

A GUIDE
TO RAISING
KIDS WHO
LOVE TO
PRACTICE
HOSPITALITY



*PRACTICAL TIPS AND IDEAS TO HELP YOUR KIDS HAVE A
GENEROUS HEART TOWARDS OTHERS*

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HOSPITALITY AND CHILDREN

As a child, the Bible story about Abraham entertaining angels “unaware” intrigued me. The idea of being hospitable and accidentally entertaining angels, always caused me to ponder over a guest. “Maybe they are really an angel” I would think. While I’m pretty sure we never had an angel at our dinner table, the biblical concept of hospitality has stuck with me through adulthood.

When people think of hospitality, we usually think of it as something adults do. We invite people in to share a meal, fellowship and talk about our lives together. Many times adults focus just on each other, and the only roll the kids have is to go play after the meal so the adults can visit and not be bothered. But what they forgot was, hospitality is for all ages, not just something you do when you grow up.

In fact, opening our home in hospitality should be a family event where everyone participates. It’s a great opportunity for children to learn and practice loving others through sharing what they have. Personally, some of the relationships my children made with adults that come to our home for visits were invaluable. They all developed several loving mentors throughout their lives which were a great gift. Showing hospitality also helps children see how we can live out the gospel in a practical way. As God gave His Son for us so that we might live, when we open our homes in hospitality, we are providing food, comfort, finding needs you might be able to help with, and showing the love of Jesus through our actions.

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHING MOMENTS

Take time to talk to your children about hospitality. Help them think through questions like these and use them as a teaching opportunity.

Preschoolers

- 1. Why is it good to let your friend go first*
- 2. What toys can you share with your friends*
- 3. How would you like someone to treat you when you visit their home?*

School Age

- 1. How does it feel when your guest enjoy playing with your favorite toys?*
- 2. What is hospitality?*
- 3. What can you do to make your guest feel comfortable when they visit?*
- 4. What if your guest is mean and won't share?*
- 5. Would you like to be treated the same way you treated your friend when they visited?*

Teenagers

- 1. Have you ever felt unwelcome in someones home? What did they do to make you feel this way?*
- 2. Have you ever felt welcome in someone's home? What did they do to make you feel this way?*
- 3. We are all given unique talents, what are yours? How can you use these talents to share hospitality with others?*
- 4. How should you act if you don't enjoy the person visiting?*

GETTING STARTED

The early years of a child is a precious time to form their little hearts and minds to walk in the ways of the Lord. Children are eager to learn and quick to absorb all that we have to teach them. One such thing we can foster in our children is the gift of hospitality, teaching them that hospitality extends past just receiving. Childhood is a critical time to help children learn not to walk in the ways of it's all about me but cultivate a heart for giving to others. Teaching our children that hospitality is an enjoyable task with many blessings will produce an adult that God can use joyfully in the future to minister to others.

Preschool

Start at an early age doing simple things to help them develop a heart of hospitality. When your child has someone over for a play date, have them start thinking ahead about how they can make their visit special for their friend.

- 1. Perhaps have them help you prepare a special snack or drink to serve.*
- 2. Could they help you set the table with pretty plates, napkins or decorations so the visiting child might feel special?*
- 3. Help them think through what special toys they might get out that their friend would enjoy.*
- 4. What things about their home might their friend not like? Possibly they are afraid of dogs, so your child should be sure your family pet is put up during the visit.*
- 5. What does their friend like to do? Maybe a special craft project, while they are visiting, would be appropriate or play a fun game.*

School Age

As your kids get older, around 5 or so you could have them help prepare for their birthday party. The party could be just family members, or you could have an all kids birthday party. While planning to keep your child focused on giving joy to others instead of just looking forward to all the presents, they will get.

- 1. Start by helping them make invitations that could be sent in the mail or hand-delivered to friends and family. Make the project into a fun craft project and don't stress if they are not perfect.*
- 2. Have your child help prepare a menu. It can be simple or a complete meal whatever you decide together. Having their favorite cake is fine, but what other foods would their family and friends enjoy?*
- 3. Decide together on a decoration theme. Then take them with you to buy party supplies. Have them help you make decorations and try to find some special things to decorate that they can do on their own such as coloring place setting cards, placemats or a large printed banner.*
- 4. Have them help prepare the house a few days before the party. Sit down together and make a list of what needs to be done. Remind them the little touches are important to make the guest feel welcome, like fresh towels in the bathroom or special soaps set out. Then assign them some tasks that they can help you with for getting prepared.*
- 5. The day before work together preparing what food you can do ahead. Remember, remind them the focus is on what others would like.*
- 6. Role play and practice ahead of time how to greet company at the door and welcome them into your home. Take their coats and point them to the drink table as other guests arrive. The goal is to make the guest comfortable and help them feel special.*
- 7. The day of the party decorate your home together.*

8. *Discuss the importance of letting the guest go first and being attentive to their needs throughout the party.*
9. *When the party ends teach them to thank each guest individually for coming and the gift, they brought while walking them to the door.*
10. *The day after the party, help them write thank you notes.*

Teenagers

Once your children are teens, they have the ability to plan, prepare and run an entire get together with very little supervision from a parent.

1. *Have your teen host a dinner and game night. They can invite friends, neighbors, or newcomers to the area. Remind them to think about children who usually are not invited to activities; this would be a perfect time to step out of their comfort zone. Remind them this is not just a teen party but a time when they can practice hospitality to all different ages.*
2. *Step back and allow them to plan. Tell them you will look over their menu plans and lists of things to do and buy just to see if they missed anything but emphasize this is their party.*
3. *Go with them to the store and help them only if they need it, such as how much food to buy or what to buy if you know someone has a special diet need.*
4. *To reduce stress, I have found it helpful to set up the day before the party. This will give your teen plenty of time to decorate, get proper serving pieces ready and game table areas set up.*
5. *Have them prepare as much food the day before as they can. This will make party day easier for both of you.*
6. *The day of the party, step back and encourage them to run the show. If you see a problem very, discreetly tell your teen about it or just help out and take care of it without anyone noticing.*

7. *After the party is over, discuss with your teen how they felt it went. Ask questions such how do you think your guest felt? Were you able to grow a relationship closer? Did you discover someone's need that you could help with in the future? Discuss what they might do differently next time. Most important encourage and praise them.*

BUILD A HOSPITALITY BOX TOGETHER

A fun way to get your kids thinking about always being prepared to open your home to guest is to have them help you make a hospitality box. The box should be a special pretty box ready to be pulled out at the last second when you have an unexpected opportunity to invite someone into your home. Take your child shopping and tell them today we are making a hospitality box. Stock your box with items such as a tin of flavored tea bags, special gourmet coffee, unique sodas, special cookies or savory crackers you can serve with meat and cheese you might have on hand. If your guest arrive at dinner time, keep some extra cash and a menu of your favorite local take out restaurant in there. Also purchase some pretty paper plates, matching napkins and silverware to put in your box. You are now ready for drop in guests at any time and even unexpected dinner guests. Remind you child it does not need to be some fancy spread that takes up all your time preparing but your focus should be on your time of fellowship.

LESSONS ON HOSPITALITY FROM THE BIBLE

Genesis 18:1-19 (NIV)

The Three Visitors

18 The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord,[a] do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

Questions & Answers to: Genesis 18:1-19

1. *What did Abraham do as soon as he saw the visitors? (hurried to greet them personally)*
2. *How did he greet the visitors? (bowing low is a sign of respect)*
3. *What was the first thing Abraham did for visitors (brought them water to wash their feet and gave them a place to rest)*
4. *What else did he want to do to help them refresh? (get them something to eat)*
5. *What kind of food did he tell Sarah to feed the visitors? (bread from the finest flour)*
6. *What else did Abraham prepare for the visitors? (choice meat, curds and milk)*
7. *Why do you think Abraham stood near the visitors while they ate? (he wanted to serve them if they needed anything else)*

2 Kings 4:8-17 (NIV)

The Shunammite Woman Shows Hospitality To Elisha

8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. 9 She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10 Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

11 One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12 He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13 Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'"

She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

14 "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.

Gehazi said, "She has no son, and her husband is old."

15 Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16 "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

"No, my lord!" she objected. "Please, man of God, don't mislead your servant!"

17 But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.'s Son Restored to Life

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Questions & Answers to: 2 Kings 4:8-17

1. *How did the Shunammite woman first show Elisha hospitality? (she urged him to stay for a meal)*
2. *What did she do next to serve Elisha's needs? (she prepared a room on the roof with a bed, table, chair and lamp so he had a place to stay when he came to the area to visit)*
3. *Was Elisha appreciative of her hospitality? How do you know? (he said, "You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you?")*
4. *How did Elisha thank and encourage the woman? (he told her God would give her a son this time next year even though her husband was old)*

Luke 10:30-37 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Teaches About Serving Others

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Questions & Answers to: Luke 10:30-37

1. *What happened to the man going to Jericho? (robbers stripped him and beat leaving him half dead)*
2. *How did the priest treat the man when he saw him? (he ignored him, walked on the other side of the road)*
3. *How did the Levite treat the man when he saw him? (he ignored him and walked on the other side of the road)*
4. *What did the Samaritan do when he saw the man? (he took pity on him)*
5. *What three main ways did the Samaritan take care of the man? (1.health, bandaged his wounds 2. gave him shelter, 3. paid to have someone take care of him while the Samaritan was gone)*

WHAT IF HOSPITALITY IS A NEW CONCEPT TO YOUR FAMILY?

If you have not been hospitable to others in your home regularly, you will need to be intentional making an effort with your children to do better. Start out by committing to have company once a month at first. Start simple such as asking a neighboring mom and her children over to join you for tea. Nothing formal, just mention it when you see her outside next time. Have a few dates in mind however to accommodate what works best for her. When your company arrives, encourage your children to spend time together as a group, young and old, as everyone becomes better acquainted. Next try inviting a family from church or your sports team over for a casual lunch or dinner.

After a few monthly times having guest over, try scheduling weekly guests. Encourage your children to invite friends and their parents over for dessert and games one night. If the weather is nice for a fun treat, service ice cream outside on your deck or porch. If it's cold make s'mores in the fireplace. Both are simple fun things to do while playing a game and getting to know your guest better.

Remind your children their focus should be on using hospitality to build relationships with others providing you child with a chance to serve others and share your faith.

Who knows whom your family may entertain some day!

My Hospitality Chart



Action	Name:	Name:	Name:
Help clean house for guest			
Help set table			
Greet guest at the door			
Offer drinks when guest arrive			
Let guest get food first			
Clear dishes after meal			
Allow others to go first in activities			
Share your favorite things			
Be attentive to guest needs and meet them			
Walk guest to door when leaving and thank them for coming			



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