



Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Workbench Parenting: Envisioning How Common Household Tools Can Remind Us to Be Stronger Parents

THE SCREWDRIVER

“Honey, I need you to tighten up the hinge on the pantry door.”

“OK, but first I need to see if I need a Phillips head or a flathead screwdriver.”

It is very likely that this husband would go and find a Phillips head screwdriver — the one that looks like a cross or an “X” — since he was securing an item to wood. If he were tightening up a plate for a light switch or electrical socket, he may have retrieved a “slot” or “flathead” screwdriver. If by chance he were in Canada, he might have looked for a Robertson screwdriver to adjust a squarehead or boxhead screw.

Screwdrivers come in various shapes and sizes for the various jobs required. If we needed to repair eyeglasses, we would seek a small, delicate tool; if we were securing a bracket that would hold up a garage door opener, we would need one much larger. It is important to have the right tool for the task at hand when we need to loosen or tighten something.

There are times in our role as parents when we need to make this kind of choice in a situation with a child or in our overall family life. Is something too loose? Is this a good rule? Are we not paying bills on time? Are we late to events and activities? What are our rules concerning TV time and computer use? Does the recent behavior of a child need to be addressed? Admit it: There are times when we get lax as parents and need to get things a little more “shipshape.”

There also are those times when things may need to “loosen up a bit.” A child asks for an extension on bedtime to watch a special educational TV show. Maybe it is time to purchase a fun dessert or go out for ice cream.

Perhaps we have a special opportunity to travel as a family that requires a loosening of our schedule. There indeed may be times when we are wound too tight and need to relax a bit for the good of the family.

The job of a screwdriver is to secure things — one item to another. As parents, we want to establish a secure home. We certainly hope to create strong relational bonds between children and ourselves as well as among our children. It is important to create a safe family atmosphere that offers physical, emotional, financial and spiritual security for our children.

In this broken and troubled world, we will never fully achieve the sense of security we desire. It is comforting to know that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, we have the security of eternal life. We know that even though the things of this world make get loose and wobble, in Jesus we find strength. Even if this world comes down hard on us and things get overly tight, our heavenly Father is there to give us peace and comfort.

Knowing we find our security in God Almighty, we can live in a world that is confusingly both loose and tight at the same.



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FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together for a time of Bible study and interaction following the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Given by the one who the family thinks is the most easygoing.

FAMILY FUN TIME WITH TOOLS

Have a parent or older sibling locate several screws of various sizes — both flathead and Phillips head — and various size screwdrivers of differing styles. Also, obtain a piece of wood that is large enough that you can drive the screws into it.

Have an adult demonstrate how to secure a screw into the piece of wood. Point out the various styles of screws and screwdrivers. Teach children the classic line of knowing which way to turn the tool: “righty-tighty, lefty-loosey.” As a family, take turns trying to turn and secure the screws into the piece of wood.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) How did you do? Did you get the screws into the wood?
- 2) What was hard about doing this activity?
- 3) What surprised you most?
- 4) Where do you see screws holding things together in your house?
- 5) How are they helpful in your home?

FAMILY BIBLE TIME:

Have someone look up and read Ps. 46:11, and then discuss the questions below.

- 1) What is a fortress (fort)? (A secure place for people to be)
- 2) What does a fortress do? (It keeps us safe from our enemies. It helps win battles.)
- 3) How is Jesus like a fortress for us? (He won the battle over sin. We are now safe in Him.)

FAMILY FUN TIME: SAND PLAY SCULPTURES

Locate a number of older blankets, sheets and bedspreads, and bring them into your living room area to use in building a family fort. Use books to secure the sheets as needed; clothespins also are very helpful in holding things together. Add pillows, stuffed animals and other blankets as desired. Make it big enough for the entire family, so mom and dad can come inside as well.

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have everyone get into the fort. Get situated and secure. Now, have a parent read the first line of Ps. 46:11 inside the fort, with the rest of the family repeating the second line. Do this four or five times, each time getting louder and louder. End the last time with everyone shouting “Amen!”

Parent: The LORD of hosts is with us;

Family: The God of Jacob is our fortress.



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Writer: Dr. Steve Christopher Designer: Annie Monette

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