



**January 2010**

**Centenary Church  
Children's Ministry**

1911 Toyon Avenue  
Modesto, CA 95350  
527-5441

Corner of McHenry & Norwegian  
www.centenarychurch.net

Dear Centenary Families,

As we begin the new year, we see offers of improved health and promises of weight loss abounding in the media around us. Here at Centenary, we want to offer you hope in our Savior and growth in your relationship with Him. We know that this is the most important and lasting relationship you will have in your life. Our Children's Ministry leaders want to offer that same hope and peace to your children.

Every week we see the children of Centenary growing in their faith. One of the ways we see this growth is through the questions they ask. Questions are a great way to measure how much a child understands about their faith and how much they are interested in learning more. Often questions may be in the form of doubts and that's okay. God gave us free will and curious minds for a reason; He wants us to really seek Him and believe with our whole heart that He is our God.

Curiosity is normal and doubts become a given in the mind of a child (and even in us adults still!). One thing I still struggle with, both as a parent and as the Children's Ministry Director, is having answers to the sometimes tough questions that children ask. Some examples of recent questions I've heard are, "Would I be following God's laws if I joined the Army and had to go to war?" and "Are there really such a thing as demons?" I've become very good at saying that those are great questions and I'll have to check my Bible and maybe talk to our Pastor and get back to them.

As parents, I encourage you to welcome questions and doubts, even if they are tough, and seek Biblical wisdom in your answers. Please remember that we as your ministry staff are always here if you need help answering some of the tough questions. Read on for more ideas on how to handle questions and doubts from your kids.

In His Service,

*Heather Daniel*

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### When Doubts Arise

*In Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church and What You Can Do About It* (Master Books), Ken Ham and Britt Beemer explore the epidemic of young people leaving the traditional church in droves. They cite a George Barna study showing that 61% of young adults had been churched at one point during their teen years but are now spiritually disengaged. They also discovered that of young adults who no longer believe that all the Bible accounts are true:

- 40% first had doubts in middle school.
- 44% first had doubts in high school.
- 11% first had doubts in college.



### Ask God:

1. To help your children know it's okay to have questions.
2. To help you be a good listener when kids share their doubts.
3. To reassure your whole family of God's presence and love.

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### Parenting Insights

These age-level insights from *Children's Ministry Magazine* track how young Christians' thoughts and questions change over time.

#### Ages 3 to 5

Older preschoolers begin to ask "why?" and "how?" Miracles, symbolism, and God's nonphysical nature are often confusing for kids this age. Answer their questions simply with words that mean exactly what they say.

#### Ages 6 to 8

Children this age begin to distinguish between fantasy and reality and begin to use logical thinking. Give them answers that allow them to use these skills; otherwise, they'll get frustrated.

#### Ages 9 to 12

Older children tend to question some basic beliefs they previously accepted. They want to explore an issue from many perspectives. Share your own doubts and help kids find a niche to put their faith into action.

## OpenTheBook

**"You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."  
John 20:29**

Jesus said these words to "Doubting Thomas," the disciple who wouldn't believe that Jesus rose unless he saw and touched him. When our faith is unsteady, we can find answers in God's Word.

### Teachable Moments

1. **Establish the Bible as the authority for truth.** Affirm that whatever God's Word says has either happened or will happen. Tell Bible accounts with enthusiasm so your children will believe them, too.



2. **Let your children know that you also doubt sometimes.** Share the ways that your faith is a work in progress. Tell how God has worked in your life today. Be an example of how to grow through positive doubting.
3. **Celebrate your children's faith journeys.** Recognize that kids' images of God expand as they struggle with life's complexities. Accept their immature perceptions and challenge them as their ability to think abstractly develops. Mark important milestones such as baptism, first Bible, Sunday school promotion, confirmation, etc.



**"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**

**Support children's faith development by talking to them about their doubts and questions. Start by asking:**

1. How much proof or evidence do you need before you believe something or someone?
2. What things about God and the Bible are hardest for you to believe, and why?
3. Why do you think God asks us to believe without visual "proof"?
4. How might doubts and questions actually make our faith stronger?

## How to Handle Doubt & Questions

"Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith," wrote Frederick Buechner. "They keep it awake and moving." This runs contrary to most people's assumptions about doubt—that questioning your faith proves you're a weak Christian. But when we have doubts about something, we're forced to examine its truthfulness and consider how much of ourselves we wish to invest in it. If we (and our children) are going to truly own our beliefs, we must critically evaluate them first.

Teaching your children that it's okay to express doubts and ask questions is crucial for their faith development. "When the doubts get ignored, it could eventually result in serious skepticism of one's worldview and personal faith," says professor Dean Hardy. Use these tips to help kids wonder and open up:



**Don't feel threatened when children want to ask questions.** These queries help kids verbalize their doubts. View tough questions not as a sign of rebellion but as opportunities to teach and learn.

**Listen intently, and don't shame kids for asking questions.** Reflect on what children say and affirm their feelings with phrases such as "You seem afraid" or "You look like you have a question."

**Make your family a "safe zone."** Foster attitudes that say it's okay to question and doubt. That will encourage children to feel free to think critically and explore honestly.



## What's Playing at the Movies

**Movie:** *The Tooth Fairy* (Jan. 22)

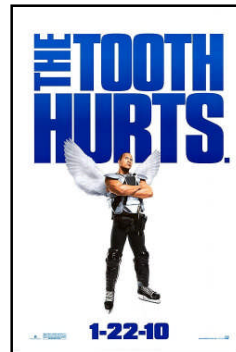
**Genre:** Family comedy

**Rating:** PG

**Cast:** Dwayne Johnson, Ashley Judd, Julie Andrews

**Synopsis:** A tough minor-league hockey player with a reputation for doing facial damage to opponents gets busted for some insensitive comments to a child. His lousy attitude earns him a sentence working for a week as a real-life tooth fairy. After getting used to his new role, he starts to rediscover some of his own long-lost dreams.

**Discussion Questions:** What type of attitude do you usually have? Think of a time you've hurt someone with your words: Were you able to undo the damage? If so, how? Read aloud Matthew 18:4. What does it mean to have a childlike faith?



## What Music Is Releasing

**Artist:** Katharine McPhee

**Album:** *Unbroken*

**Artist Info:** This 25-year-old pop singer was the runner-up on *American Idol* season five. Her self-titled debut album reached number two on the Billboard top 200 chart. McPhee has been upfront about her struggle with bulimia.

**Summary:** McPhee's sophomore album highlights her versatile, elegant vocal style. Several songs deal with broken relationships. In the first single, "Had It All," McPhee sings, "Why did I believe that little voice that led me down the path to this bad choice? Why don't I listen to the angels when they sing?"

**Discussion Questions:** How aware are you each day of your conscience? How much do you rely on it to help you choose between right and wrong? Read aloud 1 Kings 19:11-13. How and when does God speak to you? When are you most likely to listen to him?



## What Games Are Out

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Ultimate I Spy</i>	Players navigate 3D screens to solve riddles and complete puzzles.	E; Wii
<i>Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box</i>	In this adventure game, players can work on more than 150 logic puzzles. Clues help players solve a mystery.	E10+; Nintendo DS
<i>James Cameron's Avatar: The Game</i>	This shoot-'em-up fantasy game offers a prequel version of the hit movie, introducing the alien moon Pandora. Contains non-bloody combat violence.	T; PSP

**RATINGS:** 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:**

- "Helicopter parents" who are overinvolved with their children's lives face a growing backlash. Kids grow best when parents let go, experts say.
- The recession is slowing such "hyperparenting." One-third of parents say they've had to cut their children's extracurricular activities—and most families admit they like the results.

(CBS News Poll)

## Quick Stats

- An estimated 13% of U.S. children walk or bike to school these days, compared to more than 50% of children 40 years ago. (Science Daily)
- A study shows that children burn about three times more calories playing some exercise-oriented video games than they do just sitting on the couch watching television.

(USA Today)





## Ministry Needs

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT NEEDS!** Our winter session of the Wednesday night children's program needs a Preschool teacher and one or two leaders to help with our elementary-aged children. Classes run Jan. 13–Mar. 24.

Please pray about serving in our Children's Ministry.

Contact Heather at 527-5441 or [hethdaniel@yahoo.com](mailto:hethdaniel@yahoo.com) for more information.

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# January 2010

## Centenary Children's Ministry

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sunday School 9 & 10:30am						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Sunday School 9 & 10:30am			WNL Begins! Dinner 5:30 Classes 6:30 Preschool, K, 1st Choir 6:15			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Sunday School 9 & 10:30am			Dinner 5:30 Classes 6:30 Preschool, K, 1st Choir 6:15		Family Fun Game Night! 6:30-8:30pm	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Sunday School 9 & 10:30am			Dinner 5:30 Classes 6:30 Preschool, K, 1st Choir 6:15			
31						
FAMILY WORSHIP! Sunday School 9 & 10:30am						

### Our Mission in Children's Ministry:

**At Centenary Church we believe children are a precious gift from God. We recognize that we are responsible for raising our children with Biblical truth while helping them develop a Biblical worldview. In doing this, they can apply their Christian faith to their everyday lives and have a growing relationship with Jesus.**

**Ultimately, we hope to equip each and every child to:**

- S**eek the Word of God,
- H**ave a growing relationship with Jesus,
- I**dentify Him as their Savior,
- N**urture others and
- E**xemplify His life.





# FAMILY FUN GAME NIGHT!

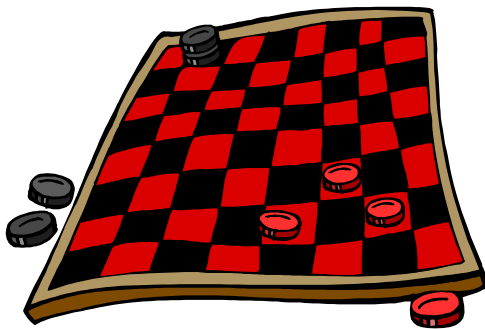


**FRIDAY, JANUARY 22  
6:30-8:30PM  
CENTENARY'S FIRESIDE ROOM**

**Come relax and spend some time with the Church Family!**

**Bring your favorite games (for children or for the grown-ups)  
and bring a favorite snack or dessert to share.**

**Nursery care will be available for infants and toddlers if we receive a call or e-mail by Wednesday, January 20. Dress-up/housekeeping, blocks and other favorite toys will be on-hand for our preschoolers to enjoy.**



**Call or e-mail to let us  
know your family is  
coming!**

**Heather @ 527-5441 or  
hethdaniel@yahoo.com**



## LOOKING AHEAD...

**February 26 & 27—Centenary Women's Conference, Friday evening & Saturday; Located at Centenary Church.**

**March 27, 10:00am—Easter Eggstravaganza! Fun Family Activities to prepare your family for Holy Week.**

**March 28—Palm Sunday. Children participate in our Parade of Palms at the beginning of each service.**

**April 4—Easter Sunday. Family Services at 9:00 & 11:00am.**

**April 30—Friday Family Fun Night!  
Watch for more info!**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Each week of Kid's Own Worship we collect offering from the children. In 2009, we were able to...

Send \$100 worth of Bibles and Bible stories on DVD to children in Cambodia,

Buy 120 chicks through Heifer Project to give to needy families around the world,

Sponsor 14 backpacks full of school supplies to be given to needy children through the Gospel Mission, and

Purchase 1 1/2 clean water filters for impoverished villages around the world.

Thanks for supporting Children's Ministry offering!

\*Don't worry. We'll finish up that last half of the water filter this month!

