someone

God, I miss _____.

Thank You that I can tell You.

Please help me when I feel sad.

Amen.

Let the child say the person's name.

There is no need to rush past the sadness.

When I Don't Get My Way

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

God, I really wanted it.

I'm disappointed.

Help me accept the answer

and trust You anyway.

Amen.

For a very little child:

**God, I wanted it.
Help me when the answer is no.
Amen.**

When I Have to Wait

**“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”
Psalm 37:7, KJV**

**God, waiting is hard.
Help me be patient.
Amen.**

That may be one of the most useful little prayers in the guidebook.

Waiting for a turn.

Waiting in the car.

Waiting for dinner.

Waiting for someone to finish.

God, waiting is hard. Help me be patient.

When Things Don't Go My Way

**“In every thing give thanks...”
1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV**

**God, this isn't what I wanted.
I'm disappointed.
Help me trust You
and choose what is right next.
Amen.**

Then, when the child is ready, help them think about what comes next.

When I Need Gentle Hands

**“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”
Ephesians 4:32, KJV**

**Jesus, help my hands
to help and not hurt.**

Help me be gentle.

Amen.

Then put those hands to work doing something good.

Help.

Share.

Build.

Comfort.

Care.

When I Need Kind Words

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

God, help me stop and think.

Help me tell the truth

and use kind words.

Amen.

If the child already said something hurtful:

God, I'm sorry for the words I used. Help me use better words. Amen.

Then help the child make things right with the person who was hurt.

When I Did Something Wrong

Children need to learn that they can come to God when they have done wrong too.

We do not need to hide.

We do not need to blame someone else.

We can tell the truth.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...”

1 John 1:9, KJV

A simple prayer might be:

God, I did something wrong.

I'm sorry.

**Please forgive me
and help me choose what is right.
Amen.**

If another person was hurt, prayer should be followed by making things right when possible.

When I Am Happy

Prayer is not only for difficult feelings.

**God, I'm happy today.
Thank You for this good day.
Amen.**

Teach children to bring joy to God too.

When I Am Thankful

Thank You, God, for my family.

Thank You for my food.

Thank You for Scout.

Thank You for my friends.

Thank You for taking care of me.

Let the child add whatever comes to mind.

It may surprise you what a preschooler considers especially important.

When Someone Else Needs Prayer

Children can begin learning to pray for others.

God, please help Grandma today.

God, please help my friend who is sick.

God, please comfort Mommy because she is sad.

God, please help Daddy at work.

These little prayers begin moving the child's attention beyond:

What do I want?

toward:

How can I care about someone else?

When I Need Help but Don't Know What to Say

Sometimes there simply are not many words.

That is okay.

Teach your child that this is a prayer too:

God, please help me.

And this:

Jesus, help me.

And this:

Thank You, God.

And this:

God, I'm sad.

Prayer does not become more real because it becomes longer.

Let Your Child Finish the Prayer

Try beginning and allowing your child to finish:

“God, today I'm thankful for...”

Pause.

“God, today I was scared when...”

Pause.

“God, please help me with...”

Pause.

“God, please help...”

Pause.

Do not worry about correcting every sentence.

Listen.

You may be hearing your child begin to develop a personal habit of talking to God.

My Little Prayer

You can use this simple pattern anytime:

Dear God,

Today I feel _____.

I want to tell You about _____.

Please help me _____.

Thank You for _____.

Amen.

For the smallest children, make it even simpler:

God, I feel _____.

Please help me.

Amen.

The Prayer We Want Them to Remember

After twelve songs, many Scriptures, activities, conversations, and lessons, the central truth is still wonderfully small:

I can talk to God.

When?

Anytime.

Where?

Anywhere.

About what?

Anything.

And when a little heart cannot find many words at all:

God hears my little prayer.

Scripture Memory Time

Twelve Truths for Little Hearts

Young children often remember words long before they understand everything those words mean.

That is one of the wonderful things about teaching Scripture early.

A preschooler may not be able to explain every word in a Bible verse, but those words can become familiar. As the child grows, understanding can grow with them.

The goal of this section is not to see how many verses a child can recite perfectly.

We are planting God's Word in little hearts.

Keep it joyful.

Keep it simple.

And always remember that **the song helps us remember the truth, but the Bible is where the truth comes from.**

1. When I Am Afraid

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Little Heart Truth

When I feel afraid, I can trust God.

Practice It

Adult:

“What time I am afraid...”

Child:

“I will trust in thee.”

This is short enough that many preschoolers may eventually learn the entire verse.

2. When I Get Angry

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Little Heart Truth

Being angry does not mean I should do something wrong.

Practice It

Adult:

“When I'm angry, can I hit?”

Child:

“No.”

Adult:

“Can I choose what is right?”

Child:

“Yes.”

3. Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

Little Heart Truth

Jesus can help me be gentle.

Practice It

For a very young child, concentrate on one word from the verse:

Gentleness.

Ask:

“Can you show me gentle?”

Let the child demonstrate a gentle touch.

4. When I Feel Sad

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

Little Heart Truth

God cares when my heart is sad.

Practice It

Adult:

“When you're sad, is God far away?”

Child:

“No.”

Adult:

“Can you talk to Him?”

Child:

“Yes.”

5. God Is With Me in the Dark

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

Little Heart Truth

God can see me even when it is dark.

Practice It

Turn the lights down slightly.

Ask:

“Can God still see us?”

“Yes.”

Then repeat:

“The darkness hideth not from thee.”

6. I Don't Have to Have My Way

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:4, KJV

Little Heart Truth

I can think about other people too.

Practice It

Adult:

“Do I always have to be first?”

Child:

“No.”

Adult:

“Do other people matter too?”

Child:

“Yes.”

7. Wait, Wait, Wait

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

Little Heart Truth

Sometimes I have to wait.

Practice It

Adult:

“Rest in the LORD...”

Child:

“And wait patiently for him.”

If that is too much, simply practice:

“Wait patiently.”

8. I Can Be Patient

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Galatians 5:22, KJV

Little Heart Truth

God can help me be patient.

A Big Bible Word

The KJV uses the word:

Longsuffering.

You can explain it simply:

“It means we keep doing what is right even when something is difficult or takes a long time.”

Your preschooler does not need to memorize that definition.

For now:

“God can help me wait patiently.”

9. When Things Don't Go My Way

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, KJV

Little Heart Truth

Even when I'm disappointed, I can still thank God.

Practice It

Ask:

“Can you think of one thing to thank God for?”

Let the child choose.

Food.

Family.

Scout.

A favorite toy.

Sunshine.

Grandma.

A friend.

Whatever comes to mind.

10. Gentle Hands

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

Little Heart Truth

My hands can show kindness.

Practice It

Adult:

“Be ye...”

Child:

“Kind one to another.”

Then ask:

“Show me something kind your hands can do.”

Wave.

Help.

Share.

Give an appropriate gentle hug.

11. Use Kind Words

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Little Heart Truth

My words can help instead of hurt.

Practice It

Ask:

“Can you give me a sweet word?”

The child might say:

“Thank you.”

“I love you.”

“Please.”

“Can I help?”

Then remind them:

“The Bible says pleasant words are like something sweet.”

12. God Hears My Little Prayer

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalm 55:17, KJV

Little Heart Truth

I can talk to God throughout my day.

Practice It

Adult:

“Morning?”

Child:

“I can pray.”

Adult:

“Noon?”

Child:

“I can pray.”

Adult:

“Night?”

Child:

“I can pray.”

Adult:

“Who hears your prayer?”

Child:

“God does.”

Make Scripture Memory Fun

You do not need flash cards, tests, scores, or prizes.

Try saying a verse while:

Walking to the mailbox.

Riding in the car.

Getting dressed.

Cleaning up toys.

Sitting at the breakfast table.

Waiting in line.

Getting ready for bed.

Use the songs too.

When a lyric reminds you of one of these Scriptures, stop occasionally and say:

“Do you know where that idea came from?”

Then open the Bible and show your child.

Don't Worry About Perfect Recitation

A three-year-old may say:

“When I'm scared, I trust God.”

instead of:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

That is not a failure.

Continue reading the actual KJV verse so the child hears Scripture accurately.

As children grow, they can learn the exact wording.

At this age, we are building familiarity with both the **words of Scripture** and the **truth Scripture teaches**.

The Twelve Little Heart Truths

At the end of the album, see how many your child recognizes:

When I feel afraid, I can trust God.

When I am angry, I can still choose what is right.

Jesus can help me be gentle.

When I am sad, I can pray.

God is with me in the dark.

I don't have to have my way.

Sometimes I have to wait.

I can learn patience.

I can handle disappointment without doing wrong.

I can use gentle hands.

I can use kind words.

God hears my little prayer.

You do not need your child to master all twelve.

If even one of these truths comes back to a little mind at exactly the moment it is needed, the time you spent teaching it was worthwhile.

And little by little, we are helping children discover something even more important than remembering the songs:

God has given us His Word.

We can believe what He says.

A Note From Grandpa Joe

If you have made it this far through *Little Hearts, Big Feelings*, I want to leave you with something simple.

You do not have to do everything in this guidebook.

You do not have to complete every activity, memorize every verse, or turn every difficult moment into a lesson.

This guide was never meant to make raising little children more complicated.

It was meant to help.

The idea behind this album began with something every parent and grandparent already knows.

Little children can have very big feelings.

Fear can be big.

Anger can be big.

Sadness can be big.

Waiting can feel almost impossible.

Hearing “**no**” can seem like the end of the world.

And sometimes a thunderclap can send a little one running straight into your arms.

Those feelings are real.

But I did not want to make an album that simply told children to follow whatever they feel.

I wanted to give them something better.

I wanted to begin teaching them, while they are still very young, that they can recognize what they are feeling, bring it to God, believe what He has said, and then learn to respond rightly.

That became the simple pattern running through this entire guide:

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

Why Songs?

There is something wonderful about the way children remember music.

You may explain something ten times and wonder whether any of it stayed with them.

Then one day, completely unexpectedly, you hear them singing it.

That is why The Shepherd's Meadow uses songs.

A little child may not remember a long conversation about patience when waiting for a turn.

But perhaps they will remember:

“Wait, wait, wait.”

They may not remember everything Grandpa explained about fear.

But when the thunder rolls, perhaps a familiar little melody comes back:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

They may not remember a whole lesson about anger.

But maybe they remember:

“Gentle hands.”

And when they do, we have an opportunity to point them back to something even more important than the song.

God's Word.

The songs are not the foundation.

Scripture is.

The songs simply help little hearts remember.

Why Grandpa?

There is a reason the grandfather voice has become such an important part of The Shepherd's Meadow.

Grandparents have a wonderful opportunity.

We have lived long enough to know that many things that seem enormous in the moment eventually pass.

We have made mistakes.

We have needed forgiveness.

We have watched our children grow.

And then, if God gives us the privilege, we get to bend down again and look into another little face.

Only this time it belongs to a grandchild.

There is something precious about that.

A grandparent does not replace a child's parents.

But we can stand beside them.

We can reinforce what is being taught at home.

We can listen.

We can tell stories.

We can open the Bible.

We can pray.

We can sing silly songs.

We can sit through the same song seventeen times because a little voice says:

“Again, Grandpa.”

And sometimes we can provide the calm voice a little heart needs in a difficult moment.

That is the Grandpa I hope children hear in these songs.

Warm.

Safe.

Patient.

Joyful.

And always pointing beyond himself to Jesus and the Word of God.

The Meadow Has Room for Imperfect Families

Nobody will use this guide perfectly.

Parents will become impatient while teaching patience.

Grandparents will occasionally use the wrong words while teaching kind words.

Children will sing **Gentle Hands** and then use those same hands badly ten minutes later.

That is real family life.

Keep teaching.

Keep correcting when correction is needed.

Keep apologizing when you are the one who needs to apologize.

Keep listening.

Keep laughing.

Keep praying.

And keep opening God's Word.

The goal is not a preschooler who never cries, never becomes angry, never gets frightened, and cheerfully accepts every disappointment.

The goal is growth.

Little by little.

One Day They Will Not Be Little

This is something grandparents understand particularly well.

The little hand holding yours will not always be little.

The child frightened by thunder will grow.

The child struggling to wait for a toy will someday wait for much bigger things.

The little heart broken because someone would not share may someday experience real heartbreak.

The problems will change.

The feelings will become more complicated.

And there will come a day when you cannot simply pick that child up and make everything feel better.

That is one reason these little lessons matter so much.

We are planting something now that we pray will still be there later.

When I am afraid, I can trust God.

When I am hurting, I can pray.

I do not have to have my way.

I can choose what is right even when my feelings are strong.

I can tell the truth.

I can ask for help.

I can forgive.

God has given me His Word.

God hears my prayer.

Those truths are not only for preschoolers.

They are truths worth carrying for a lifetime.

To the Parents and Grandparents

Thank you for spending this time with a little one.

The most valuable part of this guidebook is not the page you are holding.

It is you.

Your child or grandchild will probably forget many of these activities.

They may eventually forget which Shepherd's Meadow song was their favorite.

But they may remember sitting beside you.

They may remember singing together in the car.

They may remember Grandpa praying with them when the thunder was loud.

They may remember Mom sitting beside the bed when the room felt scary.

They may remember Dad helping them calm down instead of simply becoming angry with them.

They may remember Grandma opening the Bible and showing them where the words from their song came from.

Those ordinary moments matter.

So use this guidebook.

Play the songs.

Do the activities that fit your family.

Skip the ones that do not.

Come back to a lesson when you need it.

And then put the guidebook down and enjoy the child God has placed in front of you.

From My Heart to Your Little Hearts

My prayer for *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* is not that children simply learn twelve songs.

I pray that somewhere beneath the melodies, the hand motions, Scout's adventures, the otter, the laughter, and all the ordinary moments in *The Shepherd's Meadow*, God's truth begins finding a home in little hearts.

And when one of those hearts fills with a feeling that seems much too big, I hope a familiar truth comes back:

I can bring this to God.

I can believe His Word.

I can choose what is right.

And perhaps, when there are hardly any words at all:

God hears my little prayer.

With love,

Grandpa Joe

Joe Soares

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

Album Companion Song List

The twelve songs of *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* were created to help young children recognize real emotions, bring those feelings to God, remember what His Word says, and learn to respond rightly.

Each song has its own lesson in this guidebook. You can follow the album from beginning to end, or return to a particular song whenever that lesson is especially needed.

The 12 Songs

1. When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

The lesson: Fear is real, but I can bring my fear to God and trust Him.

Remember:

When I feel afraid, I trust God.

Scripture: Psalm 56:3

2. When I Get Angry

The lesson: Anger is a real feeling, but being angry does not give me permission to hurt someone or do wrong.

Remember:

I can be angry and still choose what is right.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:26

3. Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

The lesson: When big feelings make me want to react roughly, I can ask Jesus to help me respond with gentleness.

Remember:

Jesus, help me be gentle.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22

4. When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray

The lesson: I do not have to hide sadness. I can tell someone who loves me, and I can talk to God about it.

Remember:

When I feel sad, I can pray.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18

5. God Is With Me in the Dark

The lesson: Darkness can feel scary, but darkness does not hide me from God.

Remember:

God is with me in the dark.

Scripture: Psalm 139:12

6. I Don't Have to Have My Way

The lesson: I will not always get what I want. I can be disappointed without demanding my own way.

Remember:

I don't have to have my way.

Scripture: Philippians 2:4

7. Wait, Wait, Wait

The lesson: Sometimes it simply is not my turn yet. Waiting is part of life, and I can learn how to do it.

Remember:

Wait, wait, wait. Sometimes I have to wait.

Scripture: Psalm 37:7

8. I Can Be Patient

The lesson: Waiting is what happens around me. Patience is how I learn to respond while I wait.

Remember:

I can be patient. I can wait.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22

9. When Things Don't Go My Way

The lesson: Plans change. Things break. Sometimes the answer is no. Disappointment does not have to determine what I do next.

Remember:

Things don't always go my way, but I can still choose what is right.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

10. Gentle Hands

The lesson: My hands can help instead of hurt. Even when I am angry, frustrated, or excited, I can learn to use gentle hands.

Remember:

Hands can help. Hands can share. Gentle hands can show I care.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32

11. Use Kind Words

The lesson: Words can help or hurt. I can tell the truth, explain how I feel, and still choose words that are kind.

Remember:

Kind words, kind words, I can choose kind words.

Scripture: Proverbs 16:24

12. God Hears My Little Prayer

The lesson: Whatever I am feeling, I can talk to God. Prayer belongs in ordinary childhood, morning, noon, night, and all the moments in between.

Remember:

God hears my little prayer, anytime and anywhere.

Scripture: Psalm 55:17

One Album, One Simple Pattern

Although the songs address different emotions and situations, they all lead children back to the same four-step pattern:

Feel It

What am I feeling?

Bring It to God

I can talk to God about what is happening.

Believe His Word

My feelings may change, but God's Word is true.

Respond Rightly

With God's help, I can choose what I do next.

Using the Album With This Guidebook

You do not need to play all twelve songs every time.

Choose the song that fits the moment.

Thunder outside?

Play **When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God.**

Angry little hands?

Try **When I Get Angry, Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle, or Gentle Hands.**

A difficult bedtime?

Play **God Is With Me in the Dark.**

A hard time hearing no?

Return to **I Don't Have to Have My Way.**

Waiting for a turn?

Sing **Wait, Wait, Wait** or **I Can Be Patient**.

A disappointing change of plans?

Try **When Things Don't Go My Way**.

Hurtful words?

Return to **Use Kind Words**.

A little heart that simply needs to talk to God?

Play **God Hears My Little Prayer**.

The album and guidebook were designed to work together, but neither needs to become a rigid program.

Sometimes you will read the lesson.

Sometimes you will do an activity.

Sometimes you will sing together.

And sometimes two familiar words will be enough:

Gentle hands.

That is the beauty of repetition.

A song heard during a happy afternoon in The Shepherd's Meadow may become a truth remembered later, exactly when a little heart needs it.

Scripture Reference Index

Scriptures Used Throughout Little Hearts, Big Feelings

The songs and activities in *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* are designed to help children remember biblical truth. This reference section gives parents, grandparents, and caregivers a convenient place to find the principal Scriptures connected with the twelve songs in this guidebook.

All Scripture references in this guidebook are from the King James Version (KJV).

Rather than repeating every verse in full, this index points you back to the passages so you can open the Bible and read them together.

Old Testament

Psalms

Psalm 34:18

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Used with:

When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray

Little Heart Truth:

God cares when my heart is sad.

Psalm 37:7

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Used with:

Wait, Wait, Wait

I Can Be Patient

Little Heart Truth:

Sometimes I have to wait, and I can learn patience while I wait.

Psalm 55:17

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Used with:

God Hears My Little Prayer

Little Heart Truth:

I can talk to God throughout my day.

Psalms 56:3

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Used with:

When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

Little Heart Truth:

When I feel afraid, I can trust God.

This is one of the central memory verses of the entire album and a particularly good verse for young children to learn in full.

Psalms 139:12

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Used with:

God Is With Me in the Dark

Little Heart Truth:

Darkness does not hide me from God.

Proverbs

Proverbs 16:24

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.”

Used with:

Use Kind Words

Little Heart Truth:

My words can help instead of hurt.

New Testament

Matthew

Matthew 6:8

“...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Used with:

God Hears My Little Prayer

Little Heart Truth:

God already knows what I need, and I can still talk to Him about it.

Galatians

Galatians 5:22

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”

Used with:

Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

I Can Be Patient

Little Heart Truth:

God can help me grow in gentleness and patience.

Ephesians

Ephesians 4:26

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Used with:

When I Get Angry

Little Heart Truth:

Being angry does not mean I have to do something wrong.

Ephesians 4:32

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Used with:

Gentle Hands

Little Heart Truth:

God wants me to show kindness and tenderness toward others.

Philippians

Philippians 2:4

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Used with:

I Don't Have to Have My Way

Little Heart Truth:

I can think about other people instead of always insisting on what I want.

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Used with:

When Things Don't Go My Way

Little Heart Truth:

Even when I am disappointed, I can still find reasons to thank God.

The Twelve Main Album Scriptures

For families who want to concentrate only on the Scriptures directly connected with the twelve songs, begin with these:

1. When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

Psalms 56:3

2. When I Get Angry

Ephesians 4:26

3. Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

Galatians 5:22

4. When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray

Psalms 34:18

5. God Is With Me in the Dark

Psalms 139:12

6. I Don't Have to Have My Way

Philippians 2:4

7. Wait, Wait, Wait

Psalms 37:7

8. I Can Be Patient

Galatians 5:22

9. When Things Don't Go My Way

1 Thessalonians 5:18

10. Gentle Hands

Ephesians 4:32

11. Use Kind Words

Proverbs 16:24

12. God Hears My Little Prayer

Psalms 55:17

Where to Begin

You do not need to teach all of these Scriptures at once.

For a very young child, one verse may be enough for quite some time.

If you are looking for a place to begin, start here:

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Then perhaps:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Ephesians 4:32, KJV

And:

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb...”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Over time, add another.

Then another.

Read the actual Bible to your child so they become familiar not only with the simplified Little Heart Truth, but with the words God gave us.

The songs can help them remember.

The activities can help them practice.

Grandpa can help explain.

Scout and the otter can help make the lessons memorable.

But we always want to lead the child back to the source:

God's Word.

Quick Topic Finder

What Does My Little Heart Need Right Now?

Big feelings rarely arrive when we have time to search through an entire guidebook.

Sometimes you simply need to know:

“Which song can help us right now?”

Use this section as a quick reference. Find what your child is experiencing, then return to the suggested song and its lesson in this guidebook.

My Child Is Afraid

Try These Songs

When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

God Is With Me in the Dark

Remember

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Say

“It's okay to tell me you're afraid. Let's talk to God about it and remember what He says.”

My Child Is Afraid of Thunder

Start Here

When I Feel Afraid, I Trust God

Thunder was intentionally included in this album because it is a very real childhood fear.

Remember

“The thunder is loud, but you are not alone. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Try

Pray together, stay close, and let the child hear the familiar song.

My Child Is Afraid of the Dark

Start Here

God Is With Me in the Dark

Remember

“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee...”

Psalms 139:12, KJV

Say

“The room looks different when it is dark, but God can still see us.”

Also Try

Return to the **Find the Light** activity in the *God Is With Me in the Dark* lesson.

My Child Is Angry

Try These Songs

When I Get Angry

Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

Gentle Hands

Remember

“Be ye angry, and sin not...”

Ephesians 4:26, KJV

Say

“You're angry. You may be angry, but you may not hurt someone.”

Then help the child choose what to do next.

My Child Is Hitting, Pushing, or Being Rough

Start Here

Gentle Hands

Then use:

Jesus, Help Me Be Gentle

Say

“I won't let you hit. We use gentle hands.”

Once everyone is safe and the child is calm, talk about what happened.

Help the child think about what could be done differently next time.

My Child Is Sad

Start Here

When I Feel Sad, I Can Pray

Remember

“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”

Psalms 34:18, KJV

Say

“You can be sad. Do you want to tell me what happened?”

Then listen.

Do not rush immediately to make the sadness disappear.

My Child Doesn't Want to Hear “No”

Start Here

I Don't Have to Have My Way

Remember

Wanting something does not mean I must have it.

Say

“I know you wanted that. The answer is still no. You can be disappointed and still choose what is right.”

Also Try

When Things Don't Go My Way

My Child Is Having Trouble Waiting

Try These Songs

Wait, Wait, Wait

I Can Be Patient

Remember

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”

Psalms 37:7, KJV

Say

“It isn't your turn yet. What can we do while we wait?”

For very young children, keep waiting periods reasonable.

My Child Is Impatient

Start Here

I Can Be Patient

Remember

Waiting is the situation.

Patience is how we respond while we wait.

Practice short, reasonable periods of waiting and praise the child for making a good choice while waiting.

Something Didn't Go My Child's Way

Start Here

When Things Don't Go My Way

Then try:

I Don't Have to Have My Way

Say

“That wasn't what you wanted to happen. What can we do now?”

Help the child move from disappointment toward the next right response.

My Child Is Using Hurtful Words

Start Here

Use Kind Words

Remember

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb...”

Proverbs 16:24, KJV

Say

“You can tell me you're angry, but you may not use words to hurt someone.”

Then help the child find better words.

My Child Hurt Someone

Try These Songs

Gentle Hands

Use Kind Words

Help the Child Learn

Tell the truth.

Say what you did.

Apologize when you have wronged someone.

Repair what you reasonably can.

Ask God for forgiveness.

Think about what you can do differently next time.

Someone Hurt My Child

Remember

Your child can tell you what happened.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending that something wrong was acceptable.

It does not mean keeping harmful behavior secret.

It does not mean remaining in an unsafe situation.

Say

“You can tell me what happened.”

“You don't have to hurt someone back.”

“We can ask God to help you respond in the right way.”

My Child Needs Help

Practice These Words

“Can you help me?”

“I need help.”

“I'm scared.”

“Someone hurt me.”

“Please stop.”

Remember

A child who trusts God can also ask a trusted adult for help.

My Child Feels Left Out

Say

“I know that hurt your feelings. Tell me what happened.”

Then help the child decide whether to:

Ask to join.

Find another activity.

Invite someone else to play.

Or ask an adult for help if someone is deliberately being unkind.

My Child Says “Nobody Loves Me”

Say

“You feel very disappointed right now. But let's think about what is true.”

Do not dismiss the feeling.

Help the child separate the feeling from the conclusion.

Remind the child of the people who love and care for them and, most importantly, of God's love and care.

My Child Says “I Can't Do It”

Try Replacing

“I can't do it.”

with:

“This is hard. Can you help me?”

Sometimes the child needs encouragement to try again.

Sometimes the child really does need help.

My Child's Body Seems Out of Control

Check the simple things too.

Is the child:

Hungry?

Thirsty?

Tired?

Too hot?

Overstimulated?

In need of the bathroom?

In need of some quiet?

Not every difficult moment requires a long lesson.

Sometimes a little body simply needs care.

When the child is ready, choose the song that best fits what is happening.

My Child Is Overly Excited and Getting Rough

Try

Gentle Hands

Say

“You're really excited. Even excited hands can be gentle hands.”

Big feelings are not limited to anger, fear, and sadness.

Even joyful excitement needs appropriate boundaries.

My Child Did Something Wrong and Is Hiding It

Teach

“When we do something wrong, we tell the truth.”

Help the child learn to say what happened without blaming someone else.

Then help the child apologize and repair what can reasonably be repaired.

A simple prayer can follow:

“God, I did something wrong. I’m sorry. Please forgive me and help me choose what is right. Amen.”

Brothers and Sisters Are Fighting

Try These Songs

I Don't Have to Have My Way

Wait, Wait, Wait

Gentle Hands

Use Kind Words

Ask

“What happened?”

“What were you feeling?”

“What did you do?”

“What can you do now?”

Help each child move from the feeling toward the next right response.

My Child Needs to Pray

Start Here

God Hears My Little Prayer

Remember

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

Psalms 55:17, KJV

Prayer does not have to be long.

A preschooler's prayer may be:

“God, I’m scared. Help me.”

That is a prayer.

I Don't Know What My Child Is Feeling

That is okay.

You do not always have to know.

Try:

“Something seems wrong. Do you want to tell me about it?”

If the child cannot explain, stay nearby.

Sometimes the words come later.

You can also return to the basic questions:

Are you afraid?

Are you angry?

Are you sad?

Are you disappointed?

Do you need help?

Avoid supplying an answer the child has not given you.

Nothing Seems to Be Working

Remember something important.

Children learn through repetition.

A lesson that worked yesterday may need to be taught again today.

And again tomorrow.

Return to the song that most closely fits what your child is experiencing. Keep the lesson simple. You may need only one familiar phrase:

“Gentle hands.”

“I can pray.”

“I don't have to have my way.”

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

If a child's fear, sadness, aggression, physical complaints, behavior, or distress becomes persistent, severe, unsafe, or concerning, this guidebook is not a substitute for appropriate professional help.

The Fastest Guide of All

When there is no time to find the right page, remember these four questions:

1. What are you feeling?

Feel it.

2. Can we talk to God about it?

Bring it to God.

3. What does God say?

Believe His Word.

4. What should we do now?

Respond rightly.

You may not remember which page contains the activity.

You may not remember which song discussed the problem.

You may not even have this guidebook nearby.

But if you remember those four steps, you already have the heart of *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* with you.

About The Shepherd's Meadow

Songs, Stories, and Scripture for Little Hearts

The Shepherd's Meadow was created as a warm, joyful place where young children can learn about God through music, simple stories, memorable characters, and the truth of Scripture.

In the Meadow, children meet familiar friends.

There is **Grandpa**, whose warm voice helps guide the songs and conversations.

There is **Scout**, the lovable goldendoodle who seems to find his way into all kinds of everyday adventures.

There is our playful **otter**, along with the boys and girls who learn, sing, play, make mistakes, and grow together.

The Meadow is intentionally simple.

Children sing.

They clap.

They move.

They laugh.

They learn.

And through those ordinary childhood experiences, they are introduced again and again to something that matters far more than the characters or the songs:

God and His Word.

Why The Shepherd's Meadow?

Young children are already learning every day.

They are learning what words mean.

How to take turns.

How to use their hands.

What happens when someone says no.

What to do when they are frightened.

How to pray.

How to treat other people.

And, most importantly, they are beginning to learn who God is.

The Shepherd's Meadow was created to come alongside parents, grandparents, churches, teachers, and caregivers during those early years.

The songs are intentionally memorable and repetitive because little children learn through repetition.

The lessons are simple because they are meant for little hearts.

But simple does not mean unimportant.

A child singing:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God”

is beginning to learn a truth that will still matter when that child is seventy years old.

A child learning:

“I don’t have to have my way”

is beginning a lesson many adults still struggle to learn.

A child singing:

“God hears my little prayer”

is discovering that prayer is not something reserved for grown-ups.

That is what The Shepherd's Meadow is about.

More Than Music

The music is at the center of the Meadow, but the goal has never been simply to produce children's songs.

The songs provide a doorway.

A child hears the song.

The parent talks about it.

Grandpa opens the Bible.

The family practices the lesson.

And eventually the child begins connecting the words of the song with everyday life.

That is why companion guidebooks like this one exist.

They help take a two-minute song and turn it into conversations that can continue long after the music stops.

You do not need to use every page.

The guidebook is there when you need it.

Keeping Scripture at the Center

The Shepherd's Meadow is intentionally Christian.

It does not attempt to replace biblical truth with generic messages about being nice, feeling good about ourselves, or simply following our hearts.

Children certainly need love, encouragement, patience, and compassion.

But they also need truth.

That is why the Meadow continually points children back to Scripture.

We want them to hear:

“The Bible says...”

We want them to see parents and grandparents actually open the Bible.

We want Scripture to become familiar in the home.

And as the children grow, we pray that their understanding grows with them.

The Shepherd's Meadow uses the **King James Version (KJV)** for Scripture.

About Joe Soares

Joe Soares is a husband, father, grandfather, Bible teacher, worship leader, author, and Christian songwriter.

His heart for The Shepherd's Meadow grew from a simple desire to create Christ-centered music that children would genuinely enjoy while giving parents and grandparents something worthwhile to place in their ears and hearts.

As **Grandpa Joe**, his warm grandfather voice became part of the character of the Shepherd's Meadow songs.

The goal was never to sound like a children's performer standing on a stage.

The idea was much more personal:

What would it sound like if Grandpa sat down with the children, picked up an instrument, and began singing with them?

That family feeling became part of the sound of The Shepherd's Meadow.

Joe's Christian teaching and writing share the same underlying conviction found throughout these guidebooks:

God's Word matters.

Children do not need every difficult biblical truth explained to them at once.

But they can begin learning very early that God has spoken, that His Word is true, that Jesus loves them, and that what God says should shape the way we live.

A Family Resource

The Shepherd's Meadow is designed to be used wherever children and the people who love them happen to be.

At home.

In the car.

At Grandma and Grandpa's house.

During playtime.

At bedtime.

At church.

During a rainy afternoon.

Or during a Florida thunderstorm when one frightened little person suddenly remembers:

“When I feel afraid, I trust God.”

If that happens, the song has done exactly what it was created to do.

It helped a little heart remember the truth.

Welcome to the Meadow

The Shepherd's Meadow will continue to grow with new songs, albums, characters, and guidebooks, but its purpose remains simple:

Create joyful, Christ-centered resources that help families place biblical truth into little hearts.

Scout will undoubtedly get into something.

The otter will probably be nearby.

Grandpa will have another song.

And there will always be room for another little one to come into the Meadow, sit down, sing along, and learn about God.

Welcome to The Shepherd's Meadow.

Joe Soares

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

A Shepherd's Meadow Family Guidebook

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

Thank you for spending time with us in The Shepherd's Meadow.

May the songs bring joy to your home, the activities create wonderful moments together, and most of all, may the truths of God's Word remain in these little hearts long after the music stops.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

Psalms 56:3, KJV

Continue the Journey

Listen to *Little Hearts, Big Feelings* and discover more music from **The Shepherd's Meadow** by **Joe Soares**.

More Shepherd's Meadow albums and companion family guidebooks are available for families who want to continue learning, singing, and growing together.

Joe Soares

The Shepherd's Meadow

One Last Thought From Grandpa

The children will grow.

The little voices will change.

The tiny hands will get bigger.

But the Word of God we place in their hearts today can go with them for the rest of their lives.

Little hearts. Big feelings. A faithful God.

Little Hearts, Big Feelings

Learning to Bring Our Feelings to God

Feel it.

Bring it to God.

Believe His Word.

Respond rightly.

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

Psalms 56:3, KJV

From **The Shepherd’s Meadow**, where little hearts learn big truths through songs, Scripture, family, and fun.

Music and Guidebook by Joe Soares

Little hearts. Big feelings. A faithful God.