



Mealtime Conversations

TOPIC 1: Conquering Fear

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HOW TO USE MEALTIME CONVERSATIONS

“Deep conversations with the right people are priceless.” - Anonymous

As parents, we desire a close relationship with our children. We care about their spiritual lives and want them to grow in their faith. It can be challenging to make time in our busy lives for intentional and meaningful conversations about God. We at Living on the Edge want to help! We've created *Mealtime Conversations* as a fun way for your family to come together and talk about God.

As you begin . . .

- Be ready to lean in and listen to your kids.
- Don't feel that you have to know all the answers, answer every question, or do all the activities.
- Keep in mind that the goal is to grow together as a family and deepen your understanding of God.
- Pray and ask God for His help and wisdom.
- Remember that learning about God as a family is a lifelong process!

Plan on spending about 30 minutes for each discussion. Some discussions may move quickly, and others may take longer as your family engages in conversation and in the activities. This discussion guide contains three main sections:

- **GET TOGETHER:** This section brings the family together for a fun game or activity to get the conversation going.
- **GET TALKING:** This section contains the Big Idea about God, discussion questions, and a key verse.
- **GET GOING:** This section contains an activity to help your family better understand the Big Idea and apply it in your lives.

Use *Mealtime Conversations* in a way that works the best for your family!





GET TOGETHER

Gather around the table and have some fun.

- What is your favorite thing to do with your family?
- Say one kind thing about each person around you right now.



GET TALKING

Read today's Big Idea, and then use the questions to get everyone talking.

***Note to Parents:** Encourage everyone to share because everyone's story is important, but depending on the ages and personalities of your family members, you may not get much of a response. Give your family time to let the question soak in and the space to respond when they are ready. You can guide the conversation and be the first one to share.

BIG IDEA When I am afraid, I will remember that God is good and He is always with me. Because God is good, He wants what is best for us. God is generous, kind, and caring. God is good all the time, even when life is difficult.

Use these questions to talk about how you've seen God's goodness in your life.

- How has God been good to you in the past?
- How has God been good to you or your family during a difficult time?
- How have you seen God's goodness to you today?

Work on memorizing the Key Verse together.

KEY VERSE FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

Here are some ideas for having fun as you read the key verse out loud.

- Each person says one word from the verse aloud until the entire verse is shared.
- Turn it into a game: say it quickly, quietly, or in your favorite cartoon voice.

 **GET GOING**

Read the following quotes out loud.

“Goodness is the only investment that never fails.” - Henry David Thoreau

“Live in such a way that if people should see you, they could see God’s goodness in you.” - Anonymous

“Do all the good you can and make as little fuss about it as possible.”
- Charles Dickens

- What quote about goodness did you like the best? Why?

Brainstorm some ways that you can show goodness to others. Together, choose at least one thing from your list and do it this week. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Mow the lawn or shovel the driveway for a neighbor.
- Bake cookies for the elderly.
- Surprise a sibling and do a chore or two for them.
- Pack a lunch for someone.
- Do a 5K for a good cause.
- Make dinner or buy groceries for someone in need.
- Babysit for free.



GET TOGETHER

Have fun discussing these “Would You Rather” questions.

Would you rather. . .

- live without music or movies?
- go skydiving or deep-sea diving?
- be covered in fur or scales?
- be able to only whisper or only scream for the rest of your life?
- lose both eyebrows or just one?
- eat just breakfast or just dinner for the rest of your life?
- have an elephant trunk or a giraffe neck?



GET TALKING

Read today’s Big Idea and about the life of Joseph, and then use the questions to get everyone talking.

***Note to Parents:** Encourage everyone to share because everyone’s story is important, but depending on the ages and personalities of your family members, you may not get much of a response. Give your family time to let the question soak in and the space to respond when they are ready. You can guide the conversation and be the first one to share.

BIG IDEA When I am afraid, I will remember that God is good and He is always with me. Because God is good, I can trust Him for good things, even in the hard times.

JOSEPH

Joseph was one of twelve brothers living with his family in Canaan. His father, Jacob, loved him the most, and to show it he gave Joseph an extraordinary coat to wear. This made his brothers very jealous and they hated him.

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JOSEPH

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One day Joseph had a dream, and he told his brothers all about it. He told them that they were all out in the field gathering up grain when suddenly his sheaf of grain rose high and all of theirs bowed down to his. His brothers were furious. They responded with anger and said, “Do you think you will actually rule over us?”

When Joseph’s brothers were out in the field, they saw him walking and they said to each other, “Here comes the dreamer! Let’s kill him, throw him into a well, and say that a ferocious animal attacked him. Then we will see if his dream really comes true.” Joseph’s brothers decided not to kill him. Instead, they took his coat and sold Joseph into slavery for twenty shekels of silver.

But God was with Joseph through it all. Many years later, Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to buy food. They didn’t recognize Joseph now that he was second in command in all of Egypt. They bowed down to him, just like in his dream. When Joseph told them who he was, they were so scared! But he said, *“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives”* (Genesis 50:19-20).

God used Joseph to save not only his family but also the people of Egypt.

Use these questions to talk about Joseph and God’s goodness.

- How would you feel if you were Joseph?
- Where do you see God’s goodness in Joseph’s life?
- What did Joseph say to his brothers, even after they treated him so badly? Does this change the way you see God’s goodness in your life? Why or why not?

Work on memorizing the key verse together.

KEY VERSE FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

Here are some ideas for having fun as you read the key verse out loud.

- Write out the verse by putting each word on its own index card. Be sure to include the reference. You will need thirty-five index cards. (Or you may choose to write the verse out on paper, then cut the paper up so each word is separate.)
- Pile the words and mix them up. Distribute the words and then work on putting the verse together beginning with the first word. When the verse is complete, say it out loud together.

GET GOING

Here is an easy, fun, no-prep scavenger hunt for the whole family.

- Grab a pillowcase or large bag to collect the items.
- To play, collect one item that begins with each letter of the alphabet. (It must fit in the bag.) Each item can be used only once (e.g., a spoon cannot count as “s” for spoon and “u” for utensil).
- Play individually or in teams.
- Set a time limit (e.g., 30-60 minutes).
- Set ground rules (if there are certain items or places that are off limits).
- The player or team with the most items collected at the end wins.



GET TOGETHER

Have fun reading about fleas and sharing which flea abilities you wish you had.

- Fleas can jump more than 150 times their own size (approximately 30 cm high). That's like you jumping the length of a football field!
- When a flea jumps, it accelerates 50 times faster than a space shuttle.
- A flea can jump 30,000 times without stopping.
- Fleas can pull 160,000 times their own weight, which is the same as you pulling 2,679 double-decker buses!



GET TALKING

Read today's Big Idea and the story of Corrie ten Boom, and then use the questions to get everyone talking.

***Note to Parents:** Encourage everyone to share because everyone's story is important, but depending on the ages and personalities of your family members, you may not get much of a response. Give your family time to let the question soak in and the space to respond when they are ready. You can guide the conversation and be the first one to share.

BIG IDEA When I am afraid, I will remember that God is good and He is always with me. Because God is good, He wants what is best for me and I can be thankful for the good things He has given me.

Read the story of Corrie ten Boom aloud.

(Excerpt from Corrie's book *The Hiding Place*)

CORRIE TEN BOOM

Corrie ten Boom was a watchmaker in the Netherlands. During World War II, the Nazis invaded and began to arrest Jewish people. In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie tells the story of how she and her family, who were Christians, created a hiding place in their home, saving the lives of hundreds of Jewish people.

But Corrie and her sister Betsie were sent to a concentration camp, where conditions were unbearable. Their barracks were crowded, cold, and infested with fleas.

“Fleas!” I cried. Betsie, the place is swarming with them! How can we live in such a place?”

“Corrie!” she said excitedly. “He’s given us an answer! Before we asked, as He always does! In the Bible this morning. Where was it? Read that part again.”

I glanced down the long dim aisle to make sure no guard was in sight, then drew the Bible from its pouch. “It was 1 Thessalonians,” I said. “Here it is: ‘Comfort the frightened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.’”

“That’s it, Corrie! That’s His answer. ‘Give thanks in all circumstances!’ That is what we can do. We can start right now to thank God for every single thing about this new barracks!”

I stared at her, then around me at the dark, foul-aired room. “Such as?” I said.

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CORRIE TEN BOOM

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Betsie and Corrie took turns sharing what they were thankful for: being together, for their Bible, and for the crowded barracks that provided heat and gave more people the opportunity to hear the Bible. They were even thankful for the fleas!

Later, Corrie and Betsie learned the reason why the guards never came into their barracks and they were able to freely study the Bible and pray. It was the fleas!

Use these questions to talk about Corrie ten Boom and God's goodness.

- How would you feel if you were Corrie?
- Where do you see God's goodness in Corrie's life?
- What is the hardest thing for you to be thankful for today?

Work on memorizing the key verse together.

KEY VERSE FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

Here is an idea for having fun as you read the key verse out loud.

- Make up motions to help you remember the verse. Use your motions and say the verse together.

 **GET GOING**

Make a list (or draw a picture) of five things you are thankful for. Use whatever you have on hand at home (Post-it Notes, index cards, paper, fabric, pencils, crayons, markers, pens). When everyone is finished, share the lists and put them up where you can see them as reminders of God's goodness.

 **GET TOGETHER**

Gather around the table and have some fun!

- What do you think about when you look up at the stars at night?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

 **GET TALKING**

Read today's Big Idea, and then use the questions to get everyone talking.

***Note to Parents:** Encourage everyone to share because everyone's story is important, but depending on the ages and personalities of your family members, you may not get much of a response. Give your family time to let the question soak in and the space to respond when they are ready. You can guide the conversation and be the first one to share.

BIG IDEA When I am afraid, I will remember that God is with me and He is in control. God rules over His entire creation. He is all-powerful, knows everything, and is sovereign (in complete control).

Use these questions to talk about God's sovereignty.

- What does it mean to worry or be anxious?
- What is one thing you worry about?
- Read Colossians 1:16-17.

In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- When you look at the world around you, what evidence do you see that God is in control?

Work on memorizing the key verse together.

KEY VERSE FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

Here is an idea for having fun as you read the key verse out loud.

- Pick a stuffed animal or soft object to use as you say the verse.
- The first person holds the stuffed animal, says the first word of the verse, and then tosses the stuffed animal to another person of their choice.
- That person catches the stuffed animal, says the next word in the verse, and then tosses the stuffed animal to a different person.
- Continue until the entire verse is said.

GET GOING

Read the following quotes out loud.

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” - Corrie ten Boom

“Nothing is a surprise to God; nothing is a setback to His plans; nothing can thwart His purposes; and nothing is beyond His control.” - Joni Eareckson Tada

*Joni Eareckson Tada, the founder and CEO of Joni and Friends International Disability Center, is an international advocate for people with disabilities. A diving accident in 1967 left Joni, then seventeen, a quadriplegic in a wheelchair, without the use of her hands. After two years of rehabilitation, she emerged with new skills and a fresh determination to help others in similar situations. She is also a best-selling author, speaker, and fine-art painter. She paints each piece by placing the brush between her teeth.

- Which quote made the biggest impact on you and why?

Using a piece of paper and a pencil, trace the outline of your hand on the paper. Use the outline of your hand as a guide, writing each word of the verse along the outline. Decorate it and put it somewhere where it can be seen as a reminder that God is with you and will help you.

▶ GET TOGETHER

Gather around the table and have some fun!

High and Low

- Take turns sharing something good (high) and something tough (low) from your day.

▶ GET TALKING

Read today's Big Idea and the story about the life of Daniel, and then use the questions to get everyone talking.

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BIG IDEA When I am afraid, I will remember that God is with me and He is in control. God rules over His entire creation. He is all-powerful, knows everything, and is in complete control.

Read aloud about Daniel's life (below or from Daniel chapter 6 in your Bible).

DANIEL

Daniel was a young man when he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He spent the rest of his life as a government official to the kings of Babylon. When Darius was king, he appointed 120 men to help govern his kingdom, and Daniel was one of them. Daniel's exceptional abilities made him stand out above the rest, so King Darius planned to put him in charge over everyone. The other officials were

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DANIEL

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jealous and tried to find something they could use against Daniel. But Daniel was faithful, responsible, and trustworthy, so they couldn't find anything. They decided that the only way they could disqualify Daniel from this special job would be his faith in God.

So the officials told King Darius that because he was such a great king, there should be a new law. The law would be that for thirty days, everyone would pray to only King Darius. The punishment for disobeying the law would be death in the lions' den. King Darius thought it sounded good and signed the law.

When Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home, knelt down in his room, and prayed, just like he always did. The officials went to Daniel's room and found him praying and asking for God's help. They hurried to King Darius, told him what they saw, and reminded him of the new law. When King Darius heard this, he was very upset and tried to think of a way to save Daniel. Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do. Daniel was arrested and thrown into the lions' den.

The king went home, refused to eat, and couldn't sleep as he thought about Daniel. The next morning, he raced to the lions' den to find out if Daniel was still alive. He called Daniel, hoping that he would answer. Daniel did answer. He was ALIVE! Daniel told the king that God sent angels to close the mouths of the lions. The king was so happy and he ordered Daniel to be brought out of the lions' den and sent this message throughout his kingdom:

"May you prosper greatly! I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the

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DANIEL

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living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions” (Daniel 6:26-27).

Use these questions to talk about the truth that God is in control.

- What is one thing that stood out to you about Daniel?
- How do you see God in control over Daniel’s life?
- Since God is both good and sovereign, why does He allow bad things to happen? (Parents: This is a HUGE question but an important one to explore as a family. For more information on this topic, check out the book *The Real God*, by Chip Ingram.)

Work on memorizing the key verse together.

KEY VERSE FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

Here is an idea for having fun as you read the key verse out loud.

- Bible Verse Art: Take turns writing one word of the verse on a piece of paper in a different color or in a different way until you have finished the entire verse. Say the verse together.

 **GET GOING**

Think of an encouraging message you can share with others, reminding them that God is in control.

- Write it in sidewalk chalk on your driveway.
- Make a poster and display it in your window.
- Write it in a note to someone in your house.
- Text it to a friend.