



**Contentedness**



Try living the “no frills” lifestyle of a pioneer family for a week, or choose from plenty of other ideas that help kids break free from discontentment and envy.

Take your pick of some fun activities that help kids show:

- greater thankfulness and appreciation for what they have
- genuine pleasure at the good fortune of others, rather than jealousy
- a willingness to share with others.

In addition, this lesson helps address greed, envy and selfishness.

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## Parents’ prayer

Although we can try to develop character in our children through various methods and programs, only God can bring about permanent change in a child’s heart. Begin this study on contentedness by inviting God to help by giving you guidance and wisdom, and by releasing His power in your children.

Use the sample prayer below to guide you, or build your own prayer using the verses from “Scripture-guided prayer.”

### Sample prayer

Jehovah Jirah, You are Lord, my provider. You provide us with plenty of food and fill our hearts with joy (Acts 14:17). Those who seek You will lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10). Thank you for generously providing for our physical needs, but more importantly, for satisfying us spiritually. I praise as David did, “I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory. Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You. . . . My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods, with singing lips my mouth will praise You” (Psalm 63:2-3,5).

But Lord, too often I am so consumed by “things” in my life. I desire the things of this world and become so busy trying to maintain all the possessions You have allowed me to accumulate that I forget to take time to pray. I find myself running around “accomplishing much,” instead of focusing on the key to satisfaction in life, which is remaining in Your presence. Please forgive me. I need to learn the lesson You taught Solomon after he tried finding satisfaction chasing after worldly pleasures. As he concluded at the end of Ecclesiastes: “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

I pray that I would fear You and keep Your commandments. My heart’s desire is to be consumed by my love for You, not the things of this world.

For my children, I pray that You would fill \_\_\_\_\_'s and \_\_\_\_\_'s hearts with the presence of Your Holy Spirit and allow them to taste the joy of knowing You. Bring about a desire in them to pursue godliness as opposed to riches. Give them an understanding that accumulated wealth will permit them no sleep and that riches can be hoarded to the harm of their owner (Ecclesiastes 5:3-14). I pray that they will experience the fullness and joy of Your Spirit and that they will seek Your presence to gain satisfaction and refreshing instead of fulfilling their needs through worldly goods. Please put healthy fear of You in their hearts, that they may live life to the full and rest content, untouched by trouble (Proverbs 19:23).

In Jesus' name, I pray that You would disentangle us from the possessions we honour and cherish. I want to pray as David did: "Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25-26). We want to live with You as our priority so we can live with true contentment, joy and peace. Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for parents**

*Read and pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate the way He cares for you and your family.

Psalm 63:1-5 | Psalm 65:9-13 | Psalm 84:10-12 |  
Philippians 4:19 | Matthew 6:25-27

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge the areas where you lack contentedness.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5 | Isaiah 55:2-3 | 1 Timothy 6:6-10  
| 1 Timothy 6:17-19 | 1 John 2:15-17

#### **Gratitude**

Thank God for ways you have seen contentedness exhibited in your family.

### **Family requests**

Ask God to help you and your family to be content in all circumstances.

Psalm 17:14-15 | Psalm 145:15-19 | Psalm 147:7-9,12-14  
| 1 Timothy 6:6 | Hebrews 13:5-6

## **Kids talk with God**

*Use this section to help your children learn to reach out to God in all things. If your children are ready to formulate their own original prayers, use the verses under "Scripture-guided prayer for children" for inspiration.*

### **Sample prayers**

Dear God, I want something that I cannot have. Help me to be content and thankful for what You have given me. Amen.

Dear God, I am frustrated that my friend/brother/sister has been blessed with \_\_\_\_\_ and I have not. Help me to be happy for him/her. Help me to be thankful for what you have given me. Amen.

Dear God, please show me if there are ways I am discontent. Please help me to be thankful instead. Amen.

Dear God, I have been \_\_\_\_\_ (jealous, envious, dissatisfied, discontent, comparing myself to others, hoarding my possessions, gluttonous, controlled by desire to have \_\_\_\_\_). Please forgive me and send Your Holy Spirit to help me be strong and to withstand temptation. Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for children**

*Read through one of the selected scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate the way He cares for you and your family.

Psalm 34:10 | Psalm 84:11 | Psalm 107:8-9

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge that sometimes you are not content.

Luke 12:27-31 | 1 Timothy 6:7-10 | James 3:16

## Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have seen contentedness exhibited in your family.

## Personal requests

Ask God to help you, your siblings and parents to be content in all situations.

Psalm 107:8-9 | Psalm 147:7-9 | 1 Timothy 6:6

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## Speak a blessing

*Your affirmation will give tremendous encouragement to your children as they strive to grow in the area of contentedness. Use this section as a reminder to “speak a blessing” when you see this godly characteristic in your son or daughter.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ is a girl/boy who says “no” to wanting more things. He/she is content with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What a wise girl/boy \_\_\_\_\_ is to not crave more \_\_\_\_\_.
  - How blessed it is to have a girl/boy who shares rather than keeping his/her things just for him/herself.
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## Memory verses

*Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God’s Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse your children can learn in a pre-determined period of time and aim to review the verse at least once every day.*

Psalm 34:9 “Fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing.”

Psalm 34:10 “The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”

Psalm 84:11 “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless.”

Psalm 107:9 “For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

Psalm 111:5 “He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant.”

Proverbs 13:4 “The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.”

Proverbs 14:30 “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

Proverbs 21:26 “All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.”

Luke 12:22 “Then Jesus said to His disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.’”

1 Corinthians 13:4 “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”

Philippians 4:12-13 “. . . I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 6:8 “But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”

Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”

James 3:16 “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

1 John 2:16-17 “For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

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## Kick-off craft

Create a teachable moment by allowing your children to be creative with their food.

### A harvest of contentment

#### Directions

- 1 Prepare in advance by cooking some spaghetti or similar noodles. Allow them to cool, then have your children try to untangle them.
- 2 While they are busy doing this, tell them the story in Mark 10:17-27 about the rich young man. Explain that the noodles represent the things they own. Just as it is difficult to untangle the noodles, so it is difficult to disentangle us from our possessions.
- 3 Next, have the kids paste dry noodles onto a paper plate or poster paper. Post it on a wall with Proverbs 21:26 written on it: “All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.”
- 4 As the children are working on their poster, read all or parts of 2 Corinthians 9:7-11.

Throughout the coming days, as you see your children being content in any way, allow them to colour a piece of dry spaghetti with a marker. At the end of the week, see how colourful a “harvest” your children have produced by how many pieces of spaghetti were coloured on their poster.

#### Other ideas

If you don't have pasta, you can also use small pieces of string or yarn for this exercise.

## Bible stories

This section provides Bible stories with the theme of contentedness, along with questions that can be used as a guide for family discussions. Choose one that is most appropriate for your children. Before reading aloud, take a few minutes to review the story. If the Bible passage is too complex for your children, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

### Who or what owns your heart?

Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-20.

While reading this Scripture to your children, you can replace the words money, wealth, goods, etc. with something your children love. For example, replace these words with the word ice cream, jelly beans or toys. Emphasize verses 18-20.

#### Questions for discussion

1. Have you ever loved something so much that you wanted more and more?
2. What was it?
3. Is there something right now that you want more and more of?
4. How would it make you feel if you could not have it?
5. Would you rather have gladness of heart or frustration?
6. How was the man frustrated by having so much wealth?

7. Imagine that you had a yard full of \_\_\_\_\_. There was so much \_\_\_\_\_ that there was no way you could eat it all/play with them all. Imagine all the neighbourhood kids coming by and eating your ice cream/playing with the toys and there is no way you can stop them. What would you need to do in this situation in order to be relaxed instead of frustrated? If you went out and screamed at them all to get away from your stuff, how would they feel and what would happen? If you said, "Welcome to my \_\_\_\_\_ party," and shared the \_\_\_\_\_, what would happen?
8. How would the others feel?
9. How can we be glad in heart with what we have?

### Key concepts

Solomon was a very rich man. In accumulating all his riches, he learned some important lessons. He learned that the more money people had, the more they wanted. He found that rich people became frustrated because they didn't get a lot of sleep – maybe they had to work hard to care for their things, or maybe they couldn't sleep for fear someone would take their things. Solomon also pointed out that you can't take any wealth with you after you die.

Solomon was also wise. He decided that instead of worrying about being rich, he would try to enjoy life and allow God to give him gladness of heart. We can be glad in our hearts by being thankful for what we have instead of seeking more and more. We can also be happy in our hearts if we share what we have instead of keeping it just for ourselves.

### Gifts from God

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19, Psalm 49:16-20 and Ecclesiastes 5:15.

### Questions for discussion

1. What are things we need to live?
2. What does a baby bring into the world?
3. What does a person take out of this world when they die?

4. Are you content to give away something you love?
5. Just because you love something, does it mean you need it?
6. What do you gain when you are happy with what you have?

### Key concepts

The basic things we need in order to live include love, food, shelter and clothing. God says that if we have food and clothing, we should be content. Anything beyond that is a gift from God and we should be thankful! When we are happy with God's gifts, we have peaceful and contented hearts.

### Cravings in the desert

*Since this is a long story, use the summary in the "key concepts" section to help you paraphrase and shorten it for younger children, or use a children's Bible. Add humour where you can. For example, the people said, "Hey Moses, this is too much meat – it's coming out our noses!"*

### Questions for discussion

1. How would you feel when you want something and can't have it?
2. Have you ever been tired of eating a certain food? If so, what was it?
3. If you were in the desert for holidays and all Mom and Dad were feeding you every day was pancakes, what would you say?
4. Once you were tired of eating pancakes, what would you wish you could eat instead?
5. Read Numbers 11:4-35 or Psalm 78:18-31. What did the Israelites crave?
6. Why was God angry with the Israelites?
7. Which food did God send for the Israelites to eat?
8. What kind of meat did God send?

9. How did God punish the people for not being content with the manna?
10. What did the Israelites name the place where the people died of the plague?

### Key concepts

To envy means that you want what someone else has. Craving means to long for or desire something. God provided manna for the Israelites when they were in the desert, but they got tired of eating the same food all the time and began to crave the foods they had eaten when they were slaves in Egypt. They wanted fish, meat, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

They moaned and groaned and complained. God became angry with the Israelites because he had provided them with manna for food, and they were not thankful. God told Moses to tell the people that He would give them meat – not just a little meat, but enough meat that it would come out of their noses. They would be given meat to eat for a whole month. So, God brought quail from the ocean. The quail was piled up on the ground as thick as a kitchen table is off the floor (three feet).

Then, God was angry with the Israelites for craving food other than the manna, which he had provided. He punished them by sending a plague, which killed many of them. They called the place where they buried the people who died because they had craved other food, Kibroth Hattaavah, which means “graves of craving.”

### Mine, mine, mine!

#### Questions for discussion

1. What are some of the first words a baby learns to say?
2. Are we born wanting to share with others or is it something we have to learn to do?
3. What is one thing that you have difficulty sharing with others?
4. Read Proverbs 21:25-26, Proverbs 11:24 and 1 John 3:17-18. What does God say we should do – crave what another has or give to others?
5. Which of these attitudes do you think please God?
6. What does the Bible say will happen to the one who doesn't share?
7. What does the Bible say will happen to the one gives to the needy?

### Key concepts

Some of the first things most babies say are the words, “no” and “mine.” We are not born with a natural desire to share. The Bible says that those who give things to others freely will get even more, while the ones who refuse to share will become poor. God is pleased when people show love through sharing what they have and He promises to reward their generosity.

### Peace and contentment 101

#### Questions for discussion

1. What is the cause for most of your fights with your brother, sister or friends?
2. Why do you think this is?
3. Do you know what it means to covet?
4. Read James 4:1-3. Why does James say these people were fighting and quarrelling?
5. Why did God choose not to answer their prayers?
6. Read James 3:16-18. Who tempts us to be selfish?
7. What does it mean to be peace-loving?
8. What would someone who loves peace do if another wanted something they had?
9. What does considerate mean?
10. What does submissive mean?
11. Is it still possible to get into a fight if we are thinking of the other person's feelings and letting them have what they want?

12. Who can help you have an unselfish attitude?

### **Key concepts**

James says the reason we fight and quarrel is because we desire to have the things others have.

This passage also talks about “gimme-gimme” prayers. “Gimme-gimme” prayers are selfish prayers. It is not good to pray, treating God like He is a vending machine who will give out things just to make us happy. When we ask God for things, we need ask with the right reasons. If our only motivation for asking God for something is for our own pleasure, we need to rethink our prayer to make sure it is not a “gimme-gimme” prayer.

Satan tempts us to be selfish, but when we accept God’s wisdom, choose to be considerate of others and let others have their way, we keep the peace.

### **Mountainside snack attack**

Read Matthew 15:29-39.

### **Questions for discussion**

1. How hungry do you think you would be if you had not eaten for three days?
2. Why do you think the people in this story did not go home after one day if they were hungry?
3. What kind of miracles was Jesus doing?
4. What kind of food is in the mountains?
5. How much food did they have?
6. How many people were fed?
7. How much food was there left over?

### **Key concepts**

We can imagine that the people were very hungry, as they had not eaten for three days. They were so amazed at the miracles Jesus was doing – the lame walked, the mute talked and the blind could see after Jesus healed them – that they were not concerned about food.

Jesus was concerned for the people and wanted to feed them before He sent them back to their homes. The disciples could only find seven loaves and a few small fish, but Jesus did another miracle and provided food for 4,000 people. After all of the people ate, there were still seven basketfuls of food left over. Jesus cares about the spiritual part of us and the needs of our physical bodies.

## **Creative discipline**

*Few parents enjoy their God-given responsibility of disciplining their children, and even fewer children enjoy being on the receiving end. The Bible tells us to expect discipline to be uncomfortable, but also promises positive results. This section will provide you with innovative suggestions to use when correcting your children, to help them learn to practice contentedness.*

### **For problems with selfishness Biblical basis**

Ecclesiastes 5:11-12 *“As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.”*

### **Suggested disciplinary action**

Sometimes, wealth breeds discontentment. Bless your child by removing their “riches.” Remove toys that are causing discontentment or strife in your home. For example, a child may own ten, twenty or even fifty Matchbox® cars. For our children, owning this many cars brought out the worst in them. They hoarded their cars and were extremely possessive. The older one feared losing even one of his cars. When we took away all but one car for each child, almost all of the fighting stopped. Ecclesiastes 5:11-12 teaches that as goods increase, so do those that consume them and that the abundance of a rich man allows him no sleep.

### **Affirmation**

Encourage your child to reflect on what it means to have plenty and what it means to be “in want.” Read Philippians 4:12: *“... I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether*



well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”

Pray with your child, asking God to teach them the “secret of being content” and to give them a generous heart.

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## **For problems with greed**

### **Biblical basis**

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18; 2:1-16.

### **Suggested disciplinary action**

Take the child who is being discontent outside to chase the wind. Have them run until they are tired. After running outdoors, take time to read from Ecclesiastes. Explain that the wisest man who ever lived worked hard to get more wisdom, knowledge, houses, pleasure, food, gardens, animals, servants, gold and silver. After getting everything he ever dreamed of, he was still not satisfied and said that all his efforts has been “chasing after the wind.”

Whenever a child is envious or jealous of another, coveting things, is gluttonous, discontented or dissatisfied with something, ask them if they are “chasing the wind” as a reminder to check the attitude of their heart.

### **Affirmation**

Encourage your child to reflect on what he/she should be thankful for. Have him/her quote a paraphrase of Psalm 23:1, “**The Lord is my shepherd, I have all I need.**”

Pray together, asking God to help him/her to be content. Alternatively, read Proverbs 21:26: “**All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.**” Pray with your child, asking God to teach him/her the “secret of being content” and to remove his/her cravings for things.

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## **Hands-on options**

Often, we are consumed by the busyness of day-to-day living and we forget to look for opportunities to teach our children God-honouring character traits. These ideas require very little preparation, making it easy for you to share some simple but memorable lessons with your kids. Read over the suggestions at the beginning of your week and choose one or two that will fit your schedule.

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### **Little House on the Prairie fashion**

*drama / role play*

Have your children select two outfits to wear and two toys to play with for the duration of a week. Try to focus on being thankful for those items. Supplement this learning by reading a children’s version of this famous book series such as *A Little House Christmas*.

Take time to act out some of the stories and “play” *Little House on the Prairie* as a family. This could even include eating very simple meals. The questions for discussion will help your children further consider how much they have to be thankful for. Use this activity in conjunction with “Closet Clean-up,” also listed in this section.

### **Questions for discussion**

- Would you have liked to live in the days of *Little House on the Prairie*?
- What was the hardest part of having only two outfits to wear?
- What did you like about it?
- Do you think that you would be satisfied with owning less clothing? Less toys?
- Which toys and clothes would you like to give away?

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### **Contentedness challenge**

*drive time or any time*

Play this game while you are driving or standing in a line up. Ask each other, “Can you be content without \_\_\_\_\_?” The person can respond honestly but has to conclude their answer by saying, “If I have food and clothing, I can be content with that.” (1 Timothy 6:8) or “God is my Master”

(Matthew 6:24) or “I choose to be godly and content with what I have.” (1 Timothy 6:6) Take turns asking the question and answering. You may be surprised that it is harder for parents to answer honestly than it is for their children.

### Relevant Scripture

1 Timothy 6:6-8 “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot love both God and money.”

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### Rich man - poor man

*drama / role play*

*Ideally, parents should read the book of Ecclesiastes to get a sense of the purpose of this exercise. While you read Ecclesiastes, substitute the word insignificant for meaningless. The message of Ecclesiastes and this exercise is the same: In comparison, everything outside of our relationship with God is insignificant.*

Pick an hour or predetermined length of time that you will play this game. Have your children choose what they would like to be for the day: a rich man or a poor man.

If they choose to be a rich man, allow them to have anything they want (within reason) for the predetermined period of time. Their riches may include playing with all the toys they want, watching all the videos they want (with pre-screened content), and eating anything they want.

If they choose to be a poor man, they only get the basics, which are food and clothing. The poor man, although he/she doesn't have any toys to play with and eats only at meal times, he/she gets to hang out with Mom or Dad. The parents are basically playing the part of God, so the child is “blessed” because he/she gets to spend time with Mom or Dad.

The point of this exercise is to illustrate that just because you have everything doesn't mean you feel satisfied. Make sure that if you do this with siblings,

they have the opportunity to play both the rich man and the poor man so they can feel what it is like to be on “both sides of the fence.”

After, summarize the lesson by reading Ecclesiastes 2:24-26. Explain how we can easily be fooled into thinking our needs are satisfied by the things of this world, including pleasure, entertainment, luxurious food and activities. However, outside of being in relationship with God, our innermost needs and desires will never be met.

Though the “rich” man thought he/she was getting a good deal, all of the luxuries of this world become empty and meaningless if they are enjoyed outside of knowing God. The “poor” man, although he didn't have any luxuries, enjoyed companionship, which is ultimately more valuable than possessions, especially when it is a relationship with God. After the game is done, review the questions for discussion with your children.

### Questions for discussion

- Which did you prefer – to be the rich man or the poor man?
- Why did you enjoy being the rich man?
- Why didn't you like being the rich man?
- Why did you like being the poor man?
- Why didn't you like being the poor man?
- In this world, who is the rich man and who is the poor man?

### Relevant Scripture

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 “A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see is from the hand of God, for without Him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the man who pleases Him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness, but to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

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## Closet clean-up

*servicing others*

Go through a cupboard, closet or toy box and take out the unnecessary articles you have and give them to someone else who may need them. Be sure to include your children in this process of weeding out of unneeded items, packing the boxes and delivering them to the appropriate places. Inner-city ministries are often looking for care boxes that include a home starter kit (contains kitchenware, bedding, toiletries, etc.), winter kits (contains winter wear such as socks, gloves, toques, bus tickets, first aid supplies, etc.) or toy donations.

Look in the Yellow Pages® under “charitable organizations” to find potential recipients. You can also pray and ask God to help you find someone who is in need of the items you have to give away.

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## Caught in a trap!

*science with a twist*

This hands-on option helps illustrate the truth of 1 Timothy 6:9-10 – that a desire for riches is one of Satan’s traps.

You will need a mousetrap, bait and stuffed animals

- 1 Set up a mousetrap, complete with bait.
- 2 Have your children choose a stuffed animal and ask what their animal loves to eat.
- 3 Put this item in the trap. Pick up the stuffed animal and pretend that it is sniffing or trying to eat the bait. (Make sure you are the one to do this, and instruct your children to keep their fingers clear!)

*Note: If you prefer, you can also use a roll of paper towels to “sniff” the bait and allow the paper towels to be caught in the mousetrap.*

The questions for discussion are provided to increase dialogue and learning. For a Biblical perspective, read or paraphrase 1 Timothy 6:9-10. Paul uses the illustration of a trap to explain that the desire for more money and getting rich is one way that Satan can trap us and cause us to wander away from God.

Conclude by praying that God would help you see Satan’s trap of discontentment and greed before you get caught in it.

## Questions for discussion

- Have you ever seen how an animal trap works? If so, how does it work?
- Would the trap work if the animal did not try to get the bait?
- Does it hurt an animal to get caught in a trap?
- Did you know that one kind bait Satan uses, when he tempts us to sin, is the bait of always wanting more?
- What kind of bait do you think Satan would try to use on you?
- How do you think that loving money or the things that money can buy could tempt you to sin?
- How can we be wise and not fall into Satan’s traps?

## Relevant Scripture

1 Timothy 6:9-10 “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

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## “Practice” eating candy!

*fun with food*

After a meal, put out a bowl of small candies like chocolate-coated candies, mini-chocolate chips or a kind of appetizing food item on the table. Sit down together and sample only one candy each. Ask your children to savour the taste and describe how the candy tastes. Next, everyone samples one more. Ask if the second piece tasted as good as the first. Have a few more and see if the candy still tastes as good.

To model contentedness for your children say, for example, “I sure enjoyed that sweet treat, but I think

I've had enough for now." See if they follow your lead. Then read Proverbs 25:16. Afterwards, ask your children if they think you should eat more candy or save it for another day.

Talk about being content with just a few candies rather than needing to eat the whole bowl to be satisfied. Pray together and ask that you would all desire healthy food and be content with having sweets in moderation.

### Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 25:16 "If you find honey, eat just enough – too much of it, and you will vomit."

### Appearance, desire and deception

*fun with food*

This activity aims to teach children that their appetites can be deceiving. For a Biblical perspective, refer to Ecclesiastes 6:7.

Prepare ahead of time by purchasing some candy that looks good and sweet on the outside but tastes the opposite of how it appears. For example, sour chews, candy-coated black licorice and cinnamon hearts look good, but don't always taste good.

Allow your kids to try the candy, but be sure to have a glass of water handy! Use the discussion questions to help explain the following truth: Things can look really good, causing us to desire them, but in the end when we get them we can be disappointed. In life, if we are always seeking to feed our appetites, we can end up more concerned about our physical desires than we are about God. When something is more important to us than God, it is called an idol. God tells us in the Ten Commandments that He doesn't want us to worship anything but Him (Deuteronomy 5:7-10).

### Questions for discussion

- Do you think you could ever get enough candy?
- What flavour do you think this candy will be?
- Do you think it will be good?
- Did you like the candy?

- Did it look good before you ate it?
- When you see someone else eating candy, do you usually want some, too?
- Do you know what an appetite is?
- When it comes to candy, do you have a large or small appetite?
- Just because something looks good and you really want it, is it always good?
- How can your appetite get you into trouble?

### Relevant Scripture

Ecclesiastes 6:7 "All man's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied."

### Rotten envy

*science with a twist*

This activity illustrates the truth of Proverbs 14:30, that envying what others have can rot the attitude of our hearts.

You will need a cup, a white egg and a can of cola pop.

- 1 Have your children immerse an egg in cola overnight.
- 2 The next day, have your kids try to brush the egg with toothpaste to remove the stain on the egg. Use the discussion questions to explain that even though the pop is good tasting, it did some damage to the eggshell.
- 3 Read Proverbs 14:30. Most kids have been told many times that too much sugar can cause cavities in their teeth. Explain that when we envy "stuff," it can rot the attitude of our hearts, just as the cola will rot the eggshell. (If left longer, the cola will eat away at the eggshell.)
- 4 Use the questions listed below to further your discussion.
- 5 Pray a simple prayer to conclude, asking God to help you be content in life circumstances and with what you have. Ask Him to give you

a hunger for healthy foods and for knowing Him better.

### Questions for discussion

- Do you like the taste of pop?
- How did the pop damage the eggshell?
- Do you ever envy anyone? If so, in what way?
- How does envy damage your heart?

### Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 14:30 “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

### Chasing after the wind

*getting into nature*

This activity is based on Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 and Psalm 39:6. On a windy day, go outside and ask your kids to try and catch the wind. Take nets, buckets, a kite and the questions for discussion with you. After you have tried to catch the wind, enjoy spending some time playing with the wind using the kite instead. Thank God for His gift of the joy in being physically active. Use the questions for discussion while you are enjoying the outdoors or after you get back.

### Questions for discussion

- Can you feel the wind?
- Can you smell the wind?
- Can you taste the wind?
- Can you hear the wind?
- Is the wind real?
- How come you cannot catch it?
- Is there anything that you want that is like chasing the wind?

### Relevant Scripture

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Psalm 39:6 “Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.”

### Recommended resources

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **contentedness** lesson at [Kidsofintegrity.com](http://Kidsofintegrity.com).

# Planning card for contentedness

point form

## God's way

### I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I am content with what I have
- I am thankful in all situations
- I am happy for others when they have good things
- I am willing to share what I have

## My way

### When I am tempted to:

- be jealous or envious of others
- be dissatisfied or discontent
- compare myself to others
- not be willing to share what I have

## And God is pleased!

## I know that I need to go to God for help.

*This week, we will focus on learning about contentedness by:*

*Date complete:*

**Daily reminders:** PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

**Memory verse:**

# Planning card for contentedness

calendar form

## God's way

### I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I am content with what I have
- I am thankful in all situations
- I am happy for others when they have good things
- I am willing to share what I have

## My way

### When I am tempted to:

- be jealous or envious of others
- be dissatisfied or discontent
- compare myself to others
- not be willing to share what I have

## And God is pleased!

## I know that I need to go to God for help.

### This week, we will focus on learning about contentedness by:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Daily reminders: **PRAY!** | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse

Memory verse: