

“If you’re like most Christian parents, you have been considering how to best address this generation’s LGBTQ+ questions with your children. This topic intimidates and scares so many of us, but Rachel Gilson’s new book is here to endow us with confidence so we can approach even the toughest questions with truth and grace rooted in Jesus and his word. Rachel’s new book is practical, convicting, and exactly what we need right now. This should be required reading for any and every Christian parent.”

**ADAM GRIFFIN**, Lead Pastor, Eastside Community Church, Dallas, TX; Host, Family Discipleship Podcast

“In an age when we are called to be true to our inner selves, what you’ll find in this book is exactly what’s printed on the cover: *Parenting without Panic*. From one parent to another, Rachel offers real-world advice anchored in the eternal goodness and wisdom of the Bible. No angst, no rancour, but ‘creating and testing our best practices right now’ in light of God’s promises to us in Jesus. An easily accessible and empowering read for every parent.”

**CRAIG ROBERTS**, CEO, Sydney Anglican Youthworks

“Christian parents are in desperate need of Jesus-centered guidance as they talk to their kids about LGBT questions. This short book is just what we have all been waiting for: a master class in truth and love, equipping us to raise this generation with a cross-shaped understanding of discipleship and pointing them to Jesus’ unending love as we explain the Bible’s boundaries around sex and the goodness of how God has made our bodies.”

**REBECCA McLAUGHLIN**, Author, *Confronting Christianity and Does the Bible Affirm Same-Sex Relationships?*

“I hope that every Christian parent, teacher, pastor, counselor, or anyone else who ministers to children will take the time to read this short primer on preparing children to withstand, as disciples, the cultural affirmation of LGBT+ narratives, as well as what may be their own confusion. Rachel Gilson is both rock solid in affirming all God’s commandments and will for male and female identities, while at the same time, urging graciousness and kindness to those who have adopted a broken understanding of sexuality. For that matter, I would hope kind and gentle Christians would be moved to pass this small volume along to those who hold a different view from the Bible, in the hopes that they would learn that to disagree is not to hate and that the gospel of Jesus is our resource for all kinds of brokenness.”

**KATHY KELLER**, Former Assistant Director of Communications, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC; Co-author, *The Meaning of Marriage*

“Rachel Gilson’s *Parenting without Panic in an LGBT-Affirming World* can be welcomed by parents with a huge sigh of relief! She writes as a true friend who understands what you are facing and as a brave ally who can help when your child needs support. Let’s all thank Rachel for her honesty, faithfulness, and wisdom.”

**RAY AND JANI ORTLUND**, Renewal Ministries, Nashville, TN

“A marvellous little book that asks all the hardest questions about parenting and sexuality, and gives wise, loving, and thoughtful answers. Rachel has served us magnificently by thinking through how to raise children from toddlers to teenagers, without fear and without compromise. Superb.”

**ANDREW WILSON**, Teaching Pastor, King’s Church, London, UK; Co-author, *The Life You Never Expected*

“Rachel Gilson has written the book that Christian parents have been needing for some time—a book designed to equip us and our children to navigate faithfully LGBT+ questions and to do so, as she puts it, ‘not as adversaries but as missionaries.’ Rachel’s own life story has caused her to wrestle deeply and personally with the matters she addresses. Doubtless, this explains both the clarity and the sense of reality that characterize her writing. Most important of all, however, is the biblical truth and gospel grace that permeate her thinking and counsel on every page. When it comes to imparting the wisdom of God’s ways to Christian children and preparing them for discipleship in an LGBT+-affirming world, this brief resource is the ideal place in which to begin.”

**ROB S. SMITH**, Lecturer, Sydney Missionary Bible College, Sydney, Australia; Author, *How Should We Think about Gender and Identity?* and *The Body God Gives: A Biblical Response to Transgender Theory*


“This book is a triumph of both calmness and confidence. To parents and all who love young people, Gilson models calmness in the presence of panic and confidence in the face of anxiety. But, even more importantly, she equips readers to rest calmly in God’s steadfast faithfulness and confidently in his enduring goodness. In these pages, Gilson unapologetically promotes the Bible’s truthful teaching about sexuality, gender, identity, sin, and forgiveness, all while imitating Christ’s committed love and call to know him and the abundant life he offers. This is a book which truly lives up to its title and is a blessing to all who seek to disciple children with Jesus’ truth and love.”

**DANI TREWEEK**, Founding Director, Single Minded Ministry; Author, *The Meaning of Singleness*




Rachel  
Gilson

**PARENTING**



**WITHOUT PANIC**



**IN AN LGBT  
AFFIRMING  
WORLD**

the goodbook  
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# INTRODUCTION

**“ALL OF THE KINDERGARTEN** teachers are amazing—but did you know one is a woman who is married to another woman?”

My stomach sank when I heard Laura say this. I had just enrolled my daughter to start kindergarten in the neighborhood public school where Laura also sent two of her children. Like any parent, I had excitement and other big feelings as my daughter prepared to head off to school; this was brand new for our little family of three. Laura was a natural friend to turn to for advance news. But I truly hadn't expected that piece of information.

My first emotion was fear. My second emotion was shame.

My fear was instinctive, animal almost, not focused on one particular thing but as scattered as the toys lying all over my daughter's room.

As a follower of Jesus, what I want most for my daughter is for her to follow Jesus too. I want her to see him and what he says as good, true, and beautiful—

including what he says about our bodies, sex, and relationships. But what Jesus says about these topics is out of step with much of what the world now says. I knew I needed to prepare her, but kindergarten seemed impossibly early to start!

My daughter was only five years old. What could I say to her about this teacher that she would actually understand? Was it even age appropriate to talk about it? Her youth just made her so impressionable; I could imagine this teacher being warm, loving, and excellent—and without any effort at all showing my daughter that a woman being legally married to another woman was good.

Then there was the fear that if I tried to address the subject with my daughter, she would repeat it to her teacher or others at school in the least nuanced ways. We've all heard kids' interpretations of what they just heard from an adult. Let's just say they wouldn't be our first choice as ambassadors. What if she walked in and blurted, "MY mom said being gay is a SIN"? What kind of phone calls and meetings would I have to field? Would the school try to turn my daughter against me, persuading her that I was bigoted and wrong?

There was also a fear that her new little peers, if they knew what her family believed, would reject her, mock her, or perhaps shun her. Perhaps it wouldn't happen in kindergarten, but as all the kids advanced through school together, at some point it would become clear that our family was not in lock-step with our community on LGBT+ questions. Being from a committed Christian family can

already make you seem strange. Would our very different views on sexuality cause too much social strain and make her want to walk away from faith? And what if she came to me with questions I just couldn't answer or with arguments for embracing LGBT+ identities and practices that I couldn't dissuade her from?

But even stronger than this rush of fears was my sense of shame. Why shame? Because I felt that I, of all people, should be able to handle this. First, I experience same-sex attraction; folks who identify as LGBT+ are not frightening to me because this is a road I've walked myself. I had started dating other young women in high school, and even though at that time no state in America had legalized gay marriage, I knew I wanted to marry a woman someday. This didn't pose any moral problems for me because I was an atheist and thought that all objections to gay relationships came from bigotry, stupidity, or both. During my first year at college, however, God interrupted my life. After stealing a copy of *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis from a classmate, I was confronted with the gospel: that though I was a sinner deserving death, Jesus had come to absorb God's wrath towards me on the cross, to forgive me of my sin, and to give me, by his resurrection from the grave, a new life, now and forever. This news suddenly became the defining center of my life.

Which leads to the second reason why I felt shame. I've been thinking about, reading about, and writing about how to navigate LGBT+ questions as a Christian for decades. My same-sex attraction didn't simply disappear

when I started following Jesus, and I had to work out what it meant to say “No” to those attractions and “Yes” to the Holy Spirit. That working out is the subject of my book *Born Again This Way*, as well as various articles I’ve written and talks I’ve given.

So shouldn’t I, of all people, be equipped to help my own child navigate this scenario? Instead, I was thinking, “Please God, let her get one of the other two teachers; I’m not ready to handle this.”

I don’t know how you’d feel if you had been in my shoes. Maybe you would feel conflicted because you yourself still have questions about what the Bible says about sexuality. Or perhaps you feel secure in what the Bible teaches, but the postures of people who argue both for and against a traditional Christian perspective seem off-putting and uncomfortable to you—not much like the Jesus you encounter in Scripture—and you don’t want to become one of them. No matter where you are personally, I know each of us have big questions and big emotions as we come to this topic and our kids.

I’m writing this little book for parents because I myself needed and need it. What’s more, I know from my conversations at churches and conferences that I’m not the only one feeling these fears. We simply don’t feel prepared to help our children navigate these questions because most of us aren’t sure how to navigate them ourselves. If no one has equipped us first, how can we avoid being anything but the blind leading the blind, with both ourselves and our children ending up in a pit?

Our fears aren't baseless. So many of them make sense, given the facts on the ground and in our own lives. We don't gain anything by pretending our fears don't exist or by trying to shove them into the overstuffed junk drawer of our minds. At the same time, it is dangerous to feed these fears or to be ruled by them, "for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7).

The problem with fear is that it makes us act less like Jesus, not more. Fear tends to make us isolate ourselves instead of connecting with others and loving them. Fear tends to make us go on the attack instead of dying to ourselves. Fear is very real and very powerful, but Christ our Savior is more real and more powerful. He calls us and our children to life to the full (John 10:10).

The goal of this book is to help you equip the kids in your life to navigate LGBT+ questions with the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. This is tricky to do because these questions just weren't being asked a couple of decades ago—at least not as frequently, as intensely, or as publicly as they are now. All of us are trying to figure out on the fly how to parent in this cultural moment. This means we're creating and testing our best practices right now. This is a vulnerable place to be, but we can be confident that we have been given what we need. God has graciously given us his word, his Spirit, and his people so that we can be faithful disciples in any generation, including this one.

This little book is for us—as parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and anyone who cares for children—by

God's grace, to move from a place of fear to one of humble confidence and faith. The chapters are therefore designed to lead with principles that can help us make that move, with some practical options for applying these principles at the end of each chapter.

We'll start by exploring God's positive vision for our bodies and relationships, which is the foundation for all that follows. After that, we'll discuss what it means to communicate these things to our kids in age-appropriate ways. Next, we'll think about how sin and brokenness impact God's good design. This will set us up to talk about useful tools for talking to our kids about LGBT+ questions. Then we'll be ready to tackle how to equip our kids to think about being Christians in a world that is rapidly changing. Finally, we'll consider how to respond when LGBT+ questions become personal for some of the children we love.

Each of our kids is unique. Each of our contexts is complex. There isn't a set script or roadmap tailor-made for us. But the Bible promises, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). So, let us pray diligently and have grace with ourselves and each other as we seek to apply God's wisdom.



## GOD'S POSITIVE VISION

**THERE ISN'T ANYTHING QUITE** like the power of “No.” When dropped upon a child, it has explosive force. “No” to an extra show, a piece of candy, or more tablet time strikes children as a cruel injustice. They posture and protest as if the adult before them exists only to take pleasure in their pain: “But I WANT it!”

This frenzy of destructive energy is matched only when the child understands that she, too, can wield the power of “No.” Vegetables? “No!” Sharing? “No!” Bedtime? “Double no!!” My friend has a young son who can get on such a “No” run that you can start offering him things he truly loves, and he’ll just as fiercely scowl and repeat “No” at you.

As givers and as receivers, we have all experienced that “No” is sometimes necessary, yet often abused. And even when necessary, it can sting. It can be wielded without pity, without thought, without gentleness or understanding. Just this morning, tired and impatient, I snapped at my

daughter that she is *not* to touch my phone unless given permission—and immediately knew that I could have communicated the same “No” in a better way.

When it comes to what the Bible says about sex, we may expect to hear an equally brutal “No.” Growing up outside of church, my perception of Christianity’s attitude towards sexuality could be summed up as backward, prudish, and oppressive. Unfortunately, many of my friends who *did* grow up going to church didn’t have a much better experience. Some of my friends felt a tense contradiction on the topic. On the one hand, sexual desire was talked about like it could only ever be a destructive fire, leaving men and women scorched, bereft, and ashamed. On the other hand, they heard that they should get married as soon as possible so that they too could finally have sex. Other friends tell me that sex was a forbidden topic; instead of contradiction, there was silence.

One of the disconcerting things about being a parent is how often we find ourselves saying to our children the very things that our parents said to us. So if, with regards to sexuality, we were formed by the pervasive, frightening “No” that hovered around sex, we will need to be intentional about not simply transmitting that to our children. We first need to go back to the Bible to check whether what we learned is really the full-orbed vision of sex and sexuality that the Bible teaches.

I want to suggest that God’s first words about our bodies and how to use them were not “No” but “Yes”—and that any place where he says “No” springs from this



“Yes” and is for our own good. I believe that if we grow more competent in expressing God’s positive vision for sexuality to our children—if they have a chance to see what God is *for*, and only with this “Yes” in place to hear what God is *against*—then they will have a much better shot at experiencing and expressing the Bible’s vision with grace and truth.

So, in this chapter we’re going to look at the “Yes” God has said to our bodies, to marriage, and to singleness.

### **TRUST YOUR BODY**

When my daughter was a toddler, I marveled at how many children’s songs and stories existed solely to ensure that she knew the names and sounds of barnyard animals. I suppose there are still kids in America who regularly interact with cows, pigs, horses, goats, and the like, but my child, like many, is a city girl. She’s seen way more squirrels and pigeons than roosters and hens, but no one is writing cute songs about what racoons sound like when they’re digging through your trash. In any case, she soon became an expert at matching Moo to Cow and Oink to Pig. The overall theme was that you can trust the sound an animal makes to reveal what it is. You’ll never hear a duck meowing or a cat trying to quack. Some things really just are what they are, and what is more, they *tell* you what they are.

Similarly, when it comes to sexuality, one place where we can and should start with our kids is simply this: they can trust their body to tell them who they are.

One of the beautiful truths of Christianity is that God calls creation good. Many religions today and in history have doubted this goodness because of the presence of brokenness and sin. And Christianity does not deny this brokenness. In fact, in chapter 3 we'll look at it squarely. (This is especially important for our kids who have disorders of sexual development—some of which are sometimes called intersex conditions—who need to know they are not cut off from God's goodness and love.)

Yet we know from Scripture that brokenness and troubles are not intrinsic to the project: that is, creation did exist in pure goodness and will someday again. In the creation story in Genesis 1, God repeatedly declares that the things he has made are good. Land and light: good. Water and air: good. Humanity, created in God's image, male and female: *very good*.

We don't need to have overly complex conversations with our kids about theories of sex and gender. The "very good" that God spoke over humanity as male and female establishes that we are called to receive the gift of our male or our female body as a good gift. Receiving it means that we are to live out, if we are male, our maleness identifiably as boys and men, and if we are female, our femaleness identifiably as girls and women (compare Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16). From very early on, you can teach your children that their body shows them whether they are a male or a female, and therefore that they are a boy or a girl, and that being a boy or a girl is very good. It is so simple—something easily taken for granted—and yet

the truth of a good God creating boys and girls, men and women, out of his love and for our joy is one of the most solid foundations we can give.

We can also point our kids to Jesus, who took on real humanity. He was born with the real body of a baby boy, born from the real body of a woman, showing the dignity and goodness of both. When he rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples in a new body—but still a *human* body, which could be touched and seen and recognized as his. He wasn't just pretending to take on humanity or pretending to have body; it was and is real. We can teach our children that they have much dignity because they have a human body and soul, and that they can trust their body to show them who they are when it comes to being a boy or a girl, rather than questioning how much their feelings or interests line up with male or female stereotypes.

When they're little and in the bath, as we make sure each part is clean, we can teach them to be thankful for each part of their body because it is a good gift from God. When a new baby is born at church, we can remind our kids that that little one's tiny body tells us whether they are a girl or a boy, and that the gift of a brand new human is something to celebrate because God made humans good. As we run around outside, jumping and playing, we can thank God for good bodies that are powerful and bring joy. At Easter time we can tell our kids that Jesus purchased salvation not just for our souls but also for our male and female bodies forever. Bodies aren't a temporary gift but something we will enjoy for eternity.

## **SIGNPOSTS TO GOD'S GOODNESS**

We also have good news to tell our kids about singleness and marriage. According to the Bible, both of these ways of living can communicate the goodness of the real Marriage between God and his people, Christ and his church. In addition to being able to trust that their bodies can tell them who they are, our children can learn how relationships are signposts that point to the goodness of God's forever family.

One beautiful thing about these signposts is that we can begin to talk about them with theological depth even to our very little children, long before we talk explicitly about sexuality. They are an image that can grow with our children and work in stages, setting up the later conversations.

## **SINGLENES AS SIGNPOST**

Let's start with a brief look at singleness. In our culture, both outside the church and inside, singleness can be portrayed as if it is one of the saddest ways to live if it lingers "too long." No one wonders with concern about the 22-year-old single; the same can't usually be said about the 42-year-old single. We can easily speak and act as if a person only really becomes whole or fulfilled or a grown-up once they have a romantic partner. The problem with this vision is that it's unbiblical and untrue.

When the Bible talks about the community God is creating—the church of Jesus Christ—it consistently uses the language of family. We are both "born again" into

the family (John 3:3) and also adopted (Ephesians 1:5)! We become brothers and sisters one to another. Though we may leave father, mother, siblings and lands when we seek the kingdom of God, Jesus says that we gain them in much more abundance (with persecutions, he adds, in Mark 10:29-31).

What is inescapable about the biblical vision is that when a person is in Christ, they are also in his family. To be a Christian is to be in relationships—relationships that are to be marked with the intimacy, fellowship, and joy of a healthy family. A person’s marital status does not determine whether they are in the family.

What’s more, according to Jesus, in the new heavens and the new earth, all of us will be single. We discover this when Jesus, in a debate with religious leaders, teaches that there will be no human marriage in heaven (Matthew 22:29-30). But while the human spousal relationship will not endure, our relationship to each other as siblings will remain. This family is more fundamental than any other relationship. Single Christians radically demonstrate to the watching world that God’s family is more inclusive and expansive than what the world has to offer, and it is forever. They are a signpost that the gospel isn’t first about “No” but about the “Yes” of love relationships and mutual self-giving.

The New Testament dignifies singleness that is lived in purity and love. One way you can teach this to your children is in the way you speak to them about their future. You could choose to say, “if you get married” to

your kids instead of “when you get married,” for example. You can talk about how the family of God, which glorifies him as a good Father, is a gospel picture, and how one of our best gifts as disciples is to participate in and build up this family, the church. This helps everyone see how God’s family unit, because it is forever, gets pride of place, and helps your kids know that they will always have a place in it through Christ. You can value your siblings in Christ, celebrating and mourning with them as the family they are, instead of reserving these things for biological or legal family. At our church, several families host Thanksgiving and Easter dinners where there are more church-family members than legal family members. I regularly talk with my daughter about how her church friends truly are her siblings, and I’ve seen this reflected in how she now talks about them as well.

So, singles who are thriving in the local church are a signpost to the boundary-shattering, good-news eternal family that God is creating through Christ. All of us, married or single, are responsible for making other members of our spiritual family feel valued and included. Single Christians will be in a position to thrive if they take this seriously. In a culture that believes in salvation-by-romance—that we are not full or real persons until we have a partner—a commitment to joyful participation in the family of God is a powerful vision of salvation by faith in Christ alone. This is what our kids need to hear and see, not the false gospel that they are worthless unless someone romantically loves them.

Faithful singleness plays another key role: it is a signpost to the real Marriage between Jesus and his church, which will be consummated when Jesus comes again (Revelation 19 – 21). A disciple living faithfully in singleness can say of human marriage, “That is a good and worthy thing, and even if I am not experiencing it now, I won’t miss out on the real thing.” A single person can declare with their very life that the resurrection is real, and really coming, and will be better than any earthly romance. This is an incredibly countercultural proclamation of the sweetness of the gospel in a society drunk on romance.

### **MARRIAGE AS SIGNPOST**

Over and over in Scripture, God describes his relationship with his people using the picture of marriage. It’s not the only picture God uses of course; the love between friends is also a gospel picture, as is the love of a mother for her child, and on and on. Nonetheless, marriage is one of God’s favorite gospel pictures. Over and over we see God portrayed as a faithful, loving Husband and his people called to be a faithful, loving Bride. The picture is present in many places in the Bible, with some of the more famous examples occurring in Hosea and Isaiah, but the foremost is Ephesians 5:22-33, where Paul writes, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (v 25) and “As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands” (v 24).

Now, God didn't look at human marriage and think, "Wow, that sort of reminds me of my relationship to my people." No! Marriage was designed from the outset to be a model—imperfect and miniature but true—of the real Marriage. So human marriage, if conducted in purity and love, can be a beautiful display of God's relationship with his people: a living, breathing picture of the gospel. This is something you can share with your kids over and over.

Why are husbands and wives called to be faithful throughout their whole lives? Because God is always faithful to his people, and his people are called to faithful love in return. Why do husbands and wives give birth to children and seek to bring children into their homes through adoption? Because God's relationship with his people is a fruitful family—a network of expansive love. Why are husbands and wives to give their bodies only to each other, in safety and joy? Because God's relationship with his people is exclusive: a place of true shelter and intimate love.

And why does the Bible speak of marriage exclusively as between a man and a woman, not two men or two women? Because God's love for his people and their love for him is a love across difference—not one between two interchangeable parties. Jesus and the church are not the same! And though there are many beautiful forms of human difference in the world, none is as fundamental as the original difference of male and female—a difference that registers even at the cellular level. And it is this special instance of diversity in unity—a male and female



united in marriage—that is constantly employed in the Bible as a picture of God’s relationship with his people.

As Paul explains in his letter to the Ephesians, since Jesus and his people play different roles in their love relationship, so husbands and wives are called to different roles in their love relationship. The spouses tell the gospel story by playing their assigned part: husbands loving their wives as Christ loves the church, and wives submitting to husbands as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). Editing the story so that there are two people representing Christ, or two people representing the church, distorts the gospel picture just as deeply as the distortion of adultery, or the distortion of sexual violence in marriage. To these distortions and more, God says “No” because they are sin against his great “Yes” in Christ.

Yet when a marriage is undertaken by disciples of Christ in purity and love, it can show in its own small way a glimmer of what the gospel is. It is a signpost towards the ultimate Marriage between Jesus and his Bride, which will be consummated at the end (Revelation 19:7; 21:9-10).

In the promised new creation, all of us will be single, and all of us will participate in the Marriage, making up the Bride of Christ. That means that local churches now, if filled with healthy marriages and healthy singles, will have multiple powerful ways of pointing to that gospel vision. Our neighbors are longing for intimacy, for romance, and for connection, but they are being sold a cheap, plastic imitation of the real thing by the world

around them. Only in Christ—where sin is forgiven, where transformation is available, where love that conquers death is promised—can this longing be met. It is what we need; it is what our children need; it is what our neighbors and the world need.

Every time something in our life exalts romance, we can talk to our kids about how that desire is met in the marriage of God with his people. Every time a story celebrates belonging and family, we can tell our kids about God’s design for us to have these things, and how he is providing them first in his church. Every time our culture tells a story that singleness is dangerous or sad, we can tell our children of our single Savior, who proved that humans don’t need mere romance to live well; we have all we need in God and in his people to thrive.

If our children hear again and again the ways that these things positively point to the gospel, they will become fluent in the *why* of God’s sexual ethic. This will ease their understanding of the various “No’s” that God says. But before we can move any farther, we need to talk about equipping our kids not just with theology but biology. We can’t have full conversations about LGBT+ questions without laying the groundwork of physical bodies and reproduction, which we will turn to next.

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

- ▲ God created us male and female, and we can trust our bodies to tell us who we are: boys or girls, men or women.

- ☺ God created marriage and singleness to tell the story of the gospel. Both of these ways to live can be joyful, fruitful, and fulfilling in God's family.

## **PRACTICES FOR PARENTING**

- Look for everyday examples and opportunities to teach about the goodness of our bodies and to reinforce the goodness of humanity's creation as male and female. Think creatively about bath time, the birth of babies, playtime, and more as ways of celebrating bodies and the male/female distinction.
- Similarly, make frequent mentions of how singleness and marriage both tell the gospel. As you watch movies, listen to songs, and enjoy your single and married friends, remind your kids about the gospel picture present in these places.
- ▲ Teach your children about the family of God: how believers are all sons and daughters of our Father in heaven and therefore brothers and sisters to one another. Practice valuing your local church family with your kids: invite different kinds of people over for a chaotic family meal and bedtime or together attend an event of importance in a church friend's life, such as a birthday party.