



# Family Matters



A Christ-center resource for families and teachers

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## Helping Your Child to "C"

*Discovering ways to impart critical skills and values in your child's life and family setting.*

### Consistency

There are some things you can count on — the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening, phases of the moon, death, taxes and the Chicago Cubs not winning the World Series. (Sorry, Cubbies fans.)

Consistency is the quality of being dependable, reliable and stable in the midst of everything else going on in life. It often has been undervalued in a world that praises the new and different, as well as the unexpected.

The term *consistency* often conjures up images of someone stuck in a rut, a boring routine or the general lack of pizzazz toward life. Consistency makes us think of plow horses, not thoroughbreds. It makes us think of keeping the status quo, not increasing in status. When someone is described as a consistent person, it's not always received as a compliment.

But there are positive aspects to the idea of consistency, especially among young children. Children consistent in their emotions are seen as mature. Children consistent in their assignments are seen as logical. Children consistent in their physical development are considered healthy. Children consistent in keeping strong relationships are considered friendly.

In addition to the practical areas of life, consistency in spiritual matters also is a desired part of raising a well-balanced child. How can this be accomplished? Here are some suggestions:

**Daily Devotions:** There are many books and devotional subscriptions that are age appropriate and inspiring for the entire family. Use them daily within your home.

**Meal Prayers:** The classic prayer to teach children at a young age is "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen." From there you can add other

table prayers or make up your own at each meal. The key is always to pray at mealtime.

**Spirit Talk:** Take time to speak aloud and recognize God at work in your life. Everything from answered prayers to God's surprise blessings should be discussed as they happen. Let this be a natural part of the conversation in your home.

**Evening Prayers:** The classic one is "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen." Another is the "God bless prayer," which begins with "God bless ..." and then mentions people by name that you would like God to bless. It ends with "Amen" said by all.

**Evening Blessing:** Following the prayers, parents can place a hand on the head of the child and pray aloud, "God bless (Name), our special gift from God. Keep him/her always within Your love. Amen." Make the time of prayer and blessing as much a part of the ritual of going to bed as having a regular bedtime, putting on pajamas and brushing teeth.

**Regular Church Attendance:** Church happens every Sunday at the same time and in the same place. Make worship with the entire family part of your weekly routine. Enjoy the fellowship time and education hour along with the service, and let this experience be a time to build spiritual foundations for your entire family. Some congregations offer worship on days other than Sunday.

Consistency in these areas will create consistency in the spiritual growth of the child.

## FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together and follow the outline below. Make sure you have a Bible.

Open with a prayer.

Read the following sections of Scripture from Daniel 3:

**Read Daniel 3:1, 4-6.** What is going on here?  
*(The king makes an image of gold. When music is played, everyone must bow down and worship it or be thrown into a blazing furnace.)*

**Read Daniel 3:12-18.** In spite of the king's demand, what do Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego decide to do? Why don't they follow the king's order?  
*(They don't fall down and worship because the true God is the only one they worship. They know that God will be with them no matter what happens.)*

**Read Daniel 3:19-23.** What does the king do?  
*(He has the furnace turned up even hotter and has these three men thrown in.)*

**Read Daniel 3:24-27.** What happens when the men get thrown into the fire?  
*(They don't get burned up because an angel of the Lord is with them!)*

**Read Daniel 3:28-30.** How does the king react?  
*(He praises the true God and won't allow others to speak against the one true God. He then promotes Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to positions of authority.)*

**Summary Statement** (read by a family member): The three men in this story were consistent in their faith. When everyone around them did the wrong thing, they stood their ground. They did not waiver, even when threatened with death. God delivered them in their moment of need. Likewise, God takes care of us and gives us the Holy Spirit to keep us strong and consistent in faith and life.

## Parenting Insights on the Topic of Consistency from the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace:

1. There will be unexpected challenges to our faith from the world around us.
2. People around us will hear and follow temptations, making it even more difficult to remain consistent in our faith.
3. The people of God will be noticed when they act differently from the world.
4. Those in authority may be angered or unhappy with our positions and actions based on our faith.
5. God's followers may even be threatened because of their faith.
6. God's followers can trust that He will be with them in the face of any danger.
7. Consistency in faith can be a witness to others.
8. Consistency in faith can bring strength to those who are troubled.
9. Consistency in faith can bring a change to the world around us.
10. God can use us in ways we may never have expected.
11. Even better, God consistently forgives our sins for the sake of Jesus, who lived, died and rose to save us from our sins.

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