

## Being a spiritually-nurturing adult ctd

- Focus on God's grace, and what He has done to save us, so children don't believe that they have to earn their salvation by how they behave.
- Listen to their questions and help them look for meaningful answers.
- Teach your children to accept and love the people in your church who have different ideas about spiritual matters than you do.
- Invite children to accept Jesus as their Saviour and choose to follow Him.
- Never stop praying for a child, and keep on actively loving and accepting them, even if he or she turns away from God.
- Remember that God loves your child even more than you do. He longs to save them and spend eternity with them, too.
- We need to remember that we're not God. It's the Holy Spirit's work to convict every child of sin and to transform their lives. It's our job to pray for them and to support them lovingly and hopefully on their unpredictable spiritual journeys.

## Helpful resources

To learn more about leading your children to Jesus visit the Children's Ministries page of the BUC website, [www.adventist.org.uk](http://www.adventist.org.uk) and discover how Kids in Discipleship can change your lives and your church!

Visit the Children's Ministry pages of the BUC website to download:

- 'Tell a Child Tell the World' - BUC Children's Evangelism Manual
- Printable 'Child's Affirmation of Faith' certificates

Contact your Adventist Book Centre to buy a range of books and resources to nurture your child's faith.

## Spiritual goals for our children

Here are some spiritual goals that help children to follow Jesus and live a happy, faithful, hopeful, loving, positive and generous Christian life. Choose one or two of these goals and encourage each other to work towards them. It is exciting when we grow spiritually with our children!

- Experiencing and sharing God's unconditional love through loving, accepting and forgiving relationships.
- Learning about God through Bible stories and nature.
- Learning to follow God's will rather than our own wishes.
- Making good decisions to do right even when it's hard.
- Feeling guilty and being sorry when we've done something wrong.
- Saying sorry to Jesus, and those we hurt, when we've done wrong.
- Experiencing forgiveness from God and others and forgiving others when we've been hurt.
- Developing good habits.
- Recognising temptation and asking God to help you resist it.
- Discovering and using our spiritual gifts to bless others.
- Helping and caring for others.
- Praying: praising, thanking, confessing and praying for self and others.
- Coping with difficulties through faith, prayer and a hopeful attitude.
- Believing and claiming God's promises.
- Trusting that Jesus will make things work out well in the end.
- Believing in and longing for the Second Coming of Jesus.

### Leaflet sponsored by:

The BUC Children's Ministries Department  
SDA Church Headquarters  
Stanborough Park  
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## Nurturing a Child's Faith

Helping your child grow  
closer to Jesus

## Children learn about Jesus in different ways as they grow.

When we understand how children develop spiritually we can make the most of each step along the way.

### Being a spiritually-nurturing adult

We can encourage our children's faith through our own example and through our loving relationships with them.

- Live a joyful, loving, thankful, forgiving, compassionate and praising life.
- Eagerly look forward to the Second Advent of Jesus.
- Make Sabbath a delight for those around you.
- Show the children how your faith in God helps you to face the challenges.
- Talk about God's protection and guidance in your life.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you what to say and do as you lead your children towards God. Pray specifically for each child's salvation.
- Love children unconditionally so that they learn about God's love through you. The childhood experience of his father's unconditional love and generosity inspired the prodigal son to return home.
- Let the children know that God loves them just the way they are, they don't have to be perfect before they can be His children.
- Never say 'God won't love you if you do such and such...' as that misrepresents God's love. The children may feel that they're so bad God can never love them and it's not worth trying to be good.
- Pray with your children and thank God for His answers.



### 0-2 years

Young children learn most about God from their relationships with adults.

- Children learn about God's love and forgiveness from caring adults who are warmly affectionate, forgiving, accepting, available and comforting.
- Children learn about trust, and the great value that God places on them, when caring adults meet their physical and emotional needs quickly and generously.
- Children learn obedience when caring adults set clear, simple, understandable boundaries within their developmental abilities.

### 2-5 years

- Children have a simple, strong faith. They believe that God hears and answers their prayers.
- Children are easily distressed. They need adults who will warmly comfort their disappointment and hurts.
- At this age children readily believe in the miracle stories that older children might question, such as Noah, or Creation.
- Children who have been warmly, kindly and respectfully cared for by nurturing adults will have a stronger ability to love others and be kind to them.

### 6-12 years

Older children are learning what the Bible says about God, and they will come to love, trust and obey Him for themselves.

- Children need to feel that they belong to a special group, such as church, and they need to experience that their local church values them and needs their help.
- Throughout these years they are able to learn more about God, the Bible and the Christian life. They can understand the meaning of sin, salvation, and most of the doctrines when they are clearly presented by adults who positively nurture their faith.
- During this stage children become able to make age-appropriate commitments to God when invited to accept Jesus as their Saviour by spirit-led adults. At this age they are the most open to being baptised and joining our church.
- They are developing their conscience and choosing the values that will shape their life choices. They need good, spiritual, adult role models.

### Teenage years

When children become teenagers they will question and test their faith because they need to work out how the truths they have learned apply to their everyday lives and complex situations. They need adults who are patient, guiding, kind, loving, understanding, listening, accepting, respectful, inspiring, forgiving, persevering and hopeful...and all the other qualities of love described in 1 Corinthians 13!

- Teenagers are choosing the major directions for their lives.
- They are sorting out their values and solidifying them.
- They are questioning and challenging, needing evidence for their faith and beliefs.
- They are deciding whether or not the church is relevant to their lives.
- They have a strong need to belong and peer pressure can be a negative influence.
- They need to find enjoyable and inspiring ways to help and serve others.
- They need to feel they can make a difference to their community and their world.
- They are able to make a more adult commitment to God.

