

## TEACHING OUR CHILDREN ABOUT CHOOSING MEDIA

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Discernment is crucial, and why the Bible tells us—and our children—to “keep in tune with wisdom,” “beg as loud as you can for good common sense,” and “search for wisdom as you would search for silver or hidden treasure” ([Proverbs 2:1-5](#)). But discernment can also be challenging at times.

Last week’s [devotion](#) and [parent blog](#) provided several discernment strategies for families:



- Be involved and stay in tune with children’s interests.
- Teach children to read and understand the Bible.
- Set an example of holiness with your own life.

But what questions can you teach your children to ask when considering whether a book, movie, or video game is “true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper” ([Philippians 4:8](#))?

### Questions for Discernment

When you are trying to teach your children how to tell if some form of media is good and beneficial, it is helpful to ask questions about what it says and how it makes them feel.

#### What It Says:

These questions focus on how the media is similar to or different from God’s story:

1. Does it provide evidence of our need for the good news or remind us that we need God’s love? For instance, people in the Bible need God’s help. One way to break this down is to ask if the characters in the book or video game need someone’s help to survive.
2. The Bible is also a redemption story. So your children can ask whether or not a character learns from their mistakes, admits when they’ve done wrong, asks for forgiveness, and tries to make it right or to do better in the future.
3. The Bible is ultimately a love letter, so you and your children can see how the text compares to God’s story by looking at the characters’ motivations. Are they compelled to act because of their love for someone else or is it all in their self-interest?

As you go through these questions, don’t forget that just because God isn’t mentioned in a story or song doesn’t mean it’s terrible. And just because the media mentions God doesn’t mean it’s good.

#### How They Feel:

Discernment isn't a one-time thing. And it doesn't only happen before we partake in media. After watching a show or listening to a song, ask your children to think about how it affected them:

1. Did the story negatively impact their thoughts and emotions? For example, when our children were younger, we didn't let them watch Peppa Pig because they copied Peppa. When they watched the show, they were rude, mean, and grumpy. When we stopped watching that show, they didn't act that way.
2. Did the story celebrate something evil? A story with murder, demons, etc., isn't necessarily bad. The problem comes when it's presented as good or admirable. We know that what we view as consumers comes out of us ([Mark 7:14-23](#)), and if we or our children are watching or listening to media that celebrates evil things, we will become numb to it.

Discernment is an important skill. Use these questions to help you teach your children how to discern the appropriateness of a text so they can hunt for wisdom.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Parenting In a Media-Saturated World](#).

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