The Big Kid Bed

Moving from the crib to a big kid bed is a big step. A child's bed is the place where dreams, rest, and incredible conversations occur. We want to remember that as this Rites of Passage Experience guides parents through a big kid bed ceremony. The family writes Scriptures on pieces of paper and tucks them under the mattress. Then they invite their big kid to sit in the bed while the family prays for them. This Rite of Passage might take place earlier or later than the third year, but it will help infuse faith into an important transition.

Kickstarter 1: Dream Time

Neuroscientists believe children begin dreaming when they're able to imagine. Dreaming and imagination go hand in hand. Is your child beginning to make pretend sounds as he/she zooms the car on the floor? Do they talk to their stuffed animals? Are they playing with an imaginary friend? If your child is doing these things, you can guarantee he/she is dreaming.

Some of these dreams are pleasant, and some can be scary for a little one. Even though your child has the ability to imagine, he/she probably is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy, so that monster they imagine is VERY REAL to them! As a parent how can we encourage "sweet" dreams and help our child deal with the ones that are scary to them?

One of the best ways is to limit exposure to scary things. Think wicked step-mother in Snow White-she's SCARY! Some children are more easily frightened than others. Make sure you know your child's personality to know what it is that scares them. Some kids are terrified of clowns, some are not. Some children think the wolf blowing down the pig's houses is funny, others get freaked out. Know your kiddo well, and take cues from him/her.

An incredible verse to cling to when it comes to praying over a scared child having bad dreams is:

- ***2 Timothy 1:7****- For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*
- ***Psalm 118:6*** *- The Lord is for me, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?*

Helping a child deal with his/her scary dreams is a great time to help them understand the comfort and love of God. Remind them God will care for them, and NO ONE is bigger or stronger than Him.

Kickstarter 2-Sleep time

Sleep, glorious sleep! Hopefully if you're child is ready to transition to a big kid bed, he/she is sleeping through the night. Let's take a moment to remember what it was like to get up multiple times in one night, living life in that constant state of groggy.

Sleep is a wonderful idea from God for parents and children. We spend 1/3 of our lives sleeping. Maybe you've asked, why did God create sleep? We could get so much more done if we didn't need to spend 7-8 hours in each 24 hour period asleep.

Psalm 127:2 states,
It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

According to this simple verse, God gives us sleep because He loves us. If you look closely at this verse you realize the opposite of sleep is anxiety. We can have incredible sleep and rest when we fully trust that God can handle anything and everything in our lives.

What is it that you anxiously worry about? What keeps you up at night? Let's give those things to God, allowing Him to work out the details that we so often fret over. What about your child? What does he/she worry most about? What causes your child to lose sleep? Spend some time giving these things to God so that you can sleep well, resting completely in His love for you.

Kickstarter 3- Talk Time

Oh, the conversations that will take place over the lifetime of a child in his/her bed! When it's time to tuck your child in, you can guarantee that's when he/she is ready to talk about anything and everything. If you capitalize on this moment, you'll create for yourself an open invitation for honest conversation between you and your child for the rest of his/her life.

In the therapy world the term "unconditional positive regard" is often used. This simply is the complete acceptance of a person regardless of what the person says or does. In order to assure constant communication with your child one of the best things you can do NOW is decide to have unconditional positive regard for your child. As they struggle through different life stages, the best thing we can do is be present and loving in the moment.

Take a moment to read **1 Corinthians 13**, the love chapter. As you read each verse stating what love is, take a moment to reflect on yourself. Which of these would most likely be the stumbling block between your child having great conversation with you? Are you easily irritated with your child? Do you insist on your own way? (v.5)

In order to have a lifetime of honest conversation with our child we need to

LOVINGLY guide them through life. They will make choices that disappoint us, do things that break our hearts, and our response in these moments will determine their willingness to talk with us over the rest of their lives.

You may not be able to think about conversations with your child revolving around boyfriends/girlfriends, a friend hurting their feelings, deciding which college to attend, etc., but if you begin with honest and loving conversation now, you'll set yourself up for success in assuring your child always talks with you about the hard times and the good times.