



The Big Kid Bed

Moving from the crib to a big kid bed is a big step. A child's bed is the place where dreams, rest, and incredible conversations occur. We want to remember that as this Family Experience guides parents through a big kid bed ceremony. The family writes Scriptures on pieces of paper and tucks them under the mattress. Then they invite their big kid to sit in the bed while the family prays for them. This Family Experience might take place earlier or later than the third year, but it will help infuse faith into an important transition.

Kickstarter 1: Dream Time

Neuroscientists believe children begin dreaming when they're able to imagine. Dreaming and imagination go hand in hand. Is your child beginning to make pretend sounds as he/she zooms the car on the floor? Do they talk to their stuffed animals? Are they playing with an imaginary friend? If your child is doing these things, you can guarantee he/she is dreaming.

Some of these dreams are pleasant, and some can be scary for a little one. Even though your child has the ability to imagine, he/she probably is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, so that monster they imagine is VERY REAL to them! As a parent, how can we encourage "sweet" dreams and help our

child deal with the ones that are scary to them?

One of the best ways is to limit exposure to scary things. Think wicked step-mother in Snow White - she's SCARY! Some children are more easily frightened than others. Make sure you know your child's personality to know what it is that scares them. Some kids are terrified of clowns, some are not. Some children think the wolf blowing down the pig's houses is funny, others get freaked out. Know your kiddo well, and take cues from him/her.

An incredible verse to cling to when it comes to praying over a scared child having bad dreams is:

- *2 Timothy 1:7- For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*
- *Psalm 118:6 - The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*

Helping a child deal with his/her scary dreams is a great time to help them understand the comfort and love of God. Remind them God will care for them, and NO ONE is bigger or stronger than Him.

Kickstarter 2-Sleep time

Sleep, glorious sleep! Hopefully if your child is ready to transition to a big kid bed, he/she is sleeping through the night. Let's take a moment to



remember what it was like to get up multiple times in one night, living life in that constant state of groggy.

Sleep is a wonder idea from God for parents and children. We spend 1/3 of our lives sleeping. Maybe you've asked, why did God create sleep? We could get so much more done if we didn't need to spend 7-8 hours in each 24 hour period asleep.

Psalm 127:2 states,

"In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves."

According to this simple verse, God gives us sleep because He loves us. If you look closely at this verse you realize the opposite of sleep is anxiety. We can have incredible sleep and rest when we fully trust that God can handle anything and everything in our lives.

What is it that you anxiously worry about? What keeps you up at night? Let's give those things to God, allowing Him to work out the details that we so often fret over. What about your child? What does he/she worry most about? What causes your child to lose sleep? Spend some time giving these things to God so that you can sleep well, resting completely in His love for you.

Kickstarter 3- Talk Time

Oh, the conversations that will take place over the lifetime of a child in his/her bed! When it's time to tuck your child in, you can guarantee that's when he/she is ready to talk about anything and everything. If you capitalize on this moment, you'll create for yourself an open invitation for honest conversation between you and your child for the rest of his/her life.

In the therapy world, the term "unconditional positive regard" is often used. This simply is the complete acceptance of a person, regardless of what the person says or does. In order to assure constant communication with your child, one of the best things you can do NOW is to decide to have unconditional positive regard for your child. As they struggle through different life stages, the best thing we can do is be present and loving in the moment.

Take a moment to read **1 Corinthians 13**, the love chapter. As you read each verse



stating what love is, take a moment to reflect on yourself. Which of these would most likely be the stumbling block between your child having great conversation with you? Are you easily irritated with your child? Do you insist on your own way? (v.5)

In order to have a lifetime of honest conversation with our child, we need to LOVINGLY guide them through life. They will make choices that disappoint us, do things that break our hearts, and our response in these moments will determine their willingness to talk with us over the rest of their lives.

You may not be able to think about conversations with your child revolving around boyfriends/girlfriends, a friend hurting their feelings, deciding which college to attend, etc., but if you begin with honest and loving conversation now, you'll set yourself up for success in assuring your child always talks with you about the hard times and the good times.



3rd Grade Developmental Guide

This is the year that children begin to see clear differences between themselves and others, which can lead children to suppress their individuality. We need to help children see that they are uniquely made. This is the year that children's interests in multiple areas can peak, leading to increased chaos in scheduling.

Here are some of the developmental changes they are experiencing right now.

Physical

- Are growing permanent teeth
- Have interest in team sports
- Are recognizing the large differences in size and ability among them and their peers
- Are increasing in coordination as well as motor and non-locomotor movement
- Are increasing in attention span

Emotional

- Define themselves based on attributes or achievements
- Will test limits
- Have a strong desire to do things well
- Struggle to handle failure and criticism
- Can become stressed because of schoolwork
- Can bite off more than they can chew by overshooting abilities

Relational

- Place high importance on friendships and have very close friends
- Begin to display a sense of humor

- Become less dependent on parents and more dependent on peers
- Begin to care for and play with younger children
- Recognize when someone is being left out and take initiative to include them

Spiritual

- Move out of the egocentric stage to begin considering others
- Begin to distinguish what is important
- Can ask big spiritual questions and tend to have big ideas on their own
- Can rank themselves and others based on material possessions



Big Kid Bed Family Experience

9. Lamentations 3:22-23

10. Psalm 37:4-5

Now that you've gone through the three Kickstarters, hopefully you're able to envision the hope and promise held in a child's bed. From sweet dreams to peaceful rest to significant conversations, the big kid bed is the location for some of your child's most precious moments. In order to carry out the big kid ceremony, you'll need to take the following steps:

1. Once your child's big kid bed is in place in his/her room, decide if you want to write verses or a prayer on slips of paper to:

1. tuck under the mattress
2. write on the wooden slats that go under the mattress
3. write on a pillowcase he'll/she'll sleep on
4. another idea you come up with on your own

2. Select verses or a prayer that you like. See the list below for ideas.

1. 2 Timothy 1:7
2. Psalm 118:6
3. Proverbs 3:24
4. Psalm 4:8
5. Isaiah 40:28
6. Romans 8:28
7. Matthew 11:28-30
8. Jeremiah 29:11



Sample Prayers

Dear God,

We know this bed will be a place where _____ will have sweet dreams, peaceful rest, and a place where we'll have significant conversations. We pray that you will guard his/her dreams and ask that he/she would be able to sleep in peace because he/she grows to trust you.

Help us as parents to have conversations in this bed that will honor you and help _____ to know you so that one day he/she can choose to follow you.

-Amen

You can keep this Family Experience intimate with just your immediate family. However, if you have very close friends or family you'd like to make part of the experience, feel free. During the time you can have them write verses or prayers for your child on the wooden boards, sheets of paper, etc. You also could have your child sit on the bed as you read through the verses or scripture.