

Tools to try in 2023

As parents and carers who love God, our heart's desire is that our children meet and know him too. And the good news is that you can use the skills and tools you use in your everyday parenting to help you spiritually parent your kids as naturally as you parent them in managing their emotions or teaching them how to cross the road. At Parenting for Faith we call these the Five Key Tools and they are a game-changer. So as you grab a quiet moment this New Year, why not have look at the Key Tools and think about what they might look like in your family? We've suggested some ideas below. And for more about this, just scan the QR code.



Creating Windows



We spend our lives showing children how to do things. Sometimes intentionally, sometimes just by being ourselves. You model how to disagree well as you return a faulty item to a shop. You notice your toddler driving her imaginary car, changing gear and checking her mirrors. Because that's how kids learn – by watching and copying. So if we allow our kids glimpses, little windows, into our lives with God, we show them how to have one of their own.

Framing



We are constantly explaining the world to our children – from what toes are, to how to manage disappointment, to what the government is doing and why. To make proper sense of things, kids also need to learn who God is in the world and what he's doing – when they are at school, in a disaster, when they are lonely and so much more. We do this as we read the Bible together, as we explain things and as we answer their questions.

Unwinding



Part of parenting is helping kids when they misunderstand something or someone – whether that's a situation at school, or they've taken a dislike to Aunty Maud. Kids get their ideas about God from all sorts of places, and can sometimes misunderstand him and so not want to connect with him. As we spiritually parent, we can help kids develop a full and deep view of God, and as we discover how they see God, we can gently unwind any unbalanced views.

Chat and Catch



We spend a lot of time helping our children build good and healthy relationships – from sorting out friendship issues to teaching them how to relate to all sorts of people well. The greatest gift we can give to our kids is the confidence and ability to connect with their Father God in prayer: chatting to him about everything and catching what he is communicating to them. Chat and catch is simply a way to encourage an informal yet deep prayer life that works for all ages.

Surfing the Waves



We love encouraging our kids, spotting their passions and talents and helping them pursue their dreams. From buying their first soccer boots, to driving miles each week to band practice, that's what we do! And we can do that for them spiritually too. God places talents and passions in our kids. Some will last a life time, others just a while as they figure out who they are and what God's calling them to be. But it's our joy to jump on board to help them surf the wave of that for as long as it lasts.

parenting for faith





If your kid's facing something new - a club, first love, illness, for example - share a story about who God was when you were in a similar situation.

Find child-friendly stories of famous Christians and enjoy watching or reading them together

Where do you and God connect well? A place? A service? A group? Take your kid with you and let them see you connecting with God.

What do you do for God that isn't churchy? Add the why as you do it with your kid, eg as I recycle, I remember God asked us to look after the world ...

Play your favourite worship song while your kids are around. Say "I love this song so much because..."

While you are scrolling on your phone and see some faith-based thing that encourages you, share with your kid what poked your heart about it.



When your kid has a question about God, answer it using our Questions Tool. parentingforfaith.org/post/questions/

Tell your kids the story of a difficult time in your life. Share how that impacted your relationship with God, and what He did .

When you look at the world, where do you see God at work? Share that with your children.

As you read a Bible story wonder together about what God was doing, feeling or thinking at different points in the story. How is he like that today?

Share a story of a decision you made and how God played a part in that. What happened? How did you know it was God?

Tell your kids about the first time that you knew God was real.



Ask your kid 'Which Star Wars character is most like God ? Why?' (Feel free to sub in any programme or movie that you like.)

When reading Bible stories, choose ones that capture different sides of God's character so that your kid begins to build up a big picture of God.

What's something you don't understand about God? If appropriate, share that with your kid and explain how you deal with it.

Ask your child: what do you think God is doing in the world right now? Why do you think this?

Take a little time to think about what your kid's view of God is and how you could widen that view so they understand him better.

Get everyone to draw a picture of them and God. Chat about each picture.



Suggest that everybody tell God in their heads (or whisper into their hands so no one else can hear), the most frustrating part of their day.

List together all the times people had actual conversations with God in the Bible. Check them out. Do you think you could talk to God like that?

Chat out loud to God yourself – share what's on your heart in front of your children in the words you'd usually use with God.

Share with your child how you know God is communicating with you, when you aren't sure, and how his communications make a difference to you.

As you're winding down from an activity, say "Let's take three deep breaths and ask God to fill us with his peace." Wait for 20 seconds and share what God did .

Try asking God a question and see what you catch: we have lots of suggestions here. parentingforfaith.org/ 101



What have you already spotted in your child that you think might be from God? Chat to God and ask him for your next steps to help your child surf this wave.

Listen to your kid's play or stories. Recurring themes, such as being the rescuer, protector or nurturer may be something God is growing in them.

Read or watch a story of someone who made a difference in the world. See if anything about it sparks their interest.

Reflect on the way your spiritual interests have gone in waves. Share that with your child.

Give them a next step for something they're interested in, eg a YouTube tutorial in song writing or some ideas for how they could support a charity.

Ask 'If you had a million pounds to help people, what would you do with it and why?' This might give you some clues about what God is doing in their heart.