



FIRST MCKINNEY

BAPTIST CHURCH

Helping your Family Manage Fear and Anxiety

In times of uncertainty, it is important to remember that our hope is in the Lord. We have a God who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is trustworthy and faithful even when life seems unpredictable and chaotic. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, we can find hope and encouragement in God's Word. The Bible tells us 365 times to "fear not." That's a very specific word about fear—one verse for every day of the year.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

As you and your family process the recent current events, here are some practical tips to manage the anxiety and fear in your home.

Get the facts and follow safe practices.

Anxiety decreases with facts. Be sure to follow accurate information from reputable sources like the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and WHO (World Health Organization).

Adopting healthy hygiene practices such as frequent handwashing, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer and covering your mouth with a sleeve or tissue is recommended by all healthcare providers. Stay home if you are feeling ill. Limit travel and participation in large group gatherings.

Limit media exposure

While accurate information is important, too much news and media can increase anxiety. Children can often become stressed by information they don't understand. Limiting their exposure to news will help to decrease some fears. Be careful with your own viewing as well. Seek out truth and don't get caught up in unproductive, fearful

conversations on social media. Use this time to focus on more important personal conversations with family and friends.

Talk about it

Allow your child to talk about their concerns. Validate their feelings and help them to put their fears into perspective. Give accurate information and empower them to help develop healthy habits in your home. Use this health crisis as an opportunity to have spiritual conversations with your kids. Talk about God's faithfulness. Read the Bible together as a family and talk about people in the Bible who found help and hope in God.

Some great examples:

David & Goliath—David's strength and trust in God helped him defeat a really challenging situation

Noah—God told Noah to do something huge. Noah trusted God, obeyed Him and God helped him accomplish something that would have seemed impossible.

Abraham & Sarah—God gave them the son that He had promised to them even when they were 100 years old!

Daniel—God was bigger than a den of lions.

Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego—No fiery furnace was too scary for God! They trusted God and not even a single hair was scorched by that fire.

Disciples in the storm—The disciples were scared and Jesus was sleeping. When Jesus woke up, He showed His power over the waves and wind.

A health crisis can create a feeling of lack of control which contributes to increased worry and anxiety. Kids like to be helpful. Give back control by allowing them to help you keep the house clean. Even young kids can wipe doorknobs or counters.

Fix your eyes on Jesus

God is our help in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). It is important as a family to remember to keep your eyes on Jesus rather than the crisis of the world. There are tangible ways to help your family focus on Jesus.

- **Place Scripture in your home.** Make posters and place them around your home. This project is great for kids. You can use it as an art project and a conversation starter as you learn the truths in God's Word about faith over fear. (See the handout with encouraging verses for anxiety and worry).

- **Play worship music.** Music has a powerful ability to reduce fear and anxiety. Playing praise and worship music focuses your home on Jesus and creates a peaceful environment.
- **Create a gratitude jar or journal.** Research has shown that you can rewire your brain with gratitude. Teaching your family how to focus on the positive is a great way to reduce stress and worry. Allow family members to express gratitude by writing in a family gratitude journal or on slips of paper that are placed in a jar. Dinner time is a great opportunity to read the words of thanksgiving together and then express them to God in prayer.
- **Use your senses.** God created every aspect of your body and you can use your senses He created to find peace and calm. (See the handout on your senses.)
- **Share the Gospel.** Our greatest hope is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus, our two great fears, sin and death, have been removed. Jesus died in our place so that we can live with Him forever. Our bodies may get sick on the outside, but we will always be well on the inside because of Jesus. Use this tumultuous season to share the Good News of Jesus with your family and friends.

Pray together

Pray together as a family. Pray at mealtimes. Pray at bedtime. Pray whenever someone is feeling worried or afraid. Model for your children the power of prayer. Teach them to turn to Jesus with their concerns and to cast all their cares on Him.

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken. Psalm 55:22

Seek Professional Help

Seeking help is not a sign of a lack of faith or a sign of failure as a parent. It makes you a good parent when you realize your child sometimes needs more help than you can give. When anxiety symptoms become overwhelming, there are many Christian counselors that can help you or a family member cope. First McKinney has a great staff of professional counselors available to you. You can get more information at firstmckinney.com/counseling or 214.526.4525.