



*A peacemaker strives to love the world.*

There is some tension between how the world is sometimes described in religious spaces, and God’s description of the world as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). This tension can be particularly confusing for children who are taught principles of kindness, charity, and the universality of God’s love for all of humankind from a young age. The tension is confusing also for parents who have often seen enough of the world to know its capacity for great beauty as well as great cruelty.

Navigating those waters peaceably is tricky. Preparing your child to navigate them with great love is the essence of what it is to be a parent.

This document is not an effort to provide all the answers, but an invitation to search out truth and love with your children. Here are some suggestions for making a start, including some activities, tips, and suggested messages to share with your children:

## **1 EXPRESS GOD’S DEEP AND ABIDING LOVE FOR THE WORLD AND THE PEOPLE IN IT.**

### **TO DO**

Read scriptures describing God’s love for the world (Genesis 1:31, John 3:16, Romans 8:37-39). Discuss times when you have felt God’s love, or sensed God’s love for another human.

### **FOR HELP**

Depending on the age of your children, it can be helpful to try and paraphrase scriptures together into simpler language. You can also talk with your children about how they feel love, helping them break down what their bodies and minds are doing when they are experiencing love.

## 2 BE VULNERABLE AND HONEST ABOUT YOUR OWN FEARS ABOUT THE WORLD AND AMBIVALENCES ABOUT PEOPLE.

### TO DO

Describe a time when you experienced fear of or frustration with another person, even though you knew they were a child of God. Acknowledge the discomfort you experienced, and validate that discomfort is something our bodies use to keep us safe, but also that it can sometimes mislead us to make false judgements about people and situations.

### FOR HELP

Let Grow has several excellent resources for collaborating with your child to determine reasonable activities that they can do to safely foster independence and confidence in themselves and in the world.

## 3 FOSTER CONNECTIONS WITH PEOPLE WHO LOOK, THINK, BEHAVE, AND/OR BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU DO. MODEL HEALTHY DIALOGUES AND RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS THOSE DIFFERENCES.

### TO DO

Brainstorm together with your child someone in your community who you might reach out to or try to bless. Prompt your child to think of people who they don't typically interact with.

### FOR HELP

Modeling appreciation across differences is incredibly helpful in fostering a healthy curiosity and appreciation in children. Be intentional about noticing and vocalizing goodness you observe in people around you, especially in people different from you.

As parents, we can convey to our children the message:

*"While it's true that the world can be very frightening and unkind, it is also true that it's made of our sisters and brothers, children of God who are usually trying to be good and who mess up a lot—just like you and me! The world is people who God loves very much, people who are imperfect and diverse and who disagree on a lot of really, really important things but who God asks us to care about and try to love anyway.*

*"You won't always get it right. Sometimes loving will be too hard. And that's okay. Trying and failing and trying to love is a very human part of being human. But fortunately we have a God who so loves the world. And when we need help, God can heal our hearts, give us courage, and help us to try again to love."*



Scan for additional resources for practical peacemaking from Mormon Women for Ethical Government