



January 2010

Waleska United
Methodist Church and
Preschool
7340 Reinhardt College Parkway
Post Office Box 8
Waleska GA 30183
770-479-4428
www.waleskaumc.com

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.



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 church-ed 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.

PowerSource

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.

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?

Family Experience: Faith Adventures

Many people in the Bible struggled with doubt. Use these experiences from Group's *Hands-On Bible* to explore faith.

- **What You Know**—Read aloud John 20:24-31 to meet a doubting disciple. Then say: "When you have doubts, it's helpful to separate what you *know* from what you *feel*. For example, you may doubt that God loves you because you didn't make the soccer team. You feel alone and unloved. But the Bible says that God loves you and that he'll take care of you. Because the Bible says it, you know it's true, even if it doesn't feel that way right now."

Together, divide a sheet of poster board into two columns. Label one "What I Feel" and the other "What I Know." List some feelings, and across from each feeling, write a Bible verse in response. For example, across from "loneliness" you can write "God is with me. Matthew 28:20." Use a Bible index to help you find relevant passages.

- **Childlike Faith**—Say: "When you were littler, you trusted your parents about everything. Jesus says everyone should have faith like little kids—even grown-ups! We *all* need Jesus, *all* the time." Read aloud Luke 18:15-17. Then make something to remind you that Jesus wants you to trust him the same way little kids trust their parents. Have each family member draw a heart on a piece of construction paper. Write "Jesus" inside it. To the left, tape a picture of when you were little. To the right, tape a recent picture of yourself. Decorate and hang the paper as a reminder of your faith.





What's Playing at the Movies

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

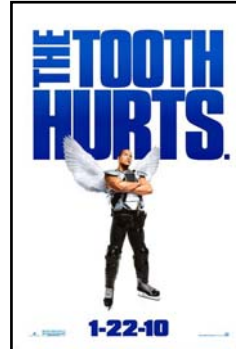
Genre: Family comedy

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

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:

- "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)



January 2010

Waleska United Methodist Church – Hagen Chapel at Reinhardt College

					1	2
					Church Office Closed	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8:30am United Methodsit Men's Breakfast 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship		Preschool and Cherokee County Schools Resume				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	9:30am MOPS	Freshly & Wesley Fellowship Groups Resume meeting in Fellowship Hall		Juliet's Ladies Luncheon 2pm Reinhardt College Chapel Service @ WUMC	MOPS Playdate @ Earth, Paint & Fire	10am-12noon Post-It Note Party for Church TBA Tweener Movie Night
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship 6pm Administrative Council	MLK Holiday No School Church Office Closed		Romeo's Men's Luncheon	12:30pm Preschool Staff Meeting	MOPS Mom's Night Out TBA	Experience Reinhardt for High School Students
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	9:30am MOPS 7-9pm Jesus the One and Only Bible Study	1-3pm Jesus the One and Only Bible Study				
31		February	March	April	May	June
9:30am Confirmation Information Meeting 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship		Wednesday Family Night Resumes on February 10th	MultiChurch Confirmation Retreat on Friday, March 5 th North Georgia Emmaus Gathering on March 12th	Great Waleska Garage Sale on Saturday, April 17th	Last Day of Preschool on Thursday, May 13 th Confirmation Sunday on May 9th	Drive In Movies Vacation Bible School

Confirmation 2010 – Not Just For Kids Anymore Information Gathering Sunday, January 31st, at 9:30am

Confirmation is a learning season when persons make a study of what it means to be a Christian. To be a Christian is not a title, but a journey toward becoming more "Christ-like." But what does that really look like? Confirmation 2010 is an intentional plan to begin a life dedicated to Christ and a life of study to follow God's calling in every way.

This journey will be open for students in the 4th grade as well as for adults. The adult component will be new this year. The journey will begin on Sunday, February 14th at 9:30am during the Sunday school hour.

Confirmation 2010 will be jam packed with hands-on challenges relating to "Your Bible," "Choices," "Ways We Worship," Prayer Paths," "Simple Acts of Service," "Baptism & Communion," "Creeds," "Missing The Mark," as well as special events and opportunities to live full out for Christ.

If you are interested in participating or need more information, please contact Pastor Sam or DeDe.