An Invitation

RESPONSIBILITY

Children in 1st grade take a huge step in their level of responsibility. They're asked to attend school, complete homework, help out at home, navigate friendships, and join in extracurricular activities. There are a number of responsibilities in each of these areas. We can help our children navigate all the different pulls on them, since this is only the beginning.

Kickstarter 1: School

Define responsibility in a way your 1st grader can understand. Ask them what they think responsibility means. Responsibility is choosing to do the right thing.

Ask, "If God told you that you could have anything you wanted, what would you ask for?" God asked King Solomon this and his answer was WISDOM (knowing what is true and right). This answer pleased God, so He made Solomon the wisest man to ever live. This wise man had a lot to say about knowledge. We develop knowledge through learning.

Read Proverbs 2:10
Your heart will become wise.
Your mind will delight in knowledge.

Proverbs 8:10
Choose my teaching instead of silver.
Choose knowledge rather than fine gold.

Proverbs 15:2
The tongues of wise people use knowledge well.
But the mouths of foolish people pour out foolish words.

We can gain knowledge by being responsible at school. Help your child fill out the responsibility chart listing the things for which he/she is responsible for at school.

Kickstarter 2: Home

Children are ready for more responsibility at home around this age. They have the ability to unload a dishwasher, put up clean clothes, make their bed, clean up toys, etc. These opportunities help them grow into a responsible person.

Read Luke 16:10a
"Suppose you can be trusted with very little. Then you can be trusted with a lot."

Help your child fill out the responsibility chart including his/her current responsibilities in the home column. As you talk with your child about being a big kid, maybe there are some responsibilities you can add to this column.

Kickstarter 3

We all need friends. Even Jesus surrounded Himself with a group of friends. Look together at the end of John 1 and figure out who the first disciples were. Help them scan for the names. Jesus knew living life alone wasn't good. We can choose to be responsible in our friendships. Fill out the responsibility chart under the friendship column. Help your child to think through a few specific friends, then ask how can you show responsibility in your friendships?

Blessing Box

The culminating experience for your child in learning about responsibility is the Blessing Box. We have looked at responsibilities for your child in three areas: school, home, and friendships. Choose someone (or more than one person) that represents each of these areas (e.g. a teacher, the parent of one of your child's friends; someone to represent home, such as a mother, father, older sibling, etc.). Have each person write a letter to your child, stating the ways they've seen your child being responsible.

Guide these individuals in the writing of the letters, specifically with your child in mind, remembering that this time is to signify his/her becoming a "big kid" through responsibility. Feel free to use the provided sample letter as a guide. Then place these letters inside a Blessing Box. This can be something you create, buy, or already have in your possession. The Blessing Box can be in just about any form; it is simply meant to house the letters. Feel free to make it something that matches your child's room, is something that the two of you made by hand together, or is a keepsake box that is kept in a special place in your home.

Designate a special time to present your child with this Blessing Box, telling him/her that they've shown they are now a "big kid" by being responsible at school, at home, and in their friendships. Read the letters to your child, and pray with them that God would help them continue to be responsible as they grow up by choosing to do what is right. If you would like additional guidance, you can use the script we have provided for the presentation of the Blessing Box.

Sample Letter to Your Child:

Dear _____,

I am so proud of the big kid you are becoming. At home you have been keeping your room clean without my even having to ask you. You take such good care of the dog by walking her, keeping her food and water bowls filled, and even giving her a bath sometimes. I see you choosing to do what is right most of the time. You're choosing to share with your sister, even if you may not want to.

All of these things show that you are responsible. I love watching you become the big girl God created you to be. You help our house be a place of love and peace through being responsible. I love that God gave you to me. You have shown that you can be a big kid who is responsible, allowing God to shape who you are.

I Love you,

Mom

1st Grade Blessing Box Presentation Script

This year you have become a really good reader. As a family, we've heard you read many books, and we believe the greatest book you will ever read is the Bible. We chose this Bible for you because we want you to begin spending your own time reading it every day--whether that be

in the morning when you first wake up, when you get home from school in the afternoon, or before you go to bed at night.

Lots of people that you love have marked special verses in this Bible, so that as you read, you can discover everyone's favorite verses. We hope that this Bible becomes very special to you as you spend time reading it in order to know God more.

We've written a letter to you in the front of this Bible. Let me read it with you.

[Read letter.]

As a family, we've learned that the Bible is personal, that the Bible prepares us for life, and that the Bible is true. We hope you will always remember these three things as you grow up and learn more about a great God who loves you by reading His words to you.

[Present Bible.]

1st Grade Developmental Guide

1st graders are stepping into their "Big Kid" years. There can be some insecurity for children during this transition. This year, kids are spending a good deal of their time away from you, which can be a little scary for everyone involved. However, they are developmentally ready for this shift toward independence.

Physical

- Tend to be in perpetual motion, squirm, gesture while talking, etc.
- Will test muscle strength by skipping, running, throwing, catching
- May be sloppy because they tend to do things in a hurry
- Can tire easily because of the fast pace at which they do things
- Engage in lots of chasing games, specifically boy/girl chasing on playground

Emotional

- Can distinguish reality from fantasy
- Play becomes more dramatic
- Still can't fully process a consequence before they execute an action
- Tend to be overly sensitive
- Have a tendency to still be egocentric
- Moody
- Increased move toward independence, spending a good deal of time apart from family
- More aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others
- See things as black and white with no middle ground

Relational

- Tattling becomes very real at this age
- Need rules and rituals
- Opportunities for unmonitored social interactions
- Care what others think about them
- Will begin asking for privacy
- Focuses on friendships with peers and interacts with other adults such as a friend's parent
- Plays with friends of the same gender
- Has a few close friends they play with more than others

Spiritual

- Begins to ask questions, some of which we may not know the answer. It's a good time to begin telling our children that we don't know the answer if we don't. Be ready for tough questions, even ones that make you squirm (where do babies come from)
- Developing a moral sense. Will see things as right or wrong through the lens of parents and teachers. Tend to have a strong conviction of this right and wrong.
- Because kids still see themselves as the center of the universe and will be proud of their accomplishments, we can help them see the difference in confidence and boasting.
- Children are just beginning to think of others.

Family EXPERIENCES