

no. **10**
in the series

Spiritual growth needs to be nurtured through regular spiritual practices. May this practice help you grow deeper in Christ and further in mission.



grow

deeper
in Christ

Mentoring Children...

MENTORING CHILDREN is a vital means of spiritual growth. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God calls both parents and the church to nurture children in faith 24/7. It extends beyond Sunday morning. Our relationship with Jesus is 24/7 and so is our faith formation. Here are some practical ways for parents and others to help children GROW toward a deep and abiding faith.

God's Word

Interacting and becoming familiar with the Word of God creates an important foundation on which our life of faith is built.

- International Children's Bible or NIV are good choices for early readers.
- Pray before you begin to read.

- Read together with your child or have your child read to you.
- With younger children, tell the story in your own words.
- Keep it short. Children have short attention spans.
- Have children retell the story to you.
- Ask wondering questions: "I wonder how Jesus felt when the disciples tried to keep the children away?" It will give you insight into a child's perception of Jesus.
- Have children imagine being in the story.
- What would you smell, hear, feel, taste?
- Relate the story to real life, everyday experiences.
- Act out, or make up a song, about the story.

The Evangelical Covenant Church

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- Draw a picture about the story, or mold it out of clay.

Relationships

Each of us needs the encouragement and support of others in order to grow spiritually. That's the way God has made us. These relationships can occur both within and outside of the biological family.

- *Be a model.* Children emulate what they see and hear. A child will know who you are by what you say and do and by the way you say and do it.
- *Take time to be with children.* Remember, formation takes place 24/7. How much influence do you have?
- *Affirm children.* Children are a gift from God. Affirm them for who they are as well as for what they do. Healthy families have five times more positive than negative communication.
- *Talk to children.* Begin faith life conversations early in life. Talk about God as though God were everywhere present because, in fact, God is. Be open to talking about the things children want to talk about, even if it seems mundane.
- *Introduce children to God's kingdom.* Provide multi cultural experiences. Visit churches of other racial groups. Read about spiritual heroes from many cultures.

Obedient Living

Because we love Christ we obey him in the things that we do. As we serve side by side our children not only hear about the importance of service but experience it with you.

- Purchase and take food to a food pantry or distribution center.
- Pray daily for your neighbors.
- Help the elderly with spring cleaning.
- Visit a retirement community.
- Assemble school supply packs for needy children.
- Collect clothing for the poor.
- Give money to help with ministry.
- Write to missionaries.
- Bake cookies for shelters.
- Go on a mission trip together.

Worship

Worship is more than a service on Sunday morning. It's putting God first in all that we do. We worship God as we:

- Model faith day by day.
- Pray together.
- Have regular conversation with children about faith issues.
- Read the Bible together.
- Serve others together.
- Share your faith story.
- Worship with others in the church.

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."—Proverbs 22:6

This "Growing Deeper" tool is part of a series. To learn more about these resources, contact the Covenant Resource Center by email at resource.center@covchurch.org or phone at 800.338.IDEA (4332). To download this and other tools, visit www.covchurch.org/formation. To order copies of the "Growing Deeper" tools, visit www.covenantbookstore.com.