



FORMING FAITH AT HOME WITH TEENAGERS

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The Ten Faith Factors Shaping Each Stage of Life from Birth to Age 29

Note: These factors are rooted in child development, adolescent development, adult development, and faith 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)	Young Adults (Ages 19 to 29)
1. Feels valued and accepted	1. Connects to safe and stimulating adults and peers	1. Yearns to be part of a group that matters	1. Discovers a balance between acceptance and independence	1. Finds a unique place in the world with value and acceptance
2. Develops caring relationships	2. Thrives with consistent support and care	2. Craves support and fights it	2. Redefines meaningful support	2. Discovers an adult support system
3. Follows a curiosity for learning	3. Engages in learning and discovery	3. Feels conflicted about learning	3. Yearns to learn and succeed in meaningful ways	3. Explores curiosities and masters deeper learning
4. Celebrates milestones	4. Enjoys milestones	4. Celebrates milestones while resisting them	4. Enjoys meaningful milestones	4. Redefines and celebrates milestones
5. Tries meditation and prayer	5. Explores meditation and prayer	5. Wonders about meditation and prayer	5. Meditates and prays with questions	5. Meditates and prays
6. Serves and helps others	6. Develops fairness, justice, & compassion	6. Balks at some service; deepens others	6. Creates a commitment to service	6. Becomes more compassionate
7. Attends worship services	7. Participates in worship services	7. Attends worship services with resistance	7. Participates in worship in ways that reflect a personal faith journey	7. Worships in ways that fit a personal value system
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. Explores meaning and purpose	8. Searches for deeper purpose and meaning
9. Experiments with a personal spirituality	9. Becomes exposed to more religious and spiritual experiences	9. Desires religious and spiritual belonging	9. Questions religious and spiritual beliefs	9. Tinkers and challenges religion 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	10. Develops an integrative faith independent of others

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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 join them. It's the Advent time of parenting. Many parents see this as a sacred experience, spending time in 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 great care and nurture, which lays the foundation for spiritual formation. By giving young children a lot of faith experiences at home and away from home, 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, pray with them, take them to worship services, introduce children to people of faith, and love their children deeply while setting clear boundaries, all what children need for their faith journey. (2 to 5 years)

Stage 4—Supporting and Strengthening—During the elementary-school years, parents support their child's spiritual and overall development, strengthening ties to other people and to important institutions, such as church and school. When parents pray, eat 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 to experiment with new ways to interact with their young adolescent while encouraging him or her to develop a personal faith. Parents continue to model their faith by attending worship services regularly, doing service projects, praying, reading scripture, and talking about faith. (11 to 14 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 teenagers 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 drive them apart. 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, they need parents who remain connected to them while letting them go. Parents continue to serve as faith models for their young adults, providing a safe place for young adults to grapple with faith issues. When parents have a strong religious commitment (meaning they attend worship services regularly and talk about the importance of their faith), the more likely young adults will find a religious grounding. (19 to 29 years)

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Faith Maturity Scale

By Search Institute

Eight Marks of Mature Faith

- Mark of Faith #1: Trusting and Believing
- Mark of Faith #2: Seeking Spiritual Growth
- Mark of Faith #3: Integrating Faith and Life
- Mark of Faith #4: Holding Life-Affirming Values
- Mark of Faith #5: Experiencing the Fruits of Faith
- Mark of Faith #6: Nurturing Faith in Community
- Mark of Faith #7: Advocating Social Change
- Mark of Faith #8: Acting and Serving

Four Faith Types

Integrated Faith—A Christian with an integrated faith experiences both a life-transforming relationship to a loving God and a consistent devotion to serving others. Of the four faith types, this one represents a high level of faith maturity.

***Vertical Faith**—A Christian with a vertical faith has a life-transforming relationship to a loving God but doesn't have a consistent devotion to serving others.

***Horizontal Faith**—A Christian with a horizontal faith is consistently devoted to serving others but doesn't have a life-transforming relationship to a loving God.

Undeveloped Faith—A Christian with an undeveloped faith doesn't strongly express his or her faith either by a devotion to serving others or a life-transforming relationship to a loving God.

*** Note: I often combine these two categories (the Vertical Faith and the Horizontal Faith) and call it a "Lopsided Faith."**

Mark of Faith #1: Trusting and Believing

- Sees God as both transcendent and immanent
- Accepts both the divinity and humanity of Jesus
- Reconciles God's love and human suffering
- Accepts God's love as unconditional
- Experiences God's guidance in daily life

Mark of Faith #2: Seeking Spiritual Growth

- Seeks opportunities for spiritual growth
- Affirms that faith is a journey that necessitates continuing change in belief and meaning
- Seeks to increase biblical knowledge and understanding
- Frequently engages in private prayer and meditation

Mark of Faith #3: Integrating Faith and Life

- Lives a life in which faith informs daily decisions and actions
- Lives a life in which faith dictates moral principles and guidelines
- Feels obligation to share personal resources with others
- Commits life to Jesus
- Applies faith to political and social issues

Mark of Faith #4: Holding Life-Affirming Values

- Pursues a healthy lifestyle
- Feels responsible for promoting human welfare
- Affirms religious diversity
- Embraces gender and racial equality
- Is accepting of other people
- Affirms the sanctity of creation

Mark of Faith #5: Experiencing the Fruits of Faith

- Feels liberated, set free
- Experiences meaning and purpose in life
- Experiences a sense of peace
- Has a deep sense of personal security
- Experiences self-acceptance

Mark of Faith #6: Nurturing Faith in Community

- Seeks to nurture the faith of others
- Shares his or her own faith story
- Experiences God in interpersonal and social encounters
- Seeks opportunities for communal prayer and reflection

Mark of Faith #7: Advocating Social Change

- Is committed to reducing poverty
- Advocates social and political change to improve human welfare
- Believes faith demands global concern
- Believes the church belongs in the public sphere

Mark of Faith #8: Acting and Serving

- Responds to others with compassion and sensitivity
- Engages in actions to protect the ecology
- Devotes time and energy to acts of social justice
- Devotes time and energy to promoting social justice
- Devotes time and energy to promoting peace

The Faith Maturity Scale is part of *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations*, a landmark study of more than 11,000 adults and youth in six U.S. denominations: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Southern Baptist Convention, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church. Copyright © 1990 by Search Institute, 615 First Avenue N.E., Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413, www.search-institute.org.

Four Settings for Faith Formation at Home

Encourage faith formation at home by focusing on these four settings. Write your ideas next to the setting that intrigues you.

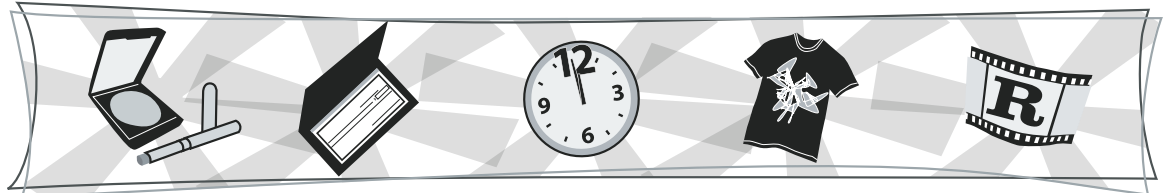
Setting	Your Ideas
Setting #1: Home—What are families doing to grow in faith and discipleship in each of the faith-forming processes?	
Setting #2—Intergenerational—How are families connected to other generations in your congregation?	
Setting #3—Congregational Life—How is your congregation empowering,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

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If you were the parent, at what age would you allow your child—if ever—to do the following activities?

Developmental Assets Tie-in:

11—Family Boundaries
30—Responsibility



Responsibility	Age	Why That Age?
1. Wear makeup	_____	_____
2. Have a credit card	_____	_____
3. Work part-time during the school year	_____	_____
4. Drink alcohol for the first time	_____	_____
5. Get her or his ears pierced	_____	_____
6. Buy a car	_____	_____
7. Go on a group date	_____	_____
8. Go on an individual date	_____	_____
9. Date someone exclusively	_____	_____
10. Stay out until midnight on weekends	_____	_____
11. Not have a curfew	_____	_____
12. Rent a hotel room	_____	_____
13. Have a boy/girl party	_____	_____
14. Open a checking account	_____	_____
15. Get a tattoo	_____	_____
16. Stay home alone when parents go out of town	_____	_____
17. Take a weekend camping trip with peers	_____	_____
18. Go to an R-rated movie	_____	_____
19. Go out of state with a friend's family	_____	_____
20. Fly unaccompanied on an airplane	_____	_____