

Participant's Handbook



Welcome to this additional session of the Parenting for Faith course

We are so pleased that you are viewing this new session, and we pray that it will be useful to you as you coach your children, of any age, to step into a vibrant two-way relationship with God. Over the next year we hope to release more sessions which build on the skills and tools you learned in the Parenting for Faith course. These will be based on content from parts II and III of *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (BRF, 2018) – ‘Parenting children for a life of purpose’ and ‘Parenting children for a life of confidence’.

This booklet is for you to use as you would like. For each session, there is:

- a session outline
- a guide to the session, with spaces for you to take notes and your own reflections – or just to doodle in if you wish
- some suggested next steps for you to take throughout the week – pick and choose one or two that may encourage you to explore the topic deeper.

Our website – parentingforfaith.org – is full of stories, ideas and wisdom from lots of people who are passionate about parenting for faith. There’s content from and for parents, grandparents, carers, church leaders, course leaders and those with a particular interest in parenting for faith and additional needs; in fact, all sorts of people who are committed to this journey of learning to spiritually parent our children.

There are several ways you can keep in touch with Parenting for Faith:

- **join our email newsletter** to stay up to date at parentingforfaith.org/email
- **follow us on Facebook** at facebook.com/parentingforfaithBRF and facebook.com/groups/PFFparentsandcarers
- **follow us on Twitter** at twitter.com/godconnected
- **follow us on Instagram** at [@parentingforfaithbrf](https://www.instagram.com/parentingforfaithbrf)
- **catch our podcasts** at parentingforfaith.org/podcast

May God bless you with clarity, hope and boldness as you go on this journey.

BRF’s Parenting for Faith team

Parenting for Faith is part of BRF, a Christian charity that resources individuals and churches. Our vision is to enable people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible and to see more people equipped to exercise their gifts in leadership and ministry. Find out more at brf.org.uk.

I'm not finished yet

We're all on a journey of transformation

We live in a world where perfection is king. We are bombarded with images and ideas of perfection and it can seem as if being less than perfect is failure. This affects us, and it also affects our children, and their confidence can be knocked when they judge themselves against impossible ideals. By helping our children understand that we are all on a journey of transformation to become more and more like the Father, we can help them see themselves as on an exciting journey of transformation with a God who loves them and wants them to partner with him now.

Video introduction

- We are all on a journey of transformation

Individual or group reflection

- Reflect on this idea of perfection. Where can you see it playing out in:
 - Your life?

 - Your children's lives?

Video main session 1

- Lessons from TV baking shows

Individual or group reflection

- Think about an area of your life where you are different to how you were five years ago – maybe a changed attitude, a new or improved skill or just something you deal differently with

- How did the transformation happen? What was the journey like? How has God used you during the transformation?

Video main session 2

- Share stories of transformation

Individual or group reflection

- Tell a story of how God has been helping you change – now or in the past

- Think about how you might frame an apology to your child so that it helps them see that you are on your own journey of transformation

- Which Bible characters inspire you on your journey of transformation? How could you share Bible stories with your children so that they notice how God helps people transform?

Video main session 3

- Draw attention to what you think is important

- Praise character, effort, progress and transformation

Individual or group reflection

- Thinking about your childhood, what things did your parents draw your attention to that still impact you today?

- How are you already drawing your children's attention to people's character, effort, progress and transformation?

- Practise debriefing a real or imaginary situation where your child might be disappointed about something that went wrong. How can you help them see the little successes?

Video main session 4

- Foundational phrases

Individual or group reflection

- What foundational phrases did you learn from your parents that you use today?

- Thinking about your child(ren), what messages do you think they need to hear about transformation?

- What phrases could you invent to help your child embrace the idea that imperfection is okay because we are all on a journey of transformation with God?

Video conclusion

- Enjoy the journey!

Group discussion

In your groups, discuss some of the following questions:

- What messages about perfection are your children hearing – for example, from school, their peers, social media or advertising?
- Is this idea of being okay with imperfection new to you?
- How has your child changed over the past few years? What great things do you see in your child that they might not see in themselves? How could you help them to see that?
- Thinking about your own journey of transformation, are there any stories you might like to share with your child?
- How do you know when your child feels the pressure of being perfect?

Suggestions for exploring this topic further

- Look back at your first reflection in this session. Is there anything you want to do or change in the light of your answer?
- Have a go at creating windows into your experience of how God has transformed you so your child gets a glimpse of your journey.
- When you are watching television or social media with your child, point out the perfection-lies you are seeing: for example, that being perfectly beautiful makes you popular, that driving the perfect car will make you happy or that cooking the perfect meal every night is a mark of success.
- Pick a few of the stories about well-known Bible characters, such as Peter, Noah, Miriam or Paul. Read them with fresh eyes: where can you see the ups and downs of their transformation? When did God use them when you might not have done?
- Chat to God about your own life and your children's. Ask him to show you where he's been at work in your lives and any next steps he'd like you to take.
- Really focus on praising what you see in your children, rather than commenting on what they've achieved; for example, 'I really admired the care you put into that piece of coursework,' rather than 'Well done, that's a great grade!', or, 'I saw how hard you practised to jump that high,' rather than 'You're jumping really high!'
- Think about what foundational phrases you already use in your family. Are they helpful? Do you want to add any new ones?

Acknowledgements

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What next?

We hope that you have enjoyed this session and that you are already seeing the fruits in you and your family's life. Of course, this is just a beginning, and we'd love to continue supporting you in this journey.

Visit the website

The Parenting for Faith website is packed with stories and resources for parents and churches to read, listen to and watch, covering a host of different topics – parentingforfaith.org/parents is a good place to start. We also host regular Facebook Live sessions for parents and carers, tackling different topics and issues for under-5s, primary-aged children, and pre-teens and teens.

We're regularly adding new content, and we're working to develop what we offer over the coming months. Do keep in touch with us and help us shape what we offer.

Keep in touch

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- **catch our podcasts** at parentingforfaith.org/podcast

Books and resources

The Parenting for Faith course is based on the book *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (BRF, 2018), available in print, on Kindle and as an audiobook.

Babies and Toddlers: Nurturing your child's spiritual life (BRF, 2021) is a book for parents and carers of 0–3s, wherever they are on their faith journey, to help them help their babies and toddlers connect with God.

Rachel Turner has also written *Comfort in the Darkness* (BRF, 2016), a collection of retellings of Bible stories exploring God's character and promises that helps parents grow peace, confidence and an understanding of who God is in their children.

You can find these and other useful books and resources at parentingforfaith.org/resources.

Connect with other families

You might want to connect with one or two other families who also attended the course, to intentionally support, encourage and learn from each other in the months ahead.