

Lord of the Rings: Aiming our Kids

 Psalm 127:4–5 (LB) “Children born to a young man are like sharp arrows to defend him. ⁵ Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them. That man shall have the help he needs when arguing with his enemies.”

Aim them [and let them go.](#)

 Luke 15:11–13 (NIV) “Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.”

 Luke 15:30 (NIV) “...this son of yours squandered your property with prostitutes...”

Allow them [to learn from their mistakes.](#)

 Luke 15:14–16 (NIV) “After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.”

 Psalm 40:12–13 (GNB) “I am surrounded by many troubles— too many to count! My sins have caught up with me, and I can no longer see; they are more than the hairs of my head, and I have lost my courage. ¹³ Save me, Lord! Help me now!”

Show them [that moral living makes sense.](#)

 Luke 15:17–20a (NIV) “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.”

 Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

Welcome them [when they come back.](#)

 Luke 15:20b (NIV) “...while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

 Luke 15:21–24 (NIV) “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Guide them [no matter how old they get.](#)

 Luke 15:25–30 (NIV) “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

 Luke 15:31–32 (NIV) “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

 Luke 15:7 (NIV) “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

Digging Deeper: Where is your life aimed? Where are you aiming others? Can you describe a time when you learned a lesson from suffering? Are your kids being raised in a home that is healthy and happy—where everyone is treated with integrity? Did you

 ever intend to leave home for good only to end up needing to go back home? Can you describe what happened? What kind of welcome did you get when you went back home? Why is it important to still celebrate repentant people even though they continually disappointed us?