

A P A R E N T ' S
T O
G U I D E

Making Your Home a Safe Place

axis

“

Aslan is a lion—*the* Lion, the great Lion.”

“Ooh,” said Susan. “I’d thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good.”

— *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
by C.S. Lewis

The Paradox of Safety

Safety is a funny thing. We all long for and need safety, and if we never get it, we can shut down emotionally and mentally or even, in extreme cases, die. And even though we humans can survive intensely unsafe situations for long periods of time, something in us knows that that isn't how things are meant to be. Something tells us that we should strive to get back to safety.

But at the same time, too much safety is also unhealthy. When we're too safe, we become complacent, lazy, and bored. We long for excitement, for some mountain to climb or problem to solve. And if we don't get it, we'll find it one way or another, either vicariously (video games, movies, TV, etc.) or by creating it (drugs, crime, drama, fighting, etc.).

So if both too little and too much safety aren't good, how do we find the middle ground? How do we parents make our homes into the perfect balance between safety and risk, between calm and excitement, between stability and growth? How do we make our homes into safe spaces that help our kids better understand the true nature of God?

In this Guide, we'll cover what it means to make our homes safe places for our kids, why it matters, and the practical ins and outs of how to do this well.

— What do you mean by “safe”?

“Safe spaces” have gotten a lot of publicity in recent years, especially on [college campuses](#) and after the 2016 presidential election. As a response to this previous craze, the term “safe space” now has [its own dictionary entry](#). For many, the idea of creating a “safe” place at home equates to passive parenting void of consequence (something we'll address later in our discussion). But despite the term's negative connotations, the idea of a safe place actually has its roots deep within the very nature and character of God.

We as Christians live in what can seem to be a paradox of safety. Our God is good, and in that goodness, we find our safety ([Ps. 119:68](#)). Even when situations and circumstances surrounding us feel chaotic and wrong, our God is our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer; He is our refuge and rest for our souls ([Ps. 18:3](#)). When life is frightening, our God is the good shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep ([Jn. 10:11](#)), going before us into life's darkest valleys ([Ps. 23:4](#)). He is safe and makes safe spaces in a life that feels full of chaos. In the Garden where Adam and Eve lived in intimate, vulnerable harmony with God ([Gen. 2](#)), God made a space for them where they could simply be with Him and enjoy His presence. The story of humanity begins in the safe security of God. For those in Christ, the God of safety is our beginning, our end, and our refuge in between. And, like Aslan in Narnia, He is our only hope for everlasting salvation ([Heb. 5:9-10](#)).

But here the paradox prevails because, while our God is safe for those needing rest and a refuge, He might ask us to do things or lead us into places that aren't always “safe” ([Gen. 1:1](#); [Ps. 80:19](#); [1 Chron. 19:11](#)). He might call us or our kids to a different part of the world to serve His body and spread the Good News in unreached places. Or He may ask us to move into an “unsafe” neighborhood to be His hands and feet to the people there. Even the conversations He leads us into might seem frightening or unsafe, and yet, we can obey His commands **because we know that God is good**. We know that He always

has our best interests at heart and that He is *for* us. It is in His goodness, not merely His safeness, that we find our refuge.

What it comes down to is this: **Our God is our safe place, our home, where we go to be rejuvenated and inspired before going back out into the world.** What a beautiful system God designed! He intends for us to have the safety and rest we need *in order to join Him* in His good mission of redeeming a broken, chaotic world and bringing others into His safety. And even though doing so will be hard and risky and painful, it is also good.

This concept is key when speaking of making our homes safe. We're talking about something much bigger than a place kids can go when they're stressed; we're talking about making our homes *refuges* for our kids so they can get the rest, rejuvenation, and inspiration they need to go back out into the world and be part of God's mission. We're talking about the whole feel, tone, mood, and environment that our kids experience. Making our homes safe means that kids can come, take off the masks they wear day in and day out, and simply [be who they are](#) with people who unconditionally love them.

When home becomes a refuge, it becomes safe even when everything else seems to be falling apart, and in intentionally creating a space that feels safe, we're inviting God to come, comfort our family, and be our ultimate safety.

— What are the benefits of making my home a safe space?

For so many kids, the world is *not* safe, and they're often living each day in fear. Even children who come from relatively stable, wealthy homes can feel this way, thanks to things like the Internet and social media. American teens have [more anxiety](#) than ever from social, emotional, and physical instability in their daily lives. Unfortunately, the sad reality is that there is no refuge from the storm for them because the storm rages 24/7 through the device in their pockets. So unless home is a safe place, where can they go to be themselves without fear? If home lacks a sense of security, then it will simply add to our kids' sense of danger, rather than give them a place to truly rest.

In addition, our children need a place where they know, in the core of their being, that their parents are *for* them. This means that our kids know we're on their side and want what's absolutely best for them, even if it might not feel like it at the time (e.g. implementing boundaries for screen time or administering consequences for behaving inappropriately). When this principle of being "for" our kids becomes one of the foundational pillars of our relationship with them, they will feel safer knowing that, no matter what happens, someone is on their side.

In Christianity, we often talk about how our parents, particularly our fathers, shape and color our understanding of God—a beneficial practice that can bring both healing and clarity. What we don't often talk about is how physical space can similarly impact and twist our view of God. The tenor and atmosphere of our homes can either be one of love, joy, and peace that's anchored in the Gospel, or it can be one of condemnation, judgment, neglect, and disappointment. If we care to make a space that speaks and models the Gospel, we can actually turn our homes into **signposts for the kingdom**. (Because God created a physical world, we can see that the *form* of a thing matters just

as much as its *function*.) What was once “just” a living room, office, or bedroom is now an opportunity to teach our kids about the God who is a refuge. (So, yes, you *can* spend money on remodeling/decorating your home and not feel guilty about it! ;))

Finally, by creating a safe home, **we’re investing time and energy in creating a place where our kids and their friends will actually want hang out!** Just imagine for a moment the impact you could have on your kids and their friends if they wanted to spend time at your home. If they feel safe enough to let their guard down and simply be themselves, they will want to be there more and more, which will lead to more conversations, interactions, and chances to serve and disciple them. All of this because a home simply *feels* different. What an opportunity!

— What makes a home feel unsafe?

Unfortunately, the story of so many is that their home growing up wasn’t a refuge at all, but rather a place of painful memories, scars, wounds, and hurt. Instead of home as the place of peace to meet God and rest, it was the place to desperately escape. There are many things that can contribute to this feeling, some of which can’t be controlled. But being aware of and willing to remedy the ones you can control is crucial.

Safety at home is something that must start and be modeled by parents. Kids are extremely perceptive to changes in their environment, and they can sense when the relationship between two parents is strained, stretched, or unstable. Constant arguing between parents, passive aggressive communication, and unwillingness to listen to the other spouse all contribute to an unsafe feel. This sense of disunity is felt by all the children in a house, and when left unchecked and undiscussed it can lead to kids wanting to spend every waking moment away from the home in a desperate search for a more stable, consistent place.

Additionally, a home where questions and exploration of thought are discouraged can lead a space to feel unsafe. When teens feel that every answer they give to a parent’s questions is criticized, harshly corrected, or shut down, they themselves will begin to emotionally shut down, and the feeling that they simply can’t be at home will grow exponentially. When exploration and critical thinking is discouraged because we’re afraid of the questions our kids ask, the result is a home that feels isolated and disconnected and leaves teens wondering if they fit in at all with the family.

Also, if failure isn’t handled well, kids will begin to feel like they have to be perfect when they’re at home, which makes them feel like they have to perform rather than just be. So if we want our kids to feel safe, we need to make sure they know that failure is ok; it’s how they handle it and learn from it that matters.

Some other factors that can contribute to a feeling of chaos and a lack of safety at home are:

- Moving frequently
- Disunity among siblings or a sibling who is rebelling
- Distracted/absent parents
- Parents who work too much (whether from necessity or not)
- The need to always perform or please others
- Excessive criticism and/or sarcasm

- Lack of structure OR too rigid of structure
- Foster children coming in and out of the home
- Too much pressure on parents or kids
- Frequent outbursts of anger and/or angry reactions
- Alcohol or substance abuse

As much as you are capable, do your best to minimize these things in your home in order to increase the feeling of safety. And for those factors beyond your control, simply talking to your kids about them, explaining why things have to be that way, and allowing them to process how they feel because of them can work wonders.

— So how do I make my home a safe place?

Creating space is an art, and just like interior designers who intentionally choose particular paint colors, lighting, and style of decor to create a certain feel in a room, making our homes safe places for kids requires the same intentionality, not just with what fills your home, but also with the attitudes and ideas you foster.

The first step in making your home safe is creating a space where **masks come off and your children can just be**, a place in which you celebrate your kids for who they are as image bearers of God and encourage them to live into their redeemed selves (as opposed to their fallen selves) as much as possible. This can be scary, though, because it means that your kids can not only be known by you fully without shame or fear of rejection, but also know you (to the point that's appropriate). Vulnerability begets vulnerability, and our kids can tell when we're being closed off. And they won't feel safe if they feel like they are supposed to be honest and vulnerable when no one else is.

A fun and engaging way to better know each other that's worked for many families whose kids are old enough is for everyone in the family take a personality assessment, like the [MBTI](#) or [Enneagram](#). Once the tests are taken, the whole family can spend a night (or multiple) talking through their results and explaining how they have been uniquely created by God to see the world. Moving forward, these can be extremely helpful to understand how your kids think and can also give valuable insight into what makes them tick and what frustrates them.

A tangible way to celebrate your kids for who they are without strings attached is to start a blessing cup tradition. One night a month, pick one member of the family to celebrate. Then take a special cup and pass it around the table, and the person who has the cup says something they love about the person. This could be an aspect of their personality or a way they reflect God to others, but it's important that the person being celebrated knows that it's not their merit or achievements that earn them the comments. This is a fantastic way to teach kids that they are loved, not for what they provide, but simply because you delight in them as their parents or siblings.

Another way to create a refuge in your home is to make it a place **where emotions are fostered and engaged fully**, rather than ignored or covered up with cute phrases like, "Well, it could always be worse" or "You'll get over it." No matter how true that might be, safe homes are ones where kids are allowed to experience their emotions without them being minimized or rejected. [Negative emotions aren't bad](#), and we don't need to be afraid of them, but they can become destructive when they're left unchecked and unprocessed.

To process more effectively, parents and kids need to develop emotional intelligence skills to learn how to identify what they're feeling, name it, and communicate *why* that emotion is currently present. A fantastic tip here is to use an [emotion chart](#) that helps build emotional vocabulary and also teaches kids the full range of emotions they may be feeling. The trick with this one is never to get mad because your child is feeling a certain way, but to try to identify the “why” behind the emotion and give your children the opportunity to go deeper with what they're feeling. Using emotional intelligence techniques doesn't mean your kid will automatically go deeper, but as the parent, you can always make sure the door is wide open when your kids want to walk through and have a conversation. Remember, a flippant, off-hand remark might be the perfect opportunity to ask, “What do you mean by that?” and dig deeper into some of the underlying emotions your kids are experiencing.

This leads to our third point, which is that safe homes are places **where deep conversation is encouraged and flourishes**. Conversation is hugely important in homes that are safe because it keeps the communication and connection active and alive within the home. This means modeling deeper conversations and not shying away from having a conversation with teens even if it's uncomfortable (e.g. when your teen says they're not sure what gender they are or what gender they're attracted to). It's okay to say you don't know how to answer yet or admit that you wrestle with very similar questions, but shutting down our kids' questions because they're difficult or uncomfortable sends the signal that their questions and curiosities are unwanted and unwelcome in the home. (See our [Parent's Guide to Tough Conversations](#), [Parent's Guide to a Doubting Teen](#), and [Parent's Guide to LGBT+ and Your Teen](#) for more info.)

Creating this environment means that we get serious about spending time together as a family without the constant distractions of TV, smartphones, or other technology. A great place to start might be to have a room in your house that's TV-free where you can all go to talk, play games, or have morning or evening prayer time. It's also smart to enact device limits for *everyone* in the home. Just as teens are quick to escape to their rooms to play video games or make TikTok videos on their phones, we parents are easily distracted by emails, sports scores, fantasy football, Pinterest, Facebook, and more. By enacting limits for everyone and talking to your kids about why you've chosen those boundaries, they will see that you want to help them flourish and that you're serious about being present for them. (See our [Parent's Guide to Smartphones](#) and our [Reclaiming the Smartphone](#) free video series for more on this.)

Another idea is to have a phone basket, in which everyone places their phones during family meals. Then, to spark conversation, go around the table and have each person answer one or two questions like, “What's your primary or strongest emotion right now?” or “What's on your heart?” These questions can be great jumping off points for conversation, and give everyone in the family a chance to honest, open, and vulnerable with where they are and any baggage they might be bringing to the table.

— How do I become a safe person for my kids to talk to?

How our kids perceive us is a huge factor in their willingness to talk to us and be honest with what's going on in their lives, and that requires not only that they see your home

as a safe place to be, but that they know that *you* are also a safe person to go when life feels hectic and crazy.

For so many of us, getting our kids to talk feels like herding cats: impossible. We long to know our kids, and we want to see their beautiful hearts thriving in everyday, ordinary life. But few things are more frustrating than asking, “How was your day?” and getting the stereotypical and unenthusiastic “Good” or “Fine” in response. Trying to engage our kids often leaves us drained, confused, and desperate to have some impactful contact with our kids, but we’re often left wondering, “Why won’t they talk to me? What did I do?”

Conversation in the home is often stifled because kids feel like their parent is standing over them with a judgmental attitude, waiting to hear a fault and say, “I told you so.” What kids so desperately need to know, though, is that *we’re all in process*. We’re all on a journey with Jesus, becoming more transformed into His image, but that trip toward our Savior is often slow, fragmented, and tedious. While it may seem like we’re on a different path because we’re further down the road, what our kids need to know is that we are also in process. We’re broken and hurting, too, and they need to see us [admitting our faults](#) freely and openly. This shows our kids that we’re not perfect and that we don’t think we’re perfect or better than them because we’re further along in the journey. It will require a deep sense of humility, which is often painful and hard to have. But being open with where we’re broken will make it easier for our kids to do the same with us.

A caveat: It’s important to keep in mind that when we’re admitting our faults to our kids, we don’t do it in a way that seeks our own validation or that tries to fill an insecure hole in our hearts. It’s never okay for a parent to need a kid for stability. This means we always need to keep our motivations in mind when admitting our faults so as not to give the impression that we need our kids to validate our emotions or feelings.

Once your kids know they can trust you, spark conversation with [open-ended questions](#). These questions require more than a simple “yes” or “no” in response. Instead of asking, “Did you have a good day?” ask, “What was the most interesting thing that happened to you today?” Asking a variety of questions that hit holistically on your child’s life shows them that you’re interested in every part of them, not just the pieces that are easy to swallow. If you’re having trouble coming up with some creative conversation starters, check out [this link](#) with 100 questions to ask your teens.

— So how is being safe different from being permissive?

[Permissive parenting](#) is a lax parenting style characterized by low expectations on children regarding their behavior, maturity level, and interactions with others. Homes that are permissive often have very few rules, inconsistent demands on the kids, a lack of consequences for inappropriate behavior, and an emphasis on the kids’ autonomy over the authority of the parent.

There’s a host of negative consequences with permissive parenting because it lacks the intentionality needed to define what leads to flourishing versus what leads to

destruction. Permissive parents often take a hands-off approach to dealing with their kids and send the message that the kids, not the parents, run the house. Despite good intentions, these parents are actually creating an unsafe space devoid of structure, responsibilities, and consequences. The effect of this is anxious, aggressive, and entitled children who are unable to function well with the stresses of daily life.

So why does permissive parenting not work? It goes back to what we said in the beginning about *both* too little safety and too much safety being bad.

As G.K. Chesterton [wrote in *Orthodoxy*](#), “The more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it had established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild.” He saw that the boundaries (“rule and order”) God had created were there to keep out the bad (sin, chaos, dysfunction) and thereby allow all things good to flourish. We see this in how God lovingly gave Adam and Eve the Garden of Eden (a refuge) and put up boundaries around the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He didn’t give them boundaries because He’s evil; He gave them boundaries for their protection and flourishing. It’s the same as when we baby proof our house when our children are young. We know that there are many things that can harm them when they’re too young to understand, so we protect them from the dangers as best as we can. And we don’t do it because we hate them; we do it because we want what’s best for them!

But at the same time, *too much* safety or protection is equally bad. God gave Adam and Eve a purpose (to rule, [Gen. 1:26](#); and to work and take care of the Garden, [Gen. 2:15](#)), but He also gave them the free will to do what they wanted—including rebelling against Him. He didn’t have to do that. In fact, He could’ve “protected” us from sin by creating us as robots who did everything He commanded, but He didn’t. Why? Because He knew that robots can’t truly love or be in relationship because those things can’t be forced. This is why we eventually remove the baby gates. If our kids are 10 and we still have gates up to “protect” them, it would be clear that we don’t want them to think for themselves or become autonomous; we simply want them to be robots who do what we tell them.

But instead of over- or under-protecting us, God loved us enough to give us the ability to choose for ourselves. Do we want to submit to His boundaries and be part of His mission to restore everything (i.e. to flourish)? Do we want to reject all boundaries and become slaves to sin and selfish desires? Or do we want to stay “safe” in Eden and never experience the abundance that comes with joining God in His mission?

As parents, we should seek to emulate God’s design. We need to create the right balance of boundaries and free will within our homes, protecting our kids when they’re too young to do so themselves, then slowly teaching them how to be wise, discerning, God-fearing, kind, gracious, and loving in everything they do. They should have the ability to express themselves, explore their creativity, pursue interests, and follow their passions. But they should also know that there are consequences for wrongdoing, that privileges can be lost, that they live in the real world, and that they need to be on a trajectory toward becoming responsible, autonomous adults. Parents who create a safe home for their kids always have very clear standards, boundaries, and expectations, and what underlies those expectations is a **mutual respect for one another**. In a safe home, kids know that they can say or question whatever they need to, but it must be respectful. If the conversation or behavior at any point becomes disrespectful, the

conversation is halted until the child is able to engage respectfully.

[This video](#) does a wonderful job clarifying the importance of making home a safe place while still implementing consequences for unacceptable behavior, and he gives great practical insight on how to give your kids increasing freedom as they grow.

— Does this mean I can't tell my kids if they've done something wrong?

Not at all. Part of parenting is helping our kids grow into fully capable adults who love Jesus more than anything else, but growth is often painful, and there will be bumps along the way. Whether we realize it or not, many of us think of love as “uncritical acceptance of whatever a person does.” But this is a faulty understanding of love.

God loves us; He's crazy about us as His children, and, as a good parent, He also gives us boundaries that allow us to flourish into the beautiful people He desires us to be. A god who says anything goes really isn't all that interested in our development. Our God, however, calls us to be holy, or set apart, and gives us standards to live by as His kids. This isn't because God is a nagging parent who demands perfection; rather, it's because God is in the process of fully redeeming our hearts, bodies, and souls. God is renewing all of us, and He's inviting us into a life that's far better than we could imagine. [1 Peter 1:16](#) says, “For it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.” He's quoting from [Leviticus 11:44](#) where God told Israel to be Holy because they are His people. God tells them, “Be who you are.” In this same way, Peter's calling us to be who we really are. He's saying, “You are a new creation; now go and live into it!” God calls us to be who we are, and as parents, we're called to encourage and guide our kids to be who God has called them to be. When we call out what is wrong in their behavior, what we're saying is, “Be who you really are.” But, that requires that we set boundaries for behavior and enforce [age-appropriate consequences](#).

When boundaries are crossed, parents who create a safe home identify how the boundary is crossed, explain why that's inappropriate behavior, and set consequences that limit or remove privileges for a set amount of time. For teens, this could be two days without the car, a day without phone use, or losing the freedom to be out past a certain time. An important point here is that a safe home allows the kids to earn back those privileges when respect is back in place and behavior is re-aligned with the home's expectations. As you begin introducing consequences for unacceptable behavior, one idea is to give your kids a week to begin identifying that behavior. Each time you see the behavior (e.g. acting entitled), you name it. Then, say, “Remember, in one week, you'll be getting a consequence when I see that happen again.”

Parents who create safe spaces for their kids are in it for the long haul, and discipling our kids more into the likeness of Christ and loving them well doesn't mean anything goes; it means we must be intentional in forming their character through love, enforcing boundaries, and setting clear expectations.

How do I make home a safe place to search for answers of faith, regardless of where they lead?

We serve a big God who is the author of truth and the creator of knowledge, but often parents feel nervous for their kids to start digging for answers to life's deepest questions. What we must remember is that those questions and all others like them are not dangerous or scary. Christianity is the most dependable, rational, logical, and cohesive religion on the planet, and our kids are not the first to ask these questions.

A faith that can't be questioned is not nearly a big enough faith, and we must always remember that God is bigger than those questions and that He will make himself known in those answers. When our kids come to us with questions like, "Why is there suffering and pain in the world if God loves us?" what we *don't* want to do is push that question to the side and give the typical "Just have more faith" response. Few things will stifle our kids' faith like that. Instead, use that as an opportunity to teach them that they aren't the first person to have ever asked this question. In fact, God's people have been asking why bad things happen since the days of Job! The beauty is that we do have answers to difficult questions. Research great books and videos on the topic, consult reliable Bible commentaries like the one found on [Denver Seminary's website](#), and use your kids' questions as a way to explore the faith more fully.

Using your child's inquisitive mind to open up those real faith conversations is an invaluable skill, but there also needs to be discernment in knowing when that question is too deep of a pool for your kid's development. This might mean telling him/her that you will eventually get to the answer of their question, but first, you might need to go into some foundational principles of faith to give them a stronger foundation about God and His character before jumping into the deep end of the pool with more difficult questions.

Often, the foundation kids need at all ages of their development is knowing that God is love and in Him is no darkness at all. While it seems like a very basic truth, there are so many kids that hear that "Jesus died in your place because you're a sinful person," and they subconsciously start thinking of God as an angry God who needed someone to kill, so Jesus got in the way of God killing us to appease him. It's very difficult to work back to a God of love from that point. However, if we start with the truth that God loves us and that He's a loving, good God who created a good world, questions of sin, suffering, death, and redemption become much less scary because they're anchored in the God of love and safety who took on the sin of the world Himself instead of inflicting that pain upon us.

If you get a question that you have absolutely no idea how to answer, which inevitably will happen, don't panic! Be honest with your kids and say, "That's a really great question, but I don't know the answer to it right now. Why don't you and I study and explore that together?" This invites your kids into greater study while also admitting that you don't have the answer to every question, but you're willing to put the work into finding it. (See our [Parent's Guide to a Doubting Teen](#) for more on this.)

— What do I do if my kids tell me they're questioning their sexuality or about abortion/suicidal thoughts/rape/etc.?

Being a safe harbor where our kids can “let their hair down” and not pretend anymore often means that they'll confess things, like being same-sex attracted or having an eating disorder, that are frustrating or with which we disagree. It's always a shocking moment when our kids start talking about topics that are way beyond their years or that we're underprepared to discuss with them. Topics like abortion, suicide, depression, self-harm, rape, and gender/sexuality are all over the media. We as Christian parents need to be prepared to talk about these things much earlier than we might have thought, and if our homes are safe homes, kids should know that they can always come to us to discuss them.

If your child tells you she had an abortion, is having suicidal thoughts, or has been sexually assaulted, this is where having a safe home is beyond important and could make a world of a difference on the rest of their lives. The first thing to do is listen. Ask your child to tell you what happened and listen empathetically and with compassion. It's important to continue to be a safe person and fully hear what your child is telling you. Remember that your teen is experiencing tremendous emotional pain and is probably feeling isolated, ashamed, ignored, rejected, abused, and threatened, which are all characteristics of an unsafe space. Getting mad while your kid is sharing is an emotionally damaging experience will only push them away and make you and your home feel unsafe. This is the time to come alongside them as Jesus would and help them to recover. (You may very well have some extreme feelings as a result of their confession, which are completely understandable. But do your best *not* to show them to your child. Wait until the conversation is over, then talk to your spouse or a friend or a counselor/therapist to work through your feelings. As hurt or angry or frustrated as you might be, your child is not the one who should bear the weight of those feelings.)

It's a sacred privilege for someone (even your own child) to let you into their deepest secrets and pain, so after you've fully listened to your kid's experience, thank them for being honest and open with you. Tell them you love them, and remind them that there's nothing they could do that would cause you to abandon them. Remind them that they're not alone and communicate your unconditional love for them and enduring presence through this difficult situation. Whether they've wilfully disobeyed or have been a victim of abuse, they are probably feeling an incredible amount of shame. Please, don't reject them, and don't multiply their pain with words or actions that lead them into further isolation.

[Getting teens to counseling](#) is tricky business and needs to be done wisely. Immediately suggesting counseling might solicit a quick and aggressive response, but getting professional help in these situations is a necessary and important step in recovery. Tell your teen that what they've been through is incredibly difficult and be honest that dealing with certain issues fully is beyond your own capabilities. Hear them out, listen, and get professional help.

Keep in mind that when a teen comes to you with something that is emotionally traumatic, you as the parent will also be put through the ringer emotionally, so don't be

afraid to get counseling yourself to process some of the emotions you're going through. This also sets an example that counseling is not something to be ashamed of, but is a good and beneficial way to take care of yourself well.

Recap

- Safe homes reflect the goodness and safety of our God who is for us in everything.
- Safe homes are places of refuge for our kids where they can come, let their guard down, and be who they are.
- Safe homes are places where emotions are fostered and engaged fully.
- Safe homes are places where deep conversation is encouraged and flourishes because of mutual respect between parents and kids.
- Safe homes are not passive or permissive homes; they are places with clear expectations, boundaries, and age-appropriate consequences to help kids truly thrive.

Conclusion

God redeems space, and even spaces that might seem uninviting or chaotic have infinite potential of being transformed into places of respect, love, joy, peace, and rest when God becomes our ultimate shelter. As parents, we get the incredible privilege of partnering with God to redeem space by bringing His safety into our homes. At first, making your home safe might seem daunting or even impossible depending on your current circumstances, but few things will reap greater short- and long-term benefits than making our homes refuges. In them, kids can be themselves, parents get to know their kids' hearts, deep conversations flourish and thrive, and each member of the family is celebrated simply for being made in God's image.

As you think about making your home a safe place, you might be feeling the same hesitation as Susan when she anticipated meeting Aslan. You might be thinking, "Is making my home a safe space safe to do? This all seems very messy." You'd be right. Creating a safe home can be messy and intimidating because it means we all have to be authentic and real with ourselves and with our kids. That can be frightening. It may not be safe. But it's good, and it's worth it.

Related Axis Resources

- [Parent's Guide to Shame-Free Parenting](#)
- [Parent's Guide to a Doubting Teen](#)
- [Parent's Guide to Tough Conversations](#)
- [Parent's Guide to LGBT+ & Your Teen](#)
- [Parent's Guide to Smartphones](#)
- [Reclaiming the Smartphone](#) free video series

Additional Resources

- [The Sacred Enneagram](#) by Christopher L. Heuertz
- [What Type am I?](#) by Renee Brown
- [Boundaries with Teens: When to Say Yes, How to Say No](#) by John Townsend
- [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#) by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves
- [God Distorted: How Your Earthly Father Affects Your Perception of God and Why It Matters](#) by John Bishop
- [Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#) by Carol Dweck (how to foster a growth mindset in yourself and your kids)

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