

Resources for Families

3.17.2020

Dear Families,

Our children and young people can ask some really good and tough questions. Even before the most recent life-altering events of this past week, I have been hearing from parents about the kind of questions their children are asking. Our 4-year-olds can ask just as many tough questions as our 15-year-olds, and yet, we answer them in different ways.

Sometimes adults try to give children too much information when they ask questions, and it can be confusing to them. Try to keep things simple and clear, always reminding children that God is good and that God loves them and wants a relationship with them. These are often the big meta-narrative questions that are behind the very specific questions children and youth ask.

While we as adults can see nuances in questions and can have debates about certain theological issues, allowing those questions to influence and confuse our children can really lead to some serious confusion and indifference on their part.

The catechism of the church is always helpful for succinct question and answer and is designed for all ages. One thing I really like about the Godly Play curriculum is that it teaches our young people that there are not always answers to all of our questions. They emphasize that there is mystery in our faith and that God at times is mystery and that we will not always understand everything. Godly Play has offered some resources for families at home during this time called "Making Meaning in the Exile" here: <https://www.godlyplayfoundation.org/>.

Also remember that because children are such black and white thinkers (which is an important cognitive development stage for them), there will inevitably be some deconstruction and that is ok. All of us have to deconstruct our ideas, not just religious or faith beliefs, but all ideas about relationships, country, education, and other big over-arching ideas. Children will need something to pick apart in order to better understand as they mature. A strong foundation is crucial so there is something to dissect when they are older. Some adults who have had to do major faith-deconstruction try to save their children from that and wind up giving them nothing. So there is a balance. Let's help our young people to hold on to a **good God** who **loves them** and wants to be involved in their life in a **personal way**. See the DaySpring website for more resources on nurturing the faith of families, children, and youth.

I am reminded of what Mr. Rogers once said: "In times of tragedy, my mother told me to look for the helpers" -- to look for those who are helping and serving. They are always there. May we, with our children and youth, be the helpers and the servers in this time.

In peace,
Tiffani

Resources for families during our modern “exile”

Book on the questions children and youth ask:

- *Can I ask That?* By Candy, Griffin and Powell

Some of our Life Together Groups are using these resources:

- Web-based learning for the whole family:
 - <https://bibleproject.com/>
- Web-based learning more geared towards youth and adults:
 - <https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/>
 - Password to use: DSrenewal

When questions arise, going back to the basics is a good place to begin. During this time of new rhythms, consider some family learning time.

Here are some resources our Catechism Supper Clubs have used with individuals and families.

- <http://anglicanonline.org/basics/catechism.html>
- *Training Hearts, Teaching Minds: Family Devotions Based on the Shorter Catechism* by Starr Meade

Ideas for family faith formation and a weekly email:

- <http://www.traci-smith.com/about-me/>

Preteen Identity: Family Book Club –

This is on the list for all our rising 7th graders

- *Who Am I? Exploring what it means to be a child of God* by Katherine Paterson

YOU! Parents and Family: YOU ARE THE BEST RESOURCE!

Share your faith story with your youth and children. Ask grandparents to do the same! Family story time: Nothing passes the faith along better than our young people seeing that God is REAL and active in our lives today.

- What has God done in your life?
- How have you grown to love God more?
- What are you learning about God right now?
- What reminds you of God’s goodness and great love for you?
- How has God changed you?
- How do you hope God will continue to work in you and change you?

Family Worship and Prayers

These books each have very practical outlines for creating family spiritual formation time:

- *DaySpring Prayers at Dinner*– see upcoming weekly emails
- *The Busy Family’s Guide to Spirituality: Practical lessons for modern living from the monastic tradition* by David Robinson
- *To Dance With God: Family Ritual and Community Celebration* by Gertrude Mueller Nelson
- *Living in God’s Time: A Parent’s Guide to Nurturing Children Throughout the Christian Year* by Margaret McMillan Persky
- *Scrambled Starts: Family Prayers for Morning, Bedtime and Everything in Between* by Jenny Youngman