

THE FIVE KEY TOOLS

The Key Truths

Explore five reassuring truths about helping your child or teenager grow a relationship with God in ordinary family life.

01 Key points

- The Five Key Tools are designed to help parents and carers help their children and teenagers grow a real, personal relationship with God — moving beyond simply knowing things about God (“God-smart”) towards being connected to him (“God-connected”). Key truths underpin the approach:
 - 1 God is already at work in your child or teenager's life. You are not starting from scratch, and it isn't all on your shoulders. God loves your child, wants a relationship with them and is already at work in their life. Your role is to partner with what God is doing.
 - 2 This is designed for ordinary, messy family life. Parenting for faith isn't something that needs to happen when everyone is calm, the house is tidy and you've got plenty of time. God designed it to happen in the middle of ordinary life - the busy, boring, joyful and difficult bits.
 - 3 You're not trying to produce a perfect Christian 18-year-old. Parenting is a lifelong journey. The goal isn't to get your child to a particular point by a particular age, but to walk alongside them as they take their own next steps with God.
 - 4 Every child and family is different. There is no one right way to help your child or teenager grow in their relationship with God. Your child has their own personality, interests, needs and ways of connecting with God. You know your child or teenager best and may also spend the most time with them, so you are in a unique position to work out what might help them take their next step.
 - 5 You are a gift, not a performance. You don't need to be a perfect Christian or a parenting expert. Your child doesn't need you to have everything sorted. They need you to walk alongside them as yourself, in whatever season of faith you're in. That includes if you're new to faith or just exploring it yourself.

02 Things to think about/chat about

- What particularly stood out to you from this session?
- What would it mean for you to see yourself as partnering with what God is already doing, rather than making your child or teenager's faith happen?
- Who helped you discover God? What ordinary things did they do?
- What might your child or teenager's next step with God be now?

03 Have a go

You could:

- Notice the ways your child is already learning about God from you, perhaps through the way you pray, talk about God or go to church.
- Read Deuteronomy 6:4–9 and notice how ordinary God's picture of faith being passed on to children is.
- Think about all the other things you naturally help your child learn. From brushing their teeth to handling friendships or learning a hobby. What could parenting for faith look like if it was woven into life in the same way?
- Think about someone who helped you discover God. What ordinary things did they do?
- Ask yourself: What might the next step with God be for my child?

04 Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Key Truths for parents and carers (3 min read)
- › Podcast episode on God's plan for kids' discipleship with Rachel Turner (35 min listen)
- › The joy of the mundane: discipleship in the busy, tired, boring bits of life (2 min watch)
- › Perfectly positioned whether you know it or not! (5 min read)

Last reviewed 18 August 2026

SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

THE FIVE KEY TOOLS

Creating Windows

Give your child or teenager small, natural glimpses into your own relationship with God through everyday words and actions.

01

Key points

- Children learn by watching, listening and having a go. A lot of our relationship with God happens where our children can't see it. That could be inside our heads, behind closed doors, or when they're at school, nursery or university.
- Creating Windows means deliberately giving our children and teenagers little glimpses into our real relationship with God, so they can see what life with God can look like and begin to work out what their own relationship with him might look like.
- You don't need to perform a better version of Christianity for them. Let them see the relationship with God you already have, in whatever season you're in.
- Windows can include:
 - letting children hear you pray;
 - talking about how God helped you with something;
 - sharing a story about you and God;
 - letting them see how you respond when life is difficult;
 - talking about something you're grateful to God for;
 - letting them see you worship, read the Bible or seek God's help.
- Windows don't have to be dramatic. Often they're tiny moments or a sentence in passing. And they don't always have to happen in the moment — you can tell your child afterwards about something that happened when they weren't there.

- Creating Windows is also not about explaining everything. Sometimes the window is simply allowing your child to see or hear you doing life with God.
- Creating windows might feel strange at first but as you practise, you'll notice opportunities more naturally.

02 Things to think about/chat about

- What parts of your relationship with God do your children currently get to see or hear?
- What do they probably not see or hear?
- Which idea from the session feels natural for your family?
- What would be a tiny "window" you could create this week?

03 Have a go – under-fives

With young children, simply narrating some of what's happening inside you can make a big difference.

- When something delights you, tell God about it out loud: “God, look at those beautiful flowers!”
- When you're struggling, let them hear a simple glimpse: “I'm finding this really hard. I'm going to talk to God about it.”
- Let them see you pray, worship or read the Bible.
- Tell them a story about something that happened with God.
- If they're strapped into the buggy or car, use that time to practise saying some of the things you'd normally say to God silently, out loud.
- Remember that you don't have to make a big thing of it. Your child simply hearing you naturally talk to God can become part of their picture of what life with God looks like.

04

Have a go – children and teenagers

- Try praying out loud or reading the Bible where your child can see or hear you.
- Tell them a story about you and God — perhaps a time you knew he was real, he helped you decide or change something.
- When talking about your day, mention where you noticed God in it.
- If you've had a difficult day, tell them afterwards how you experienced God in it.
- If you're facing something difficult, let them see what you do with God before and afterwards.
- Leave your Bible, a book, journal or other faith resource somewhere they might notice it.
- Instead of listening to a Christian podcast with headphones, sometimes put it on the speaker when your children are around.
- Invite them into something you're already doing with God when that feels appropriate.

05

Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Summary of the Creating Windows tool (1 min watch, 4 min read)
- › Creating windows into every aspect of our lives (7 min read)
- › Creating windows and additional needs: FAQs (7 min read)
- › Sharing Creating Windows with parents and under fives (3 min read)

- › Session 1 of the Original Parenting for Faith course (27 min watch)

SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

THE FIVE KEY TOOLS | Framing

Help your child or teenager connect what they know about God with everyday experiences, questions and conversations.

01 Key points

- We naturally help our children make sense of the world. We point things out, explain why things happen, answer questions, encourage curiosity and talk about what we've experienced.
- Framing is doing the same thing with our children's spiritual lives.
- It helps children and teenagers join up the dots between what they know about God and what they're actually experiencing — helping them see where God is, what he might be doing and why faith matters in ordinary life.
- There are four particularly useful things we can do:
 - 1 Name it when you see it. Point out where you notice God at work, in your family, church, the world or other people's lives.
 - 2 Give the why. Don't just tell children what Christians do. Explain why. "We're going to church" becomes "We're going because..." The why helps children understand rather than simply follow a rule.
 - 3 Encourage curiosity and questions. You don't need to know everything. It's okay to say, "I don't know, let's find out," or "I'm not sure about that either." Your curiosity gives your child permission to be curious too.
 - 4 Debrief and tell stories. Looking back over experiences and asking what happened, how we felt and where God was helps children learn to see their lives with a spiritual framework.
- Framing isn't about having all the answers. Sometimes part of framing is saying "We don't know." When something is difficult or we can't see where God is, we can model seeking God and seeking help from other people rather than pretending we understand everything.

02 A useful way to answer questions

When your child asks a difficult question, try:

- 1 What do you think?
- 2 What do we know?
- 3 What don't we know?
- 4 How have I handled this? This gives you time to understand why they're asking, share what you do know, acknowledge what remains uncertain, and model what it looks like to journey with a question rather than needing an instant perfect answer.

03 Things to think about/chat about

- What kinds of things do your children or teenagers ask you about?
- Where do you already find yourself explaining why something matters?
- How comfortable are you saying, "I don't know, shall we explore that together?"
- Which of the framing ideas could fit naturally into your family?

04

Have a go – under-fives

- In church, explain what's happening and why.
- Use simple phrases about God throughout the day: “God, thank you for the sunshine” or “Oh God, I'm so tired!”
- When reading a Bible story, talk about what the characters might be feeling and what God might be doing.
- Ask your child what they notice or wonder about.
- If they ask a question you don't know the answer to, be curious together rather than rushing to provide an answer.

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Have a go – children and teenagers

- When reading a Bible story, ask: “I wonder what God was thinking or doing?”
- In church, explain some of the things that are happening and why.
- When you notice something good, courageous, compassionate or beautiful in the world, point it out and talk about where you see God in it.
- Tell your child something you wish you'd known about God when you were younger.
- Ask open questions about God that don't have a right answer.
- If your child asks a difficult question, use the four-step approach (see link below).
- If your teenager is facing something difficult — friendship problems, exams, decisions or worries — help them connect what they know about God with what they're experiencing.

06

Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Summary of the Framing tool (1 min watch, 4 min read)
- › Framing and additional needs: FAQs (5 min read)
- › 101 ways to spark an interesting conversation about God (free download)
- › Four steps to answering any question (6 min watch, 3 min read, free download)
- › Intellectual wrestlers: equipping kids who need to know (9 min listen, 3 min read)
- › Helping under-fives make sense of a church service (3 min watch)
- › Reading a Bible story with under-fives (3 min watch)
- › Accessing God's word with dyslexia or reading difficulties (20 min watch, 5 min read)
- › Session 2 of the Original Parenting for Faith course (24 min watch)
- › Tying together truth and experience from Parenting Teens for a Life of Faith (38 min watch)

Last reviewed 26 August 2026

SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

THE FIVE KEY TOOLS

Unwinding

Explore what your child or teenager thinks God is like and gently help them develop a broader, more balanced picture.

01 Key points

- Children and teenagers are constantly building a picture of what God is like from the Bible, church, family, friends, social media, conversations and their own experiences.
- Sometimes that picture is accurate. Sometimes it's partly right but unbalanced. Sometimes it's simply wrong.
- The way a child sees God affects how they relate to him. If they think God is distant, they may not expect him to care. If they think God is angry with them, they may avoid him. If they think God only wants them to be happy, they may struggle when life is difficult.
- Unwinding means noticing what our children think about God and gently helping them move towards a broader, more balanced picture.
- The first step is often simply noticing. Listen for little comments about God rather than asking, "What is your theology of God?"!
- Open-ended questions can help because they aren't a quiz. You're trying to discover what your child genuinely thinks, not whether they know the right answer.
- Once you've noticed something, you don't have to correct it immediately. Try "Tell me more". Follow your curiosity and find out where the idea came from.
- Then think about what might help bring balance. Sometimes children need more information. Sometimes they need an experience of the truth they're missing.
- For example, if a child thinks God is distant, you might create more windows into how close God is to you or help them experience connecting with God for themselves.

- You can also join your child in their journey — especially teenagers who are getting ideas about God from friends, podcasts, school or social media. Ask them what they've heard and invite them to explore it with you rather than turning it into a debate.
- And remember: you don't have to do this alone. Other Christians, church communities and people with particular knowledge can help.

02 Things to think about/chat about

- What do you think your child or teenager currently thinks God is like?
- Where might that idea have come from?
- What might be missing from their picture?
- How could you explore that together without turning it into a correction or a test?

03 Have a go – under-fives

- Ask your toddler to draw a picture of God and them. Look at it together and see what you notice.
- Think about your own view of God. Are there characteristics you naturally emphasise more than others?
- Use the “When I am...” tool (see link below) to help your child discover that God's love isn't dependent on their behaviour.
- If your child says something about God that seems unhelpful, gently explore it rather than simply saying, “That's wrong.”
- If your child loves hearing the same Bible story repeatedly, introduce another story that shows a different aspect of God's character.
- Remember that you don't need to force a conversation. You can also broaden their picture simply through the stories you choose, the way you talk about God and the windows you create.

04

Have a go – children and teenagers

- Ask: “If you had to describe God in five words, what would they be and why?”
- Ask open questions such as “What do you think God thinks about...?” or “What do you think God was doing in that situation?”
- When your child says something about God that interests you, try “Tell me more.”
- Ask where they've got an idea about God from.
- If they are getting ideas from a podcast, YouTube video or social media, ask them to show you what they've heard and explore it together.
- If you notice an unbalanced view of God, ask: “What else might they need to know or experience about God?”
- Be willing to share things you find difficult to understand about God too.

05

Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Summary of the Unwinding tool (1 min watch, 4 min read)
- › Unwinding and additional needs: FAQs (5 min read)
- › Ideas to spark a conversation with children and teens (4 min watch)
- › Ideas to spark a conversation with teens (2 min watch)
- › 101 questions to start an interesting conversation about God (free download)

- › Helping under-fives grow a balanced view of God (3 min watch)
- › Session 3 of the Original Parenting for Faith course (25 min watch)
- › Session 4 of Parenting Teens for a Life of Faith course (35 min watch)

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SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Help your child or teenager talk naturally with God, notice what he communicates and learn to discern what they catch.

01

Key points

- Chat and Catch is about helping children and teenagers develop their own two-way relationship with God.
- “Chat” means being free to talk to God about whatever is on their minds and hearts — the big things and the tiny things, wherever they are and however feels natural to them.
- “Catch” means being ready to notice what God communicates back.
- Prayer doesn't need to be a formula or a performance. Children can talk to God in ways that look like them — while walking, drawing, riding a bike, lying in bed or sitting in an exam.
- God can communicate in many different ways. We see this throughout the Bible, including through Scripture, pictures, dreams, emotions and physical experiences.
- But not everything we think or feel is automatically from God. Children need to learn to discern what they catch.
- Rachel uses the analogy of discerning if milk is good or not:
- Look at it: is it clearly from God or not at a first glance?
- Smell it: get closer, does it fit with what we know about God and Scripture?
- Taste it: does it draw us towards God?
- Ask someone else: what do other trusted, wise Christians think?
- The aim isn't to make children afraid of getting it wrong. It's to help them become increasingly confident at recognising God's voice while remaining grounded in Scripture, God's character and Christian community.

- You also don't have to hear or see what your child catches. The goal is to help them develop their own conversation with God, rather than turning it into something they perform for you.

02

Things to think about/chat about

- What does prayer look or feel like in your family at the moment?
- What might make prayer feel more natural or accessible for your child?
- Where might they already be noticing God communicating with them?
- How could you encourage this without making it feel like a performance?

03

Have a go – under-fives

- Ask your toddler to show God their favourite toy, animal or book.
- When they're happy, sad, angry or excited, encourage them to show God how they feel.
- Whisper a prayer into your hand and invite them to do the same.
- Leave a little pause and say, “Shall we see what we can catch from God?”
- Pray out loud in front of them.
- Bring God naturally into everyday conversations: “God, look at the sunshine!” or “Oh God, we're so tired.”
- Tell them when you notice God communicating with you or when you're going to ask him for help.

04

Have a go – children and teenagers

- Let your child hear you chatting naturally to God about your day (out loud even if you normally just do this in your head).
- When they're telling you about something that happened, suggest that they tell God about it too.
- Encourage them to chat to God in whatever way suits them - silently, aloud, writing or drawing.
- Give them a simple prompt: "Why don't you tell God how you're feeling about your exam?"
- At bedtime, suggest they tell God about their day.
- Ask God a question together and leave some space to see what you might catch.
- Use a few of the 101 ways to start a conversation with God - don't try and work through all 101!
- When your child or teenager catches something they think is from God, talk it through using the "milk" idea above.
- Share your own experiences of chatting and catching, including when you're still figuring things out.

05

Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Summary of the Chat and Catch tool (1 min watch, 4 min read)
- › Chat and Catch and additional needs: FAQs (10 min read, 8 min listen)
- › Ideas for helping under-fives chat with God (3 min read, free download)

- › When catching from God is hard (7 min listen, 3 min read)
- › 101 ways to start a conversation with God (free download)
- › Different ways to engage kids and teens with Chat and Catch (33 min watch)
- › Sessions 4 and 5 of the Original Parenting for Faith Course (1 hour watch)
- › Session 3 of the Parenting Teens for a Life of Faith Course (45 min watch)
- › Session 3 of the Babies and Toddlers course (8 min watch)

SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

THE FIVE KEY TOOLS

Surfing the Waves

Notice your child's or teenager's changing interests, feelings and experiences, and explore opportunities to connect with God.

01

Key points

- Children's and teenagers' spiritual lives don't develop in a straight line.
- They have ups, downs, pauses, doubts, enthusiasms and changing interests. A child who was fascinated by the Bible last month might suddenly become fascinated by something completely different. That doesn't necessarily mean they've lost interest in God. It may simply mean that a new “wave” has arrived.
- A wave could be:
 - an interest or passion;
 - an emotion such as anger or excitement;
 - life events or circumstances;
 - something they're curious about;
- Surfing the Waves means noticing those things and looking for opportunities to help your child meet and know God in the season they're currently in.
- You don't need to surf every wave. No surfer tries to surf every wave. Sometimes you'll notice an opportunity but don't have the energy to do anything with it. That's okay.
- When you do choose a wave, come alongside rather than taking over. Use the other tools you've learned to help your child discover God in what's happening.
- And when the wave passes, let it go. You don't have to keep trying to recreate something that has finished. There will be another wave.

- Sometimes the most useful thing you can do is simply notice what's happening in your child's life and ask God how to support them in it.

02

Things to think about/chat about

- What "waves" can you spot in your child or teenager's life at the moment?
- What are they particularly interested in, curious about or feeling?
- Is there a way this could become an opportunity to help them meet God?
- Which waves do you have the energy to surf — and which do you need to let pass?

03

Have a go – under-fives

- A simple pattern is: Notice → Celebrate → Connect to God For example:
 - If they love animals: “God made animals! He's so creative. Why don't you show him your favourite animal?”
 - If they love jumping: “God gave you strong legs! Show God how high you can jump.”
 - If they love making things: “You're so good at making things! God loves making things too.”
- Notice whether they're particularly drawn to music, nature, people, silence or something else at church.
- If they become curious about God, encourage that curiosity for as long as it lasts.
- Ask your toddler how they'd like to help in church or help others and see whether you can facilitate it.

04

Have a go – children and teenagers

- Ask: “If you had £1 million to help people, what would you do and why?”
- Notice what your child or teenager is passionate about and ask God what might be underneath that.
- Help them take a small next step in something they're interested in.
- Read or watch a story about someone who made a difference and see what sparks their interest.
- Talk about your own spiritual “waves” — times when faith felt exciting, times when it felt harder, or periods when you had doubts.
- Ask what they've noticed about themselves recently.
- Chat to God about how he has made your child and what he has placed in them.
- If they're going through a difficult season, ask: “How could we help you meet with God in this?”
- Remember that the wave might last one conversation or several years. You don't have to force it to last longer than it does.

05

Keep exploring

- These ideas are a starting point, not a checklist. You don't need to try everything. Choose something that feels like it might fit your child, your family and the season you're in and see what happens.
- There is no one right way to parent for faith. You're the expert in your child, and you can experiment, notice what helps and work out their next step with God.

GO DEEPER

- › Summary of the Surfing the Waves tool (1 min watch, 4 min read)
- › Surfing the Waves and additional needs: FAQs (5 min read)
- › Session 6 of the Original Parenting for Faith course (25 min watch)

- › Session 1 of Parenting Teens for a Life of Faith Course (9 min watch)
- › Session 2, part 2 of Babies and Toddlers course (3 min watch)
- › Surfing the Waves stories – Before a hospital trip and others (2 min watch and link to other stories)

SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS
