Faith
Conversation Guide
for Parents of Elementary Schoolers

Faith. In the elementary school years, kids become equipped with the skills they need to discover more about faith, and they have an active imagination that leads them to ask questions about their world and what they experience. As they learn new stories from the Bible, you'll be amazed at the questions they start to consider. The best thing to remember is to treat each question with care. How you respond to your kids each time they have questions about faith will determine if they continue to talk to you about their faith. Your role is to...

Provoke Discovery → So they will TRUST GOD'S CHARACTER AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S FAMILY.

This guide is designed to help you connect with your elementary-age kid where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of faith. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal for your kid:

Authentic Faith

Trusting Jesus in a way that transforms how I love God, myself, and the rest of the world.

To elementary schoolers (K-3rd), say things like . . .

"Can I pray about that with you?"
"You can trust God no matter what."
"You need to make the wise choice."
"You should treat others the way you want to be treated."
"I'm not sure where that passage is. Let's look it up together." (Teach them to use a concordance and digital reference book.)
"Don't ever get tired of doing the right thing." 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (Repeat and memorize simple Bible verses together.)
"When I first trusted Jesus . . ." (Share your own faith story.)
"I'm sorry your friend's mom is sick. What could we do to help?" (Make service personal. Encourage them to serve people who matter to them.)

To elementary schoolers (4th-5th), say things like . . .

"How can I pray for you today/this week?"
"Having faith isn't always easy, but we can trust God no matter what."
"What do you think is the wisest choice in this situation?"
"Do not be afraid, for the Lord your God is with you." Joshua 1:9 (Repeat simple Bible verses.)
"If you were them, how do you think you would want to be treated?"
"Have you read anything in the Bible that means a lot to you right now?" (Talk about the Bible.)
"Did you know that the Bible was written as 66 different books, but they all tell one story?" (Connect the dots between the stories to give a bigger context.)
"I've been wanting to volunteer more. Is there somewhere we could serve together." (Consider serving at your church or a local ministry that appeals to your kid's interests.)

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It!

Just Remember . . . Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The elementary years are the discovery years. You can provoke their discovery by encouraging their imaginations, allowing them to investigate without filling in all the blanks, and simply making yourself available for the many, many questions that will come. As your child learns to read and gain more independence, it's a great time to encourage personal devotional time. But don't let their faith become private; continue having other faith conversations as you go about your days together.

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Create a "Joy Jar." Find a bin or bucket and label it the "Joy Jar." Place it in the middle of your dinner table along with a pen and index cards. Choose a period of time—30 days at the least—and write down all the answered prayers your family experiences and place them in the Joy Jar after dinner. (There will be some meals when you have nothing to write down—and that's okay.) At the end of the period of time, have your elementary schooler read through all the ways God was faithful to your family.

Make church part of your family's weekly routine. There's always a reason not to go, but demonstrating a positive interest in connecting with community and learning about God is an integral step in helping your child establish a faith of their own. Find somewhere you can attend consistently, so your elementary schooler can build relationships and trust with their church friends and leaders. Talk about why church is important in your family.

Share your own story of how you began a relationship with God with your 4th or 5th grader. Then share about how God has wired you, and how you connect with Him best. Share that it might be different than someone else's story. For example, you might feel most connected to God when you listen to worship music or journal; for others it may be when they are outside experiencing nature or beauty. Help your child see that we all connect with God in different ways, but there's a common thread of experiencing His love and forgiveness. Is there a particular way your child connects with God? Nurture it. If it's in nature, go for a hike. If it's journaling, take him or her shopping for a new journal. Music? Sign them up for a streaming music service so they can get all the latest worship songs.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.

To discover more ways to understand your child's phase, check out the Parenting Your . . . book series at parentcuestore.org.

PARENT CUE

For more information on The Phase Project and other great parent resources, visit theParentCue.org

©2018 The Phase Project. All rights reserved.