

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN

Just as your kids are different, the way you parent them should be different, too. Parenting is not formulaic. What works for one child may not be suited for another. The key to parenting is to make a point to get to know each child well, and as you become an “expert” on knowing and loving each individual child, you’ll be better able to make wise decisions when problems occur. You’ll also be equipped to develop more effective parenting strategies.

Julie Smith Lowe, counselor and Single & Parenting expert, explains the importance of slowing down and asking yourself good questions about your child before reacting or applying a discipline that’s not appropriate. For instance, if your child is having social difficulties and is socially awkward, before getting upset about a situation, ask yourself, “Is this really a discipline issue? Or is this a situation where I need to be intentional about teaching my child and affirming even the slowest progress?” Another example is in areas of weakness. We all have areas of weakness, and when we recognize those in our children, we can stop ourselves from getting frustrated and angry and choose to show grace instead.

As you continue to ask yourself questions about the child and think different situations through, you’ll want to brainstorm different ideas that might work for the child in that situation. Try out your idea. If it works, great. If it doesn’t, that’s fine, too. Spend even more time getting to know your child and come up with a new idea. What’s important is that you’re engaging in relationship. The child will see that you’re taking time to get to know him, and that is a clear demonstration of your love and care.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the questions below, and then interact with your children on the answers. This is a good starting point in getting to know your child. (You may want to write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you need more room or if you have more than three children.)

	Child 1:	Child 2:	Child 3:
What are their favorite colors, music groups/types, foods, drinks, movies, stores, sports teams, foods, snacks, etc.?			
Why are those their favorites?			
What are their strengths?			
What are their weaknesses?			
What things tend to make them afraid?			
What were they like when they were little?			

What are their hobbies?			
What do they enjoy doing in their free time?			
What areas do they really struggle in?			
What do they thrive at?			
How do they get along with other kids?			
How do they get along with other adults?			
What do they like about school?			
What do they dislike about school?			
Who are their friends?			
What do they want to be when they grow up?			

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