

# 10 Steps Toward Raising a Faith-Sharing Child

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## 1. Have Vision

You, as a parent, need to make a long-term commitment toward raising your children to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The word vision implies that you have your sights set on a goal and you are passionate about accomplishing that goal. Many parents put a great deal of time and effort into supporting and encouraging their children in educational, athletic, or career pursuits while giving very little attention to encouraging their pursuit of God, godliness, and people who need God. The truly wise parent will prioritize what God prioritizes—running well the race that He has set before us, and handing the "baton" to the next generation.

Second Timothy 4:7-8—I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day -- not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.

## 2. Be Focused

If our focus is on our children's education only, we will carefully observe test scores, GPAs, and SAT'S. If our focus is on athletic prowess only, we will carefully observe batting averages, final scores, and college scouts in the stands. But if our focus is on raising fully devoted followers of Christ, we will carefully observe our children's total way of life and encourage them to share their faith by their walk and talk—whether in the classroom, on the athletic field, or in social settings.

Matthew 6:33—But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

## 3. Develop Habits

One of the most effective ways to encourage your children to share their faith is to have regular family devotional times and set apart a portion of that time to report and celebrate witnessing opportunities. This keeps the matter of witnessing before your children on a regular basis, and opens their eyes to see what a "witnessing opportunity"

looks like and how to step into that opportunity willingly. It is wise to also share missed opportunities so that children learn the value of honesty and understand that becoming a faithful witness is a matter of growth and progress.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7—These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

## **4. Optimize Life's Challenges**

Demonstrate for your children the art of taking the challenges of life and turning them into witnessing opportunities. The challenge might be a financial setback, a hospital stay, or a job loss. Responding to these trials by being Christ-like and sharing the love of Christ will go a long way towards teaching your children to respond to their challenges and sharing their own faith.

John 9:2—Jesus said, " But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

## **5. Build Confidence**

In school, when we have done our homework and put in the study time necessary, we can approach an exam with confidence. So it is with our witness for Christ. We can help our children clear one of the hurdles, or fears, of witnessing by helping them to be prepared to share their faith. There are books to read, helpful seminars, and proven methods that can be learned. We, as parents, need to commit to being informed and passing that information along to our children.

Second Timothy 2:15—Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved a Workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth.

## **6. Be a Model**

A father teaches his boy to catch a ball by heading out to the yard with mitts and ball in hand. A mother passes down a family recipe in the kitchen, not just on paper. And a child learns faith sharing in the same way: by watching and hearing of your successes and failures in sharing your own faith. If they don't see and hear examples of how you are attempting to share the love of Christ with others, they will never believe that it is a priority—no matter how much you insist upon it.

Proverbs 20:7—The righteous man leads blameless life; blessed are his children after him.

## **7. Affirm Kingdom Potential**

Every child of God has it! God has given each of his children different gifts and abilities, and He went to great lengths in Scripture to emphasize the importance of each area of giftedness. By doing this, God was modeling for all parents how to affirm uniqueness and significance. Be sure to observe your children's talents and gifts and communicate to them how you see them contributing to the Kingdom of God. Your child may not have the gift of evangelism, but they need to see their part in bringing others to Christ.

Romans 12:4—Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body.

## **8. Pray Regularly**

This is another way of continually exposing your children to a compassionate awareness of people. Use mealtime prayers, bedtime prayers, family altar prayers, and spontaneous prayers as opportunities to remember by name lost friends, relatives, teachers, and neighbors. This is a great way to remind you to take for witnessing opportunities with these same individuals. It is difficult to regularly pray for people without developing an "I gotta say something" kind of burden for their salvation.

Romans 10:1—Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved

## **9. Encourage Bringing**

Encourage your children to use outreach-type events as opportunities to be a "bringer" to Christ. Just as the disciples of Christ brought people to him for healing or teaching, our children can bring their lost friends to evangelistic events, youth group activities, a summer camp, or a youth retreat. These are great ways for our children to expose their friends to a clear presentation of the gospel.

John 14:41-42—The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him "We have found the Messiah." And he brought him to Jesus.

## **10. Applaud Obedience**

Don't just celebrate when a person comes to Christ as the result of your child's faith sharing (though that is cause for rejoicing). Be sure to celebrate and applaud the obedience of faithfully planting seed, whether in word or deed. Help your children to see that "being a witness" is our responsibility. God is in charge of "doing the harvesting."

Luke 10: 16—He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects HIM who sent me.

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