

The background of the page is a light-colored wood grain pattern with a teal border. The text is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BEFRIENDING



TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Befriending?	3
Best Practices in Befriending.....	5
Developmental Considerations	7
Lower Elementary (ages 7 to 9).....	8
Upper Elementary (ages 10 to 12)	10
Essentials of Befriending: Listening	12
Essentials of Befriending: Sharing of Self.....	15
Essentials of Befriending: Respect	18
Essentials of Befriending: Commitment.....	20



WHAT IS BEFRIENDING?

Robert Mulholland defines spiritual formation as "a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others."¹

It is a fact that God's word invites us to share in the privileged space of transformational growth of other believers. Hebrews 10:24-25 reads, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

This mandate is for the benefit of all his people and holds no age limit. Children are especially in need of "faith-friends" to walk alongside them as they grow in relationship with Christ.

There are many different words we use for this type of relationship. In the church, we may call it "discipleship." Another descriptor can be "mentoring."

Both words "disciple" and "mentor" can be quite intimidating! The complexity and desired outcomes can bring anxiety to those asked to fill the role. To enter into a mentoring or discipling relationship can imply one is qualified, experienced, and brings knowledge and answers.

Walking alongside young believers is a role very few people feel "qualified" to accept. After all, does anyone have all the answers about life and faith? An even more common fear is "what if I mess up?"

Despite the hesitation many adults face, a grounded reality remains. A colleague of mine states it best in saying the more trusted people speak into the lives of children, the greater the opportunity for directed faith conversations to lead to godly actions.

Dianna Garland gives us a refreshing lens through which to view mentoring. She calls it "befriending."²

There is freedom in the word "befriending":

- You don't have to know all the answers
- You don't have to be perfect
- You don't have to have a certain level of experience
- You don't have to be considered a "success"
- Anyone can be a friend

Garland identifies four essentials to effective befriending: listening, sharing of self, sensitivity, and commitment. For each essential, this booklet will present five keys to help us reflect the love of God and establish a befriending relationship with a child. The focus age for this material is elementary age children, approximately seven to twelve.

As you humbly enter into God's work in the life of another, you will likely be equally blessed!



BEST PRACTICES IN BEFRIENDING

Before we discover keys to befriending, we need to understand best practices for the safety of all involved.

Follow Policies

Strictly follow all policies and procedures the ministry, church, or their insurance company, has outlined for meeting with children and youth. Since most churches have a two-adult rule to protect both children and volunteers, you may need to be creative in when and where you spend time in a befriending relationship.

When in doubt about anything, always ask *first!*

Should a policy be broken in your time spent with a child, do not try to hide or overlook it. Immediately present it to the appropriate leadership so the situation can be addressed.

Allow Children to Make Choices

In the same way we would not invade an adult's physical space, nor should we do so with a child. Allow a child to decide whether or not they want to hug you or anyone else. It's best to always ask a child first, such as "Can I give you a high-five?"

Talk to Parents or Guardians

Before entering into any befriending relationship, always talk to the child's parent or guardian. It's important to share that a faith-friend is not replacing a parental role.³ Some important things to establish are:

- What the program or meeting schedule involves
- Who to contact with concerns
- Permission for outings
- Boundaries, such as curfew and restricted activities
- Medical or personal knowledge needed about the child

When Trust is Broken

All relationships are complicated. Rifts happen suddenly or over time. We are all human, and not all our choices are good ones. Do not give up on a relationship. Should trust be broken by the child or the adult, there are practices we can learn from to recover the relationship. While every situation is unique, a few examples are below.

- Acknowledge what you see in a child's behavior, and use a calm moment to communicate with them what you've observed and how you feel about it. For example, "I realize things have been a little tense between us, and that makes me sad. I want to work on improving."
- Take responsibility for your behavior. Be direct and apologize; own your part.
- If a child feels hurt, recognize the value of their perspective. There are at least two ways of seeing any situation. You may disagree, but let the child speak freely about the ways in which they are hurt.
- One of the most challenging aspects of repairing a relationship is not being in control of the other person. Don't force repair in a day. A child wants to know that they are valued in a relationship. Just as it took time to develop a relationship, it will take time to repair it.⁴

Recognize When Deeper Help is Needed

Respecting privacy is an important aspect of befriending; however, it's critical to recognize when another form of help is needed.

Children today experience a vast array of circumstances. When something you hear or see from a child is concerning or feels that it needs deeper investigation from a professional, don't try to counsel or handle it on your own. Connect with the child's parent or guardian about what you see.

If you suspect abuse of any kind, immediately contact the proper authorities.



DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children are constantly growing, learning, and experiencing! Having a basic insight into children's faith and emotional development will provide a general understanding of what they may be working through at each age. Depending on each child's unique circumstances and upbringing, we should not expect children everywhere to fit into developmental theories.⁵

James W. Fowler's "Stages of Faith" help us to understand faith development of children. In Fowler's stages, "Mythic-Literal Faith" (stage two) focuses on ages seven to twelve. To understand the characteristics of the Mythical-Literal Faith stage, here is a brief summary⁶:

- At this age, children's source of religious authority starts to expand past parents and trusted adults to others in their community like teachers and friends.
- Faith is something to be experienced as children think in concrete and literal ways. Faith becomes the stories told and the rituals practiced.
- Children at this age can start to work out the difference between verified facts and things that might be more fantasy or speculation.
- Later in this stage, children begin to have the capacity to understand that others might have different beliefs than them.

Now let's look at how each age is developing.

Early Elementary⁺

Approximate age: 7 to 9

Early elementary school-age children begin to think for themselves and develop personal values. They are developing reasoning skills, wanting to know "why" and "how" as they explore options. You may find they ask a lot of questions! It's important to explain things to them in preparation for the next stage of growth when they begin making their own decisions.

Children at this age are often physically, socially, and intellectually active and desire independence. They need safe opportunities to practice new skills.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT (AGES 7-9)

- ☛ Beginning to internalize values and integrate moral principles
- ☛ "Buying into" what they have been taught and developing habits
- ☛ Most important influence is family, but peer groups are gaining
- ☛ Can remember several things at once and retain facts longer
- ☛ Attention span is longer
- ☛ Have a good concept of time (understanding months and years)
- ☛ Think systematically and logically
- ☛ Can deal with real, concrete ideas
- ☛ Independent and industrious
- ☛ Enjoy working on new skills
- ☛ Gender differences matter

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ☛ Becoming more independent and trustworthy
- ☛ Resolve conflict more effectively
- ☛ Show an increase in empathy
- ☛ Can show verbal and relational aggression
- ☛ Can differentiate between facial and situational cues that are contradictory as they seek to understand another person's feelings
- ☛ Recognize that people can experience more than one emotion at a time and that expressions may not reflect their true feelings

At this story-centered stage of faith, children take on the stories, beliefs, and observances that define their faith community. They still think in literal ways and need hands-on experiences to learn best. They depend on rules.

Considerations for learning at this stage⁺:

- Provide physically and intellectually relevant tasks
- Discuss the meaning of Bible verses before memorizing
- Give honest praise and acceptance
- Treat all children fairly
- Make the learning environment a safe place
- Give opportunities to read as the child is comfortable

Considerations for faith development at this stage:

- Children need to experience the results of actively trusting their loving God. They don't always connect an answer to prayer with a specific prayer they prayed earlier. You can play an important role by keeping track of these, showing them their faith is real and practical.
- Encourage children to pray for the people they love and also for people they do not know
- Children need to know their faith is both reasonable (there are good reasons behind it) and real (it works in their lives)
- Be a living role model for children and talk about how God works in your life
- Show children what it means to be a disciple of Christ in the world while being mindful of the need for safe boundaries
- Guide children in ways that will help address situations in a Christian way

Upper Elementary⁺

Approximate age: 10 to 12

Rapid growth and development changes define this stage. Children become increasingly independent as they work hard at "growing up!" This pivotal age is where self-consciousness grows with a deep longing for acceptance and approval. If a child doesn't get acceptance in one place, they will look for it somewhere else. This can lead to a temptation to associate with "popular" people or groups regardless of the morals they may exhibit.

Older elementary-age children are beginning to grasp abstract concepts. They often appreciate a wide range of experiences. They have an awareness of justice and fairness.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEVELOPMENT (AGES 10-12)

- ☛ Continuing to internalize values
- ☛ Peer groups become increasingly important
- ☛ Have a keen sense of loyalty
- ☛ Think logically and with reason
- ☛ Have increased attention span
- ☛ Learning how to resolve conflict fairly
- ☛ Notice when their needs are different from others
- ☛ Exploring abilities and talents
- ☛ Emotions stay fairly stable until end of stage, when they begin to swing wildly as hormones build
- ☛ Becoming body-conscious
- ☛ Lack of self-confidence begins to grow

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ☛ Are more selective about friendships and base them on mutual trust
- ☛ Are more convicted about matters of personal choice as their understanding of individual rights expands
- ☛ Have an expanded gender identity to include self-evaluations of typicality, contentedness and felt pressure to conform
- ☛ Possible increase in sibling rivalry

As children transition from dependence to independence, they begin to realize, "these are *my* thoughts," "this is *my* life," and "this is *my* faith." They see a need to take ownership of developing their spiritual life and be responsible for their walk with God. Their identity in a faith community can deepen as they connect stories, beliefs, and rituals that allow them to say, "this is what *we* believe," "this is what *we* do," and this is *our* story."⁷

Children are taking in vast amounts of information at this stage, and they are ready to make choices based on it. It will be important for faith friends to help them learn to make the *right* choices. As everything seems to be changing for a child, it is essential to assure them that God's love is constant.

This is an age for understanding and establishing spiritual disciplines. Children are primed to learn that spending time with God seems to have less appeal than playing a video game, yet there is tremendous long-term importance.

Considerations for learning at this stage⁺:

- Vary the pace between physical and mental tasks
- Make the learning environment a safe place
- Use visual aids and life experiences
- Provide opportunities for active involvement—including missions and service

Considerations for faith development at this stage:

- Guide children in ways that deepen the belief that they are a child of God and part of God's beloved community
- Guide children in ways that show devotion to God
- Encourage prayer journaling
- Be open to discussions about God, and intentionally guide children in developing their faith
- Be open to the ways that children may experience God in ways they are not sure how to articulate
- Be an accepting adult willing to hear the many questions about God and God's presence in our lives
- Help children understand that God gave them unique gifts and provide opportunities to develop and share those gifts

⁺These stages are adapted from:

Melanie C Gordon, "What Every Child Should Experience," Discipleship Ministries, January 28, 2016, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/what-every-child-should-experience>.

Kathy Pittenger, "Develop a Discipleship System," SeeAllThePeople (Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church), <https://www.seeallthepeople.org/develop-a-discipleship-system>.

Trent, John, Rick Osborne, and Kurt D. Bruner, eds. *Parent's Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2000.



ESSENTIALS OF BEFRIENDING: **LISTENING**

To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.
Proverbs 18:13

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this:
Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry
James 1:19

In an episode of "The Looney Toons Show," Daffy Duck coaches a group of children in water polo. He instructs the aspiring athletes in his nonsensical verbiage, "I don't want you to *listen*. I want you to *hear*!"⁸

As silly as that sentence sounds, I would argue that Daffy may have it backward. In order to truly *hear* another's heart, we need to be fully present to *listen*.

To be present is not as easy as it sounds. Distraction finds us easily, so it takes effort and intention to be present. In doing so, we put our own wants, needs, and intentions aside. Author Marjorie Thompson says, "Presence is the root of authentic listening, and listening is the foundation of real communication and communion among persons."⁹

Being present allows us to hear another's heart, showing value in them and what they have to say. In befriending, we listen to understand the world from the child's perspective. It also places us in a posture of willingness to learn from whatever God may have to teach us through a child.

FIVE KEYS TO LISTENING WELL



Pay Attention, and Show It

- Give your total concentration to what the child is saying. Listen with all your senses, giving your full attention.
- Silence and put away your phone, ignore distractions, avoid daydreaming, and shut down any internal dialogue.
- Be mindful of nonverbal behaviors. Use open, non-threatening body language. Avoid folding your arms. Smile, lean in, and nod when appropriate. Consciously control your facial expressions, avoiding any that might convey negative impressions.
- Make eye contact throughout the conversation. With children, this may mean you need to get down on their height/seated level as best you can.
- Allow a child to speak for themselves, even if it feels like it is taking quite a bit of time to get all the words out. Don't try to finish a sentence or story for them.



Use Reflection Words

Reflection is one way for you to show you are listening. Repeat what a child has said by summarizing what you heard and making sure you understand. What you repeat does not have to be the same word-for-word but should be similar.¹⁰



Use Reflection Emotions

Reflecting a child's emotions means watching the child's behavior and describing emotions they seem to be having. This helps a child learn that it is ok to talk about feelings. For example, you might say, "I'm hearing that you're frustrated about this situation." Mirroring what the child has said helps them feel validated and understood. Some tips for reflecting emotions:

- **Take a guess even if you are unsure**
There may be times when you are unsure what a child is feeling. For example, if you are unsure if a child is angry, scared, or sad, try saying, "It seems like you are upset, or "It sounds/looks like something is bothering you." A child may not know a word for what he is feeling, and by talking, you can figure it out together.¹¹
- **You do not always have to agree**
Sometimes it is not easy to summarize a child's feelings because you think he should be responding differently. Avoid telling a child to stop feeling a certain way. Help them to deal with and understand feelings by talking through them.
- **Talk about the *other* feelings**
Children can have several emotions at the same time. They may feel both sad and afraid. Show care for what they may be feeling on the inside and the outside by talking about *all* the feelings.



Ask Open-Ended Questions

- Avoid "yes or no" questions because they can produce dead-end answers. Instead, ask open-ended questions about the child to show you are interested in them and to encourage thoughtful and expansive responses.¹²
- If you want to better understand something the child has said, ask for clarification. However, do not focus so much on tiny details that you miss the big picture.



Be Patient

- Do not interrupt, fill periods of silence with speech, finish the child's sentences, or "top" the story (for example, saying "that reminds me of the time I...").
- Listen to understand, not to respond. Avoid preparing a reply while the child is still speaking; the last thing they say might change the meaning of what they have already said.
- Do not change the subject abruptly; this may signal boredom or impatience.



ESSENTIALS OF BEFRIENDING: **SHARING OF SELF**

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
Proverbs 16:24

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:
If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

A word that has become popular with the rise of social media is "humblebrag." Merriam-Webster defines it as making a seemingly modest, self-critical, or casual statement or reference to draw attention to one's admirable or impressive qualities or achievements.

It is easy to want to share positive events and successes. In befriending, we need openness to share the good, the bad, *and* the ugly. In Paul's word to the Philippians, he shares, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Phil. 2:3-4)

In befriending, we are willing to say, "this is who I am, and this is what I have learned." We then allow the child to decide what may or may not be helpful to them.¹³ Our goal is not to show what we have, what we know, or what we have achieved. We put another's interest first by expanding their view and understanding through encouragement.

FIVE KEYS TO SHARING ONESELF



Be Willing to Learn

Sharing of self is two-way. Be open to what the child is saying and sharing about themselves. Be willing to recapture the values of child-like attributes.¹⁴



Avoid Giving Advice

Share experiences and perspectives to allow the child to decide what may or may not be useful for their own life. Give them room to wrestle.



Acknowledge Feelings

Children, even small ones, have big feelings. Be sensitive to what the child is sharing. Acknowledging a child's feelings encourages healthier emotions and provides a safe space for expressing those feelings.



Withhold Judgment

- Remain neutral and non-judgmental in your responses so that the child feels safe enough to continue sharing their thoughts. Words have tremendous potential for causing harm to children and adolescents.
- Make the conversation a safe zone where the person can trust that they will not be shamed, criticized, blamed, or negatively received.
- Act as a sounding board. Avoid jumping in with your own ideas, stories, or opinions about what is being said.



Carefully Encourage¹⁵

- Be sincere. When you give praise, make sure it is honest; otherwise, a child will not believe the "encouragement" is truthful.
 - Instead of saying: You are a *genius* for solving that problem!
 - Try instead: "You came up with an excellent answer for the last question."
- Be specific and descriptive. Point out a specific aspect of a child's performance or describe what behavior led to good results. Noticing small things shows you have paid attention and you care.
 - Instead of saying: "You did such a good job."
 - Try: "You were so brave on stage. You were great at making eye contact and singing loudly."

- Focus on effort and process, not achievement or ability. Every child is unique, so judging by outcome can be damaging, especially when what comes easily to one child takes another more effort. It is important to compliment a child on effort and determination, not just the final result.
 - Instead of saying: "You are a great puzzle-solver!"
 - Try instead: "I can see that you worked really hard on putting the pieces together."

- Avoid conditional praise. Encouragement phrased as contingent upon good results or performance can lead children to believe their worth is attached to what they do, not who they are.
 - Instead of saying: "You did very well on that, just as expected."
 - Try: "You've worked really hard on this every day, and I like how you've drawn this picture using bright colors."

- Avoid Comparisons. Similar to conditional praise, social-comparison encouragement teaches children that winning, not learning, is the goal.
 - Instead of saying: You are the smartest in your class!
 - Try: You solved that problem with such great focus.

- Some Examples of Encouragement for Kids
 - You worked really hard for this.
 - These are very creative ideas.
 - You've come up with a lovely solution.
 - I can see that you've worked very hard putting this together.
 - That's very thoughtful of you.
 - Your compassion for others is wonderful.
 - I like how you included your new friends in the game.
 - It's about how much you've learned; not how much you've won.
 - Winning or losing doesn't define who you are. You do.
 - You have so much room to grow as long as you don't give up.



ESSENTIALS OF BEFRIENDING: **RESPECT**

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.
Romans 12:10

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.
Matthew 7:12

Treating another with respect is a special grace. We respect others by seeing them as precious and beloved children of God. Genuine respect means accepting someone with unconditional love, even when values or beliefs differ from our own.¹⁶

Most everyone has heard the phrase "respect your elders," but how does respect factor into befriending a "younger" child? First, respect is a two-way street; we need to show respect if we want to be respected.

Second, scripture points to a significant reason to show respect to a child. When the disciples try to turn children away from Jesus, but he rebukes them. "Let the little children come to me," He says, "and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Mark 10:14-16) Showing respect for children gives them a sense of belonging and value, all the while showing adults the way to God's kingdom.

Finally, Mark continues, "And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them." Most importantly, we choose to respect children because Jesus respected children.

FIVE KEYS TO SHOWING RESPECT



Value Time and Thoughts

- Children are generally viewed as having a low place in society, with little to contribute. Jesus' actions in welcoming children show us that their presence is important! Give respect by welcoming and giving value to what they have to say.
- Value a child's presence by expressing your thanks for spending time with you.



Use Good Manners

- It may sound strange, but modeling courtesy and grace teaches a child how to treat all people. It instills a sense of self-respect and makes others feel valued.



Respond with Grace

- Children do some silly things! When appropriate, laugh at their joke or funny story. However, be careful to refrain from laughing when a child makes a mistake, falls down, or, for example, accidentally gets food stuck in their hair! It may be funny to us, but being laughed at for a mistake can be humiliating to a child.
- Show unconditional love. It shows your commitment to the child and models God's grace to his people.



Show Trust by Allowing Independence

- Serving is essential, and there is a place for it with children. However, allowing children to try things for themselves can empower them. Give a child the chance to pour their own drink, clean up after him/herself, or carry his own plate of food to the table. It is a confidence booster and increases ability. The more a child does things by themselves, the more they will learn and the more they will grow.¹⁷



Respect Privacy

- Part of showing respect to children is remembering that some things can be "big" or embarrassing, and they can count on you to keep them private. Showing respect involves being aware of a child's feelings and honoring them.
- When a child brings up a "big" topic, be intentional about how you respond. How a child feels during a conversation will be even more important than what you talk about¹⁸. Answer with a phrase such as:
 - "I'm glad you want to talk about this."
 - "Thank you for talking to me about this. I know it's not easy to bring up big stuff."



ESSENTIALS OF BEFRIENDING: **COMMITMENT**

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.
Proverbs 16:3

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
Philippians 4:6-7

The most important thing to remember in befriending is that it doesn't matter that you do not have all the answers. Jim Henson said, "Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are."

Befriending at its root is a bond of commitment that says, "we are in this together." It is sticking with a person through the ups and downs. Being able to depend on another person to walk alongside us no matter what creates a solid and lasting relationship.

We find examples throughout scripture of this type of commitment. Paul tells the church at Philippi, "Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do." (Phil. 3:17)

A committed befriending relationship means that someone next to us shows a living, breathing example of what faith in God looks like. Let's look at important areas of commitment to establish in a befriending relationship with a child.

FIVE KEY COMMITMENTS TO MAKE



Commitment to Time

Everyone is busy, making it hard to devote time to a person regularly. Committing dedicated time to a child is essential for them to know that you value them. Relationship building takes time, so patience and consistency are necessary.



Commitment to Speaking Truth in Love

An essential part of any relationship is honesty. Be gracious in speaking the truth in love so the child knows you are someone who can be trusted. In practicing this, a child will know that they can turn to you for honesty when the world makes them question things.



Commitment to Blessing

- To speak blessing to someone is a prayer in humility, asking for God's favor and protection. It's God using a human to impart His message and image of identity and destiny to another person's heart.¹⁹ Speaking blessing over a child is one of the most empowering things we can do. In a world where negativity is rampant, speaking blessing impresses positive truths from God.
- As you end your time together, take a moment to make eye contact and speak special words from God. Try to choose something specific that will help the child through the week or specific situation. If appropriate, you can also choose a passage of scripture that is meaningful to you or the child. Some examples are:
 - "The Lord bless you & keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you & be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you & give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)
 - "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself & God our Father, who loved us & by his grace gave us eternal encouragement & good hope, encourage your heart & strengthen you in every good deed & word." (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)
 - "Be strong & courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)
 - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart & do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him & and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)



Commitment to Prayer

- Prayer is foundational for anything we do. Commit to praying for your time together.
- Ask the child how you can be in prayer for them every time you meet.
- Ask the child to pray for you. They can talk to God about big things and small.
- Keep a journal with requests you have brought before God so you can follow up with one another. Talk about ways God has answered prayer.



Commitment to Christ

- Dr. Lawson Murray says, "Children may be small in stature, but they're big in discernment."²⁰ Children watch our every move, learning how to behave by using the example they see and hear. Be sure that your actions line up with your words.
- Of all the things a friend might share, children need relationships that share what it looks like to love God completely. That does not mean you are perfect! It means you do your best to walk with God and reflect His love each day.

References

- ¹ Mulholland, M. Robert, and R. Ruth Barton. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016.
- ² Richmond, Garland Diana S. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*, 567. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012.
- ³ Richmond, Garland Diana S. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*, 568. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012.
- ⁴ Scharff, Constance. "6 Ways to Rebuild a Relationship with Your Children." HuffPost. HuffPost, May 18, 2016. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/6-ways-to-rebuild-a-relationship-with-your-children_b_7294726.
- ⁵ May, Scottie. *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*, 85. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2005.
- ⁶ A Place of Wholeness, Based on the work of James Fowler. "Handout 1: Stages of Faith Development." UUA.org, April 12, 2021. <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/wholeness/workshop2/handout1-stages-faith-development>.
- ⁷ Stonehouse, Catherine. Essay. In *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*, 162. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic a division of Baker Publishing Group, 1998.
- ⁸ Davidson, Hugh, Larry Dorf, and Rachel Ramras. "Bobcats on Three!" Episode. *The Looney Toons Show* 2, no. 1, October 2, 2012.
- ⁹ Thompson, Marjorie J. *Family, the Forming Center*, 59. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996.
- ¹⁰ "Active Listening." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 5, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/communication/activelisting.html>.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Richmond, Garland Diana S. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*, 567. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012.
- ¹⁴ Judith, Sadler Mary. "All-Age Learning: Implications for Faith Development, Education and Nurture in a Changing Church." *Durham Theses*. Thesis, Durham University, 1994. <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5104/>.

-
- ¹⁵ Jennifer, Diffley. “10 Ways to Give Positive Encouragement to Your Child.” Web log. *Select Health* (blog), March 2019. 10 Ways to Give Positive Encouragement to Your Child.” .
- ¹⁶ Thompson, Marjorie J. *Family, the Forming Center*, 60. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996.
- ¹⁷ “7 Ways to Show Respect to Children.” *Villa Di Maria Montessori School* (blog), April 12, 2018. <http://www.montessori-blog.org/2018/04/12/7-ways-to-show-respect-to-children/>.
- ¹⁸ Hershberg, Rebecca. Photograph. *Instagram*. Little House Calls, April 24, 2022. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Ccfn-0egw2O/>.
- ¹⁹ Hill, Craig S. *The Power of a Parent's Blessing*, 2. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2013.
- ²⁰ Murray, Lawson. “More Is Caught than Taught.” *Children’s Ministry Basics*, May 8, 2022. <https://childrensministrybasics.com/2022/05/10/more-is-caught-than-taught/>.