

ChildFaith:

Experiencing God and Spiritual Growth with Your Children

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Summary: Parents can encourage the spiritual growth and experiences of their children through activities both in and outside the home. Parents, in turn, can benefit in the process because their own spiritual growth is in many ways similar to that of their child. Children can minister to parents and other adults because they also hear from God and be used by God. This book provides the foundation for parental nurture of children's spirituality as well as children influencing their parents spiritually. A wide variety of methods are explored that can encourage the mutual spiritual growth of parents and children, including Bible stories, celebrating biblical holidays, church activities, family field trips, and many others. Part of the book considers age-specific activities as well.

Outline:

1. The Spiritual Growth and Experience of Children
 - introduction
 - my experience as a child at a campmeeting
 - what is spiritual development?
 - stage-centered spiritual development
 - spiritual growth as a process unrelated to age
 - the spiritual experiences of children
 - the numinous experiences of children
 - Christian spiritual experiences of children
 - encouraging children's spiritual experiences
 - conclusion
2. Baby Faith: Forming Strong Roots of Faith in Infancy
 - before birth: preparing for the child's spiritual development
 - temperament and faith
 - faith builds upon trust
 - feelings about God
 - the spiritual experiences of infants
 - babies as examples
3. Crawling, Walking, and Running Toward God: Toddlers and Preschoolers
 - teddy bears and God
 - parents: the child's first god?
 - experiences with God and angels in the preschool years
 - share your faith and track your child's faith
 - guidelines for teaching your preschooler
 - encouraging the preschooler's experience of God

4. Salvation: Moment and Memory
 - crisis and relationship
 - salvation at different ages
 - stages that take place before salvation
 - some suggested guidelines on leading a child to Christ

5. Co-creating Life in God: You, Your School-Aged Children, and God
 - what is it like to be a child?
 - sharing yourself with your children
 - spiritual spirals
 - reciprocal discipleship
 - putting your child's faith (and yours) into action

6. Telling, Acting, and Applying Bible Stories
 - effective story-telling
 - enacting Bible stories
 - enacting applications, role-playing, and family puppets
 - a wide variety of methods to consider

7. Daily and Weekly Rhythms of Faith: Children's Rituals
 - tasty rituals--no boredom, please!
 - healthy families have rituals
 - children naturally have rituals
 - daily and weekly faith rituals

8. Touching, Smelling, and Eating: The Biblical Holidays
 - the seven feasts plus two
 - children's activities during the feasts
 - adapting and adding activities for Passover

9. Communion or Commotion: Children, Parents, and Church
 - preparing for church: more than just clothes
 - worshipping together or apart?
 - diversity in worship styles
 - can children minister to adults?
 - spiritual mentors
 - a Christian bar mitzvah?
 - moving from conflict to caring for children and parents

10. Handel's Messiah and Visiting a Sheep Farm: Family Field Trips
 - vacation Bible school, campmeeting, and camping
 - music, drama, and television as contexts for spiritual growth and experience
 - farms and fishing as foundations of faith formation
 - pilgrimages to the holy lands: Israel and Georgia

11. Potential Faith Partners: Brothers, Sisters, Friends, Grandparents, and Schools

- sibling rivalry . . . and revelry
- child culture, school culture, and home culture
- grandparents and substitutes: the faith community as extended family
- the spiritual influence of friends
- spiritual development and schools
- luminous, numinous parenting

12. ChildFaith for Parents

- the greatest of these
- reductionist parenting
- the wayward (prodigal) son
- conclusion