

 Teach | Talk | Walk



Choose **GOD'S** Ways

*Obedience is formed by belief
and expressed through behaviour*

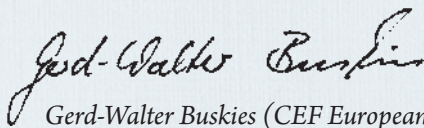


Since 1937

CEF
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

Reaching children worldwide

OFFERING QUALITY TRAINING THAT IS ACCESSIBLE FOR THOSE TEACHING GOD'S WORD TO CHILDREN HAS always been a priority for *Child Evangelism Fellowship*® (CEF®). This is why we have launched the "D6:7" (*Deuteronomy 6:7*) training series—a new resource allowing you to access foundational CEF training from your own home or church, at any time! D6:7 booklets are designed to help you as you teach (formally), talk (informally) and walk (live out) the truths of God's Word to children. *Choose God's Ways* is the second book we have produced in this format as a small group/self-study training resource. Our prayer is that as you work through the various sections of this book, not only your skills in communicating truth from God's Word to children will develop, but also that your life and personal relationship with Him will be enriched.



Gerd-Walter Buskies (CEF European Regional Director)

© 2022 Child Evangelism Fellowship of Europe. All rights reserved.

D6:7 resources are offered freely as digital downloads (teachkids.eu). For more information about printing these resources please contact us at: education@cef europe.org.

D 6:7 Deuteronomy 6:7

Choose **GOD'S** Ways

*Obedience is formed by belief
and expressed through behaviour*



Since 1937

CEF

CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

Reaching children worldwide™

D 6:7

*You shall teach them
diligently to your children,
and shall talk of them
when you sit in your house,
and when you walk by
the way, and when you lie
down, and when you rise.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*®), copyright 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
SECTION 1 – IDENTITY IS CRITICAL	11
<i>Beliefs Form Identity</i>	11
<i>Beliefs Influence the Heart</i>	19
SECTION 2 – UNCOVERING UNDERLYING BELIEFS	25
<i>Identifying Idols</i>	25
<i>Turning Away Requires Discipline</i>	31
<i>Beholding Christ and His Ways</i>	37
SECTION 3 – TEACHING FOR CHANGE	37
SECTION 4 – LEADING CHILDREN TO CHOOSE GOD’S WAYS	43
<i>Truths to Teach</i>	43
<i>God knows the best way to live!</i>	43
<i>God accepts me</i>	46
<i>God wants to speak to me</i>	48
<i>God has a good plan for my life</i>	50
<i>God gives us good gifts to delight in</i>	51
<i>God made everything in His world to produce and grow after its own kind</i>	54
<i>I can show God’s love to others</i>	57
LEADER’S GUIDE	61

How to lead a child to Christ

Make sure the child understands about:

God

- Who is God?
- God made us. He speaks to us through the Bible.
- God is holy and pure. He loves us.

Sin

- What is sin?
- Sin is disobeying God's commands. It is against God.
- Speak about specific sins.
- The child is a sinner by nature and act. (We sin because we are sinners.)
- Sin deserves punishment.

The Saviour

- Who alone can take away your sin?
- God the Son died on the cross for sinners.
- The Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.
- He is Lord of all.

Explain how the child can be saved

- Explain what the Lord wants us to do, and what He will do.

Use a Bible verse. (*John 1:12, John 3:16, John 6:37, Acts 16:31, Romans 6:23 or Romans 10:13.*)

What does the Lord want you to do?

What will the Lord do?

- Warn about difficulties.
- Ask, "Do you want to trust Christ, or would you rather wait and think about it?"
- Encourage the child to pray audibly (if ready).

Speak about assurance of salvation

- Go back to the Bible verse you used.
- Speak about a changed life.
- Tell him what the person who is truly trusting in Christ can know.

Give the child (later) some advice about the Christian life

- Read and obey your Bible.
- Talk to God, your Heavenly Father.
- Tell others what the Lord has done for you.
- Ask God to forgive you when you sin.
- Meet with other Christians.
- Remember the Lord promises, "*I will never leave you*" (*Hebrews 13:5*).

Children's choices are influenced by a myriad of voices – entertainment, peers, culture, politics, etc. You as a parent, Sunday school teacher or children's worker are one of the key voices speaking into the lives of the children around you. You have the high honour of helping children hear God's guiding voice (*Isaiah 30:21*) and choose God's ways!

As you do this, remember:

You CAN make a difference.

It might seem disheartening as you consider all the voices influencing children today and the seemingly limited time you have to speak into a child's life and guide him. Other influences may have more money and seem more alluring. But remember, in God's economy small things have big results. Your faithfulness to love, come alongside, and speak truth can accomplish much! (*Isaiah 55:11*)

Children can't choose God's ways until they have believed in Jesus.

Even children must believe in Jesus as the way of salvation (*Romans 10:9-10*). It is only then that their heart has been changed to desire God's rule. And only then that they Holy Spirit resides within and can lead them into truth (*John 16:13*).

This booklet provides inspiration and practical ideas to help believing children know God's way is best and embrace a life of following God's commands. If you teach children who have not yet believed in God, continue to present the gospel and invite them to salvation. A useful resource designed to help you lead a child to Christ is located on the previous page, should God give you this wonderful privilege.

God knows best.

This truth is important not only for the children you lead, but for yourself too. Trust in God's goodness and sovereignty results in a quiet confidence as you follow God's ways even when they don't make sense. This trust also results in a peace that permeates every aspect of life regardless of its circumstances. A life that embraces this truth lights the way for the children you lead to do the same.

As you work through this booklet, know you have been prayed for! We echo the words of Paul in Ephesians 1:15-22 and thank God for your faith in Jesus and love for His children. We ask that God would give you wisdom in the knowledge of Himself and in how to share truth about God with children. We pray that your heart would see and be amazed at the hope and power of the gospel through Christ, and that your lips would be filled with joy and praises to Him.

Getting Started

You can work through this book on your own or with a small group of friends, parents or fellow-teachers. Each chapter ends with a reflection section.



READ IT
(Scriptural basis)



THINK ABOUT IT
(Personal reflection)



TALK ABOUT IT
(Questions for group discussion)



PRAY ABOUT IT
(Personal and/or group prayer prompts)



DO IT
(A simple idea to implement or question to consider)

These questions are designed to help you reflect on the ideas, process truths, and identify ways to implement them. You will get the most out of the ideas here when you take the time to answer the questions and talk about the ideas with others (if possible).

If you are leading a small group of **parents, Sunday school teachers or children's workers** in your church, there are tips and additional content in the Leader's Guide in the back designed to help you go deeper. Be sure to take a look (even if you're going through the booklet on your own)!

You might also consider forming a group through a social media platform (e.g., *WhatsApp, Facebook or Viber*) with those you will lead through the study. This will not only allow you to remind them of the next meeting, but also allow you to share Bible verses and encouragement from time to time.

We also strongly recommend that as a small group leader, you read through the entire book before beginning the study. This will allow you to see the development of teaching in the various sections and also enable you to guide the group through the book more effectively.

Beliefs Form Identity

1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

We are a people preoccupied with our identities. Anytime we're asked to introduce ourselves, we describe our identities using a label others will understand. Which labels describe you? Salesman. Mom. Executive. Storyteller. Missionary. Gamer. Minimalist. Vegan. Sportsman. Writer.

Each label identifies aspects of how we spend our time and how we define what is important in our own lives. These labels begin when we are children and grow and change as we fully form our identities.

What is Identity?

If you look up the word in the dictionary, you'll find several definitions. Everyone has an identity related to their own personhood—race, culture, personal characteristics, etc. But identity is also a set of beliefs that distinguish or identify a person.

It's important to recognize that much of our core identity is formed based on a set of beliefs related to the labels we use to identify ourselves. To better understand this, substitute the words confidence, faith, or trust for the word belief. We could then say the labels we use to identify ourselves reveal what we trust in, or where we place our confidence and faith.

Why is Identity So Important?

Our identities (*or labels*) don't simply reveal what we do, but, also, what we believe to be most important. They express what we trust to be real and true in a given area of life.

These beliefs shape our perspective of what is valuable. They help us discern what is true and good and right. These beliefs form the basis of our worldview and influence how we interpret the world around us.

Anytime we find our core identity in something outside of God and His ways, we begin to place trust or value in those things in a way God never intended.

If we identify ourselves by our work, it is easy to begin trusting in that work to provide and sustain us instead of trusting in God as our provider. If we identify ourselves by our hobbies, it is easy to pour time, energy, and resources into them without pausing to ask how God desires for us to use those things.

How Children Experiment with Identity

As children grow, they begin to try on various labels as they figure out who they are and what is important to them. They also work to discover how they fit in with their peers and the larger world around them.

It is quite possible for a child to experiment with a label for a short time without adhering to (*or even being aware of*) the beliefs that undergird that identity. They might dress in a certain style or listen to certain music in order to fit in with their peers, without knowing and accepting the related beliefs others who live this way might follow.

While they can experiment this way in the short-term, the longer a child (*or any person*) embraces an identity, the more their beliefs are influenced and eventually set by that identity.

Our Primary Identity Must be Found in Christ

As believers (*whether children or adults*), it is critical that what we place value and importance on be found first and foremost in Christ. Our beliefs, confidence, trust and faith, must be found in the person of Christ, the character of God, and the teaching of Scripture.

Every other identity or label that we wear must be filtered through this one. Some identities will need to be discarded when they do not align with Scripture. Some identities will need to be lived out differently than other people live them out in order to keep love for God and trust in Him supreme in our hearts.

Helping children find their core identity in Christ is the only way to ensure they are able to live life as God intended – in intimacy with Him, in fellowship with other believers, and as a light to those walking in darkness.

Our Identity in Christ

The Bible gives basic truths that form the foundation of a believer's identity in Christ. Here are a few:

- Upon salvation, we become the children of God and He becomes our Father. This gives us belonging (*John 1:12*).
- God is a good Father who is filled with lovingkindness towards us and gives us gifts to delight in. We can trust His heart (*James 1:17*).
- God has a good plan for our lives and no plan of His can be thwarted. Our confidence is in His sovereignty (*Romans 8:28, Job 42:2*).
- God sees us moment by moment and directs our steps at every moment of every day. We do not have to rely on ourselves (*Psalms 32:8*).
- God is our guard and our shield that protects and shelters. We are not alone (*Psalms 18:1-2*).
- God loves us unconditionally and is always ready to forgive and restore. We are not beyond His help or care (*Psalms 32:5*).
- God is always at work to accomplish His work in and through us. God is doing something even when we can't see it (*Galatians 2:20*).

What wonderful gifts! And how astonishing that God does not require us to earn these, but He freely bestows each one!

Summary

- 1 We use labels to describe our identities.
- 2 These labels reveal our beliefs about what is important and valuable to us.
- 3 These beliefs can distract us from or go against our identity in Christ – who God says we are and what God says is true, most important, and valuable.

Here are some examples to help follow the progression of these ideas. Following the label, “athlete” is an associated belief someone could have about what is most important and valuable and where they might place their trust. You can then read the biblical truth and see how it differs. How would you complete the chart for the artist and teacher?

Label	Most Important	Most Valuable	Place Trust In
Athlete	Winning	Training	Physical strength
When athletes find their identity in Christ first, they will: do their best in order to glorify God; prioritize training in its proper place - after God and family, etc; trust God to sustain them, not their own body.			
Artist			
When artists find their identity in Christ first, they will: put God and people first above beauty and art; find value in leading others to worship God through their art; trust God to express beauty through them.			
Teacher	Students listen & respond	Conveying information	Communicating in an effective manner

— { Reflection } —



Psalm 32:8

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

John 1:12, James 1:17, Romans 8:28, Job 42:2, Psalm 3:3, Psalm 32:5



NOTE: We all have room to grow. As you complete this section, don't become discouraged by your answers or believe the lie that God is condemning you. (*Romans 8:1*) Simply confess anything God shows you, tell Him you want to enjoy Him, and ask Him to show you one way to do that this week.

What labels would you use to describe yourself to someone? (*List 5-10.*) What do they reveal as being important or valuable to you? What do they lead you to trust in?

Are there any beliefs from these labels that could distract or go against what God says is most important or valuable? Which ones? How can you see these wrong beliefs affecting your life or walk with God?

What biblical truth do you need to take hold of and implement in your life in order to combat the wrong beliefs you are adhering to?



What types of identities do children experiment with? For each one, share how it aligns (*or doesn't align*) with an identity rooted in Christ and what He says is most important and valuable.

Read 1 Peter 2:9 and identify who we are in Christ as described in this verse. Share how each one encourages or challenges you in your walk with God.

What do you see as an obstacle for a believer to live according to his or her identity in Christ?



Ask God to help you identify false beliefs and exchange them for true beliefs rooted in the person of Christ. Tell Him you want to live according to what God says is most important and valuable.



Choose one truth you identified in the Think About It section you want to implement into life. Write down the truth or a verse that conveys the truth. Put it in a place you can see it every day.



NOTES



Beliefs Influence the Heart

**Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life.**

Reflect back for a moment on what we've already covered regarding beliefs.

- Beliefs are what form our perspectives and worldviews.
- Beliefs are what impart the foundation of our identities.

There is another truth about beliefs we'll explore further together in this section. This is the idea that beliefs guide hearts.

Why is this idea important? Because it is from the heart that choices are made and from which our very life flows. Our heart chooses what is important and valuable based on the beliefs that have become a part of it. And then it acts based on those beliefs.

One way to see this is to think of the way different people spend money. Some people purchase large, showy items because in their heart they want to be accepted. Some people prioritize trips and vacations because their heart values times of rest with others. Some people save money because their heart desires security. Beliefs of the heart underly even the way money is spent.

How are Beliefs Formed?

We like to think that beliefs are formed based on direct instruction. And while this can happen, more often than not, beliefs are formed more by what surrounds us in our environment day in and day out. This is especially true for children.

Everything around them sends a message about what is important and what is true. These messages influence how they define reality. Every message is absorbed into their mind and filtered down into their heart.

In essence, they become what they behold, what they hear, what they experience. Children are veritable sponges, soaking in messages every moment of the day.

The Example of Solomon

A perfect example of how beliefs are formed in this way is King Solomon, known as the wisest man ever to live. People travelled for weeks so they could ask for advice and glean from his wisdom. He wrote three of the five wisdom books of the Bible (*and parts of another*).

King Solomon loved God. He knew truth. And he lived accordingly for many years. But something changed by the end of his life. This change didn't happen suddenly, but rather subtly over time. 1 Kings 11:1-13 helps us understand what happened.

King Solomon had a weakness for women. It's why he had 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of them from foreign lands who served foreign gods. Solomon decided to marry them anyway. And even went as far as to build shrines for them so they could worship their gods while remaining with him in Israel.

By the end of his life, not only were his wives worshipping these false gods, but Solomon himself worshipped them too. Scripture summarizes what happened, "And his wives turned away his heart" (*v. 3b*).

Day in and day out, Solomon lived his life amongst people and shrines who steadily sent him messages about what was important and true. He probably withstood the falsehoods for a while, but he could not withstand them forever. They eventually were absorbed into his mind, transferred to his heart, and resulted in actions and choices that were in line with those false beliefs.

Solomon failed to put into practice his own advice to "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (*Proverbs 4:23*).

As we teach children to guard their hearts, discern truth from lies and form right beliefs, their very lives will be protected and secured.

Reflection



Proverbs 2 (*Make time to read the whole chapter.*)

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God” (Vv. 1-5).



How would Solomon’s life have been different if he had followed what he wrote in Proverbs 2?

What messages are you absorbing day in and day out that are in conflict with Scripture and the character of God? How might these affect you in months and years to come?



What are children surrounded by that are influencing the messages they are absorbing?

How can we help children form correct beliefs even as they are bombarded by false messages?

Discuss what could have happened in Solomon’s mind and heart that would have caused him to turn from God to idols. What false messages could he have heard? How might he have tried to resist? Why might he have finally given in?



Ask God to guard your heart and the hearts of the children you influence. Ask God what false messages you are absorbing and listen for what He reveals.



Make a list of the false messages you are absorbing right now that are affecting your beliefs. (*Focus on false messages about what is most important and valuable in life.*) Beside each one write down a biblical truth that can help you counteract the lie.



NOTES

Identifying Idols

Jeremiah 32:33 - They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction.

My son is into fishing right now, which means I'm at the lake a lot and casting his rod for him a lot and untangling fishing line A LOT. One rod in particular constantly unwinds and tangles. We only use it when there are no other options.

It's amazing the complicated twists and knots that can happen in a matter of seconds. And it is often difficult to identify the cause of the tangle or find where the knot actually is.

It can be this way too with our beliefs. It's not always easy or straightforward to identify the underlying belief that leads to a certain behaviour or is associated with a particular identity.

But the good news is that God is ready to help us! He desires wholeness for us. His Word reveals wrong beliefs, points out sin, uproots lies, leads us into truth, and restores our soul (*Hebrews 4:12*). We must immerse ourselves in His Word if we are to uncover our wrong beliefs.

Origin of Wrong Beliefs

Here are some questions that can help you identify wrong beliefs underlying identities you are embracing or behaviours in which you are engaging. (*These same principles apply to children, but let's think through it for ourselves first.*)

- What do I believe about God that is untrue?
- What do I believe about myself or my life that is untrue?

- What do I believe about others that is untrue?

When we believe what is untrue, it leads to wrong behaviour and misplaced identity. Instead of accepting truth, we doubt it. Instead of trusting, we become cynical. Instead of holding out hope, we give in to other ideas and philosophies.

Becoming Idols

We continue down this road until the person or thing we think wrongly about has a greater and greater place in our lives and our heart.

These wrong beliefs then manifest themselves in the choices our heart makes.

- We desire something different than God commands.
- We trust in something else besides God.
- We value something more than God.

When this happens, an idol has taken root – something now occupies a place in our mind and heart intended only for God. Our admiration and love are fixed on them, not God. Our attention and devotion are given to them, not God.

By the time something is an idol in our life, we have thought wrongly about it for so long that it is difficult to identify the lie and pull apart the tangled web of untruths. But God is the God who searches hearts and minds and will lead us into all truth if we ask Him to (*Psalm 139:23; Romans 8:27*).

Untangling Solomon's Wrong Beliefs

Many different wrong beliefs can lead to the same end. We aren't told exactly which wrong belief Solomon held that led him to marry foreign women, build shrines, and ultimately worship false gods, but let's use the above process to identify some possible wrong beliefs and successive actions of the heart that could have led Solomon to do those things.

- Solomon could have believed God was holding out on him, keeping him from enjoying all of life by limiting marriage to those within Israel.
- Solomon could have believed he was spiritually strong enough to resist the temptation of his wives to serve false gods.
- Solomon could have believed those women would be convinced of the reality and greatness of the one true God once they were living in Israel with him.

- Solomon could have believed God’s generous and gracious heart would cause Him to overlook his sin.

Any of these could have then led Solomon to:

- Desire the most beautiful and captivating women regardless of their allegiance to God.
- Trust in his own wisdom and ability to remain devoted to God.
- Value pleasing his wives over pleasing God.
- Downplay the seriousness of God’s command.

Do you see how these things work together? Idols aren’t built in a day. Rarely do we leap into outright, blatantly sinful behaviour. But the groundwork is laid as we accept and harbour wrong beliefs. We must diligently identify and root out wrong beliefs, in both our hearts and our children’s.

— { Reflection } —



Deuteronomy 5:27 – 6:25 (*Make time to read the whole portion*)

“You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess” (Vv. 32-33).

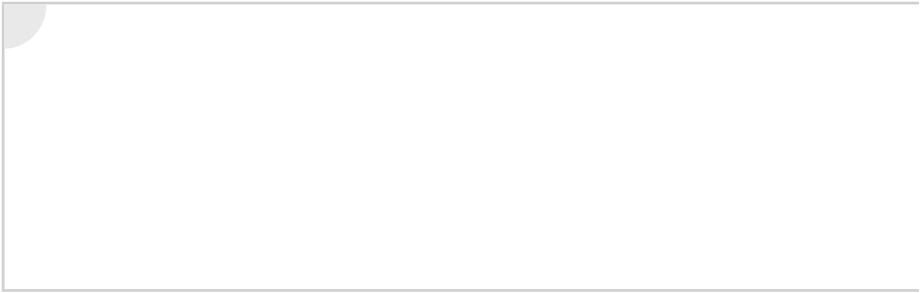


What safeguards does God put in place in Deuteronomy to help guard His people against wrong beliefs and the subsequent idolatry that arises?

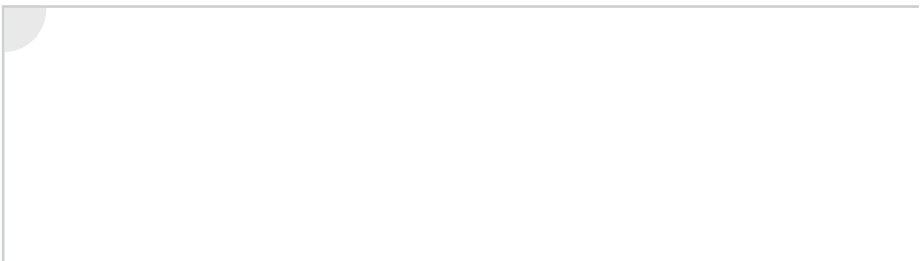
Go back to your list of 5-10 labels from the first Think About It section. Use the questions below to untangle some of the underlying beliefs that could be leading you astray. Are you:

- Believing something untrue about God?
- Believing something untrue about yourself?
- Believing something untrue about others?
- Desiring something different than God commands?
- Trusting in something else besides God?
- Valuing something more than God?

Are any of these wrong beliefs leading to idolatry? Do they cause you to trust in something else besides God? Do they cause you to desire or place more value on something other than what God says is best?



Read Jeremiah 32:33 and consider how you would react to people who acted in this way. How would you treat them? What would you do (*or not do*) for them? Now read Jeremiah 32:36-44. How does God's action differ from yours? What character traits do you see in the way God acts?



How do you see this process of wrong belief and idolatry playing out in your own life and the lives of children around you? Go back to the identities children try on that you discussed in the first Talk About It section. What wrong beliefs might lead them to embrace certain identities?



Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal wrong beliefs that are entangling you and leading to idolatry. Repent of any idols God has revealed. Tell God you want to desire, trust and value Him more than these things.



Meditate on and pray the truths of Joshua 22:5 for yourself and the children you influence each day this week.

Joshua 22:5 - Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.



NOTES



Turning Away Requires Discipline

1 Timothy 4:7b (AMP) - Discipline yourself
for the purpose of godliness.

Have you ever become weary and overwhelmed with a project that never seems to end and requires constant attention and focus? Maybe a work project with a tight deadline. Maybe a home renovation project you tried to squeeze in around your full-time job.

Digging to the core of wrong beliefs and doing the work of changing them requires the same persistence and tenacity of any other project, it just might last longer since we are a constant work in progress!

A Heart in Training

Think of training a child in any aspect of life—to say, “Please,” to come when called, to show kindness to others. Does this training happen in a week or a month? No! It takes regularity and discipline. So it is as we work to replace wrong beliefs with true ones.

The mind and heart must be retrained to act in accordance with what they know is right even if it is not what they feel like doing. And this takes time.

It’s important as we teach our children that we keep the long-distance goal in mind without becoming discouraged in the dailyness of forward progress and backward regression.

Forward Progress

It’s also important to recognize small victories along the way. Children grow in sanctification as they experience remorse and return to Jesus over and over again, not just when they choose what is right and good.

Children grow when they find themselves acting on a wrong belief and, in that moment, reject that belief and turn instead to what is true and right and good.

Children grow when they are tempted to fall into old habits and patterns and instead declare their desire to God to do what is right and good:

- God, I want you more than _____!
- God, I need you more than _____!
- God, I desire you more than _____!
- God, I trust you more than _____!

This turning in humble dependence from what is familiar and, at times, more desirable, to the God who can truly satisfy requires regular, sustained effort, and is what produces godliness and a life that is rich and abundant.

This regular turning to God is what we must work to instil in the lives of our children.

A Close Helper

Although this takes regular, concentrated attention and effort, you, nor your children, are in this battle alone. Every believer has a close Companion that was given precisely to help in these situations (*John 14:16-17*).

God the Holy Spirit indwells the life and heart of every believer. What relief and joy this should bring to us! He is able to do what we cannot on our own (*Ephesians 3:16*). He is able to actually change our children's hearts and our wrong beliefs. He is able to pray on their behalf, better than we can even pray for them (*Romans 8:26-27*).

As you grow in dependence on the Holy Spirit in your own life, you will also grow in dependence on Him for the needed changes in the lives of your children. He loves them more than you ever will. He understands them better than you ever can. He can help them even more than you can. His heart is for them even more than your own.

Let Him be the first One you turn to as you journey alongside your children and teach them to turn to Him first as well.

Reflection



2 Peter 1:3-4

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”



According to 2 Peter, what has God given you to help in your fight against sinful desire (*wrong beliefs*)? How does this verse display the generosity of God?

What idea stood out to you today? What is God speaking to your heart specifically related to this?



Which is harder for you – to work in discipline towards godliness or to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit for change. Why do you think that is? Why do you think both are needed?

How is progress different from perfection? Which one do you tend to aim for? Why do you think that is? How do you think God views both progress and perfection?



Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in your own life and in the lives of your children. Ask Him to reveal truth, guide hearts, change beliefs, and intercede for you.



During the week, use the simple sentences below to declare your desire to choose God's way. Whenever you are tempted or find yourself living out a wrong belief, use one to return again to God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- God, I want you more than _____!
- God, I need you more than _____!
- God, I desire you more than _____!
- God, I trust you more than _____!



NOTES

Beholding Christ and His Ways

Colossians 3:1-2 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

We've already talked about how children readily absorb the messages and beliefs around them. Children don't set out to study and learn them, it just happens. The good news is this can also happen with spiritual messages and beliefs as well, just maybe not in the manner we usually think it will.

The Way Children Learn

Children are naturally curious. They learn through wonder and exploration and connection. As information becomes meaningful and interesting to them, they form attachments to it. These attachments then form the basis of their interests, beliefs and identities.

These ways of teaching children are more time consuming and require more effort than simple instruction or lecture. They require creativity and a trust that God is doing something in their hearts, even if we cannot see it or measure it.

It's easy to focus on the external behaviour of children, teaching them habits, spiritual disciplines, right behaviour. And while there is a time and place for this, none of these things can change the heart of a child. They can be a means of helping a child relate to God, but they can also become something a child simply does because it is what is expected or required.

Hidden Motivations of the Heart

It is often impossible to discern exactly what motivates a child. A young child, especially, desires to please his parents and teachers. Some children have compliant personalities. They are easy-going and accept instruction.

Sometimes we can interpret their obedience and assimilation of teaching as evidence of God at work in their heart. And it very well could be, but it's not always.

On the other hand, you have children who are independent and free-spirits. Children who are constantly moving and talking and pushing the boundaries.

It's easy to think these children who never seem to listen, never remember a verse, or never readily comply with requests are defiant or hard-hearted. But, maybe that's not the case at all.

The point is, you can't always tell what's going on in a child's heart. There are times you definitely see evidence of God at work. There are times of clear growth in a child's life. And we should rejoice and celebrate these.

But we should also be careful that we don't make assumptions or assign motives we have no way of knowing are really valid.

Make Christ Endearing

What then should we do? How can we go about teaching and instructing in a way that affects a child's heart and enables God to do the work He desires?

We make much of Christ. We point to Him over and over and over again. Not just with words and instruction, but in ways that cause children to love Him, and be drawn to Him, and relate to Him.

We see how this happened naturally as Jesus lived His life on earth. Crowds followed Him wherever He went (*Mark 3:7, 20, 32*). People who were sick came to find Him (*Mark 3:10*). Disciples left everything to follow Him (*Matthew 19:27*). Regardless of their motivation, they desired to be near.

This is what we want for our children, a desire to be near God. It is good for them to be near Him (*Psalms 73:28*). For when they are near God, they are forming an attachment, or relationship, with Him.

It might not immediately result in salvation for the unbeliever or specific growth in the believer's life, but nonetheless, they are close by and open to God's work in their heart.

Behold Christ Yourself

The last section of this booklet is filled with practical ideas you can use to exalt Christ before your children and lead them to wonder about Him, desire nearness to Him, and come to love Him with all their hearts. These ideas can help you uncover wrong beliefs and lead children to turn away from idols and back to God over and over again.

But even better than all these practical ideas, is for you to form your own personal attachment to Christ that nourishes your soul and causes you to overflow with joy and delight as you interact with the children you influence. No amount of teaching can compare with a life lived in step with Christ.

How do you do this? You draw near to Christ for yourself. You immerse yourself in His Word. You gaze upon Christ, meditate on His character, observe His personal care in your own life, and consider His goodness and greatness.

As you behold Him in these ways, you too will absorb good and true messages and beliefs. You will allow God to do the work of removing wrong beliefs and idols in your own life. You will find grace and mercy in abundance as you turn back to Him over and over and over again. And your life and heart will be changed in ways that are unmistakable, even to the children you teach.

May God bless you, change you and fill you as you behold Him and naturally lead the children you influence to do the same.

Reflection



Psalm 31 (Make time to read the whole Psalm.)



As you read Psalm 31, note the numerous ways David turns to the Lord and trusts in Him. Which verse stands out to you? What is God saying to you through it?

How would you currently evaluate your personal affection for and relationship with God? What is God whispering to your heart that needs to change?

How does the description of teaching children sound to you? How does it compare to the way you are teaching now? What do you want to be different about your teaching?



Share your thoughts about the following quote from Charles Spurgeon. What truth stands out to you from it? How would living out these words affect the children you teach?

“Nearness to God brings likeness to God. The more you see God the more of God will be seen in you.”

Read the lyrics of the song below (*Stay by This Hope*). What stands out to you from them? Discuss what could happen in your own life and the lives of the children you teach if these things were true in your own heart.

What if we looked after Him

Till everyone turned to see what we see

What if we drank from the fountain till we overflowed

What if we basked in His presence

Till we came out drenched in the fragrance of God

What if wait, what if we stayed so close

REFRAIN

Would we see giants fall

Walls come down

Mountains be moved

Lives turned around

Rest for the weary

Peace in the storm

Would we see His glory

Would we see our Lord

If we stayed

What if we stayed



Share your heart with God about where you are in your relationship with Him and where you want to be – personally and as you teach your children. Ask for His help. Ask Him to renew your love and delight and closeness with Him.



Choose something you can do to behold Christ and draw near to Him this week. Find something that will help your heart form an attachment to Christ – perhaps meditating on a verse, journaling your thoughts and prayers, listening to a song, or spending time in nature.



NOTES

Truths to Teach

Psalm 119:10-11 - With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

In this section you will find practical teaching ideas you can use with children. You will find several **Truths to Teach** (*and Corresponding Lies*) that include explanation and insight for you as a teacher to study and understand. Following each one are several activities designed to teach the specific truth.

Truths and activities can be taught in any order and are designed to stand alone. While these ideas are not complete Bible lessons, you can add them to other teaching you already have planned, choose one to do on its own, or plan several together to make a complete teaching time. Do what works best for you and your children.

TRUTH *to* TEACH

God knows the best way to live!

CORRESPONDING LIES: God doesn’t want me to have fun. God only set the world in motion but isn’t involved in my daily life. Life with God is restrictive and dull and based on a list of rules.

While it’s easy to say that God knows best, living in that reality is often difficult for children and adults alike!

God's commands are not given to withhold but rather to protect and enhance life. In fact, God promises abundance and blessing to those who follow His ways (*Psalm 128:1-2*). Believing this truth will guard a child's heart and thus influence the choices he makes.

ACTIVITY: Word vs World

DO: Write each set of statements below on a piece of paper and drop them inside a bag. You could also have a Bible and a globe or map ready to hold up (*optional*).

- 1 You should do whatever is true and right.** | You should do whatever you think is best.
- 2 God gives commands because He likes to order people around.** | **Following God's commands brings blessings to our lives.**
- 3 A good life is a life where I have whatever I want.** | **A good life is not found in the things I have.**
- 4 My body is my own and I can do whatever I want with it.** | **My body is a gift from God.**
- 5 My life should be spent living for God and earning rewards for heaven.** | My life can be spent getting rich and making a name for myself.

SAY: I have some statements in this bag. I'm going to pull out a piece of paper and read you two at a time. One will be something that God's **WORD** (*hold up Bible*) teaches us and the other will be something the **WORLD** (*show globe or map*) teaches. You have to try to figure out which is which!

DO: Pull out a piece of paper and read both statements. Have children hold up one finger if they think the first statement is from God's **WORD** or two fingers if they think the second statement is.

TEACH: Identify which statement is from God's Word and say altogether, "God knows the best way to live!" Read or have a child or other helper read the associated verse to see the truth as found in God's Word.

- 1** Romans 12:9
- 2** Psalm 103:17-18
- 3** Luke 12:15
- 4** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- 5** Matthew 6:19-20

RESPOND: Challenge children to trust that God’s way is always best. Pray over them that they would have discernment in knowing what messages are from the WORD and which are from the world. Ask God to help them set their heart on following His ways.

ACTIVITY: Why does God say...?

IDEA: This is a discussion activity. If you have a small group, you can discuss altogether. If your group is large, divide into smaller groups so children have a better chance of sharing. You can discuss all three topics at once or spread them out over time. You could have all groups discuss the same topic or give different topics to different groups. You can have groups share some of their thoughts or just wrap up the discussion time yourself with some key ideas from the topic(s) covered.

SAY: Sometimes we only think about what God says to do instead of why He says what He does. Today we’re going to think about how the things God says help us in our lives and are for our good.

TOPIC 1: Read Proverbs 1:8-9

- What truth is being taught in these verses?
- How will following this truth help you in life?
- How might following this truth protect you?
- What blessing will come to you if you follow this truth?
- How does this truth show you the goodness of God?

TOPIC 2: Read Psalm 119:37

- What truth is being taught in this verse?
- What things in life could be considered as “worthless”?
- How would turning away from those things be a help to you?
- How might turning away protect you?
- How do God’s ways give you life?

TOPIC 3: Read Ephesians 4:32

- What truth is being taught in this verse?
- When is it difficult to follow the truth in this verse?
- What might happen if you followed it even when it was difficult?
- What good might come by following this truth?

- When has God forgiven you? Do you think it was difficult for Him? Why or why not?

WRAP UP: Challenge children to see that God's commands are for their good and choose to humbly follow them.

TRUTH *to* TEACH

God accepts me

(Isaiah 55:1-3, Mark 10:13-16, John 6:37)

CORRESPONDING LIES: I need (*insert person*) to like me. Something is innately wrong with me. God messed up when He made me. I have to perform in order to earn love (*God's or people's*).

These lies are ones that lodge in the hearts and minds of children when they are young and often stick with them affecting the trajectory of their life. The very people who are supposed to be pictures to them of the unfailing and perfect love of God are not.

Often these messages aren't just one-time messages but ones that are repeated as relationships play out day to day at home or in school. For that reason, this truth is one that needs to be repeated over and over in a child's heart. Giving them truth to take home and review on their own will help with this.

ACTIVITY: Truths from Psalm 139

IDEAS: You can approach this activity differently for different aged children. For younger ones, you can say a truth from Psalm 139 and then have them repeat, "Wow! God loves me!" For older children you might have them read Psalm 139 in groups and come up with the truth statements on their own. Or you could share the statements and have them write down or draw their favourite one to take home and remember.

SAY: Did you know God loves you perfectly for exactly who you are? He made you, after all! Nothing about you is a mistake. We're going to read Psalm 139. Listen for all the things God knows about you.

READ: Psalm 139.

ASK: What did you hear that God knows about you? (*When I sit down, stand up, all my thoughts, where I am going, etc.*)

SAY (YOUNGER CHILDREN): This psalm has so many wonderful truths about how God thinks about you and relates to you! Every one of them shows just how much He loves you for exactly who you are! I'm going to say a truth from this Psalm and after each one I want you to stand up and say, "Wow! God really loves me!"

TRUTHS:	God knows me!	God sees me!
	God knows what I'm thinking!	God knows what I do!
	God knows what I will say next!	God surrounds me!
	God protects me!	God leads me!
	God made me!	God chose me!
	God knows all my days!	God thinks about me!
	God never leaves me!	

SAY (OLDER CHILDREN): This psalm has so many wonderful truths about how God thinks about you and relates to you. Every one of them shows just how much He loves you for exactly who you are. I want you to look back at the psalm and find a truth to finish one of these two sentences:

God _____ me!

God knows _____!

PRAY: Let children pray popcorn sentence prayers out loud one at a time. They can finish the sentence, "Thank you, God, that You _____." Close in prayer asking God to help His acceptance of them shape their hearts and lives.

CHALLENGE: Challenge younger children to repeat the phrase, "Wow! God really loves me!" during the week. Challenge older children to remember one truth that is meaningful to them during the week.

ACTIVITY: Name Acrostics

PREPARE: Create a paper that has each child's name printed down the side of the page and the phrase "God says I am" across the top.

ASK: What does God know about you? He knows things other people know about you – what you look like or what you're good at. He also sees your heart and your thoughts and knows what people can't always know. God also knows who you are

in Christ. God sees the gifts He gives you as a believer. We're going to use all these things to describe what God sees in each one of you. We'll use each letter that makes up your name as the first letter of something God sees in you.

DO: Complete each child's paper together as a class, brainstorming what characteristics God sees when He looks at that child. Be sure to include both external and internal characteristics as well as traits that come from their identity in Christ. *(If you don't have time to do them all in one day, do a few each class time until everyone's is done. You might want to brainstorm some key ideas before class.)*

CHALLENGE: Encourage children to display this somewhere they can read it every day.

TRUTH to TEACH

God wants to speak to me

CORRESPONDING LIES: God speaks to pastors and adults, but not to me. God only wants to tell me what to do. It's too hard to read the Bible. It's impossible for me to hear God speaking to me.

These lies from the enemy are designed to keep people, and especially our children, from the very relationship God created them for – intimacy with Him! God's Word not only gives them a chance to behold Christ, but it also reveals truth in their hearts, provides direction, and is useful in so many ways (*John 1:14, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105*).

Pray that your children would have a love and hunger for God's Word!

ACTIVITY: Complete a Devotional

PREPARE: Select a children's devotional to work through as a class. Provide copies for each child and instructions on which pages to complete during the week. Complete the pages yourself during the week and then share together once back in class. Here are some questions to help guide a conversation:

- What did you learn about God that helped you love Him more?
- What did you talk to God about?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before?
- What questions do you have about what you read?

Check out the sample devotional included at the end of this chapter from the *CEF* devotional series for little kids called *Every Day With God*, which is available at cefeurope.com/resources/resources-for-growth.

ACTIVITY: Hidden Truth

PREPARE: Pictures of nature, or an outdoor space to visit

SAY: Have you ever read a book or watched a programme on TV about a detective? What does a detective do? What makes a good detective? Would you ever want to be a detective?

Did you know God wants all of us to be nature detectives? What do you think it means to be a nature detective?

Every day God's world around us gives us clues as to what God is like. God wants to speak to us through His creation! Read Romans 1:19-20. God's attributes – who He is – can be seen in nature.

DO: Show children pictures or go outside to observe nature. Have older children identify what can be learned about God from various nature items. Tell younger children an attribute and have them identify which nature items displays that attribute.

IDEAS:

- Mountains – strength
- Young plants – new life
- Flowers – beauty
- Sun – faithfulness
- Rain - provision
- Constellations – order
- Lightning – power
- Insects – attention to detail
- Crops – gives good things

ACTIVITY: Treasure Hunt

PREPARE: Hide a special prize, snack, or activity somewhere. Prepare clues to guide children to the location of the special item. Hide a Bible in a separate location and prepare clues to guide the children here as well.

SAY: Today, we're going on a treasure hunt! What do you think of when you think of treasure? Let's get started and see what we find!

DO: Follow the clues to find the treasure and share it with everyone (*eat the snack, hand out the prizes, do the activity, etc.*).

SAY: What do you think about this treasure? Is it something you think is special? Something you enjoy? Something you would take time to care for? There's one more treasure we need to find! And it's a lot more valuable than the first one! Let's go find it!

DO: Follow the clues to find the Bible. Read Psalm 119:162.

RESPOND: God's Word is the greatest treasure anyone can ever have. It's more valuable than silver and gold! How would you react if you found a treasure chest filled with gold? Show me how your face would look. What would you say? Let's rejoice in the same way that we have the treasure of God's Word!

TRUTH *to* TEACH

God has a good plan for my life

CORRESPONDING LIES: I can do whatever I want to. What I do doesn't really make a difference. God will make me do something scary, boring, or that I don't like.

While God's plans don't always align with our natural desires, His plan is always best. God promises that He will work things together for our good – including His plan for our life (*Romans 8:28*). Childhood is a great time to begin to instill in children a desire to pursue God's will above their own, trusting that it is best in the long run.

ACTIVITY: The Potter and the Clay

PREPARE: Find a video of a potter shaping clay or bring in clay or playdough for kids to shape items.

DO: Watch the video or give children a piece of the clay or playdough and let them make something out of it and show it to everyone.

ASK: What is the person called who makes pots and things out of clay? Who gets to decide what is made with the clay? Why? What would you think if the clay pot got mad that it was made to be a pot?

READ: Listen to these verses to hear who is the Potter in the lives of people. Read Jeremiah 18:1-6.

SAY: Who is the Potter in our lives? God! Imagine God holding you right now in His hands. Imagine Him shaping you to be who He wants you to be. Imagine Him giving you the gifts He wants you to have. Would it be wise to complain to God that you don't like how He made you? No! God knows best! He knows exactly why He's making you the way He is. He has a good plan for your life.

RESPOND: Have children hold their hands open as you pray to show God their willingness to let Him shape their lives however He wants. You can have them pray on their own or lead them in a prayer they can pray silently.

ACTIVITY: Desiring God's Will

PREPARE: Blank paper and crayons or markers.

DO: Give each child a piece of paper and have him draw three things – what he wants to be when he grows up, something he loves, something (*or someone*) he trusts in for success (*experts, money, good grades, abilities, etc.*).

SAY: God gives us good things in our lives, but He doesn't always give us everything we want. God wants our hearts to love Him more than other things in our lives. God wants us to want His will more than our own. Read Mark 12:30.

RESPOND: Lead children in verbalizing their desire to love God and His will more than the things they drew on their paper. You could suggest the following sentences for them to pray silently or lead them in a verbal response together.

- God, I want you more than I want to be a _____.
- God, I love you more than I love _____.
- God, I trust you for my future more than I trust _____.

TRUTH *to* TEACH

God gives us good gifts to delight in

CORRESPONDING LIES: I get good things when I work hard. I can buy good things with money. My parents (*grandparents, etc.*) give me good things. God doesn't want me to enjoy life.

According to James 1:17, God is the source behind all good things and all good gifts. While this is true, it is not always our default response when we look at the good things all around us. It is natural to look at the natural means through which we receive them and assign God's provision only to the supernatural things of life.

Let's help our children see God's action behind everything now while they are young so they can carry that truth throughout their lives.

ACTIVITY: Back in Time

PREPARE: Pictures of different breeds of dogs (*optional*), pictures of different types of roses (*long stem, thornless, climbing, bush, wild, various colours, etc.*).

SAY: How many breeds of dogs can you name (*show pictures if using*)? Where do you think they all came from? (*The one species of dog on the ark.*)

Did you know there are about 150 species of roses? See how different they look? Do you think God made all these kinds of roses when He created the world? No! God created the first species and the others have been grown from it.

Sometimes you have to follow something back in time a long way to discover where it really comes from. The same is true of the good things in our lives!

ASK: What is something good that has happened in your life recently (*allow multiple responses*)?

READ: I'm going to read James 1:17 and I want you to listen and tell me where all those good things come from. They all come from God!

SAY: Let's see if we can work backwards to see how God is the one who gave some of these good things in your lives. (*Choose a few based on the amount of time you have. Here's an example.*)

GOOD THING: You made a new friend.

QUESTIONS: Where did you meet your new friend? (*At music lessons.*) Why did you decide to take music lessons? (*My parents wanted me to.*) Why did they want you to? (*I don't know.*)

WORKING BACKWARDS: What if God gave your parents the idea to have you try music lessons, and because you willingly obeyed them, you were able to meet this new friend that God had there for you all along?

WRAP UP: Encourage children to look for how God is the One behind every good thing in their lives during the week.

ACTIVITY: God Gives What is Good

PREPARE: Get a rock and toy snake. Ask an older child or helper to role play Matthew 7:9-10 with you.

DO: Have your helper run in to you and say, “Dad, I’m sooo hungry! Could I have some bread to eat?” Respond with, “No, but here’s a rock you can eat instead!”

ASK: What would you think of a Dad like that? Do you think he really loves his child?

DO: Have your helper run in to you and say, “Dad, I’m sooo hungry! Could I have some fish to eat?” Respond with, “No, but here’s a snake instead!”

ASK: What about a Dad like this? Is he trying to give his child what is good?

SAY: Most parents aren’t like this. Most parents want to help their children and give them what they need. What is something your parents have given you recently that shows you their love?

READ: Do you think God loves you as much as your parents do? Do you think He would give mean gifts to people who ask for what they need? Listen to Matthew 7:11.

SAY: God says that He gives what is good when we ask Him! This doesn’t mean we can just ask God for anything we want and it will magically appear. But it does mean that God always sees our needs and He wants us to ask for what we need.

RESPOND: What do you need from God today? Do you need strength to do what is right? Do you need help in a situation? Do you need to love someone who is hard to love? Do you know someone who needs a job or needs food? You can ask God right now for what you need. (*Allow time to pray silently.*) Close in prayer thanking God for the good gifts He will give.

God made everything in His world to produce and grow after its own kind

CORRESPONDING LIES: I can choose my gender. God made a mistake when He created me. I can decide who / what I want to be (*intrinsically / biologically*). We can manipulate God's order found in creation without consequences.

If we believe God knows how life works best, then we must also believe that when He created male and female and the cycle of reproduction at creation, that He knew what He was doing. God describes all aspects of His creation as good or very good (*Genesis 1*).

This fundamental truth that like produces like is foundational to many issues arising in our world today. You know your children best and know what level of information is appropriate for them. We don't want to run from issues, but we also need wisdom in knowing the right time to introduce ideas to children.

All activities below can be used in part with all children. Some portions you might decide to leave out for certain ages and groups.

Also be aware that some of the topics, particularly around gender and family, might make for a lively discussion based on the ages of the children in your room and their life experience. Our goal is to continually point children to God's best plan. His plan is distorted in both homosexual relationships and abusive or otherwise broken heterosexual relationships. His best design is for a child to grow up in a safe environment with a healthy mom and dad who can pour into the child in different ways.

Ask God to give you wisdom as you prepare these activities.

ACTIVITY: Creation Collage

PREPARE: Large sized paper, markers, crayons, old magazines or pictures of creation (*optional*), scissors, glue, seeds.

DO: Work together to create a large picture collage of things God created – plants, animals, objects in space, people, etc. Pictures can be drawn, coloured, printed from a computer, or cut from old magazines.

SAY: Wow! What an amazing God we have to think of so many different things to make! What are some of the things on our poster that have existed since God made them? (*Mountains, deserts, oceans, land, planets, etc.*) What are some things on our picture that God made that have died at some point (*plants, animals, people*)?

If those things died, then how do we still have trees, flowers, grass, people, horses, dogs, birds, insects, etc. today? God made a way for life to continue and reproduce!

DO: Show various kinds of seeds and ask what will grow from each of them. Point to various animals on the collage and ask what kind of animal will come from each one. Ask some obviously wrong things such as, “Will this pig give birth to fish?” No!

READ: Genesis 1:11-12, 20-22, 24-25.

SAY: God put inside of every living thing exactly what it needs to produce more of its kind. He put everything inside of acorns to produce oak trees. Everything inside of ladybugs to produce ladybugs. Everything inside of men and women to produce more people. God was so wise and careful in the way He created every living thing!

RESPOND: Have children fill in the blank to this statement as you praise God for His wisdom and plan in creation.

God, you are so wise in the way you created _____.

ACTIVITY: God Made Me to Be...

DO: Have children stand together in the middle of a room. Read a statement and have them go stand in a certain area for whichever description applies to them. Then have them move back to the centre of the room before reading the next statement.

God made me to be tall. (*Go stand to the right of the room.*) God made me to be short. (*Go stand to the left of the room.*)

God made me to have blue eyes ... brown eyes ... green eyes.

God made me to be a boy ... girl.

God made me to be a leader ... helper ... encourager ... teacher.

God made me to love talking ... love being quiet.

Have everyone sit down together.

SAY: All of these things tell something about the way God made you to be on the inside. They show who you are made to be, and God has a reason for the way He made you. He has good plans for you in your life and He knew you needed to be created just the way you are in order for you to do what He has for you.

READ: Psalm 139:13-16.

SAY: God's hands were the ones that made you and chose everything about you as you were growing inside your mom. God says that everything about you is wonderful! God was very careful to put you together exactly as He wanted you to be.

Sometimes you might not understand why God made you the way He did. There was once a little girl who didn't understand why God gave her brown eyes. She wanted blue eyes and would cry and complain about her brown eyes. When she grew up, she went to India to be a missionary. Guess what colour of eyes everyone in India has? Brown! God knew brown eyes would be perfect for what she would do one day!

RESPOND: Maybe there's something about yourself you wish was different or you don't understand. Will you trust that God's plan is best? Will you accept the way He has made you? Will you believe that you are fearfully and wonderfully made just the way you are? Close in prayer.

ACTIVITY: God Knows Best

Note: Be sensitive to the children in your class and their family structure as you teach this. Some may only live with one parent or may have experienced harm from a parent. Emphasize what God planned as best and what good parents can offer their children.

DO: Have children help brainstorm a list of good things about moms and good things about dads. You can write down their answers on a board that is visible, or just write them down where you can refer back to them.

SAY: Sometimes children only have a mother and no dad. What would they miss out on if this was the case? What would children with no mother in the home miss out on? This is why God's best plan for a family is to have a mom and dad marry and raise a family together.

READ: Genesis 2:24

ASK: What would happen in a home if there were two moms? What would children miss out on? What would happen in a home with two dads? What would children miss out on?

SAY: God made women to act in certain ways towards children and men to act in different ways. God's best plan is for a mom and dad together to raise a family.

God is good and kind towards those that don't have a mother or father in the home for whatever reason. God can put other men and women in their lives to help lead and care for them in the ways they are missing.

RESPOND: Will you accept God's plan for families as best? Will you trust that He is a good God whose plan for families is designed to give children exactly what they need from both a good father and a good mother? Will you turn from any wrong ideas you have about what a family could look like? Will you ask God to help you love and honour his plan for families as you grow up?

TRUTH *to* TEACH

I can show God's love to others

CORRESPONDING LIES: I'm too young to help others. I don't need to show God's love to others, adults can do that.

Children love to share their experiences and the things they love with others. Sharing the Good News and truths about God should be no different. We simply need to give them the tools so they can declare God's greatness and glory and salvation (*Psalm 96:2, 1 Peter 2:9*).

If you have access to resources (*tracts, verse cards or Gospel booklets*) that children can hand out to others, this would give them a simple way to share the full gospel with someone else even if they are not yet able to articulate the truths themselves. Alternatively, the activities below will give them simple ways they can share God's love and truth about His character with those around them.

ACTIVITY: Who Is My Neighbour?

PREPARE: Write down times of the day and night on cards and put them in a bag. Or, get a clock that you can move the hands to change the time as you teach.

DO: Show a time of the day and have children share where they are at that time and who might be around them. Include times children might be at home, school, extracurricular activities, church, visiting grandparents, in a shop, playing, etc.

READ: These people are all your neighbours. Listen to how God says you should treat them. Read Mark 12:31.

ASK: Think of how you would want to be treated in these places if you were these people. What could you do at that time to let the person (*people*) around you experience God's love? Give them ideas of simple ways they can compliment a person, show extra kindness, speak of God's love, invite someone to church, serve in some way, etc.

SAY: When people know you love and care about them, they are more willing to listen to the things you tell them. You can love others and help prepare their hearts to hear the Good News about Jesus!

RESPOND: Have children draw a picture of a person they want to show love to this week. Help them think of a way they could practically do that. Provide time for children to share what happened when you are together again.

ACTIVITY: Seeing as Jesus Did

ASK: What do you notice about people around you? Other children you play with?

SAY: When Jesus looked at people, He didn't just notice what they were wearing or what they were doing, He noticed how they felt. Did they look tired? Or sad? Or maybe afraid? He also was aware of their hearts and what they really needed.

READ: Listen to these verses and how Jesus saw some of the people He was around. Read Mark 1:41, 6:34 and Luke 7:13. What did Jesus notice about them? How did He react to them?

SAY: You and I can't see other's hearts like Jesus could, but we can slow down and notice how people are feeling and then show compassion to them. When we do this, we are able to share God's love with them in a meaningful way.

DO: Have children think of someone they know or see a lot. Have them imagine that person's face. Does it look sad? Worried? Happy? Share ideas of what you could say to them to let them know God loves them and sees them.

Have children think of someone they know who is going through something hard in life. Share ideas of what truth might encourage that person. (*That God wants to help them through the hard time. That God sees them and cares. That God can bring good*

out of bad.) Have children practice what they could say to those individuals to show them God's love. Brainstorm together what they could do to show God's love.

RESPOND: Challenge children to think of one person they want to encourage during the week. They can then take time to really see that person and ask God to show them how to encourage them.

ADDITIONAL IDEA: Consider watching a video (*or a portion of a video*) of Jesus' life and ministry. Watch how Jesus interacted with others. What did His voice sound like? (*Were His words kind or mean?*) What did His eyes look like? (*Were they angry or loving?*) How did He show love and compassion to those He interacted with?

Have Faith

Jesus was talking to Bartimaeus.

Read Mark 10:51–52

⁵¹ And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."⁵² And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.



Faith means to believe or trust. The blind man had faith in Jesus. He believed Jesus could heal his eyes.

Number the sentences (1, 2, or 3) in the right order.

- Bartimaeus followed Jesus.
- Jesus healed the man's eyes.
- Jesus asked what Bartimaeus wanted.

You can have faith in Jesus too. He is God the Son. Nothing is too hard for Him (Mark 10:27). Tell Him about your problem.

Trust Him to take care of it in His time and His way. Draw a line down a piece of paper. On one side write things you ask God for. On the other side write God's answers to your prayers. This will help you remember what God does. Your faith in Him will grow.

Print the letter for each number in the spaces below.

a	d	e	f	g	h	i	n	o	p	t	v
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

H 1 12 3 4 1 7 11 6
 G 7 8 9 2.



Dear God, give me faith to trust you with my problems. Thank you for taking care of me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you are leading a group, don't panic! Your goal is only to facilitate conversation and encourage others. Leading doesn't mean you have all the answers or do everything perfectly. It simply means you want to be available to God and help as He brings about change in the lives of a group of people committed to helping children choose God's ways.

Meeting

You should plan to work through this book in 5-8 weeks. Participants should work through the content before each meeting and come prepared to discuss the ideas.

Depending on the time available, participants could work through one or both topics of a section each week. (*Doing one topic a week would mean you would meet for 7-8 weeks. Doing an entire section each time would mean you would meet for 5-6 weeks.*) Use the last week or two you meet to try ideas from the final section with children and discuss how it went.

Schedule

Allow 30-60 minutes for your group discussion each week. Larger groups will need a longer time in order for everyone to share.

Use the Reflection section at the end of each topic to guide your discussion. General ideas to facilitate each part are given below.

- Read It: Ask, "What verse stood out to you? How did God use it to teach you?"
- *Think About It: Ask, "What idea or question challenged you the most in this section?"
- Talk About It: Discuss as many questions as time allows.
- Do It: Ask, "Who would like to share what they plan to do this week?"
- Pray About It: Spend time praying all together, in small groups, or in pairs.

Be prepared to share your personal observations or reflections as needed to get conversation going.

For each topic, you will find other specific ideas to use for the discussion times in the sections below.

**Some personality types desire perfection, others feel they are never enough, and still others believe their weaknesses define them. While God is against sin, He is for His children (Romans 8:31). Reinforce the truth that God does not condemn (Romans 8:1) and is instead gracious and kind towards His children (Psalm 86:15). He desires and will enable our growth in Christ-likeness.*



Specific Discussion Ideas for Beliefs Form Identity

As you begin the discussion, it might be good to share insights from the chart in the Summary section. This will help to review the idea of how labels can connect to underlying values and beliefs. Here is a completed chart with a few possible answers.

Label	Most Important	Most Valuable	Place Trust In
Athlete	Winning	Training	Physical strength
When athletes find their identity in Christ first, they will: do their best in order to glorify God; prioritize training in its proper place - after God and family, etc; trust God to sustain them, not their own body.			
Artist	Beauty, Recognition	Freedom of expression, Awards	Creativity, Abilities
When artists find their identity in Christ first, they will: put God and people first above beauty and art; find value in leading others to worship God through their art; trust God to express beauty through them.			
Teacher	Students listen & respond	Conveying information	Communicating in an effective manner
When teachers find their identity in Christ first, they will: care more for their students' hearts than behaviour; value relationship over facts and information; trust in the Holy Spirit to change lives.			

Sometimes it's difficult to recognize underlying beliefs that relate to an identity. Here are some more questions you can ask to help others through this process. (We will discuss and develop this more later in the study.)

- Why is this important to you? How does this importance compare to other things that should be most important in your life?
- What do you love about this? How does your love for this compare to your love for other things?
- What gets you excited about this thing? Is this excitement based on what is good, true or right?
- What must you believe to be true about the world or people in order to take on this identity?
- Where must you place your confidence and trust in order to live out this identity?

Here are a few identities children take on and experiment with. Use them to get conversation flowing. There is no need to discuss them all.

- Bossiness (*in charge*)
- Bullying
- Excelling (*school, sports, etc*)
- Rudeness
- Disdain for authority
- Compassion (*servicing, helping*)
- Silliness
- Earning / Having Money
- Trendsetter (*have the newest, nicest*)

Use this list from 1 Peter 2:9 to facilitate the Scripture discussion.

- We are chosen by God.
- We are heirs of the King.
- We are holy. (*Christ's righteousness is credited to us.*)
- We belong to God.
- We are the ones who get to tell others of God's greatness.
- We walk in light, no longer in darkness.



Specific Discussion Ideas for Beliefs Influence the Heart

Sometimes it is difficult to identify false messages in our own lives. Here are some ideas to consider together as you help to personalize this.

- False message – I need others to have a good opinion of me. Biblical truth – God’s opinion of me is what is important.
- False message – my number one desire for my children is obedience. Biblical truth – my highest priority for my children is that they experience God’s love and turn to Him for mercy and forgiveness.
- False message – the salvation of my children depends on me and how I point them to God. Biblical truth – God draws people to salvation.

As you reflect on the messages sent to children today, consider their various environments to help you as you brainstorm.

- Home – parents’ words, family structure, sibling interactions, time spent together, use of money.
- Media – music, social networks, advertising, tv / film, independence in use.
- School – peer influence, teaching, performance compared to others, coarse or bad language heard.
- Activities – pressure to succeed, busyness.

Here are some ways parents and teachers can help children form correct beliefs. Use these as a springboard to others.

- Identify false messages when they come up (*as watching tv, listening to music, etc.*).
- Ask, “What would God say (*or think*) about that?”
- Ask, “Is that really what is true?”
- Use a verse to share a biblical principle or message that counteracts the lie.
- Consistently elevate biblical truth in every aspect of life.
- Live a biblically consistent life yourself.



Specific Discussion Ideas for Identifying Idols

Although there is a lot of language in the Deuteronomy passage about obeying and doing exactly what God says, there is just as much language about the motivation behind the obedience. Be sure to discuss both aspects as you share together. Here are some safeguards God gave the people:

- Revere God and value Him most.
- Good life, blessing, and abundance promised for them and their children.
- Specific instructions so they would know how to live.
- Love God with everything you have, more than anything else.
- Internalize the commands, write them on hearts, talk about them all the time.
- Serve and worship only God.
- Remember God's care and deliverance from Egypt.

Reading Jeremiah reminds us of how different God is from us. In this passage we see God's forgiveness and promised restoration. We see a God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love (*Psalms 86:15*). God continually does for us what we do not deserve and what we can never accomplish on our own. This is our God too. Regardless of the wrong beliefs we harbour and resulting idols we set up, He is gracious and merciful to us, slow to anger, abounding in love, and quick to forgive when we repent.

Consider creating a simple card, printout, bookmark or fridge magnet of Joshua 22:5 for each person to take home and display somewhere they'll see it each day. Or provide supplies for everyone to make a simple verse card of their own at the end of the discussion. You could also simply send out the verse to your group through your social media platform during the week.



Specific Discussion Ideas for Turning Away Requires Discipline

The verses in 2 Peter are wonderful ones to showcase the generosity of God in giving us His own divine nature so that we have everything we need for both life and godliness. He doesn't leave us to ourselves to figure it out. We become partakers of His very nature through His promises. This nature is what changes our desires – removing wrong beliefs and replacing them with what is true and good and right. What a gift!

Be prepared to share what stood out to you (*Think About It question*) in order to get the conversation going. Perhaps there was a new idea or something that spoke to a need in your life. As you share openly, it will encourage others to do the same.

In the Talk About It questions, you may have different perspectives, and that is ok. Often the way we approach these questions reveals our personalities or natural tendencies. There is an aspect of the Christian life that requires both personal responsibility and action as well as the work of the Holy Spirit. And while God does say to be holy as He is (*1 Peter 1:15-16*), He also recognizes that we are weak and human and will never be perfect this side of heaven. He does, though, desire that we continually grow in grace and in spiritual maturity while on earth. You can help guide the discussion to explore each of these aspects of truth.



Specific Discussion Ideas for Beholding Christ and His Ways

This final section is a great time to challenge your group of teachers and/or parents in the work God has given them to do. Their primary responsibility is to draw near to Christ and rely on the Holy Spirit. God is more than able to do the work in the hearts of their children if they will let Him. Perhaps it would be good to lead an extended prayer time during this meeting and provide opportunity to pray for each other and for the children the members of your group teach.

If you would like to play the full song for your group, you can find the video here:



Specific Discussion Ideas for Leading Believing Children to Choose God's Ways

You can move through this section in a variety of ways depending on the need of your group and the amount of time you have.

Choose 3-4 Truths to Teach and discuss them together. Then have each person choose an activity to use with children during the next week. Share stories of how the teaching went when you meet again. You could do this for several weeks as you move through all the ideas given.

Discuss all of the Truths to Teach and have everyone choose an activity from the truth that is most relevant to a need they have. Share stories of how the teaching went when you meet again. Encourage everyone to continue implementing activities on their own once your time together is finished.

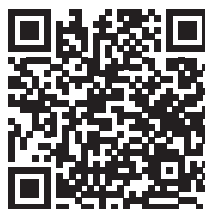


NOTES

*For more information about the CEF
training ministry in Europe check out our
website at cefeurope.com/education*



*More devotional resources for children
and families can be found here:*

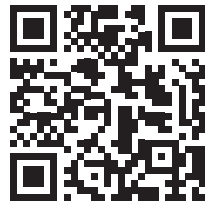


D6:7 Teach | Talk | Walk

IF YOU LIKED
Choose God's Ways,
CHECK OUT THE COMPANION
BOOK, *Love God Most.*



Available on
teachkids.eu/training



Watch for more helpful **D6:7** books to come!

Choose **GOD'S** Ways

IF WE'RE NOT CAREFUL, DISCIPLING SAVED CHILDREN CAN NATURALLY FOCUS ON EXTERNAL BEHAVIOURS, SINCE THAT'S what we can see and measure. But underlying every behaviour of a child is a belief about what is true, important, and valuable to him or her. These beliefs are what need to be moulded through the process of discipleship.

As a parent or teacher, it is often impossible to identify the beliefs that are motivating behaviour. Are children simply complying with authority? Are they obeying in order to please others? Are they conforming for selfish gain? Or is their behaviour an expression of their love for God?

While we may not be able to discern a saved child's true reason for obedience, we can intentionally instruct them in the right beliefs that should motivate Christlike behaviours. This will help children identify false beliefs that either underly good behaviour or lead them to wrong behaviour.

We can help children know what is right and good, choose to embrace those beliefs, turn away from lies, and pursue God and His ways above all else. This is the heart of discipleship (*Deuteronomy 6:5-7*). In this booklet, you will find inspiration and practical ideas to help you disciple believing children in this way.

The beauty of discipleship with children is that beliefs formed when young shape the basis of a person's entire life. What better time to establish biblical beliefs in a child's mind and heart that will lead to a lifetime of obedience to God and His ways!