



AGE 5

The Root Years



HOME
22.6

AGE 5

A Snapshot of Life

From age 5-6 years, children

- Begin to ask questions about God.
- Use the Bible and like to find Bible phrases/verses.
- Have good eye/hand coordination.
- Can control large muscles.
- Have best friends, but change friends often.
- Enjoy group play.
- Enjoy competition.

Parenting Tip

Involve your child in ministry. Help your child bake goodies for friends and neighbors, and talk about showing God's love as you do these things. Emphasize the importance of sharing Jesus and His love with others.

Parent Dedication

What is Parent Dedication?

Parent dedication is giving a strong spiritual legacy to your children. The Legacy Principle, the Likelihood Principle, and the Lenses Principle are crucial to your child's spiritual growth. In the parent dedication section you'll find tools to help you grow as a parent. **The Legacy Principle** states that the scriptures tell us that what we do today directly influences the multi-generational cycle of family traits, beliefs and actions – for good or bad (Exodus 20:5-6, Psalm 78:5-8). So passing a strong faith to our children begins by having a strong faith ourselves, modeling the gospel in our marriages and in how we relate to those closest to us. Some of us need to break negative cycles that may have started with our own upbringing in order to launch a new and improved legacy for the next generation. **The Likelihood Principle** states that the good news is this: in the context of healthy relationships, children tend to embrace the values of their parents. Proverbs 22:6 tells us that when children learn right from wrong at home under the nurturing, loving training of parents, they tend to adopt mom and dad's beliefs. While there are no guarantees because every child has a free will, kids are far more likely to embrace their parent's faith if they enjoy their parent's company! That's a big part of the reason parents are warned not to "provoke your children to wrath" but rather "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Bottom line – a strong relationship with mom and dad is key to a strong Christian faith. **The Lenses Principle** says Jesus taught that our enemy's primary weapon is deception – getting us to believe and live according to lies rather than truth (John 8:44). And when someone is deceived, he or she does not know it! Our children are growing up in a culture that bombards them with lies. An hour or two per week at church is no match for the hundreds of hours spent with media, school, and friends. Nor can it compete with a child's fallen nature that often wants to rebel against what is good, true and beautiful. It is the job of parents to equip children with the corrective "lenses" of truth so they can better navigate the deceptive roads of life.



Teaching your child about your faith daily fosters your child's spiritual foundation. You are a role model, and as your children see your relationship with Jesus, it builds a desire to have Him in their life. Strive to live out Psalm 1:2, which describes a devoted follower of Jesus: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."



Parenting Tool: *Relationships*

Building a positive relationship between a parent and child requires time and prayer. Parenting is a tough job, but maintaining a close relationship through open communication helps ensure parents stay connected to their children through all ages. Staying in the Word and building your relationship with the Lord is the key to developing the relationship with your child that will foster spiritual growth.

Communication tips

1. Be available for your child. “Direct my steps by Your word...” says Psalm 119:133. As this verse explains, we can always look to God’s Word to show us the ways we can be available to our children. Here are some other ideas that you can use to communicate availability to your child:

- Notice times when your child is most likely to talk—for example, at mealtimes, in the car, or at bedtime. Parents spend a lot of time in the car with their children, so this is a natural place to start conversations.
- Start a conversation—this lets your child know you care about what is happening in his or her life.
- Know your child’s interests—be aware of what’s happening at school, or of what sports, music, etc. they like.
- Find time during the week for a one-on-one activity with your child; avoid scheduling anything else during this time.

2. Be attentive; make sure your child knows you are listening. “How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them,” says Psalm 139:17. In the same way that you find it comforting to know that God is listening to your prayers, your child needs to know that you are listening to and thinking of them. When your child wants to talk, stop whatever you are doing and listen; express interest in what he or she says. Through words, facial expressions, and body language, let your child know you care about what he or she is saying to you!

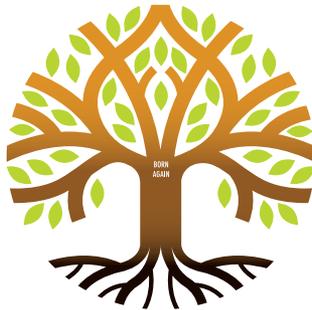
3. Respond in a loving and caring voice. Ephesians 4:29 instructs us, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Your children will know if you are angry or do not care about what they are trying to tell you. Always express your words in a positive way, even if you disagree with them. Resist arguing and instead say, “I know you may disagree, but this

is what I think.” Remember to focus on your child’s feelings instead of your own.

Reminders for building a relationship with your child

- Play with your child. Play builds memories and provides a time when you can have fun and interesting conversations.
- Respond in a godly manner. Kids learn by imitating, so they will most likely follow your lead in dealing with anger or frustration in their lives.
- Reinforce positive, not negative, thoughts when you talk to your child.
- Respect your child’s choices. You may not like it when he or she picks out a mismatched outfit, but allowing your child to wear his or her choice shows your respect.
- Listen to what your child says, and encourage him or her to talk.
- Let your child help you. Parents miss out on opportunities to build closer relationships with their children by not allowing their child to help them with simple tasks and chores.
- Eat meals together. Eating sets the stage for conversation and sharing. Be sure to turn off the TV!

Your children need to know they are a priority in your life. They know when you are not paying attention to them. Enjoy your children, and engage in conversation. Kids grow up so fast, which makes every day special. Take advantage of your precious time together! Reflect on Matthew 18:3, which tells us how we can grow closer to God: “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”



As you build trusting relationships with your children, you are building the foundation of how they trust their Heavenly Father.

Blessing Your Children

How do I bless my children?

There is power in a blessing. The Hebrew word for blessing is used over 640 times in the Old Testament alone. Do you know the very first thing God did after creating us? In Genesis 1:27–28 we read, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them...” We were made for blessing! Based on examples in the Bible, there are five basic elements that make up a biblical blessing:

1. Meaningful Touch Meaningful touch has many beneficial effects. The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth, personal acceptance, and affirmation—even physical health! For anyone who wishes to see the blessing grow and develop in a child, touch is an integral part of the blessing. As Mark 10:13–16 says, “Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’ And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”

2. A Spoken Message Words have an incredible power to build us up or tear us down emotionally. This is particularly true when those words are coming from our parents. Therefore, the blessing hinges on a spoken message. Your child desperately needs to hear a spoken blessing from you. As parents, we must be keenly aware of the power of the spoken word and also be aware of how powerful the absence of spoken words can be. Both people and relationships suffer in the absence of words of blessing, or those spoken words of love, encouragement, and support. Proverbs 16:24 reminds us, “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones...”

3. Expression of High Value To “value” something means to attach great importance to it. This is at the very heart of the concept of blessing. Anytime we bless someone, we are attaching high value to him or her. Our children need to hear that they are someone who has great worth apart from his or her performance. As Ephesians 4:29 reminds us, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

4. Picture of a Special Future Communicating a special future to a child is another important part of giving the blessing. Children are filled with the potential to be all God intends them to be. Picturing a special future for your children can help bring out the best in their lives. It gives them a positive direction to strive toward and surrounds them with hope. When a child feels in his or her heart that the future is hopeful and something to look forward to, it can greatly affect his or her attitude toward life. We can see this very thing in our relationship with the Lord. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “‘For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,’ says the Lord, ‘thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.’”

5. An Active Commitment The first four elements listed above are the building blocks of the blessing, but the mortar that holds them together is an active commitment—the fifth element. This element of the blessing describes the responsibility that goes with the blessing. Parents need to rely on the Lord to give them the strength and staying power to confirm their children’s blessing. You have God’s Word through the Scriptures as a guide, plus the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Words alone cannot communicate the blessing; they need to be backed with a commitment to do everything possible to help the one blessed to be successful. Isaiah 40:31 encourages us, “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

For more information on the biblical blessing, see *The Gift of the Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent, PhD.

“...Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” says Matthew 21:9. God is faithful to pour blessings in our lives. Continuing to bless your child will impact his life, and, in return, your child will be able to bless others through his or her words and actions in the years ahead.

Ways to Bless Your Child

Meaningful Touch

Continue to express your child's value by giving hugs and gentle touches. This is a way to affirm your love and God's love in your child's life. By expressing love to your child through meaningful touch, you obey God: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Daily blessings of Scripture

It is so important that your children hear you bless them with God's Word. As Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Pray the following Scriptures over your child in the morning, during the day, and at nighttime:

- Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
- 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
- John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
- Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

Written or spoken blessings

"Let your speech always be with grace..." reminds Colossians 4:6. Throughout the Scriptures, we find the power and importance of words. God sent His Son to communicate His love and complete His plan of salvation, and it was His Word that "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). God has always been a God who communicates His blessing through words. Some blessing activities include:

- Lunch Box Blessings—Place a note, drawing, cutout, or treat in your child's lunch box as a special blessing at lunchtime.
- Car Time Blessings—When in the car, play a simple game by saying,

“you bless me by _____” (“the way you smile,” “the way you laugh,” etc.). Remember to add these written blessings to your child’s “blessing box.”

One-on-one time

Plan some special one-on-one times with your child. Spend time expressing his or her value. Children need to hear that they are special to you and to God. Some examples of how you can spend one-on-one time with your 5-year-old include:

- Going out for ice cream together
- Taking a walk and talking about God’s beautiful creation
- Playing a board or card game
- Making (or buying) cookies and taking them to a neighbor

A blessing for you

“Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart!”—Psalm 119:2

What’s a Blessing Box?

In Genesis 1:27–28 God’s Word says, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them...” We were all made for blessing! Written words can place unconditional love and acceptance into the heart of a child. One idea for sharing blessings with your children is to have a “blessing box,” or a special box where you can store written blessings and encouraging words for your child as they develop. Several ideas for written blessings include Scripture passages you claim for your child, words of affirmation, descriptions of accomplishments, desires for the future, prayers, or whatever God puts on your heart. Continue to store these blessings in the special box throughout your child’s life. Think of what a treasure it will be in your child’s adult life to have this blessing box!

Family Time

What is Family Time?

The idea of family worship is both attractive and intimidating. The thought of beginning a new pattern of worship in the home can be overwhelming for those just beginning. This guide includes answers to basic questions that we hope will equip you to lead your family in worship.

What does the Bible say about growing together in Christ as a family?

The importance of the family in discipleship is prominent throughout the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:5-7; Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15). Husbands are primarily responsible for the spiritual leadership of their wives (Ephesians 5:22-33). Parents, especially fathers, are primarily responsible for the spiritual growth of their children (Ephesians 6:1-3). These are huge responsibilities, but God has promised to provide everything we need to lead our families well, according to His design. As leaders in our home, the critical thing to remember is that God's Word must be written upon our hearts. Our faith in Christ and reliance on His Word should be authentic, tangible, and transparent.

What are the benefits of family worship?

- Family worship brings glory to God. It is a visible reminder for all in the home that God is worthy of our time, attention, and affection.
- Family worship produces joy in the home. Jesus will bring joy to families who worship and grow together. The love of Christ will be more evident in a family where worship is central.
- Family worship effects change in the world. As families read, pray, study, sing, and grow together, they join from their homes in what God is doing across the nations, while influencing each other's lives for generations to come.

What should we do during family worship?

Keep it simple. Consider the following elements as you worship together:

READ—Read a portion of the Bible together. Don't worry if you've already read it in your time alone with God. Reading a chapter a second time will only reinforce what God is teaching you. If children are present and able to read, allow them to do so. Of course, you'll want to explain difficult words and concepts (but don't worry too much if you can't explain everything!).

DISCUSS—After reading the Bible together, work through a simple process of examining what has been read, much like you do in your own time alone with God. Give everyone a chance to discuss the passage and consider how it applies to everyday life. Ideally, you will lead by example and share with your family what you learned in your time alone with God and the difference it has made.

PRAY—Consider praying through the key points of the Bible passage that you have just read and discussed. Ask God to change your hearts, minds, lives, and family accordingly. This specific prayer can lead to a more general time of prayer that uses the letters P-R-A-Y as a guide:

Praise—Worship God for who He is.

Repent—Confess your sin to God and acknowledge your need for Jesus.

Ask—Intercede for particular needs in your life and other's lives.

Yield—Surrender your life to following Jesus wherever He leads you.

Try to include everyone as you pray, even if this is on a rotating basis. Additionally, you may want to keep a prayer journal that enables you to keep track of prayer requests and God's answers to those requests.

SING—Sing or listen to music together as a family. If someone in the family has musical gifts, that person may lead some simple songs. If no one in your family is musical, you can sing along with music from a CD or DVD and discuss what the songs mean.

MEMORIZE—Choose key verses or passages to memorize. You may want to work on a verse or passage for a week or a month. Either way, be sure to work together, taking time to understand what you are memorizing. Periodically, set aside time to review verses over the course of the year.

Frequently Asked Questions About Family Worship

1. What if a father or mother is not a Christian?

The commands regarding family discipleship in the Bible assume believing parents. Of course, this is not always the case. In those instances where the father is not a follower of Christ, the mother will need to take the initiative for leading family worship in a non-offensive and non-threatening way. In the case of a mother not being a follower of Christ, the father should lead with compassion and sensitivity.

2. What about a single parent family?

In this case, the responsibility falls to the single parent. This, along with the many other duties that single parents have, may present a significant challenge. However, God will supply great grace and everything we need to raise and strengthen our children in the faith.

3. What about children?

The dynamic of family worship will vary considerably depending upon the ages of the children involved. The goal for every child in the family is not the same. With young children, focus on the importance of knowing God, respecting the Bible, and worshiping as a family. With older children, dig into Scripture more, ask good questions, and discuss how the Bible relates to life and how a relationship with Christ changes us every day.

4. How do I keep things interesting if the ages of my children vary widely?

Regardless of age, include children in planning, reading, singing, teaching, and praying as much as possible and as much as maturity will allow. Make sure to keep things simple, and don't be afraid to keep it short; listen well, and be aware of what is happening in each child's heart and life.

5. What time of day is best for family worship?

Timing is far less important than consistency. Some families prefer to worship as the day begins. For others, evening may work best. Many families prefer to adjoin family worship to the evening meal since everyone may be present at that time.



Deuteronomy 6:7 says,
"You shall teach [God's words] diligently
to your children, and shall talk of them
when you sit in your house, and when you
walk by the way, and when you lie down,
and when you rise up."

Concentrated time in family worship
can serve as a catalyst and support for
"as you go, as you sit, as you walk"
conversations and applications of God's
Word within our families. Encouraging
and challenging our spouses and children
in Christian faith happens best in the
context of real, everyday life. Family
worship builds consistency into our family
routines and opens up many opportunities
and possibilities within our family
relationships.



A Family Time from Exodus 12 & 14

READ

o As the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God was already working out His glorious plan to deliver them. He chose Moses to be the one to lead them out of their slavery. God provided Moses' brother Aaron to come along and speak to Pharaoh with him. Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh and presented a seemingly ridiculous request: "Let my people go." Since the Israelites were the major workforce in Egypt, Pharaoh realized that letting them go would put a halt to any work in his kingdom. Pharaoh's response was no. However, God was determined to display His power and to redeem His people. God brought great plagues upon the Egyptians, demonstrating His sovereignty over all creation and all people—even Egyptian kings.

Describe what each of these plagues might have been like:

Plague 1: Water turned to blood

Plague 6: Boils

Plague 2: Frogs

Plague 7: Hail

Plague 3: Gnats

Plague 8: Locusts

Plague 4: Flies

Plague 9: Darkness

Plague 5: Livestock was killed

Plague 10: Death of the Firstborn

Each plague put Egypt in an increasingly desperate situation. The last plague temporarily broke Pharaoh's resolve. While grieving for his eldest son, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go.

o Exodus 12:30-42; 14:5-31

o Oftentimes, it is hard for us to see the big picture. As the Israelites were working as slaves for years and years, they likely did not feel that they were experiencing the goodness of God. It was easy during those times to forget that there was a bigger story at work. God had more in mind for the Israelites. The Israelites' time in slavery was only a tiny portion of the grand story that God began at creation and will ultimately finish in the last days. This is truly a story of our redemption and, more importantly, a display of His glory.

The Bottom Line: God displayed His goodness and His greatness as the One who delivers His people from slavery, a picture of the slavery He would deliver us from through Christ in the New Testament. By His grace and in His power, He delivers us from darkness and brings us into His light.

Questions:

- How was this story a display of God’s goodness?
- How did God display His goodness and faithfulness during the plagues?
- What area in your life are you waiting for God to show His faithfulness?

PRAY

o Praise is an act of worship through prayer in which we express our adoration of and love for God. It is rejoicing in who God is and the salvation He gives us through Christ. We recognize the many facets of His character and the work He has done in our lives. It is giving thanks for the blessings He has given us. When we praise God, we give glory, honor, and thanks to Him.

Biblical basis for Praise:

Deuteronomy 10:21; 1 Chronicles 16:8-13; Psalm 150; Romans 15:8-11; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:9

Take some time for each of those gathered with you to lift up praises to the Lord.

- o Pray for Afghanistan
 - Peace for this war-torn land
 - Help and protection for those translating scripture
 - Many people must listen to Christian radio in secret; pray they will understand what they hear and will come to know Jesus

Source: Operation World by Johnstone and Mandryk

MEMORIZE

o Exodus 15:2 “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.”

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered

discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions to help their children discover the truths of God's Word and worship Him together.

Preschool (Birth-Kindergarten)

o Gather a couple of items like a bike helmet or a winter coat. Show the children one item at a time and ask the following questions: How can this bike helmet protect you? Is it good to wear a bike helmet to keep you from getting hurt? What kind of protection can this coat provide? Is it a good idea to wear a coat on a really cold day? Can you see how all of these items are made to help protect us from something that could be harmful?

o God protects us, too. His protection is always there, even when we don't know it.

o God is great and God is good! God is the creator of everything and everything God made is good! God wants us to know that He is good. He also has a plan for us just like he did for Moses and the Hebrew people. He protected them from all of the plagues and rescued them from the Pharaoh king.

o God loves us so much, He sent His son Jesus to rescue us, too. Not from an evil king, but from the power of our sin. What a good and great God.

Children (Grades 1-5)

o Ask the following questions: What is a plague? A plague is a disaster or deadly disease that affects a lot of people. What is a miracle? A miracle is an event made possible by the power of God and performed as a sign or revelation of God and His character.

o God's people were in slavery in Egypt. Their lives were horrible because Pharaoh treated the Israelites with great cruelty. They were forced to work hard until their bodies were so tired they could hardly stand up! If they did not work they would be beaten or even worse.

o God displayed His goodness and glory by sending the ten plagues. He used these plagues and His servant Moses to set His people free from slavery. God showed that He is the only one who could deliver them from slavery and darkness into His light.

o God would one day send His Son to the earth to free us from slavery. Not

from slavery under an evil Pharaoh but slavery from the power of sin. When we were powerless to free ourselves from sin, Christ went to the cross to bring us from spiritual darkness into His great light.

o As you play the games below with your children, remind them of how God's display of His goodness and greatness in rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt points to His delivering us out of darkness and into His great light through Jesus.

o Game 1: Play a game of Pictionary using the 10 plagues. Write the name of the 10 plagues on strips of paper. Have each member of the family take turns selecting a piece of paper and drawing a picture of the plague. As the family member is drawing the others try to guess the plague that is being illustrated. The person who is the first to answer correctly, gets to select a piece of paper and draw a plague. Continue until all the plagues have been drawn.

Students (Grades 6-12)

o Read Exodus 14:12-14 again. The Israelite people had just been freed from slavery and immediately they second guessed leaving their chains. Each day many of us who call ourselves Christ-followers go to our schools and other environments where we must choose whether we will put on the chains of our old life or leave them off. What are some things that might pull at you from that old life? What about popularity, or what people think, or talking about others? What is it for you? Discuss.

o What are some ways we can be reminded that God's power is sufficient to help us overcome these things?

Church Community

What is Church Community?

With so many young people leaving the church after they are under the leadership of their parents, it is important that we teach the necessity of the church. Scripture says that the church is the Bride of Christ and He has given the church these four responsibilities: worship God, connect with others, grow in God's Word, and go tell the world about Christ. It is important that our children understand the heart behind what the church is meant to be and that our children allow Christ to transform their hearts to serve Him through His church.

We go to church to worship our God who has saved each of us and given us a personal relationship with Him. We go to church to come together to celebrate our Heavenly Father by giving Him our worship. Our children should see families living their lives side-by-side, sharing experiences, caring for each other, being open with one another, and praying together. Our children should know that the church is a place where they can grow in their faith and gain the knowledge that will help them grow closer to the Lord and live a more abundant life. In other words, our children should know the church is a place where we can be transformed. Finally, the church leads us to the point where we must open our eyes and our hearts to step out and follow the nudging of the Holy Spirit to reach the world around us.

Why is it important to bring my 5-year-old to church?

During the 10:30 a.m. Sunday school hour at Immanuel Baptist Church, our kindergarten-age children go to a Children's Worship time. This helps to prepare kids to worship together as a family in big church. The most important thing that marks you as a family is that you are a worshiping family, committed to the Lord. Attending worship binds the family together and brings honor and glory to God.

In Sunday school, kids continue to connect with others and build lasting friendships. Their growth in the knowledge of Jesus begins their desire to ask Jesus into their life. Be ready at this age to answer simple questions about what it means to ask Jesus into your life. You may want to get a children's tract to help you in answering questions about salvation. At this age, kids also learn and realize the importance of going outside the church to share Jesus with others.

Our teachers at Immanuel consistently pray for your children and want to be role models that help in building their spiritual growth, so when they reach the age of accountability, they will ask Jesus into their life. Bringing your 5-year-old to church lets him or her experience Hebrews 10:24 first-hand, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."





Discipling As You Go

What is Discipling As You Go?

Deuteronomy 6 is clear in its instructions to parents: constantly, as you live your life, be an example and train your children to follow the Lord. As parents, it is important for us to live a consistent life of faith in front of our children. As things happen in life, we should use those events to train our children, not only in right and wrong, but also in how to make decisions to live the abundant life that Christ has for us. We should model and explain how God's truth should be the standard of how we live our lives. In other words, even from the beginning, we should teach wisdom rather than the facts of "do's and don'ts." Faith is much easier caught than taught. Parents should always help their children see life's decisions through the lenses of our faith.

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Parenting Tools: *On Mission*

2 John 1:4 says, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father." Your kindergarten-age children need to understand that they are "on mission" right now. Involving them in mission activities at church, the community, and your neighborhood has a direct impact on how active they will remain as adults. Open their hearts to others' needs, when they see another child who is hurting they can offer comfort. Explain to them that you do not have to go overseas or to another state to be a missionary. You can be one at school, in your neighborhood, and community. Tell them how God is working here and around the world. Teach them to pray for others. Let them know the importance of giving. Hebrews 13:16 says, "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

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Parenting Tools: *Do You Believe In...?*

From "New Parent Power!" by John Rosemond

Let's approach this topic in a question and answer format.

Q: I have a five-year-old daughter with whom I feel I have an open and trusting relationship. The problem, that I am at a loss to deal with, involves my religious views. Through family members, kindergarten, and friends my daughter is exposed to a belief system that I do not share. I am not necessarily opposed to this, but I feel reluctant to share my religious views with her for fear that, if she repeats my thoughts and ideas, she will be ostracized at a time in her life when she is not able to deal with it. And yet she is beginning to ask me questions. In the past I have responded to questions with, "Yes, lots of people believe that." Now, she asks, "Do you believe it?" How do I maintain the openness we have without endangering the relationships she has with others?

A: More important than the need to protect your daughter from having differences of opinion with other children is her need to know exactly where you stand on these issues. At this time in her life, her need to identify with you takes precedence over peer affiliations and peer approval. You are her primary role model, and she is consciously striving to pattern herself after you – your behavior, your interests, your ideas. She looks to you to set the standards and wants only to follow your example. And, yes, she will identify with your beliefs and claim them as her own.

You are also her primary source of security and will continue to be for the next seven years or thereabouts, as she goes about finding a comfortable place for herself within her own generation. Before she ventures into new social territory, however, she must have a blueprint for behavior, and the directions must be clear. She depends on you to show her the way, but in this instance, it sounds as though she's having some difficulty reading you. If you make it difficult for her to pin you down (remember, she doesn't know that you are trying to protect her), she will become hung up on the question, "What does Mommy believe?" The evasive quality of your answers will frustrate her and stimulate feelings of insecurity. In an effort to reduce her anxiety, she will fixate on the religious issue until you clarify matters for her.

Furthermore, she may interpret your discomfort as a sign that you are ill at ease with your own beliefs – that perhaps you feel something is wrong with them.

Answer her questions. I would suggest, however, that instead of telling her what you don't believe, you answer her primarily in terms of what you do believe. Keep in mind that five-year-old children cannot understand philosophical abstractions. Explain your beliefs clearly, concisely, concretely and for the sake of trust.

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When we, as parents, show boldness in our faith, our children learn to stand firm in their own faith.

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