



FAMILY FAITH

*100 EASY-TO-USE IDEAS FOR
MODELLING FAITH TO CHILDREN*

IS YOUR CHILD RAISED 'IN' FAITH OR 'AROUND' FAITH?

The Bible tells us to instil the great commandments into the lives of our children through 'all of life discipleship' -talking about and showing faith every day in all circumstances.

This short resource for parents will outline some of the basic principles of modelling faith and offer lots of different ways that this can be done.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

Some basic principles of modelling faith

1. **It starts with you:** A parent who, before God, *thinks* about what they should do to raise a child in faith and *tries* to do it. A person who does this over the long term and doesn't give up.
2. **Start today:** Life is hectic so it is tempting to wait until we think it will calm down. Don't delay for window of influence is shutting.
3. **Let them see you:** We are called to be ambassadors of Christ so model the faith to your children. Parents are the main example children have of faith in action.
4. **Let them journey with you:** As Jesus took his disciples on a journey you should do the same. Talk about faith, answer and also ask questions with them. Bring them to church.
5. **Let them show you.** Give them opportunities to practice faith through prayer, reading, leading and helping.
6. **Let them go:** Your role is to prepare them to own a faith apart from you -for their helper to be the Holy Spirit.

100 ideas for modelling faith to children.

To build up the great practices of faith (e.g. prayer) in the lives of our children we need to form smaller habits -little patterns of behaviour that if undertaken over several weeks become easier to do and an almost involuntary part of the fabric of life (such as saying 'grace' before meals). If we form 2-3 habits over a few months then it is easier to add others.

This next section will list 100 habits or 'family traditions' that can be done daily, weekly or less often. They are categorised into different aspects of Christian life to help parents plan or to help you come up with your own ideas.

Remember to start small with 2-3 habits that you can incorporate into life to suit your priorities and circumstances. Over time you can add other ideas or come up with your own. Building takes place one brick at a time!

Each of these ideas or habits for building faith are characterised into the following 17 aspects of Christian parenting to help you prioritise what is important at any given time.

For instance if you want them to understand worship a bit more there are some habits you could try in this section. Or the habits could help you come up with your own ideas.



HABITS OF PRAYER



HABITS OF BIBLE READING



HABITS OF WORSHIP



HABITS OF SERVICE AND MINISTRY



HABITS OF CELEBRATION AND JOY



HABITS OF COMMITMENT & LEADERSHIP



HABITS OF SIMPLICITY



HABITS OF APPRECIATION



HABITS OF GENEROSITY



HABITS OF REMEMBRANCE



HABITS OF INTEGRITY



HABITS OF DISCIPLINE & FORGIVENESS



HABITS OF RESPECT



HABITS OF CONSISTENCY



HABITS OF SABBATH



HABITS OF SPEECH



HABITS OF ATTENTION

HABITS OF PRAYER

1. Finish each day with a prayer together. Ask older children to say prayers by themselves.
2. Go through a TSP (thank you, sorry, please), STOP (sorry, thanks, opportunities, please) or ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication/shopping list) format in prayer.
3. Memorise a set prayer to say each evening before sleep.
4. Identify prompts to help us pray –hearing a siren, seeing a rainbow, brushing your teeth.
5. Say a short prayer in the car before the school run (or during the school run!).
6. Prayer updates: 'How were your prayers today?' or 'what was God saying to you today'.
7. Include personal encouragement for children when you pray for them –'thank you God that ... is kind and that she helped out today'
8. Ask your children regularly to pray for something in your own life –help with work, being tired, wanting healing with a health issue.
9. Laying on hands: Placing a hand on child's head or shoulders to bless them when praying.
10. Involving male and female role models in prayer -particularly both parents but also grandparents.

HABITS OF BIBLE READING

11. Read a bible story or verse each evening at bedtime (even if also reading other stories).
12. Schedule the same weekly (or daily) place and time for a family Bible study.
13. Try to look up verses from a paper bible to practice where the books are.
14. Speak a memory verse every night over small children for 2-3 weeks.
15. Practice a memory verse (or passage) each day (at the same time) with children aged 4 and upward.
16. Start a book or box of memory verses.
17. Download a Bible interaction app for kids for your smart phone or tablet.

HABITS OF WORSHIP

18. Let them see you worship with all your heart –especially in church!
19. Try to sit closer to the front of church to be more involved (until it is time to go to Sunday School).
20. Minimise toys and distractions in church –slowly reduce it to a sweet or pencil and paper and only if needed.
21. Explain different parts of the church service each week and why we have them.
22. Look positive going into church and leaving it. Don't complain about church in front of children.
23. Play worship music or Christian radio at home or in the car as a background soundtrack for daily life. Use it as alarm music as they get ready in the morning!



HABITS OF SERVICE AND MINISTRY

24. Talk about every good deed or favour and say why you are doing it.
25. Ask your children to do at least one job every day and say why it is important that they do it.
26. Get them to help with family faith –to get the bible, write out memory verses, help a sibling and so on.
27. Involve other family and friends visiting in any habits of faith (such as saying grace) as much as possible – be upfront about what you do for family faith rather than doing less when visitors are present.
28. Talk about what they could become –especially as a result of achievements or character ‘you could become someone that really helps others’.
29. Share with them examples of the positive changes they have made to your life.

HABITS OF CELEBRATION AND JOY

30. Look to celebrate character as well as achievements. Say a prayer each day and thank God in it for a character trait in each child –such as manners, determination, humour etc
31. Dedicate a wall/ door near the dinner table to celebrate the work of each child.
32. Say ‘praise God’ for the good things they do, as well as ‘good for you’.
33. Practice showing joy in your face every time children achieve something –be excited!
34. Try and always go when they say to you ‘come and see’.
35. Explain your own habits of joy as they come to you:, e.g. ‘Who do I thank when I see a beautiful day?’



HABITS OF COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP

36. Reward application as often as results –for trying hard or sticking at something.
37. Explain the reasons behind each little habit or tradition of faith every time that you start a new one.
38. Develop things that they are responsible for –with more responsibility as they get older –jobs, taking care of something, pets etc.
39. Give examples of opposition/indifference to faith as they get older and share own stories about this from your own life. Prepare them for a world that will treat them differently because of their faith.
40. Give them a ‘cause’ to get excited about. Something simple and charitable. Talk about ‘causes’ in your own life. Examples include sponsoring a child, a charity money box at home or litter picking.



HABITS OF SIMPLICITY

41. Restrict screen time each day and have rules for screen time –such as family time taking priority.
42. Perhaps change the default answer for requests for material stuff from 'yes' to 'no' and encourage explanation from them as to the reasons for wanting it.
43. Save presents for special occasions or as rewards and explain why they have received them.
44. Have children outside at some stage every day to encourage interaction with nature
45. Limit screen time on car journeys –they are great opportunities to talk together.

HABITS OF APPRECIATION

46. Ask, at the end of the day, what they are thankful for and say what you are thankful for.
47. Take turns to say grace at all meal times –even in public.
48. Always remind about 'please' and 'thank you's' in as many interactions as possible.
49. Thank God in your prayers with them for each day.

HABITS OF GENEROSITY

50. When you are out give them money to put in collection tins.
51. Give them £10 on special occasions for them to give away to something they choose.
52. Have a tithing tin in the kitchen where 10% of their money can be stored to give away.
53. Sponsor a child and display their profiles.

HABITS OF REMEMBRANCE

54. Celebrate church traditions each year at home such as Advent, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and so on.
55. Make memories: List out experiences –fun, different, educational, whacky and so on that could be part of a 'bucket list' for family life.
56. Create family traditions to remember important dates like anniversaries, birthdays and so on –such as breakfast in bed and making a cake.
57. Develop different birth stories for each child –how they all came differently and how you felt differently (but with the same love!) about each one. Include your thankfulness to God.



HABITS OF INTEGRITY

58. Do not lie! Try and give a plain answer or no answer at all. Even for Santa!
59. Do what you say you'll do –or use the word 'might' liberally!
60. Ask, when looking at billboards or watching adverts, is there a lie being told and what is it?
61. Do not argue and fight before church and then be sweetness and light when you arrive.
62. Watch what you watch. Can they reconcile faith with seeing you watch swearing and violence on TV?
63. Reflect on explaining why certain actions are regarded as wrong and what the Bible says about them so that you find it easier when asked!

HABITS OF DISCIPLINE AND FORGIVENESS

64. Always discipline the small things such as bad attitude and ignoring you, rather than just the larger (then the bigger things will take care of themselves more).
65. Make eye contact and explain why you are disciplining.
66. Ask for and hear their story. Is there something else going on?
67. Seek an apology for those wronged and encourage the forgiver to say 'that's OK'
68. Seek small things for you to apologise to your children for so that they can see forgiveness modelled.
69. Pray for those that they have a problem with at school etc.

HABITS OF RESPECT

70. Try to look as much as possible at a child talking to you so that they do not feel ignored.
71. Do not permit two or more to talk at once or cut across each other. Help all to get 'airtime'.
72. Say you are listening (when you are!) but also say when you are not able to (when distracted by dinner etc).
73. Try to place a high value on tidiness, property and the environment and say why.

HABITS OF CONSISTENCY

74. Make joint parental decisions about children without them seeing your discussion.
75. Back each other up when making decisions about children and deliver decisions together in front of them when you can –as a couple you can disagree in private later!
76. Make an outward show of how important your marriage is –your children may worry about this from time to time without you knowing.



HABITS OF SABBATH

77. Don't skip church when you are tired! Try to get all of you there every week.
78. Use Sunday as a feast day. Eat the best food, let them have lots of treats (after lunch!).
79. Try not to go shopping or do housework and avoid homework on a Sunday.
80. Have a family bible study on a Sunday after a main meal and before dessert.

HABITS OF SPEECH

81. Don't review church or talk negatively about the church in front of your children.
82. For every negative thing you say to them try and think of 5 positive things to say that same day.
83. Don't talk about other people in front of your children.
84. Finish each day on a positive thing that you say before they go to sleep.
85. Find a positive 'corny catchphrase' or two to share with them that they will know you for.
86. Speak to their heart. Train yourself to ask 'what's going on inside?' every time an issue arises. Speak out of your heart (the reasons you do things) and into their heart (the reasons they should do things).
87. Practice speaking about faith out loud when you start to think about –especially in the car when you have a captive audience!
88. Take home stories from your day that you can share at the dinner table –funny, sad etc. And your role in these stories as a Christian.
89. Teach 4-5 key words each year that you would like them to know the meaning of –such as 'determination', 'respect', 'joy', 'practice' and so on.
90. Use the words 'God Bless' as part of your goodbye to them and others.

HABITS OF ATTENTION

91. Ask each child every day after work or school 'how was your day?' & 'have you any stories from today?'
92. Ban all phones, computers, books, toys and distractions from the dinner table.
93. Hug and kiss them every day –especially when leaving to go somewhere.
94. Try and get 'knee time' with younger children regularly where they can sit on your knee & talk or watch TV.
95. Say 'I love you' every day and when you leave the house or finish phone calls.
96. Write the occasional short note of encouragement in a lunch box or for trips away by themselves.
97. Self impose a ban on checking your phone when at the park or on trips out.
98. For siblings find something that is a special activity that each one gets for themselves
99. Get some individual time every few weeks with each child. Just the two of you doing a job or going out somewhere.
100. Try to remember a few positive adjectives that you don't normally use and introduce them as part of new encouragements for your children.



Remember that these are just ideas for you to build upon as a parent. You know your family life so do what suits you best. Start small! Try to make changes in achievable stages so you don't exhaust yourself or get downhearted.

Set a few reminders on paper or a phone and keep praying!

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:9, 10