

A Night to Remember – Hot Cocoa Chats – by Marcy Lytle

I recently purchased a cute tin of hot cocoa to place in my daughter's stocking, as she and her daughter often have mom/daughter hot cocoa chats. I've always thought it was so cool that the two of them do this, and I thought what a great way to train our kids to have personal chats with their Father, as well. It will help them learn how to converse, praise, and listen when the Father is present with them, by the fire and near lights, in a personal way. And then I learned that they have chats with other drinks, as well!

Preparation: Prepare hot cocoa and donuts for the family, gather around the fire or some other cozy spot – perhaps by the tree – and wrap up or sit on blankets while you sip and dine with Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Do you know what anxiety means? When we feel nervous about something, we often feel anxious. So let's begin by talking about what makes us nervous. (Parent starts and models...kids follow suit). Everyone pretend you've got a fishing pole and cast out your line. That's what it means to cast – to throw. So let's throw our anxieties on to the shoulders of Jesus, because He said he would carry our burdens. (Pray together and ask each one to ask Jesus to take the nervousness they have.)

This is a good way to begin our fireside chats with Jesus, because anxiety makes it hard to pray or chat with the Father. But now that we've cast our cares on Him, let's keep going...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

It's the time of giving and receiving, and it's of utmost importance that we are thankful for all that we have...before we receive. (Why do you think that is? Ask the kids.) Let's take turns giving thanks for something in our lives, either a toy, or a blessing, or a friend...or whatever.

One of the best ways to experience friendship with God is to acknowledge that all good things come from his hands, and it's good to give thanks and rejoice. Let's clap together to God!

1 John 5:14 "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

Remember how you kids like to ask for specific things for Christmas? Parents like to know what their child wants, and parents also know what their child needs, so that's good! What if a little toddler asked for a pocket knife? A good parent would know not to give that, but would gladly share other good things with that child.

It's okay to ask God for things when you chat with him, and this verse assures us that he hears us. So let's pray together and ask him for the things we want or need and then trust that he will answer with what is the very best for us!

Finally, a good part of a conversation or chat always includes hugs and a listening ear, and affirmation. God loves to listen but he also loves to affirm us, or assure us of his love.

Let's sing "Jesus Loves Me" together...

Now, let's pause and close our eyes and listen to His voice and see if we hear a word or see anything in our minds of his great love toward us. (Let kids share).

This is how to have a fireside chat with the Lord...it's so simple. We let go of our worries, give thanks, pray and ask for answers, and sit back and feel the warmth of His love. His love makes us warm inside, flickers like the lights on the tree that shine and make us smile, and holds us close like a blanket wrapping us up tight!

Merry Christmas, and Good Night!