

- Invite a neighbor to your church.
- Visit a retirement community.
- Assemble school supply packs for needy children.
- Collect clothing for the poor.
- Roll bandages for the mission field.
- Write to missionaries.
- Bake cookies for shelters.
- Go on a mission trip together.

Worship

Worship is more than a service on Sunday morning. It's putting God first in all that we do. We worship God as we:

- Model faith day by day.
- Pray together.
- Have regular conversation with children about faith issues.
- Read the Bible together.
- Set the example of doing devotions (reading the Bible and praying).
- Have devotions together.
- Serve others together.
- Worship with others in the church.

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”—Proverbs 22:6

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MAY YOU, THROUGH THE TRANSFORMING WORK
OF THE SPIRIT, GROW EVER DEEPER IN CHRIST...
AND FURTHER IN HIS KINGDOM MISSION.



So you've made the decision to follow Jesus. Whether that was long ago or just today, you have entered a lifelong process of growth. Spiritual growth needs to be nurtured through regular spiritual practices, sometimes called disciplines. There are many from which you can choose.

Mentoring Children can be a tremendous means of spiritual growth...for both the child and for the adult. Use this practical guide to encourage faith formation twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

This spiritual growth tool is part of a series. To learn more about these resources, contact the Covenant Resource Center by email at resource.center@covchurch.org or phone at 800.338.IDEA (4332).

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 God calls both parents and the church to nurture children in faith. Faith formation happens 24/7. It's not just one more thing we pick up on a Sunday morning. Our relationship with Jesus is 24/7 and so is our faith formation. Here are some practical ways for parents and others to help children GROW toward a deep and abiding faith.

God's Word

Becoming familiar with the stories of God's people can begin at a very early age. Interacting with the biblical stories creates an important foundation on which our life of faith is built.

- Find a Bible that is age appropriate and always handle it respectfully. International Children's Bible or NIV are good choices for early readers.
- Pray before you begin to read.
- Read together with your child or have your child read to you.
- With younger children, tell the story in your own words.
- Keep it short. Children have short attention spans.
- Have children retell the story to you.
- Ask wondering questions: "I wonder how Jesus felt when the disciples tried to keep the children away?" It will give you insight into a child's perception of Jesus.
- Have children imagine being in the story.
- What would you smell, hear, feel, taste?
- Relate the story to real life, everyday experiences.
- Act out, or make up a song, about the story.
- Draw a picture about the story, or mold it out of clay.
- Pray about the story.

Relationships

Each of us needs the encouragement and support of others in order to grow spiritually. That's the way God has made us. These relationships can occur both within and outside of the biological family.

- *Be a model.* Children emulate what they see and hear. A child will know who you are by what you say and do and by the way you say and do it.
- *Provide other models.* Older children or other adults are helpful role models for children. Discuss your child's spiritual, emotional, physical development with teachers.
- *Take time to be with your children.* Remember, formation takes place 24/7. How much influence do you have?
- *Affirm your child.* Children are a gift from God. Affirm them for who they are as well as for what they do. Healthy families have five times more positive than negative communication.
- *Talk to your child.* Begin faith life conversations early in life. Talk about God as though God were everywhere present because, in fact, God is. Be open to talking about the things your child wants to talk about, even if it seems mundane.
- *Know what is important to your child.* You can help guide this by modeling what is important to you.

Obedient Living

Because we love Christ we obey him in the things that we do. As we work side by side serving others, for example, our children not only hear about the importance of service but experience it themselves.

- Purchase and take food to a food pantry or distribution center.
- Pray daily for your neighbors.
- Invite a neighbor for a meal.