

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.

05

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)

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SPACE FOR YOUR THOUGHTS
