

## TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO WAIT

November 22, 2025

Waiting is an essential skill for kids to develop, as it supports growing patience and self-control and helps regulate emotions. Have you ever seen an adult have a tantrum because they weren't getting what they wanted fast enough?

We must learn to wait on the Lord. God's ways are not ours, and he is not confined by our timing (Isaiah 55:8-9). We need to develop that truth in our children early on. Like days of old when servants were required to "wait on" their master, we too need to wait on and attend to our Lord and King.



How do we wait on the Lord? Seeking him through his Word, listening to him in prayer, praising him in everyday circumstances, having grateful hearts, and trusting in him to lead us in the ways of everlasting are just a few.

**Develop the life skill of waiting.** In an instant-gratification-focused culture, it is challenging to help our children develop this skill.

- Praise your child when they wait for someone else to go first.
- Turn-taking games are an essential practice at any age.
- When children struggle to wait for an outcome, empathize with them. "I know waiting for your friends to return from camp is hard. It will be so special when you can play with them again. How about if we make them a card together?" This action step helps children anticipate the coming joy.

**Hand over worries to God.** To wait means to hope and ultimately to trust. We can model "waiting on the Lord" by saying, "Okay, God, I am going to wait and trust you in this struggle." God is sovereign and in control. When our kids see that we are willing to hand the details of our lives over to God, it assures them that they, too, can trust that he is good and will work all things out.

Worrying creates unnecessary clamor in our lives. When we quiet our souls in God's promises through his Word, we show our children that we surrender our lives and receive the peace we find in Christ.

**Trust in God's blessings.** Each Advent season, my family walks around the neighborhood. We enjoy the Christmas lights of different homes. We make Christmas cards closer to Christmas, put in a \$5 or \$10 gift card for a local coffee shop, and sign the card from "The Christmas Crew." Then we again drive around the neighborhood as each family member chooses their favorite house; they secretly deliver the card that thanks that neighbor for the display and invites them to a treat. It is a favorite tradition during the holiday season.

Develop a family practice where you don't always see the outcome or are rewarded with external praise. This is an extension of waiting. Maybe put together a Christmas basket for a family in need that you don't know, or check out the [Kids Corner Reverse Advent Calendar](#) for more ideas. Your family will experience the anticipation of coming joy, but—at the same time—trust that God will use your gift to bless others.

This week, prepare for Advent. Choose five candles and a [litany](#) so that you can light candles, read a [litany](#), and pray for Jesus to light your way as a family.

Check out *Kids Corner's* audio Bible story [The Birth of Jesus](#).

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<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/teaching-our-children-to-wait>  
Printed on June 4, 2026

