

Families on the Run

Parenting Conversation Starters

We live in a mobile world. Everyone is moving and change is all around us. Changing jobs and houses and cities even several times in our adult life is common. They are sometimes even seen as desirable indicators that we are 'moving up'. And even if we stay put, things change around us and our world shifts.

Stability is one of the things that our kids need: and we can't always guarantee that our external circumstances are going to stay the same: we get moved around in the company, we move house to make room for a new baby or a grandparent, we sell a house because the financial pressure is too much in a global economic crisis.

But stability especially for our kids doesn't hang necessarily on these external things staying the same...

A much stronger, resilient stability can be found in other things: how we treat each other, the small routines that acknowledge how important we are to each other.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Have you moved around much – have they been easy choices to make?

How do your kids go with the changes? Are there differences?

What helps make a move ok for your kids?

What are the things that you have found help give stability to your kids?

What are your family routines and traditions that give them an anchor in the changes?

WHAT IS GOD'S STORY

It's pretty amazing to think of Jesus being a refugee as a little kid. I reckon Mary and Joseph had some tough parenting moments. Having a baby on the move, then fleeing the country as political refugees, raising their family in a foreign country and culture, then returning to their own country after some years away. In the middle of this series of changes, there are some things that are handles to hold on to. Mary and Joseph are hanging on to God. They get that whatever changes – and there will be lots more before the story is through – God is with them. They are never going to be left by themselves, abandoned in the changes. This is one of the names for Jesus 'God is with us'. I bet they hung on to that really tightly. God is with us, too, now. Got a good grip?

Get the full story...Matthew 2:1-15

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Many opportunities to chat about the rollercoaster ride of parenting occur over coffee. The process of parenting provokes lots of questions – about our values, what we think is important, about healthy habits, discipline, ethics and living beyond ourselves. Many people struggle to find a place to explore these deep questions. Friday night drinks, the school gate and the cricket club BBQ banter frequently skirts around the edges – but a conversation about values in Australian culture is probably socially a bit dangerous.

Being a community of faith, we have the guts to ‘go there’ in our conversations: we can offer a relaxed, non-judgemental space, and some language tools to talk about what most parents have churning away under the surface, but find difficult to articulate. There is also some good, no frills wisdom in our biblical heritage that has fallen off the radar of contemporary Australian culture, like ‘don’t try and parent in isolation’ and ‘listen a lot.’

Welcome Mat (SU) includes a series of conversation starters that pick up some general issues of parenting, and gently demonstrate the correlation between our issues and the world of the Bible. This is just one to get you going...

I wonder which open conversation spaces you have in your community – perhaps at playgroup? Or some Sunday arvo parenting discussions?

However you do this, make sure there’s plenty of coffee, comfort food, and the ability to have a good laugh in the process.

