

The Five Key Tools

Team Training for camps, holiday clubs and weekends away



Parenting for Faith's Five Key Tools equip anyone working with children or teens to help them meet and know God. If you run a holiday club, summer camp, weekend away or anything with a team, here is an easy-to-use guide to help you equip your team to simply and easily use the Five Key Tools.

There are short introductions to each Key Tool, together with ideas for how your team might use it. It's written as if you are using it in each morning's briefing for a five day club, but please feel free to adapt it to suit your event.

There are two versions in this guide: one for teams working with under 5s, and one for teams working with 5s and over.

For more about the key tools, including short videos introducing each one, go to parentingforfaith.org/tools.



For teams working with under fives

Day 1: Creating Windows

Key Thought

When the session is over, the babies and preschoolers may not remember much about our talks, games, or crafts. What they will remember is what it felt like to be with us. They will notice our welcome, what we do, how we join in.

Today, you and God will be doing things the babies and toddlers will have no idea about. You might be silently thanking God, your heart might soar in praise, or you'll be relying on him to get you through a long morning. You do those things because you have a 1:1 two-way relationship with God.

We have a chance to give the under 5s little glimpses of our relationship with God that they will learn from. It isn't the big things – it's them noticing your worship, or overhearing a 'help me' prayer, seeing your smile even though it's crazy.

How do we do this?

Our first tool is something you already know, but we're going to give it a name: Creating Windows.

The Tool: Creating Windows

Just like we can peek through someone's window to get an idea of what their house looks like, you can deliberately create a window into your own relationship with God. When children see the window, it will help them understand more: how we pray, or the way God helps you or why you worship God. This gives kids an idea of what a relationship with God is like and helps them to get ideas for how they can relate to God too.

A really simple way to do this with under 5s is to name the difference God is making as you are in the session. For example:

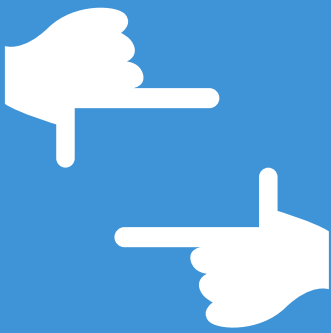
- "I'm asking God to help me."
- "I love that song about God."
- "God helped me feel calm today."
- "Thank you, God, for that."

These small moments build a picture of life with God, helping even the smallest children to start to realise how they can have a relationship with God too.

Response

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

"God, thank You that You are involved in our everyday lives. Help me today to create little windows that show the children in our care what my relationship with you is like."



For teams working with under fives

Day 2: Framing

Key Thought

Preschoolers might be used to God being here or in church on Sunday but not realise that he's busy and active in all of their lives: when they are having fun, at nursery, with their siblings or when they are upset. The problem with this is that they are building a picture of the world that doesn't include God in much of it.

Today we're going to think about how we can help the babies and toddlers in our care start to spot God in the ordinary bits of life too. We know that God's involved in all of their lives, but preschoolers might need help to realise that.

As we're caring for babies, playing with toddlers, helping them rest or celebrating their triumphs, we can show them that God's there and involved with all of that too.

Our second Key Tool is called Framing.

The Tool: Framing

Just like you put a frame around something to highlight it, we can 'frame' the children's experiences here to help them recognise who God is and what he's doing.

We can do this in little ways today. For under 5s, this is about naming what we know God is doing. Here are some examples:

- When you are helping an upset child, you can add: 'God is with you when you're sad'.
- When the child is having fun: 'God loves seeing you sing and dance!'
- When you are settling them for sleep: 'You can close your eyes – God is with you as you sleep'.
- When they're proud of what they've done: 'That's amazing – show it to God too. He loves seeing what you've made.'

Little one-liners like this help them learn more about God, and realise that he's involved in all of life.

Response

Ask the team:

What are some moments that might crop up today (or you noticed yesterday) where we could add a little one-liner that helps the kids see who God is or connect with him in their play?

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

God, help me share who you are and what you're doing with the children in my care today.



For teams working with under fives

Day 3: Surfing the Waves

Key Thought

Even at 2 or 3 years old, children have passions. They might be obsessed with cars and trains, love animals, spin round and round, or come alive when they hear music. God knows that and has made us all to be different. Some of us are never quiet – others love calm. Some of us find it hard to sit still, others will happily snuggle in for a story. Some love books, some need to run. All the kids in our care today will be different.

Today, you might find a kid lights up when it's time for crafts, or runs crazily around at play time. Or they might be fascinated by the tractors or seem captivated by the music. Those passions are things God loves to see and uses them to connect with us.

You'll be busy caring for the children today – but listen out for the nudges from God, showing you what this child is passionate about. And then help them understand that God sees that too.

Our third Key Tool is called Surfing the Waves.

The Tool: Surfing the Waves

Surfers catch waves and enjoy the ride! The children we are working with will have their own waves or passions. We can help them surf that wave by noticing what lights them up and showing them that God cares about it too.

With under 5s, a simple way to help them understand that God is involved in the things they love is to:

1. Notice whatever it is.
2. Celebrate it.
3. Connect it to God.

This tells a child: God cares about how I'm made and what I'm interested in. Some examples:

- If a child loves dinosaurs: "God made dinosaurs! He's so creative. Why don't you show him your favourite dinosaur?"
- If a child loves jumping: "God gave you strong legs! Show God how high you can jump."
- If a child loves making things: "You're so good at making things! God loves making things too."

These little statements help the children discover that God cares about what they care about and that their interests matter to Him.

Response

Invite the team to think of a child whose passions have stood out to them.

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

"Lord, help us notice the waves today and join in with what You're already doing in each child's life."



For teams working with under fives

Day 4: Chat and Catch

Key Thought

Prayer is more than talking to God—it's a two-way relationship where we communicate with God and he communicates back. The children here today will have different experiences of prayer. Some will be prayed with every day. For others this might be a new experience. Some will only pray at bedtime or mealtime. For many, the prayer they have seen modelled might be 'one way' – us talking to God, with no space or expectation that God might join in with the conversation.

We have an opportunity to encourage our preschoolers to 'chat' (communicate with) God about anything and everything, in a natural way. We can also start to build in an expectation that God also communicates back. Our fourth Key Tool is called Chat and Catch.

The Tool: Chat & Catch

- Chat & Catch means helping children talk and communicate naturally with God – as naturally as they speak to a parent or friend. Under fives may find it easier to whisper into their hands than talk 'in their heads'. They might also show God things or draw him a picture.
- It's also about feeling comfortable in God's presence and learning to recognise how God communicates with them - whether that's through words, pictures, thoughts, feelings, other people, things we see or hear, dreams etc. (For more information on this, check out our '[Prayer](#)' topic on the website.)

With under fives there are some simple things we can do to encourage them to 'chat' directly to God. We can ask them to 'show God' or 'tell God':

- 'Show God' – how fast you can run / that playdough flower you made / the dance you made up
- 'Tell God' – which doll you like, what game you'd like to play, the name of your new friend.

We can also help them understand that God communicates back:

- Let's ask God which is his favourite doll.
- I wonder why God made funny faces? Shall we ask him and see what he says?
- Don't worry, mummy will be back soon. Let's tell God that you're worried and see what he says.'

As we encourage our under 5s to 'chat' to God, and build in an expectation of God joining in, we are helping them recognise that prayer is a natural part of a two way relationship with God.

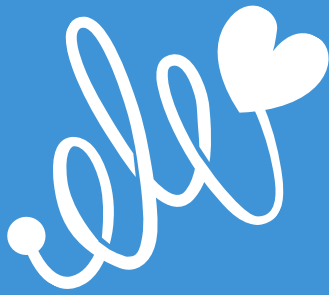
Response

Invite the team to try chat and catch for themselves by asking God this question and then waiting for 30 seconds to see if they catch God's communication back:

- God, what game would you like to play with me? (If they catch a response, encourage them to ask God why that game.)

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

God, thank you that you created prayer as a way for us to communicate naturally with you and catch your communication too! Help me to share this with the children I'm with today.



For teams working with under fives

Day 5: Unwinding

Key Thought

Our views of God are formed by all sorts of things. The bible stories we read. Church. Our experiences. Social media, friends and school.

Understanding God is a lifetime's work. None of us have a perfect view of God – it is being shaped all the time. And sometimes we get a bit mixed up. We might think God gets angry when we sin, or he's far away, or doesn't care about things. That can affect how we feel about God and being in a relationship with him.

Even though they are tiny, babies and preschoolers will be building a picture of God. We can gently unwind and correct any misunderstandings we spot.

Our final Key Tool is Unwinding.

The Tool: Unwinding

Unwinding means:

- Noticing a misunderstanding.
- Gently replacing it with truth.

Think of it like old-fashioned balance scales. If a child has a wrong view weighing down one side, what truth can you add to even up the scales?

Here are some examples of things a child might do or say and a truth you could add to rebalance the scales:

- If a child points up when they talk about God, you can say: 'God lives in your heart too'
- A child might not want to join in with the prayers because they think God is too busy to hear their prayer or is angry with them. Reassure them that God loves to hear whatever they want to tell him or share with him.
- If you ask 'When does God love you?' a child may say 'When I'm happy' or 'When I'm good'. You can tell them the great news that God loves us all the time, however we feel and however we're behaving.

As we spot and gently correct any misunderstandings about God, we're helping the under 5s build a balanced view of God.

Response

Ask the team to share any misconceptions of God they've experienced in preschoolers.

Pray with the team in your own words, or say:

"God, help us to spot any misunderstandings about you that the children might have, and know how to gently unwind them."



For teams working with fives and over

Day 1: Creating Windows

Key Thought

Today, the kids will see and experience a lot! I wonder what they'll remember in a few weeks' time? One thing for certain is that they will remember what it felt like to be here – and what it was like to be with us. How we welcomed them, helped them, encouraged them, enabled them to join in.

They will also be noticing – even if they don't realise it – your relationship with God. Today, you and God will be doing things the kids have no idea about. You'll silently thank him, your heart might soar in praise, you'll rely on him to get you through a long morning. You and God do those things because you have a 1:1 two-way relationship with God.

And the kids will be learning from this, even if they don't realise. They'll see the difference God makes. How people pray. What worshipping can look like. How God helps us. We need to see examples of other people's relationship with God in order to work out how to grow our own.

Our first tool is something you already know, but we're going to give it a name: Creating Windows.

The Tool: Creating Windows

Just like we can peek through someone's window to get an idea of what their house looks like, you can deliberately create a window into your own relationship with God. When kids see the window, it will help them understand more: how we pray, or the difference God made to you at school or why you worship God. This gives kids an idea of what a relationship with God is like and get ideas for how they can relate to God too.

A really simple way to do this with children and teens is to talk about the difference God makes for you during the session. For example, saying:

- "This bit's really hard for me, so I'm relying on God to help me".
- "I love that song about God."
- "Have you asked God – that's what I would do".

When you do that you are helping the kids see what a relationship with God looks like and the difference it makes. These small moments build a picture of life with God, helping even the smallest children to start to realise how what their relationship with God might look like.

Response

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

"God, thank You that You are involved in our everyday lives. Help us today to create little windows that show the children / teens I'll be with today what my relationship with you looks like."



For teams working with fives and over

Day 2: Framing

Key Thought

Children and young people are constantly building their picture of God. But much of their lives might not seem like it has much to do with God. They might be used to God being here or in church on Sunday – but what about when they are having fun, struggling with friendships or winning their football match? We know that God is involved in every bit of life, but children and young people may need help to realise that.

Today we're going to think about how we can help the children and young people in our care spot how God is in the ordinary bits of life too. We know that God's involved in all of their lives, but kids might need help to realise that. As we're helping them with the crafts, watching them play, listening to the bible story alongside them or calming down an angry child, we can show them that God's there and involved with all of that stuff too.

Our second Key Tool is called Framing.

The Tool: Framing

Just like you put a frame around something to highlight it, we can 'frame' the children and teens' experiences here to help them recognise who God is and what he's doing.

We can do this in little ways today by noticing and naming what we know God is doing. Here are some examples:

- When you are helping an angry child, you can add: 'God knows all about anger – he wants to help you too'.
- When they've heard the bible story, you could ask: 'Do you think God might want to speak to people today too?'
- When kids are leaving: 'Have a great afternoon! What are you and God going to do?'
- When they are enjoying the craft: 'I think God loves seeing you use your creativity'.

Little one-liners like this help them learn more about God, and realise that he's involved in all of life - not just the churchy bits.

Response

Ask the team:

What are some moments that might crop up today (or you noticed yesterday) where we could add a little one-liner that helps the kids how God is involved in every bit of their lives?

Pray with the team in your own words or say:

"God, give me opportunities to help the kids / teens I'll be with today to recognise what you are doing too."



For teams working with fives and over

Day 3: Surfing the Waves

Key Thought

You'll already have noticed that the kids in your group are all different. Some of them are probably never quiet while others love calm. Some of them need fiddle toys to concentrate, some are obsessed with sport, others love worship ... they have their own personalities and passions.

Sometimes you'll spot what lights them up. They talk about football constantly or ask you questions about the talk, are desperate to dance during worship, or love to help other kids. Those passions are things God uses to connect to us – and we can help the children understand that too.

You'll be busy caring for the children today and let's be honest, you might not feel like you have time to do any more than keep them in the right place and healthy! But listen out for the nudges from God, showing you what this child is passionate about because it might just be a wave from God – a way he is connecting with them or helping them understand something. And then help them understand that God sees that too.

Our third Key Tool is called Surfing the Waves.

The Tool: Surfing the Waves

Surfers catch waves and enjoy the ride! The children we are working with will have their own waves or passions. We can help them surf that wave by noticing what lights them up and showing them that God cares about it too.

What might this look like? It might be just a moment or something that carries on for the whole week. It might mean giving a kid some time to help them explore what's caught their attention. It might mean allowing a few moments for a conversation.

- If a kid is asking loads of questions about prayer – why not offer to chat at snack time?
- If you see a kid who just can't stop dancing – see if they could join the team leading actions.
- If you see a kid who needs quiet to concentrate – offer them some ear defenders
- If one of your kids proudly brings their new bible in – ask them about it.

When we notice the wave, celebrate it, and connect it to God, this tells a child: God cares about what I care about - and he's put this passion inside me.

Response

Invite the team to think of a child whose passions have stood out to them.

Pray with the team in your own words, or say:

"God, help us notice the waves today and encourage that child or teen to recognise and join in with what you're already doing in their life."



For teams working with fives and over

Day 4: Chat and Catch

Key Thought

The bible is clear that prayer is a two way thing. We chat to God, and he communicates with us. We can 'catch' what God says to us in many ways: an idea in our heads, something we notice, a verse from the bible, a word from a wise friend, a feeling or a dream ... God speaks to us in so many ways!

Children and young people may not realise that prayer can be like that. Some might have a limited experience of prayer. Some may believe they have to sit still, hands together, eyes closed. Many might not have experienced hearing or catching God's voice.

This is an exciting opportunity for us to give the kids in our care a bigger vision of prayer - being able to talk naturally to God in a way that works for them, and being comfortable in his presence and able to receive his communication back – however he chooses to share it.

Our fourth Key Tool is Chat and Catch.

The Tool: Chat and Catch

Chat & Catch means helping children and teens:

- Talk naturally to God in a way that works for them – as naturally as they speak to a parent or friend
- Feel comfortable in God's presence and learn to recognise how God communicates with them - whether that's through words, pictures, thoughts, feelings, other people, things we see or hear, dreams etc. (For more information on this, check out our '[Prayer](#)' [topic](#) on the website.)

You can introduce and reinforce these ideas about prayer by:

- Creating windows into your own prayer life. This might be allowing them to hear you pray out loud, or talk about your experiences of prayer. For example: 'The first time I ever heard God's voice it was like this ...' or 'when I'm stuck I ask God and see what he says'.
- Sharing stories of things you've prayed about – from big decisions to what colour to paint the wall.
- Encouraging them to chat to God about things that are bothering them or questions they have. As well as talking to them yourself, suggest they find a quiet spot and chat to God about it, allowing time to catch anything God communicates back.

Just watch out for any natural opportunities to help the kids you are with to see prayer in a richer way.

Response

Pray with the team in your own words, or say:

"God, thank you that you created prayer as a way for us to communicate naturally with you and catch your communication too! Help me to share this with the children or teens I'm with today."



For teams working with fives and over

Day 5: Unwinding

Key Thought

Our views of God are formed by all sorts of things. Church, the bible, our friends, RE lessons, YouTube, our own experiences. We can put two and two together and come out with five – The bible says that God loves me, so how come he let me fail my exam? He can't care at all.

Understanding God is a lifetime's work. None of us have a perfect view of God. As we learn more we get a bigger and more balanced view of God. But sometimes we all need a bit of help to unwind a mixed up or incorrect view.

The children in your care will have all sorts of views about God. They may assume he's angry when they sin. They may think he lives far away. They may have had a bad experience, so assume God doesn't care about them. They might think that God's too busy to hear everyone's prayers. Wrong views affect their feelings about God, and might discourage them from seeking a relationship with him. You can help by gently correcting any misunderstanding you spot.

Our final Key Tool is Unwinding.

The Tool: Unwinding

Unwinding means:

- Noticing a misunderstanding.
- Gently replacing it with truth.

Think of it like old-fashioned balance scales. If a child or teen has a wrong view weighing down one side, what truth can you add to even up the scales? Here are some examples of how to gently unwind some common wrong views you might find:

- God is far away. You might remind them that God lives in our hearts, or share a story about a time you felt God very close to you.
- God is angry because I've sinned. Share the story of the prodigal son or talk about a time you messed up but God was quick to forgive you.
- If they say 'God won't want to hear my prayers', you might say – 'It's like God's got zillions of ears, he wants to hear what everyone thinks'.

As we spot and gently correct any misunderstandings about God, we're helping the children and teenagers build a balanced view of God.

Response

Ask the team to share any misconceptions of God they've experienced in children and teens.

Pray with the team in your own words, or say:

"God, help us to spot any misunderstandings about you that the children might have, and know how to gently unwind them."