

circumstances



ANXIETY

Faith at
home

Helping Kids & Teens with Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a persistent feeling of worry or dread—often about something that hasn't happened yet. It's normal to feel anxious at times, but anxiety disorders are more serious. They last longer, often show no clear cause, and interfere with everyday life.

Types include:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- PTSD
- Social Anxiety Disorder

32% of teens experience anxiety. Many kids suffer silently.

Why is Anxiety Rising?

Kids today face:

- Constant social media pressure
- Academic overload and comparison
- Fear of school shootings
- Loneliness or isolation
- Sleep deprivation
- Post-COVID social and emotional delays

The shift from **play-based childhood** to **screen-based childhood** has also removed key opportunities to build resilience through real-life experiences.

What Does Scripture Say?

Jesus spoke to anxiety in Matthew 6:

“Look at the birds of the air... your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

The Bible reminds us that:

- God knows our needs (Matt. 6:32)
- His power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9)
- We can bring our worries to Him (Phil. 4:6–7)

Anxiety doesn't mean a lack of faith. God meets us in our pain and walks with us through it.

How Parents Can Help

1. Strengthen Connection

- Spend time together doing enjoyable, low-pressure activities.
- Listen without immediately correcting or fixing.
- Reassure them that your relationship is safe—even when they're struggling.

Trust grows when kids feel seen and heard—not just instructed.

2. Create a Spiritual Strategy

- Pray simple, repeated prayers together (e.g., “God is with me. I am safe.”)
- Read short verses regularly (Matt. 6:34, Ps. 18:2, Isa. 41:10)
- Use music—play worship songs during tough mornings or car rides.
- Write a “truth list” of God's promises for your child to keep.

3. Model Healthy Emotional Habits

Children mirror what they see. Practice:

- Naming your emotions (“I'm feeling overwhelmed right now, but I know it will pass.”)
- Using grounding tools when you kids are feeling anxious. Have them do the following:
 - **3-3-3 Rule:** Name 3 things you see, hear, and touch.
 - **5-5-5 Breathing:** Inhale, hold, and exhale for 5 seconds each.
- Staying calm during their storms to teach regulation by example.

4. Don't Rescue—Walk With

- Resist the urge to eliminate stressors entirely.
- Help them face fears gradually and build confidence through success.
- Ask:
 - “What's making you feel anxious right now?”
 - “What do you think would help?”
 - “What's the worst-case scenario—and how could we face it together?”

Avoiding fears strengthens them. Facing them—with support—shrinks them..

5. Support Healthy Rhythms

Anxiety is tied to body health.

- Prioritize sleep: Keep phones out of the bedroom.
- Encourage nutritious meals and hydration.
- Get moving daily: Walk, play outside, do chores, or join a team.

6. Know When to Get Help

If anxiety is interfering with your child's daily life:

- Seek a Christian counselor or therapist trained in youth anxiety.
- Consider Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

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- In some cases, medication may be appropriate and helpful.

Professional help is not a lack of faith—it's often a provision from God.

7. Empathize and Pray Constantly

- Let your child know you *feel with them*.
- Validate their emotions without judgment.
- Offer physical reassurance: hugs, presence, a calm tone.

And above all—keep praying.

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.”
—Psalm 18:2.

Final Encouragement

Anxiety may be part of your child's story, but it's not the end of it. You don't have to have all the answers—just be a calm, loving presence pointing them to the One who does.

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”
—1 Peter 5:7

Resources for Parents:

- **In crisis?** Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Axis.org – Faith + Culture resources
- ChildDiscipleship.com – Awana's family tools
- NAMI.org – Support groups for parents
- SleepFoundation.org – Sleep tips for families

