

# live:kind

## *Kindness for parents*

Children learn how to be kind when they experience the kindness of their parents.

1. Pray for your children every day. Let them hear your simple and loving prayers for them, and your gratitude to God for their lives.
2. Put a loving note, an encouraging and child-friendly Bible verse, or a funny joke into their lunch box. There are lots of ideas and free designs available on the internet that you can print at home. Or just make up your own.
3. Hug your child as often as you can. It helps to release happy hormones into their body that contribute to their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.
4. Do chores with your children when you can, so that they will enjoy time with you, and they can learn how to do the tasks well. Don't let them struggle alone. Explain what to do, show them how and then support them as they practice.
5. Hide a small, unexpected treat or gift in their bed, or school bag. Children love surprises!
6. Spend some time every day with your child, doing something they want to do with you. Let them choose the book or game and immerse yourself in their playful fun.
7. When they have done something wrong, surprise them with grace instead of punishment. This will help them to understand God's grace, too.
8. Take your child on a 'date' and have a meal together, a fun outing, or an adventure.
9. Tell your child just how much they mean to you: 'I'm so glad you are my child!' 'It's so much fun being your mum/dad.' 'You are my greatest treasure!'
10. Tell your child the most beautiful stories of Jesus. Find the best storybooks you can, with lovely pictures. Read the stories often, and tell your child how much Jesus loves them.
11. Start a routine of asking your child about their saddest or most difficult moment in their day, and then comfort them. Don't tell them what they should have done or belittle their feelings. Say something like: 'I am so sorry that you went through that... That's really sad... I wish I had been there to help you/protect you/comfort you, etc... Let me give you a hug... What's the best thing I could do to help now?' Also ask about the happiest moment in their day and share in the joy and wonder of that moment with them.
12. Speak well of your child in front of others. When you need to speak to your child about their misbehaviour, take them aside and do it quietly and respectfully.

13. Speak gently to your children. Talk to them the way that you want them to talk to you. Try moving closer to your child and whispering an instruction in their ear rather than yelling at them from a distance.
14. Even though you tell them a thousand times, and they still forget, pick up the laundry from their rooms calmly. Or tidy up their room when the mess is more than they can manage on their own.
15. Make chores fun! Let's see how quickly we can all run around the bedrooms, pick up all the laundry without missing anything, and get it into the washing machine/laundry basket.
16. Start a family movie night. Ask your children to take it in turn to choose their favourite movies. Make popcorn and watch the movie together. Write down some good questions to discuss as a family when the movie is over.
17. Give your children a hand or back massage while you listen to them talk about their day.
18. Make up a secret action that means 'I love you'. Make a heart shape with the thumb and first finger of each hand. Touch fingertip to fingertip and thumb tip to thumb tip and you will see a heart. Or squeeze their hand three times. Or let them come up with their own secret sign. Use it often to show your love.
19. Tell them the stories of your family. Tell them about their grandparents, about your own love story, and about their birth.
20. Have gentle tickle times together.
21. Pretend to be different animals and kiss your child as if you were an elephant, a butterfly (fluttering your eyelashes on their cheek), a kitten, or whatever animal they suggest.
22. Make a 'calm down' kit and dip into it when you or your child needs to calm down. Include a battery-operated candle, calming music, a calming story book, a soft toy, some massage oil, bubbles to blow (the blowing soothes the whole body), a distracting fidget toy or puzzle, lavender oil, etc.
23. Bake together and don't mind the mess. Put a plastic table cloth on the floor and on the table.
24. Take care of yourself as a parent. When you have enough sleep, a healthy diet and plenty of water it will be much easier to be calm and kind. Have a friend to call or develop your own strategy for coping when you are having a stressful day.
25. Don't rush your child. Plan ahead and make sure that you both have plenty of time. Walk at your child's pace. Move slowly and take time to notice the natural wonders around you.
26. Help your child to develop a hobby that they really enjoy. Whatever happens in their life, a hobby can distract them from their worries, give them a sense of accomplishment, and bring them peace and joy.
27. Before you discipline your child, always pause, take a breath, look them in the eyes, smile, and give them a hug. Once they feel safe, loved and forgiven they will be in a better place to learn from the experience.
28. At the end of each day, tell your child three things they did really well. Then they will go to bed with a glow of delight. As you go to bed, think of three things you did well as a parent too. Remember, 97% of the time you are being a great parent. Focus on the overwhelming good you are doing, and let the rest go.

29. Make your child's food fun occasionally by arranging it to make a picture. Or try having dessert for breakfast, putting chocolate chips in their pancakes, or adding a small dollop of ice cream to their cereal.

30. Laugh with your children as often as you can! Laughter is soothing and healthy for all of you. Read funny poems, make funny faces, look for funny children's stories and films, and watch funny animals.

Start a savings account for your child. Add a small amount each week and it will soon mount up. When they are 18 they can use the money to help pay for their education, finance a mission trip, or pay for something they really need, like a car.