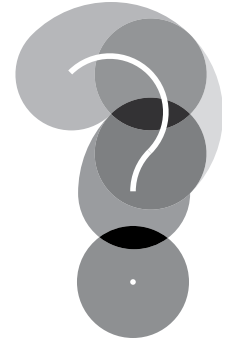




## WHAT IS DO NOT FEAR ABOUT?

Living entirely without fear is an impossible task, but encouraged by angels and prophets not to fear, we can learn to trust in God's promises. Frightening things and difficult situations are a part of life, but seeing God's faithfulness and resting in God's presence in all things helps us decrease the fear and not be paralyzed by it. Along with our faith, which assures us of God's love and presence, we can learn practical and faithful strategies to help us deal with those things that overwhelm and intimidate us. Each time we are courageous and recognize God's faithfulness to us, we are able to loosen fear's hold on us and replace it with feelings of confidence and resilience.



### HELP ONE ANOTHER

*Supplies: small slips of paper, pencils, bag*

Give everyone two or three small slips of paper. Have each person write a word or phrase about or draw a picture of something that overwhelms, scares, or intimidates them without others seeing their papers. Put the papers into a bag and shake it up. Take turns drawing a paper from the bag. Share ideas and strategies about how to deal with that particular fear. Children may feel reassured with the suggestions from parents/caregivers and siblings without feeling ashamed or silly for having that fear. Parents/caregivers may be surprised at the insight their children can give. After each paper, say a prayer thanking God that your family has one another to depend on, such as "Thank you, God, with you and with each other, we are stronger than our fears."

### NOT AFRAID OF THE DARK

*Supplies: flashlights*

Give everyone a flashlight. Location permitting, on a pleasant day go outside after dark, or turn off the lights in several rooms and play a game in the dark, using only the flashlights. Any game will do, an active game or a board game. After playing, wonder how comfortable everyone was being in a space with no light before the game and how everyone feels now. Comment that Jesus is often referred to as *light*. Ask how the light of Jesus might help us deal with our fears.

### PSALM 34

*Supplies: Bible, paper, pencil/pen, crayons/markers*

Have someone read aloud Psalm 34:4–10 slowly while everyone listens. Then take turns reading aloud the passage again, verse by verse, but after each verse pause and rewrite the verse, working together to put it in your own words. Have someone read aloud your adapted psalm. Add decorative touches to the paper and hang your psalm somewhere that everyone in the family will see it each day.

### BE BRAVE

*Supplies: internet-connected device*

Watch together the YouTube video "Brave—Sara Bareilles (Lyrics)" ([bit.ly/FMBrave](https://bit.ly/FMBrave), 3:45). After the video, use the following questions to engage in conversation:

- ➡ When was a time that you were brave?
- ➡ When was a time you felt a need to be brave?
- ➡ What lyrics in this song stood out to you?
- ➡ What does it mean to you that "maybe one of these days you can let the light in"?
- ➡ When do brave words need to "fall out"?

### PANDEMIC

*Supplies: Pandemic board game (by Z-Man Games, 2008)*

The *Pandemic* board game is appropriate for children age ten and older. It is a cooperative board game where all players work together to win the game. There are detailed instructions and setup. The goal of the game is to work together to prevent a pandemic

Note: [bit.ly](https://bit.ly) addresses are case-sensitive.



from spreading across the globe. After you play, discuss how each person's talents helped you prevent the pandemic. Ask if anyone started to feel anxious as the virus was spreading. Discuss strategies for seeking help when anyone in your family starts to feel anxious.

## ANGELIC ZIPLINING

*Supplies: angel costumes*

Find make-shift angel costumes in your home for everyone to wear and then set out on a ropes course or a ziplining adventure. These are typically found at zoos or in tourist areas of larger cities (low-ropes courses often have a minimum height of 36"). As you move through the course, imagine what it might have felt like for the angels to move through the air to come to Mary, Joseph, or the shepherds. After your adventure, talk together about why Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds might have felt afraid of an angel suddenly appearing before them. If anyone was a little nervous on the ropes or ziplining course, talk about how you overcame those fears and how that might be helpful in future fearful situations.

## DELIVER COOKIES

*Supplies: cookies, disposable plates*

Make or purchase some cookies, ideally festive Christmas ones! Prepare several plates of cookies. In case of any food allergies recipients may have, include a list of ingredients from the recipe or packaging label. As a family, adults and children together, go to a home where you do not know the inhabitants and offer the plate of cookies to whomever answers. Repeat. As an option, go to an area where unhoused people are and deliver cookies. After your deliveries, talk together about concerns anyone in your family might have had about meeting someone new and offering them a gift. Wonder how the magi felt when they visited the baby Jesus. Share how delivering the cookies to strangers, and not just to people you were familiar and comfortable with, made you feel.

## YES DAY

*Supplies: Yes Day movie (Netflix, 2021)*

Together watch the movie *Yes Day*. The movie is about children convincing their distracted parents to allow the children to dictate the family agenda for an entire day (with reasonable restrictions). Then, schedule a "Yes Day" for your own family. Parents or caregivers may find that allowing their children this much influence is an exercise in overcoming fear and having courage. If a "Yes Day" feels like too much, consider a "Yes Hour" or a "Yes Meal." After the experience, talk together about the pros and cons. Parents/caregivers, share your fears and how you dealt with them, or didn't. It's important for children to see that adults can talk about and wrestle with fears as well.

## FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS

- ➔ What are some times, places, and situations in which you feel afraid? How can our family support one another when we feel afraid? How can we trust God's promises when we feel afraid?
- ➔ What is your earliest memory of being afraid? Are you still afraid of that same thing? How does growing older affect what we are afraid of?
- ➔ What is something you have always been curious about or a place you have always wanted to go but you have not because there is something a little bit scary about it?
- ➔ In what situations and with what people do you feel absolutely safe? What does it take for you to feel safe and secure?



## PRAYER

Holy God, we belong to you when we feel confident and secure and when we feel overwhelmed and afraid. Thank you for loving us at all times and in all places. Help us to celebrate your comfort and compassion each day of our lives. Amen.

Multiage Children