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## Chores Foster Responsible Kids

Make one of your New Year's resolutions starting a regular chore routine for your children. You'll provide a valuable gift. Chores teach children responsibility, develop much-needed life skills, and instill a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Most child-development experts agree that children shouldn't be paid for household chores, which are part of contributing to family life. Here are some tips for a positive chore experience at your house:

**Give kids ownership.** Have a family meeting and enlist the help of your children in selecting the chores they want to do. Also have them participate in selecting the consequences for chores not performed in a timely manner. Let kids know expectations ahead of time.

**Use "shaping" to teach tasks.** First, let children watch you perform a chore as you talk through it step by step. The next time, let children perform one part of the chore. Each time, give kids a little more responsibility until they're ready to tackle the chore alone.



**Use language cues to spur self-reflection and responsible behavior.** Say, "I see books on the floor" rather than giving a direct command. That helps kids make decisions and reduces any defiance.

**Offer encouragement.** Always thank children for their contributions and offer genuine praise for their efforts. Instead of saying, "Your room looks good," say, "Thank you for working so hard to put your clothes and toys in their proper place." Don't expect perfection.

### More on Chores

Researchers in Canada and Australia discovered that not all chores are created equal. Children who perform chores that are focused on helping others, such as feeding pets or setting the table, show more concern for others than kids who do only self-focused chores, such as putting away their clothes or cleaning their rooms. But lots of kids are apparently missing out on the positive aspects of chores. In a "Zoom" poll at pbskids.org, more than 4,500 children revealed how much time they spend on household chores each week. The biggest response (33%) was "I don't do chores." Meanwhile, 28% of children said they spend one to two hours on chores weekly.



### Ask God:

1. To give your children a good attitude about doing chores.
2. To help your children feel like contributing members of a close family.
3. To develop in your children a heart for service at home and elsewhere.

### Parenting Insights

Select chores specifically geared to your child's age, ability, and personality. Here are some examples of age-appropriate tasks:

#### Ages 3 to 5

Work alongside children to help them perform simple chores such as putting away toys, putting dirty clothes in the hamper, sorting laundry into color-coded piles, making their beds, and feeding pets.

#### Ages 6 to 8

Children can dust and vacuum, put away their clothes, empty wastebaskets, set and clear the table, care for pets, and help with some yardwork.

#### Ages 9 to 12

Kids can unpack groceries, load and unload the dishwasher, mop the floor, fold laundry, wash the car, and help prepare simple meals.

## OpenTheBook

**"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people."  
Colossians 3:23**

Chores may not always be pleasant or exciting. But by doing them faithfully, children learn how to serve and how to perform all types of tasks with a joyful attitude.

### Teachable Moments

#### **1. Whistle While You Work—**

Let children listen to a favorite CD while they complete their chores. Also, have kids brainstorm a new, more creative name for chores (for example, "home fun" or "house helps").

#### **2. Terrific Teamwork—**

Designate a time when everyone chips in around the house. For example, do chores following an after-school snack or on Saturday mornings. This reinforces the importance of each person's contributions.



**3. Church Chores—**To show children how to extend the skills they learn while doing household chores, consider lending a hand at your church some weekend. Ask a staff member what tasks need to be done. Your family could clean out a closet, paint a room, or organize a library.



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

**Most children long to be seen as "grown-up" and responsible. Talk to your children about household duties and the ways that families work together.**

1. What are your favorite and least-favorite chores to do, and why? How do you feel about not being paid (or being paid) for doing chores?
2. What does it mean to be part of a family? How does it feel to contribute to how our family functions?
3. What would happen if no one did their tasks around the house? Why is it important for everyone to be involved?
4. What are some examples of good and bad attitudes to have toward chores?

## **Family Experience: Give Me a Hand!**

**Who says chores can't be fun? Use these creative ideas to spice up the way your family chooses and tracks its weekly workload.**

- ✓ **Responsibility Roulette—**Mix up the chore routine by letting family members randomly select their tasks for each week. On slips of paper, write all the chores that need to be done. Then place them in a cup or jar. Every Monday, have family members select their tasks for that week.
- ✓ **Lend a Hand—**Use this handy chore chart to get your family organized. Have family members each trace one of their hands on cardstock and cut it out. Family members can use markers to decorate their cutout hands with items such as a ring, a watch, or a bracelet. Attach a small self-adhesive magnet strip to the back of each handprint.

Have family members each attach a Post-it note on the center of their hand, listing their chores for the week. Place the hands pointing down on the refrigerator. As family members complete their chores for the week, have them turn their hands pointing up to show their tasks are done. Each week, replace the Post-it notes with new lists.





## What's Playing at the Movies

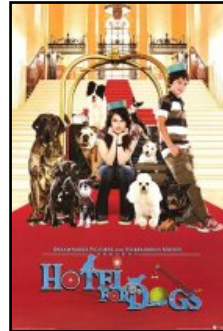
**Movie:** *Hotel for Dogs* (releases Jan. 23)

**Genre:** Comedy

**Rating:** G

**Cast:** Emma Roberts, Jake T. Austin, Lisa Kudrow

**Synopsis:** Andi (Roberts) and Bruce (Austin) are foster kids who end up in a very strict home that doesn't allow dogs. They must think quickly to find a new home for their dog, Friday. The kids transform an abandoned hotel into the perfect home for Friday, as well as for every stray dog in the city.



**Discussion Questions:** What are some ways you help take care of your pet (or a relative's pet)? What are some ways that God provides for animals' needs? How can you tell that your pet trusts you to care for it? In what ways do you show God that you trust him to meet all your needs?

## What Music Is Releasing

**Artist:** Taylor Swift

**Album:** *Fearless*

**Artist Info:** Swift, a country-pop artist, began performing at age 10. Despite much rejection, she continued to sing and write music. At 12, she was "discovered" in Nashville. *Fearless* is her second album. Swift recently had a public breakup with singer Joe Jonas, who reportedly broke up with her via phone.



**Summary:** *Fearless* debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top 200 Album Chart. The album is mostly about being young, in love, and let down in love. Overall, there's an empowering message to maintain a clear perspective during breakups or when overlooked by boys. One song does allude to virginity loss.

**Discussion Questions:** What comes to mind when you hear the word "rejection"? How does it feel when someone rejects you, your talents, or what you stand for? Think of a time Jesus was rejected: How can his example help you get through any rejections you face?

## What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Club Penguin: Elite Penguin Force</i>	In this online role-playing game, kids join a secret spy force to go on missions, solve mysteries, and help other "penguins."	E; Nintendo DS
<i>Ultimate Band</i>	This game follows a band as it works its way up to playing large, famous venues. Contains mild lyrics.	E10+; Wii
<i>Sonic Unleashed</i>	Sonic battles evil robots in this adventure game. Contains fantasy violence and animated blood.	E10+; PS2, Xbox 360, Wii, PS3

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



## Culture & Trends

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

- Chores have gone online. Parents now ask kids to share pictures and e-mails with relatives, plan trips and parties, and look up movie listings and driving directions. (marketingcharts.com)



- More families have been applying for free school lunches lately. Almost 80% of schools polled report an increase in free lunches served. (School Nutrition Association)

## Quick Stats

- In a poll of almost 3,000 parents, 56% admitted they secretly redo their children's chores to their own standards when kids aren't looking. (babycenter.com)
- Each year, more than 800,000 kids die in accidents. Easy solutions such as seat belts, childproof medicine caps, and fences around swimming pools could cut the toll in half. (Associated Press)

