

**SAY THIS:**

Who can believe in Jesus?
YOU CAN BELIEVE IN JESUS.

**DO THIS:****MORNING TIME**

When you go into your baby's room, say, "Good morning! I see someone Jesus loves, no matter what, and it's YOU!"

**FEEDING TIME**

While feeding your baby this month, look your baby in the eyes and say, "Mommy can believe in Jesus. Daddy can believe in Jesus. (Brother/sister) can believe in Jesus. (Continue naming family members.) And you can believe Jesus!"

**CUDDLE TIME**

Cuddle with your baby this month and pray, "Dear God, I ask that [child's name] will believe Jesus is Your Son, that He loves [him/her], that Jesus will always be with [him/her], and that Your way is always best. I love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen."

**BATH TIME**

As you bathe your baby, sing the following words to the tune of "Wheels on the Bus":
"You can believe in Je-e-sus
Je-e-sus, Je-e-sus
You can believe in Je-e-sus
all through the day."

BASIC TRUTH:

JESUS WANTS TO BE MY FRIEND FOREVER.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE FUTURE THERAPIST OF MY CHILDREN

By Jon Acuff

Dear therapist who, may one day be counseling my children,

There are two things I need to say right out of the gate:

1. I tried my best.
2. I hope you have a sound machine.

The second point is more of a personal preference rather than a revelation. Having gone to counseling myself, I appreciate when a therapist has some sort of sound machine that makes you feel like you're at the beach. Gentle electronic waves lapping against the shore tend to help you forget you're actually in a strip mall off the highway. The second point is easy to address. The first point is a little more detailed.

I did try my best as a parent, but I know my kids are going to have many, many things to tell you about someday. They will sit on a couch and regale you with stories from their childhoods. Some will make you laugh. We put a high price on humor in our family, and laughter often filled the halls of our home.

Some stories will be gross. Ask them about the time we thought a squirrel had died within our walls. Turns out it was a year-old ostrich egg that had cracked undetected in a decorative bowl. The smell was like getting punched in the face by a vengeful bird from another continent.

Other stories will not be as funny, and you will quickly discover something I had to

admit a few years into the adventure of parenting. I am not perfect. I tried to be for the first few years. I promise I did. But all too often . . .

I was impatient with my kids. I lost my temper over things that didn't really matter.

I discouraged when I should have encouraged, or encouraged when I should have been more realistic.

I gave them bad advice.

I took some things too seriously and others too casually.

I chased after my work instead of after them. I was on the road traveling for business, trying to be somebody when I already was somebody . . . A dad. A father. And in this case, a launch pad for some therapist's new boat.

Tell my kids I love them. That I'm so proud I got to be their dad. Tell them parenting involves a lot of mistakes, and forgiveness, and messiness, and laughter. Tell them I'll pick up the bill for your work—which I assume might be high, depending on the quality of sound machine you've got.

Sincerely,

A not-so-perfect parent.



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