

WHEN KIDS WORRY

March 11, 2023

"I can't sleep. I'm too worried."

Henry, the eight-year-old I nannied, was standing in front of the couch with glassy eyes. I sighed. After another 90-minute bedtime routine with his younger sibling, the tired babysitter in me was ready to chill out. But the nurturing caregiver in me was concerned. I invited Henry to sit down and talk it through. Once he talked about his worries, they didn't seem so big. And when we prayed about them, he was ready to have another go at his much-needed sleep.



We often allow our worries and fears, big and small, to consume us and get the better of us, and so do our kids. In fact, the stress and demands of everyday life can provide us ample opportunities for worry, and the ways that we address our worries are modeled to our children. When worry clouds our children's joy, how can we help? It can be easy as parents to fall into the trap of minimizing our worries or putting on a "brave face." But it's important that we practice self-care and model healthy coping mechanisms to our children. Doing so teaches them how they can rely on God for help and find peace and rest in his love.

Try these methods to help your kids keep their eyes on Jesus, even when they're worried.

- **Turn to the Word.** In the Bible, God gives us incredible wisdom to work through our worries. Read these passages as a family to remember that God is in control and cares deeply for us.
 - Give God Your Worries ([1 Peter 5:6-10](#))
 - The Lord Is My Shepherd ([Psalm 23](#))
 - Focus on Good Moments ([Philippians 4:8](#))
- **Pray.** Pray as a family. Pray for your kids. Cast all your anxieties on God, knowing that he wants us to lay our burdens at his feet.
- **Talk about it.** Discuss your children's worries and feelings with them, validate their concerns, and—when possible—work with them to find some sort of solution. Help them to identify what they can control or change and what should be surrendered to God. Encourage them to seek support from loved ones, friends, and the broader Christian community.
- **Ask for help.** If your child is overwhelmed by worry, stress, or anxiety, seek the advice of medical and mental health professionals. God can provide help through treatments and support. You don't have to navigate these struggles alone and can find support through treatment and professional counseling.

- **Explore the tools God gave us to help us when we feel anxious.** Emphasize to your kids that it is normal to experience worry and anxiety. Teach them to manage it in a healthy way. Go out for a walk, exercise, and enjoy nature. Listen to music, paint a picture, or find other artistic ways to express feelings. Do a relaxing stretch and some deep breathing to help physically calm down. Maybe do some stretches as a family, and if it gets silly, that's okay because laughter often helps.

Hebrews 12:2a says, "We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete." When we, in obedience, fix our eyes on Jesus, the worries and anxieties go out of focus. While the worries of this world can be big, especially to our little ones, God is still bigger. And he gives us what we need to trust him.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Addressing Common Childhood Worries](#) and [When Our Children Struggle](#) where the author encourages us to go lay our burdens—as well as our children's—down in prayer. The author says, "They need less holding tight and more letting go as we set our beloved children at the feet of Christ."

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<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/when-kids-worry>
Printed on November 21, 2024

