

Better Bedtime Routines

By Jolene Roehlkepartain



When it's time for bed, kids can often balk and dawdle. Try these ideas to make bedtime smoother and less of a hassle.

For
Young Family

Season
Winter

Needed
Bible, copies of the Bedtime Checklist (one per person), pens or pencils

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God, help us to settle down in the evening so that we can all unwind. Then be with us as we prepare for bed and go to sleep. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Psalm 4:8 "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

Then ask another family member to read aloud Exodus 33:14 "And he said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'"

3. As a family, talk about these questions:
 - What do you like best about bedtime?
 - What is most frustrating about bedtime?
 - How can we make bedtime better?
4. Give each person a copy of the Bedtime Checklist and a pen or pencil. Read through the checklist together. Cross off any items that aren't important to you. Add any items that are important. What's essential is to create a bedtime routine that you'll do every night so that everyone knows what to expect.
5. Talk about where to post the Bedtime Checklist. Some families post it on a bathroom mirror. Others place it on the wall or bulletin board of their child's bedroom.
6. If your children are young, have an adult go through the checklist with them each night. Young children need to be supervised during bathing. They often need help taking off their clothes and putting on their pajamas.

7. Variation: Although it's important to have a structured bedtime routine, children can sometimes resist the routine when they become bored. If that happens, consider looking at the creative bedtime solutions in [*Parenting Preschoolers with a Purpose*](#) by Jolene Roehlkepartain (Minneapolis: Search Institute Press).
8. Remember that during the holidays and during times of stress or excitement, kids will resist following a bedtime routine. During these times, talk about why we need proper rest so that we can have energy during the day.
9. Have all family members use the Bedtime Checklist. Children are more likely to use the checklist if they see that everyone uses it. Although adults tend to go to bed later than children, you can show children your completed, checked-off list in the morning.



Bedtime Checklist

Get ready for bed by following this checklist. As you finish each task, make an X next to it on the blank line.

- _____ Take off your clothes. Put them where your parents tell you to.
- _____ Take a bath.
- _____ Wash your hair.
- _____ Empty the bathtub.
- _____ Dry yourself with a towel.
- _____ Put on your pajamas.
- _____ Wipe up any water on the bathroom floor.
- _____ Hang up your towel.
- _____ Brush your teeth.
- _____ Do a quiet activity, such as read part of a book.
- _____ Get a small glass of water or juice.
- _____ Go to your room.
- _____ Say a bedtime prayer.
- _____ Turn off the lights.
- _____ Get into bed.

