



**FORMING FAITH AT HOME
WITH CHILDREN**
Jolene Roehlkepartain

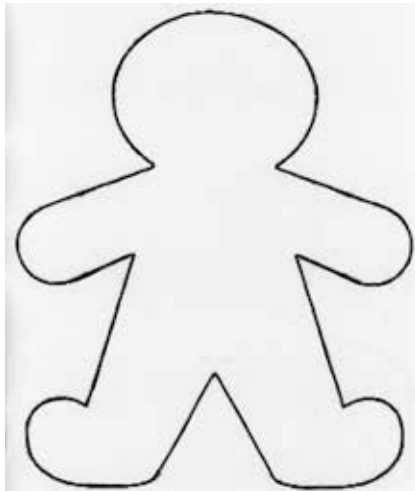


**BRINGING OUT THE
BEST IN CHILDREN**

Congregations want to nurture children's spiritual growth and their spiritual journey.



**BUT WHEN IT
COMES TO CHILD
DEVELOPMENT...**



**THAT'S NOT OUR
AREA OF EXPERTISE**

Parents, teachers, child care providers, coaches, pediatricians, and others are the experts with the other aspects of children's development.



BECAUSE WE IGNORE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

We inadvertently end up promoting a fractured sense of the child.

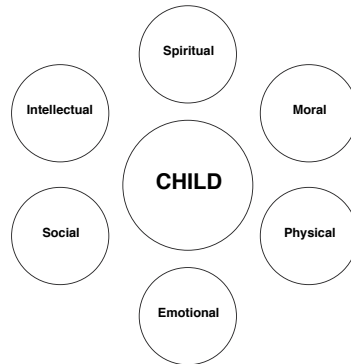


BUT THAT'S OKAY —ISN'T IT?

Congregations do the work that really matters.

(It's all about the heart—the spirit—right?)

EVERY ASPECT OF THE CHILD MATTERS



WHY STUDY CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

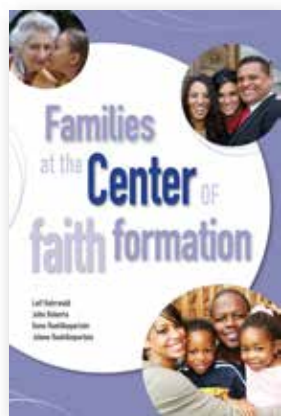
1. We learn more about what makes children tick: how they think, feel, and act.
2. We discover how to interact with them more effectively and strengthen our relationships with them.
3. We can help children grow spiritually—and more holistically when we emphasize all aspects of development.
4. We can better support parents—who are expected to nurture every aspect of the child.

FORM SMALL GROUPS

1. Form groups of 3 to 4 people.
2. You'll talk and work with this group for this session.

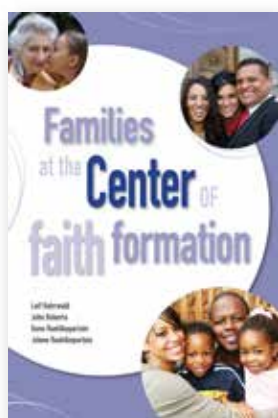
DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

1. Say your name.
2. Say where you're from.
3. Say what you love most about working with children.



CHAPTER 5

- Part 5A: Young Children: Birth to Age 5
- Part 5B: Older Children: Ages 6 to 10
- Part 5C: Young Teens: Ages 11 to 14
- Part 5D: Older Teens: Ages 15 to 18
- Part 5E: Emerging Adults: Ages 19 to 29



CHAPTER 5: OUR FOCUS TODAY

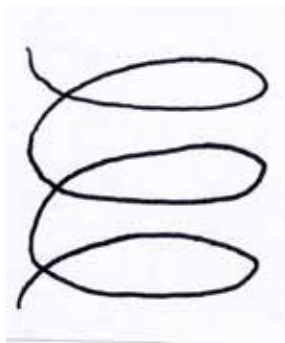
- Part 5A: Young Children:
Birth to Age 5
(Pages 109-118)

- Part 5B: Older Children:
Ages 6 to 10
(Pages 119-126)

CYCLES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Disequilibrium

- ◆ Breaking-up behavior
- ◆ Inward behavior
- ◆ Conflicted behavior



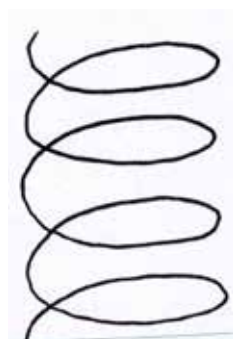
Equilibrium

- ◆ Smooth and consolidated
- ◆ Rounded and balanced
- ◆ Vigorous, expansive behavior

CYCLES OF INFANT DEVELOPMENT

Disequilibrium

- ◆ 12 weeks
- ◆ 20 weeks
- ◆ 32 weeks
- ◆ 44 weeks



Equilibrium

- ◆ 16 weeks
- ◆ 28 weeks
- ◆ 40 weeks
- ◆ 1 year (52 weeks)

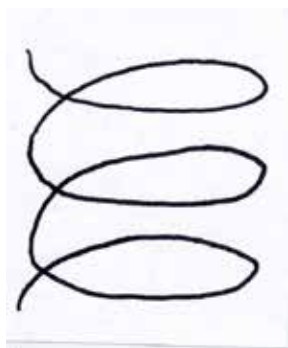
KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING INFANTS

- ◆ The world is huge in the eyes of an infant.
- ◆ The floor is the play world of infants.
- ◆ Get down on the floor to interact with infants.
- ◆ When we understand an infant's world, we can help infants grow up well and grow spiritually.

CYCLES OF TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

Disequilibrium

- ◆ 15 to 18 months
- ◆ 2 ½ years



Equilibrium

- ◆ 1 year
- ◆ 2 years
- ◆ 3 years

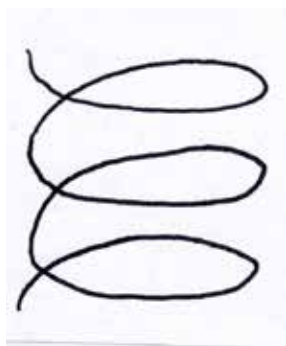
KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING TODDLERS

- ◆ Toddlers are at a push-pull stage.
- ◆ A refusal to share (the “mine” stage) is a critical part of a toddler’s development. Empower toddlers to hang on to what belongs to them while also teaching them to share.
- ◆ Expect toddlers to hit, slap, grab, punch, and bite AND be clear about appropriate behavior—and what’s not.

CYCLES OF PRESCHOOLER DEVELOPMENT

Disequilibrium

- ◆ 3 ½ years
- ◆ 4 ½ years
- ◆ 5 ½ years



Equilibrium

- ◆ 3 years
- ◆ 4 years
- ◆ 5 years

KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING PRESCHOOLERS

- ◆ Preschoolers have a delightful imagination.
- ◆ Preschoolers ask a lot of questions.
- ◆ Preschoolers go through demanding stages: the turbulent threes, the frustrating fours, and the finicky fives.
- ◆ Preschoolers can be very hard on their parents.

THE TEN FAITH FACTORS

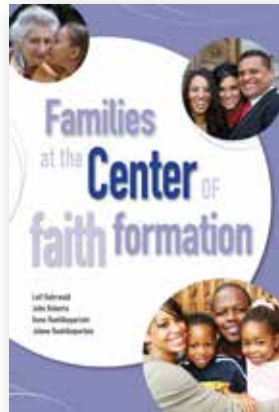
1. Feeling valued and accepted
2. Developing caring relationships
3. Engaging in learning
4. Celebrating milestones
5. Praying and meditating
6. Serving, volunteering, and helping
7. Attending worship services
8. Finding meaning and purpose
9. Examining a personal religion and spirituality
10. Developing an integrative faith

The Ten Faith Factors Shaping Each Stage of Life

Note: These factors are rooted in child development, adolescent development, adult development.

Young Children (Ages 0 to 5)	Older Children (Ages 6 to 10)	Young Adolescents (Ages 11 to 14)	Older Adolescents (Ages 15 to 18)
1. Feels valued and accepted	1. Connects to life and prayer	1. Years to be part of a group that matters	1. Discovers meaning in life
2. Develops caring relationships	2. Thrives with consistent support and care	2. Craves support and fights it	2. Resists support
3. Follows a curiosity for learning	3. Engages in learning and discovery	3. Feels conflicted about learning	3. Years succeed in ways
4. Celebrates milestones	4. Enjoys milestones	4. Celebrates milestones while resisting them	4. Enjoys milestones
5. Tries meditation and prayer	5. Enjoys meditation and prayer	5. Worries about meditation and prayer	5. Meditates with questions
6. Serves and helps others	6. Develops fairness, justice, & compassion	6. Works at some service despite others	6. Creates a purpose
7. Attends worship services	7. Participates in worship services	7. Attends worship services with resistance	7. Participates in worship services
8. Observes adults who have purpose and meaning	8. Mimics adults who have purpose and meaning	8. Longs for meaning while wondering about it	8. Examines meaning
9. Experiments with a personal spirituality	9. Becomes exposed to more religions and spiritual experiences	9. Desires religious and spiritual belonging	9. Questions faith and spirituality
10. Explores how faith and life interact	10. Discovers how faith and life interact	10. Experiments with ways to integrate faith into life	10. Deepens faith integration while continuing to question

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THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (BIRTH TO AGE 5)

Part 5A: Young Children:
Birth to Age 5

See pages 109-118

THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (BIRTH TO AGE 5)

1. Feels valued and accepted
2. Develops caring relationships
3. Follows a curiosity for learning
4. Celebrates milestones
5. Tries meditation and prayer
6. Serves and helps others
7. Attends worship services
8. Observes adults who have purpose and meaning
9. Experiments with a personal spirituality
10. Explores how faith and life intersect

YOUNG CHILDREN (BIRTH TO AGE 5): LAYING THE FOUNDATION

“Religious development is like the building of a college. There is a long period when the foundations are being laid, when what is going on does not look at all like the finished product.”

R.S. Lee

Your Growing Child and Religion

TIPS FOR FAITH FORMATION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (BIRTH TO AGE 5)

- ◆ Give children special attention, warmth, and closeness.
- ◆ Be sensitive and responsive to children’s needs.
- ◆ Create safe, stimulating environments for exploration.
- ◆ Celebrate milestones.
- ◆ Teach and model short meditations and prayers.
- ◆ Do short, one-time service “or helping” projects.
- ◆ Encourage families to attend family-friendly worship.
- ◆ Give opportunities for children to play.
- ◆ Provide ways for children to “experience” faith.

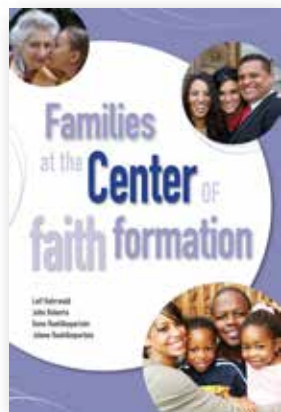
FAITH FORMATION AT HOME HAPPENS IN FOUR SETTINGS

- ◆ 1. Home: What are families doing to grow in faith and discipleship in each of the faith-forming processes?
- ◆ 2. Intergenerational: How are families connected to other generations in your congregation?
- ◆ 3. Congregational life: How is your congregation empowering, resourcing, and supporting families to grow as disciples and practice their faith?
- ◆ 4. Parents: How is your congregation empowering, resourcing, and supporting parents as faith formers?

◆ See Chapter 6, Strategy 2, Pages 166-169

DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

- ◆ Repeat your name.
- ◆ Of the four areas of where faith formation happens, which is the strongest for you? The weakest? The four areas are:
 1. Home
 2. Intergenerational connections
 3. Congregation
 4. Empowering parents



THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR OLDER CHILDREN (AGES 6 to 10)

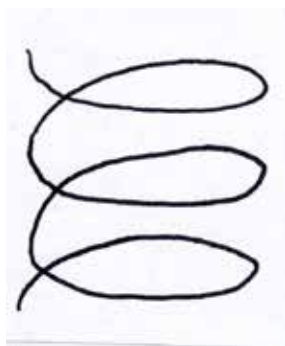
Part 5B: Older Children:
Ages 6 to 10

See pages 119-126

CYCLES OF OLDER CHILD DEVELOPMENT (AGES 6 TO 12)

Disequilibrium

- ◆ 5 ½ years
- ◆ 7 years
- ◆ 9 years
- ◆ 11 years



Equilibrium

- ◆ 6 ½ years
- ◆ 8 years
- ◆ 10 years
- ◆ 12 years

KEY MESSAGES FOR UNDERSTANDING OLDER CHILDREN

- ◆ Children at this age learn best through active participation (even though they're learned how to sit still more than younger children).
- ◆ Be clear about socially acceptable behavior.
- ◆ These are often the "quiet years" of development.
- ◆ Develop their curiosity and motivation.

THE TEN FAITH FACTORS FOR OLDER CHILDREN (AGES 6 TO 10)

1. Connects to safe and stimulating adults and peers
2. Thrives with consistent support and care
3. Engages in learning and discovery
4. Enjoys milestones
5. Explores meditation and prayer
6. Develops fairness, justice, and compassion
7. Participates in worship services
8. Mimics adults who have purpose and meaning
9. Becomes exposed to more religious and spiritual experiences
10. Discovers how faith and life intersect

OLDER CHILDREN (AGES 6 TO 10): INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSION EMERGES

“Spiritual development usually begins to find individual expression at 6 years of age.”

Vivian Thompson and Jacqueline Braeger
Human Development and Faith

TIPS FOR FAITH FORMATION FOR OLDER CHILDREN (AGES 6 TO 10)

- ◆ Develop strong relationships between adults and children and also between children.
- ◆ Welcome children. Show them that their presence matters.
- ◆ Include children in milestones, rituals, and sacraments.
- ◆ Teach children to talk to God and how to meditate in silence.
- ◆ Do short, easy, meaningful service projects.
- ◆ Encourage families to attend family-friendly worship.
- ◆ Give opportunities for children to connect with passionate adults.
- ◆ Ensure that children don't get bored and disconnect.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Family factors (economics, family interactions, faith practices)
- ◆ Environments (home, child care, school, congregation)
- ◆ Genetics (temperament, height, skin color, etc.)
- ◆ Health (physical, mental, nutrition, and access to high-quality health care)
- ◆ Trauma and/or loss
- ◆ Relationships

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

SEVEN STAGES OF PARENTS OF FAITH

- Stage 1—Wondering and imagining (pre-birth)
- Stage 2—Caring and nurturing (birth to 2 years)
- Stage 3—Testing and treasuring (2 to 5 years)
- Stage 4—Supporting and strengthening (6 to 10 years)
- Stage 5—Experimenting and encouraging (11 to 14 years)
- Stage 6—Guiding and questioning (15 to 18 years)
- Stage 7—Launching and fostering (19 to 29 years)

The Seven Stages of Parents of Faith

Stage 1—Wondering and Imagining—During the waiting process (of adoption and/or pregnancy), adults wonder what it will be like to be parents and to have a child. This time is wonder and prayer. (Pre-Birth)

Stage 2—Caring and Nurturing—During the first two years of a child's life, parents meet the child's needs and provide growth care and nurture, which lays the foundation for which children develop the critical foundation they need for their faith journey. (Birth to 2 years)

Stage 3—Testing and Treasuring—When children begin to resist and explore limits, parents become tested themselves. How will they respond to these displays of power while treasuring their child from a faith perspective? Parents can talk with children about God, love their children deeply while setting clear boundaries, introduce them to people of faith, and love their children deeply while setting clear boundaries. (2 to 5 years)

Stage 4—Supporting and Strengthening—During the elementary-school years, parents support their child's spiritual and overall development, strengthening him to other people and to important institutions, such as church and school. When parents pray, are together as a family, attend worship services, and have conversations about faith, they help strengthen their child's faith journey. (6 to 10 years)

Stage 5—Experimenting and Encouraging—While young adolescents experiment with different identities, parents discover that they, too, need an experiment with new ways to support their child's spiritual and overall development, strengthening him to other people and to important institutions, such as church and school. When parents pray, are together as a family, attend worship services, and have conversations about faith, they help strengthen their child's faith journey. (6 to 10 years)

Stage 6—Guiding and Questioning—High-school-age young people need parents who help them make sense of their world and their future. While older adolescents question various aspects of faith, parents need to question how they can continue to model and talk about faith issues that bring them closer to their teenager rather than distance them. Parents need to continue showing that their faith matters to them by talking about it, attending worship services, and doing other faith practices, such as prayer and meditation. (15 to 18 years)

Stage 7—Launching and Fostering—As young adults leave home and find their way in the world, their need parents who continue to show what looking them go. Parents continue to serve as faith models for their young adults, providing a safe place for young adults to go to people with faith issues. When parents have a strong ongoing commitment to faith, the more likely young adults will find a religious grounding. (19 to 29 years)

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WHY PARENTS RESIST BUILDING FAITH AT HOME

- ◆ They think they're not the experts. (They think people in churches are.)
- ◆ They're often not comfortable with their faith—and their faith journey.
- ◆ They think that faith is abstract, not practical.
- ◆ They don't know what to do.

EVERYONE IS ON A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

- ◆ The children in your congregation
- ◆ The parents of the children in your congregation
- ◆ Your volunteers
- ◆ Your church leadership

Key question: How are you nurturing the spiritual journey of all the people affected by your ministry?

DISCUSS: IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

1. Repeat your name.
2. Talk about what's impacting your spiritual journey at the moment.
 1. Is it a spiritual book or scripture you're reading?
 2. Is it a spiritual practice you're doing?
 3. Is there an event (or past event)?
 4. Is there a question you're wrestling with?
 5. Is there something else?

UNDERSTANDING THE UNFORTUNATE CYCLE

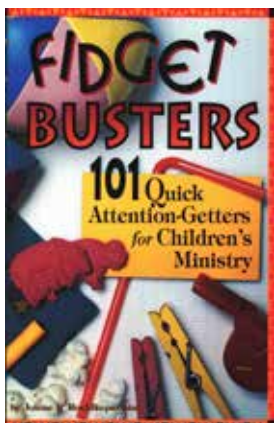
Children's ministry is a labor-intensive ministry.

Typically, it's the most labor intensive of a congregation.

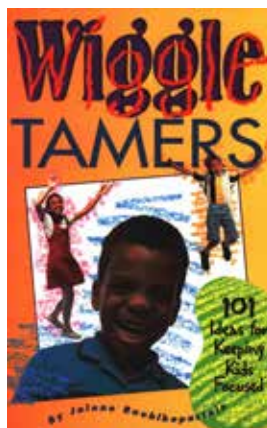
This labor intensity can make it difficult to create change.



FREE DOWNLOADS ON THE WEBSITE



101 simple, faith-based activities to deal with children's wiggles and boredom.



FINDING THE FREE DOWNLOADS

Visit: Lifelongfaith.com. Find "Symposium." Find "Family Symposium Program."

Forming Faith at Home: Adolescents

Click here for: [Resources to Accompany Jolene's Workshop](#)

 [forming_faith_at_home_-_teens.pdf](#)
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Forming Faith at Home: Children

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7 STRATEGIES FOR YOUR MINISTRY

1. Rethink relationships
2. Develop relationships between children
3. Focus on relationships between children and adult leaders
4. Form relationships with and between parents
5. Connect volunteers to each other
6. Create ways for families to be together
7. Make children more visible in your congregation

Seven Strategies for your Family-Centered Ministry
 Transform your children's ministry by focusing on one or more strategies. Write your ideas next to the strategy that intrigues you.

Strategy	Your Ideas
Strategy #1: Rethink relationships	
Strategy #2: Develop relationships between children	
Strategy #3: Focus on relationships between children and adult leaders	
Strategy #4: Form relationships with and between parents	
Strategy #5: Connect volunteers to each other	
Strategy #6: Create ways for families to be together	
Strategy #7: Make children more visible in your congregation	

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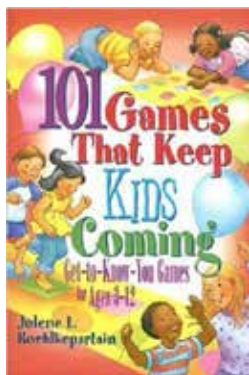
#1: RETHINK RELATIONSHIPS



Faith partners—linking up one adult with one young person in your congregation

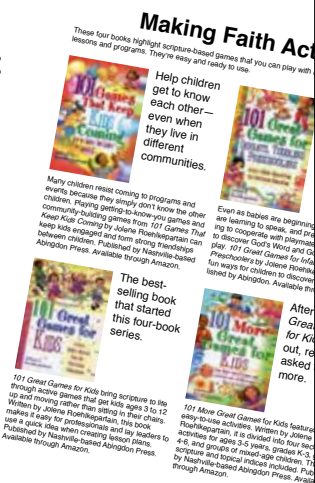
1. Greet each other
2. Seek each other out
3. Say hello

#2: DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN



Be intentional about:

1. Helping kids learn each other's names
2. Creating ways for children to interact with each other



#3: FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND ADULT LEADERS

Be intentional about:

1. Encouraging adult leaders to smile, greet, and be warm as children arrive
2. Helping children and adult leaders learn each other's names
3. Creating ways for children and adult leaders to get to know each other

#4: FORM RELATIONSHIPS WITH AND BETWEEN PARENTS

Be intentional about:

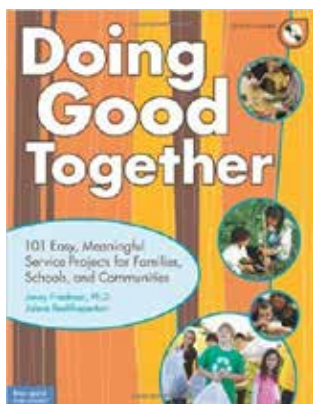
1. Getting to know parents
2. Helping parents learn each other's names
3. Creating ways for parents to get to know each other
4. Encouraging relationships to form between parents

#5: CONNECT VOLUNTEERS TO EACH OTHER

Be intentional about:

1. Helping volunteers learn each other's names
2. Creating ways for volunteers to mentor each other (your veteran volunteers can mentor your new volunteers)
3. Developing ways for volunteers to get to know each other
4. Encouraging relationships to form between volunteers

#6: CREATE WAYS FOR FAMILIES TO BE TOGETHER



Be intentional about:

1. Family volunteer activities
2. Family fun activities
3. Family faith activities



#7: MAKE CHILDREN MORE VISIBLE IN YOUR CONGREGATION



Be intentional about:

1. Worship
2. Your congregational newsletter/website/bulletin
3. Bulletin boards
4. Visible activities

PROVIDE EASY, SIMPLE WAYS FOR PARENTS TO BECOME BETTER PARENTS

- ◆ Look for helpful websites, such as the Gottman Institute on Facebook. The Gottman Institute has parenting tips, marriage tips, and other tips.
- ◆ Offer helpful, easy tips that parents can take with them.



ENCOURAGING PARENTS TO BUILD FAITH AT HOME

- ◆ Offer occasional classes (or experiences) on simple faith practices to do at home. Do demonstrations.
- ◆ Acknowledge the discomfort and the barriers so that parents don't feel alone and uneasy about this.
- ◆ Send home one-page ideas to do at home. Include simple, easy-to-use practices. See the website: Vibrant Faith at Home (www.VibrantFaithAtHome.org)
- ◆ Consider a one-time seasonal family class, such as during Advent or Lent, that gives simple faith practices to do at home.



**FORMING FAITH AT HOME
WITH CHILDREN**

Empowering families to live into the faith together