

CHAPTER 1  
Preparing for the Journey  
(Catherine Stonehouse)

To understand the inner working of the developing child is very important to adults who care about the children. We will know when our methods are contributing to spiritual growth, if we understand the processes. We will be able to identify the missing pieces in the child's experience or know how to compensate for the lack. On the other hand, we will not aware of ways to release the faith community's potential to foster the spiritual life of children, if we do not understand the process.

Methods for building understanding are often required these four approaches which are used by Christian educators; the traditional, pragmatic, social-science, and biblical approach.

The Traditional Approach: The traditionalists value the tradition and faith that was handed down to them and may assume the means used in the past are essential for passing the faith on to the next generation. Because the traditionalists fear losing the positive features of long-term programs, they may resist change. To continue providing ministries that served well in the past is important in the traditional approach, and energy is invested in revitalizing existing programs.

The Pragmatic Approach: Pragmatists know that children's lives are stimulated with media, so they find methods that equally stimulated by Christian education. They are always in search of what is working for others.

The Social-Science Approach: Many religious educators consult the insights of social

science to inform their ministries with children, since religious instruction is education. Some religious educators believe the social sciences provide the most accurate description of the educational process. Those who value the social sciences fear that the serious examination of findings from the social sciences is short-circuited, when Christians begin with a study of biblical perspectives on education.

**The Biblical Approach:** Many Christian educators turn to the Bible in their search for insights on effective ministry with children. They believe strongly in the importance of Scripture as a source of guidance for all of life, including religious instruction and spiritual formation.

**An integrated Approach:** Understanding of human development, and a theology that are in harmony, each area supporting the others, therefore the leaders and ministers working with children in the church need a philosophy of education. This calls us to be students of Scripture and the social sciences. Since the Scripture and science both offer insights on ministry with children, those insights could be integrated into a rationale or theology of spiritual formation in childhood.

There is more spiritual development, although psychological, cognitive, and moral development have an impact on spirituality. God works in our lives graciously, making possible our responses of repentance, faith, and obedience. God draws us with unconditional love into a relationship with Him.

We ignore the very foundations of the spiritual life, if we will not be concerned about spiritual formation during childhood. Healthy personality development prepares children for openness to God, since the development impairment causes barriers to a life of trusting, growing faith.

To prepare children to enter into a relationship with God, we want to discover how to

facilitate the healthy development of the whole person. Spiritual formation is a process for all life

as well as in childhood. It will help equip us to be workers, together with God for the spiritual formation of children, it can find out what prevents or closes down an awareness of God, and what helps children open up to God.

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CHAPTER 2  
Children in the Bible  
(*Catherine Stonehouse*)

Through the centuries, Christians have looked to scriptures as their major sourcebook. Therefore they come to understand their own faith and join with children on the spiritual journey. The Bible is not silent on how children are to be instructed and formed in the community of faith.

Adults and children can talk together about God and God's way at home, as we start the day, as we go here and there, and at bed time. In the normal flow of life, the commands of God are taught best. Whenever something causes us to think about God, talk naturally about God.

God prescribed religious rituals to keep the inner realities alive as part of the way of life. These rituals were also a means of teaching the faith to the next generation.

The people of Israel prepared for the first Passover as they waited for the last plague to strike Egypt ( Exod. 12:1-28). The parents would tell the story of God's marvelous deliverance as the children experienced the event.

Another two religious rituals that Israel people celebrated were the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Boost. The Festival of Weeks was a day of joyful thanksgiving to celebrate the completion of harvest. The Festival of Boots began with a celebration when everyone came together waving branches to praise God. For seven days families lived in shelters they had built from the boughs of trees.

In those gatherings children developed a deep sense of identity. Children very much enjoyed these events. The people of Israel did these rituals so that each generation would know

their ancestors had lived in booths when God brought them out of Egypt. So they would know the story and also know their God. ( Lev. 23:43)

The religion of Israel was rich in sensory symbols for there was no place for idols. God strictly forbidden them of making any images to represent Him which is found in the first commandment. The Lord gave the Israel people specific instruction for the tabernacle, and later the temple, which would represent God's presence to the people. Israel's children would notice this and care taken when it was taken down and put it up again.

In Deuteronomy 27:18, Joshua built a large stone altar on Mount Ebal and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. The children were there with their parents, while Joshua read the law, the promise of blessings, and the warning of curses. Each time the children saw the altar, they would remember the renewal of the covenant ( Josh. 8:30-35).

Many events included the children along with the adults, although some religious observances involved only priests or adults. When the walls of Jerusalem were built, Children were also part of the great celebration led by Nehemiah ( Neh. 12:27-34). Because children are the people to praise God, they should participate ritual events along with adults.

Moses realized that the hearts of the people were drawn away from God, they turned to worship gods of those around them. Religious observances with the greatest of potential become only hollow rituals, when people no longer love God with their whole heart. Moses began teaching people to love God again, they were required to consistently live and teach the faith.

According to the New Testament about teaching the faith to children, the early Christian met in home for learning, teaching, fellowship and worship. We assume children participated alongside the adults, since whole families would be there.

In the Gospels account, parents wanted Jesus to touch their children, to hold them in his arms, to look into their eyes, and to speak a blessing. Parents wanted Jesus to bless their children.

Jesus wants children to experience his love, so we are called to welcome children on behalf of Jesus. We can begin to introduce children to Jesus and his love, as they receive consistent and unconditional love from us.

According to Lawrence Richards' study of Scripture, he believes that there are five processes influence the growth of a children's faith; communicating, participation, modeling, biblical instruction and encouraging.

Children's ministries cannot be done in isolation, it requires a community of faith. Faith must be inspired within a faith community. The spiritual health of the adults and the life in community impact children. When the children have the opportunity to associate with adults who are growing persons who know and love God, their faith is most likely to grow. When children belong to an inclusive community that seeks to live out God's love, his or her faith is inspired.

We must provide instructions for the equipping of parents, since the nurture of parents is of special concern for children. Many adults may be drawn to a church that offers help, for they feel inadequate for the challenges of parenting.

Parents can support one another as they build values into their families, explore God's Word, and share their lives together. When families share their values and reinforce parental teaching, then their children will have friends.

It is as important to nurture the faith of a child as it is the faith of a teenager or an adults. Welcome the children in the name of Jesus and make adjustments that will serve them.

Some church have children worship with adults and teens for the first part of the service before going to children's worship, while others seldom have children worship with adults. Still others include children in intergenerational worship each Sunday. Children need to be part of some congregational worship experiences throughout the year, whatever a church decides on children's worship.



CHAPTER 3  
Foundations for Faith  
(*Catherine Stonehouse*)

According to Erikson's holistic view of person, biological and psychological development could not be separated. The pain and illness may be resulted, if the body experiences tension from psychological anxiety. The physical and psychological are interlaced.

A stage is a phase of life when the person is developing new capabilities and a new sense of the self in relationship with others. The person perceives and experiences life in ways qualitatively different from what goes on in other stages.

Within a certain age range, we expect babies to be able to hold their heads up, sit, stand then walk. Developmental laws within the human organism cause physical development to occur in a predictable sequence.

Infants depends greatly on the baby's caregivers to resolve the crisis of trust versus mistrust. The babies reach out for comfort by crying, so someone will know they have needs. The foundation for trust will be laid, if the mother and other caregivers come consistently. They learn that those around them can be trusted to respond, when someone come to hold, feed, and change them.

During the second year of life, children begin using words and show an increase in their ability to coordinate various function such as bodily actions, sensations, and words. This development prepare children to take on the challenge of establishing their autonomy.

Children may not develop self-control and become vulnerable to shame and doubt, if



adults over control them. Children who gain self-control without losing self-esteem will develop the ego strength of will.

Children seem to suddenly grow together both in person and in body around the age of four. Their mobility and self-control have opened to them a more wider world. To their autonomy, the children now add initiative which involve understanding, planning, and doing a task.

As empathy grows, children become aware of times when their actions hurt another, and their guilt can lead them to repair the damage they have done.

In the past children and adults entered into the life of the community, working alongside parents at home, interacting with neighbors, and participating in the family's religious life.

Normally, it is around the age of six that adults begin to teach children the skills essential for adult

life.

Education is the process by which children tackle the crisis of industry versus inferiority. Children who has been through the crisis of industry versus inferiority will develop the ego strength of competence.

Children are now laying the foundation on which to build life and faith, and becoming the persons they will be. They are being formed through what they experience in their homes, schools, and faith community. The church must find the ways to help parents provide the family experiences needed for positive resolution in each stage of childhood development. The church needs a new awareness of the importance of childhood.

Spiritual formation comes from healthy psychosocial development, because spiritual development is not just social, psychological, and biological development. Both Human development and spiritual formation are connected, or are not two separated processes.

Spiritual formation can be seen when parents care for their baby, guide the toddler, and encourage the school-age child. Children build their assumptions of how God will respond to them from the ways in which parents and other adults respond to their efforts, successes, and failures. The everyday interactions between adults and children is the process of laying foundations of faith.

The spiritual formation of children should begin with the spiritual formation of their parents. The lack of faith or the faith of parents impact their children. Those who care about the spiritual formation of children must be concerned about the spiritual formation of the parents and help them to belong to the faith community.

It is very important for children to see that those who teach moral standards and also showing love of them. Teachers must be persons of integrity.

Teachers might encourage families to take on service projects, instead of only classes working together. Be sure to include tasks that children could do and encourage them to make a ministry commitment, when designing a ministry survey for use in the church. Children should receive appreciation for what they have done. The recognition will help to build their confidence and will give them a sense of belonging in the faith community.

CHAPTER 4  
Young Learners in Action  
*(Catherine Stonehouse)*

We must learn how the children think in order to communicate with them effectively. Children's thinking and feeling are unlike of adults. Adult thinking is foreign to children, and they are intellectual aliens to the adult world. This understanding is important for adults who desire to facilitate the spiritual formation of children.

According to Piaget's study, the human beings are active learners from birth. Human's mind is like an artist creating its own interpretation of what it sees, it is not like a mirror passively reflecting whatever is held up to it.

As adults, we can give children information and experience as material that they can build understanding, but each child must construct his or her own concepts. By using whatever thinking processes they have developed, children blend what we give them with other bits of information they have picked up and organize it all. It may or may not be similar to the concept we intended to communicate, since their construction will be their own.

From Piaget study of children, he identified four stages of cognitive development. The children's thinking and logic are qualitatively different in each stage as follows; sensorimotor

from birth to age of 1 ½ or 2, preoperational from age of 1 ½ or 2 to 7 or 8, concrete operation from age of 7 or 8 to 11 or 12, and formal operations at age of 11 or 12 and up.

There are two factors that keep the sequence of stages invariant. First, biological development prepares the way for cognitive development, which follows a common sequence for all persons. Second, at each stage skills are developed that are necessary in order to move into the next stage.

The infant's mind works with sensations and actions from birth until the beginning of language development. The intellectual processes of infants are active and developing, although they do not have words with which to think. Babies begin to experiment with new means for obtaining desired ends, at first through experimental actions and finally by forming the action plan internally. We might say, babies' actions are their thoughts.

Newborns are completely unaware of anything other than their own body and actions, they are totally egocentric. Babies discover that they are an object in a world of objects as time goes on the first eighteen month of life.

In the early months of life, when babies drop a toy they do not search for it for them what they no longer see does not exist. When objects or people are out of sight, they do not cease to be. Once babies learn that objects have permanence, it is not frightening to them for mother or father to leave them.

Children amaze us with how much they learn, when they are between the ages of one to or two and seven to eight. Children gain a basic understanding of life in the family and in the communities in which their families participate, and begin the formal learning of school. Children master language in far less time than it takes an adult to learn a second language. Children is full of new things to be learned in the world of preschoolers and early elementary.

Young children are unaware that other people may have a different view of things. They assume everyone thinks and sees things just as they do. Children are egocentric in perspective and are unable to differentiate between their viewpoint and that of others.

When children think, they use intuition rather than adult logic. Children do not coordinate their pieces of experiential knowledge by making logical or rational connections. They simply internalize their perceptions and activities as mental pictures of their experiences.

Children remember the things they do, their motor memory is very effective. Children are very good at remembering words. Adults often assume that children understand their meaning and can think of them, if they know the words. Young children still need to process concepts actively, even though they may have developed a large vocabulary.

Children are strongly influenced by what they see and the meaning they make of that. They focus on one thing at a time and do not perceive the whole process. Children remember what they understood from what they saw.

Adults may feel inadequate and be afraid to try to answer children's questions. When challenged by a child's question, we can ask what did he or she think. The child's response may provide additional clues regarding what the child really wants to know, it may point us toward an adequate answer. We too will learn and grow as we honestly consider children's questions about life, death, and God.

Children make a major developmental breakthrough around the age of seven or eight. Changes occur in the way they process intellectual matters, their affections, social relationships, and individual activities. As children discover that other people have viewpoints different from their own, these changes become possible. Children can question their own thinking and identify misunderstanding, when they know their perspective is one among many.

"Concrete" operation is the mental process used during middle childhood. Children think about actual objects, events, or commands that they could not act out. They are unable to process concepts that can be represented only in words. Children think logically, but they merely think about concrete things.

Children are able to reverse their thinking because logical processes are possible after seven or eight years of age. Children are able to consider each step of the process as well as the end result, they can look back to the beginning point of an experiment.

By the age of seven or eight, children begin to master the concept of time. They have developed a working understanding of clock time and calendar time. Children learn to place events in sequential order with a duration of time inserted between them, during period of concrete operations.

Children begin to apply to the realm of abstract thought the logical abilities they developed through working with concrete thought as they move into adolescence. Formal or abstract logic develops out of experience with concrete logic, it does not just suddenly appear. Some adolescents go through life never becoming comfortable with thinking abstractly, although the potential for abstract thinking is released in many teenagers.

There are four factors that caused development in children; the biological factor of heredity and maturation, direct experience, social interaction, and the process of equilibration.

Heredity and maturation provide the potential for development. This means that persons are born with a brain, which naturally engages with the world around them, taking in perceptions, organizing and making sense of them. As the brain matures it is able to organize information in new, more adequate way, making possible qualitative changes in the child's thinking. The sequence of the development does not vary, but the speed varies because of differences in the development timetable of children.

If children are going to develop cognitively, they need direct experience with the physical world. Children discover the characteristics of the object as they encounter, handle and interact with them. Children will also learn about the effect of their actions on the objects. As children experience the objects around them, they learn and develop.

The social environment influences the development of children. As children play together and solve relational problems, they become aware that other children see things differently, and they begin to compare their view with those of others.

Children never notice in social interaction, discovering perspective before, as the brain matures they become aware of new realities through experience. Children discover that some of the things they assimilated into a mental category do not fit, disequilibrium occurs or inner conflicts. Human beings make the changes in their thinking that are necessary to reestablish harmony and a sense of adequacy, they are born with the need to resolve those inner conflicts and restore equilibrium.

The most powerful educational experiences and relationships are from everyday life setting. Children are always learning from all their experiences and relationships. What children learn in the formal setting of elementary school or Sunday school is only a small portion of their discoveries. It makes a big difference in whether the child's experiences lead to positive learning and development from the way in which parents, adult friends, and teachers cooperate with the necessary cause of development.

It is important that we accept each child's developmental timetable and uniqueness in all area. Each child's heredity and rate of maturation are givens, which cannot be changed. The way in which significant adults in a child's life relate to those givens does influence learning and development. Understanding the sequence of cognitive development helps us not only to accept but also to celebrate what is normal, healthy development during each stage.

Discoveries made through direct experiences are more transformational and exciting for children than lessons in which adults tell them what they should know. Play is one form of experience that enhances a child's development. Children benefit greatly from the freedom to play creatively. Children who play out doors have opportunity to discover the wonder of God's creation. Children want to repeat the activities, when they are learning from their experiences. Repetition helps children master what they are learning and gives them mental exercise.

Providing opportunities for and encouraging children to interact with others is another way in which parents and teachers facilitate development. Children benefit from developing friendships with older or younger children, teenagers, and adults, not only from interaction with their peers. Some children will spend many hours a day in front of the television, video games or the computer screen, if they are allowed to. To invest more time interacting with their children and giving them opportunities to interact with others, parents need to set time limited of their children spend with the television, video games, or the computer.



CHAPTER 5  
The Child's View on Right and Wrong  
(Catherine Stonehouse)

Researchers have found that children who had no religious education were more likely to steal, lie, or cheat than were the children who had moral instruction or character education classes. Obviously what children have learned from moral instruction classes is not guarantee that they will act on what is right or wrong. Children thinking processes differ from the moral reasoning of most adults, when they are faced with moral decision. We need to understand the way in which children think about moral questions at each stage in order to understand why they act as they do. Therefore, we will know how to help them to develop morally.

Kohlberg identified three levels of moral reasoning and two stages within each level, from extensive research. Understanding how some of these values and perspectives develop can help us better understand the moral thinking of children.

Level I: By the age of four or five, children begin making moral judgments using reasons similar to those employed by other children their age, although they simply act naturally without thinking about what is right or wrong.

Source of Authority: During level I, self-interest is the source of moral authority.

*Stage 1.* Children are unaware of what they do, they do not understand about the rules.

Children act based on their own interpretation of the rules, because they think they are obeying rules laid down by their parents. *Stage 2.* Children begin to break away from their egocentric

viewpoint around the age of seven or eight. They want to play with other children and coordinate their play using rules, which they still understand only vaguely.

**Defining Right and Wrong:** Children judge rightness and wrongness based on the physical or self-gratifying results of an act. *Stage 1.* For young children during this stage, right is obeying the commands of parents and other authorities and avoiding punishment. Wrong is an act that results in punishment or physical damage. *Stage 2.* At stage 2, Right is a fair deal where two people receive equal, concrete benefits, it is what serves one's personal interests and needs.. Wrong when not all people are treated equally, or when things do not work out to the person's advantage.

**Motivation to Do Right:** *Sage 1.* Children's first moral feelings involve a sense that it is right to obey, they also want to avoid punishment. Young children do what is right because they believe they ought to obey their parents and others in authority. *Stage 2.* Children in stage 2 are motivated to do what is right to gain rewards and benefits. If the potential reward is great enough, they may choose to go ahead and go what they want, willing to pay the price of being punished to gain the desired reward. The desire for reward tends to outweigh their fear of punishment.

**Awareness of Intentions:** *Stage 1.* Adults are often surprised to discover that young children are blind to intentions and the role they play in moral action. Refer to this chapter example, the boy who broke the cup, and disobeyed his mom was the worst. On the other hand, the boy who broke fifteen cups had less guilty because he intending to be obedient and simply had an accident. *Stage 2.* Children in stage 2 are not thinking about intentions or reflecting on whether their self-interest is right. In stage moral reasoning, the attention is totally focused on whether personal interests are being served. Children understand the intentions of self-interest but they do not move beyond that.

Taking the Perspective of Others: Moral development required the ability to take the perspective, understand the point of view of people. *Stage 1.* Young children are unaware of perspectives different from their own. Therefore, children do not ask how others feel or what they want in a given situation. They focus on the physical consequences of actions and are unaware of the psychological interests and needs of others. *Stage 2.* Children are aware that other individuals do have different perspectives, and that interests often conflict by the time they move into stage 2. Their solution for resolving the dilemma of conflicting desires is equal exchange.

The Value of Persons: How we understand the value of persons is another important element in the way we reason morally. *Stage 1.* In this stage, children love their parents but also fear them. This fear and affection causes children to value obedience and to think of adults as more important than children. Children believe it is wrong to lie to an adult but are not bothered by lying to another child. *Stage 2.* Children at stage 2 value people for what they can do for them. They understand human value in terms of how people contribute to meeting the needs of others.

Understanding Justice: Children talk frequently about fairness, which is how they understand justice. Justice is not a word heard often in the conversation of young children. *Stage 1.* Preschool children tend to accept whatever adults authorities, describe what is just or fair. The only inequality that young children perceive as fair is when important people are given special treatment. The rules are to be applied equally to everyone without exceptions for special needs. *Stage 2.* To children using stage 2 moral reasoning, fairness, understood as strict, qualitative equality, is extremely important. If children do something for someone, they expect the person to do them an equal favor. That is fair.

Level II: Children begin to use level II moral reasoning and come to accept these values as their own. They discover in the world around them moral values that guide the lives of others.

Source of Authority: When making moral judgments or decisions, external standard become the authority persons consult at level II. People are now ready to explore the moral guidelines others have found helpful, they are no longer locked in their fear of punishment.

*Stage 3.* As children at stage 3 discover that family members, friends, and teachers are guided by certain values and have expectations for how people should act, they now understand external standards. *Stage 4.* At stage 4, the laws of society provide moral authority. Laws are valued for the order they bring to society and made to order society for the good of everyone. When everyone follows the law as their source of authority, life runs much more smoothly.

Defining Right and Wrong: *Stage 3.* At this stage, good people are believed to be concerned about others, to be loyal, respectful, and grateful. Right is being a good person. *Stage 4.* What is right at stage 4 can be defined as obeying the law, doing one's duty, and contributing to society. Breaking the law or not accepting rightful responsibility in society is wrong.

Motivation to Do Right: *Stage 3.* Children in stage 3 want to think of themselves as good sons or daughters, friends, or team members, and the desire to be considered good motivates them to right actions. Children at this stage want to be good, and also want to please those for whom they are. *Stage 4.* As children in state 4 grow in their understanding of the law, they commit themselves to obey the law. By obeying the law is what motivates stage 4 adolescents to do what is right.

Awareness of Intentions: *Stage 3.* At stage 3 motives are judged good or bad based on the motives a good person would be expected to have in the situation. In stage 3, intentions

become an important factor in moral reasoning. *Stage 4*. There is the awareness of intentions and the expectation that people must take responsibility for the outcome of their actions in the moral reasoning of stage 4. Even if motivated by good intentions, an action that violates the law or likely to cause harm is judged wrong.

Taking the Perspective of Others: *Stage 3*. Stage 3 moral reasoning does not grasp the perspective of those who are outside the circle, it expands only to take the perspective, viewpoint of family and friends. The golden rule is applied concretely, identifying specific actions appropriate for particular individuals in specific situations. *Stage 4*. People in stage 4 judge individuals and group in terms of how they fit into the society and of the contribution they make to it. The moral reasoning of stage 4 take the perspective of the society.

The Value of Persons: *Stage 3*. At state 3, people are valued for the love they give and the love others have for them. They understand the worth of persons to be in the love and affection that bonds them together. *Stage 4*. At stage 4, individuals are valued for the contribution they make to society. Life is considered sacred, because it is declared sacred by society or religion.

Understanding Justice: *State 3*. In stage 3 standard, justice does not demand an eye for eye, a person may choose to forgive. Fairness takes into consideration the special needs of those who require more help, it no longer requires restriction. *Stage 4*. In stage 4 moral reasoning, As just using the procedures society has established for resolving conflict, justice is what the laws of society declared.

Level III. Adult forms of moral reasoning mature is described in level III. The maturity in moral development is not automatic with age, people did not begin moving into level II until their midtwenties. Some people may never develop those abilities.

Source of Authority: The preadolescents, adolescents, and young adults grow in their understanding of value and also of the limitations of the law, as they live by the specific laws and expectation of level II.

Defining Right and Wrong: *Stage 5*. At stage 5, right is protecting the life of all people and guaranteeing them the liberty to live by their values, it is upholding the rights and values upon which a society has agreed. Individuals discover that within a group or society there is a wide range of different values. *Stage 6*. Principles judging and living of the person using stage 6 moral reasoning requires that people understand moral principles and that they commit themselves to act on those principles in all situations. Those principles are respect for the dignity of each individual and equality of human rights.

Motivation to Do Right: *Stage 5*. At stage 5, people want to contribute to the welfare of others in the family, at work, within friendships, and in the community. From this desire, they are motivated to invest time and energy in protecting the rights of others and in making family or the community a better place for everyone. *Stage 6*. To be a person of integrity motivates the stage 6 persons to right attitudes and actions. Persons using moral reasoning of this stage are deeply committed to moral principles. To violate those principles would lead to self desire.

Awareness of Intentions: *Stage 5*. At stage 5, good intentions do not make an act right. When judging an action, stage moral reasoning takes into account motives and intentions. The act is wrong and the person must be held accountable for the action, if principles have been violated. *Stage 6*. For the stage 6 person, if an act applies the principle of love and respect for all persons, the act is right. Any action that violates those principles will grieve and stir anger within the principled person, even when the intentions that motivated the action were good.

Taking the Perspective of Others: *Stage 5*. At stage 5, their ability to understand diverse perspectives causes them to see the need for procedures that can justly respond to the differences.

One factor that causes people to develop stage 5 moral reasoning is the growing ability to understand the perspective of individuals and groups quite different from themselves. *Stage 6.* Unless one can comprehend the perspective and needs of each person to be affected by a decision, the principled moral judgment of stage 6 is not possible.

**The Value of Persons:** *Stage 5.* In stage 5 moral reasoning, life is valued as a basic human right. Every person has a right to life, no matter what their status in society. *Stage 6.* At stage 6, each person is treated with consideration and respect, human life is valued regardless of contribution to society. Life is of greater value than any other consideration.

**Understanding Justice:** *Stage 5.* People at stage 5 realize a just decision cannot be reached if only one perspective is considered. Justice is equity, it may require some inequality to adjust for differences. *Stage 6.* For stage 6 persons, justice is equal consideration for all who will bear the impact of the decision to be made. The justice principles that guide the reasoning of stage 6 individuals are positive statements of what one ought to do, not negative "you should not."

Understanding how children reason morally helps us to see their point of view and to be more accepting of them where they are on their developmental journey.

Role-taking is the most important social experience for stimulating moral development. Role-taking involves attaching oneself to others, children becoming aware of their thoughts, feeling, attitudes, and empathizing with them. Children watch, listen, and imitate others to try to discover what they want. Children experience some of what the admired person experiences as they imitate.

If children are to grow in their understanding of justice and develop morally, they must experience just treatment and participate in providing justice for others. When children are

respected and when their viewpoint is asked for, listened to, they experience the home or classroom as just and fair.

Parents and teachers must make a practice of listening to children to discover how they see events and to understand the reasoning they are using. Effective moral education begins with parents and teacher listening, not just talking. Unless the moral demands and instructions match the child's moral reasoning, attempts at moral education are ineffective or even counterproductive.

Children see the moral matters is a situation very differently from adults. Understanding the characteristics of moral reasoning at the various stages of development prepares us to communicate with children.

Through experiments to test the honesty of children, a researcher found that moral action is influenced by the child's level of moral reasoning and ego strength. Other researchers have also found that children who act morally and resist delinquent behavior or are characterized by these factor of ego strength that would be commonly identified as strong will.

It is important to examine the relationship between religion and morality, as we consider the moral reasoning and actions of children. Because Christians and Jews' God is deeply concerned about love and justice, their religion and morality are closely intertwined. Children see love and justice in action, as they meet Jesus and are introduced to God at work in Bible stories.

Children want to please Jesus and be like him, as they grow lover for him. Even when it is hard, children need the comfort of knowing they can ask God for the strength to do what is right.



CHAPTER 6  
Knowing God in Childhood  
(Catherine Stonehouse)

Adults overlook the young child's experience God, when the focus of attention for religious education is on the cognitive knowing of God. Children's comments about God are unimportant in the long run, their questions are viewed as cute but distorted.

Children are sensitive and responsive to God. Childhood images of God are powerful and influence us throughout a lifetime. Evidences of profound spiritual experience in early childhood come from many sources. A searcher believes that children first become conscious of God between two and three year of age.

By the age of three children's cognitive development makes it possible to wonder what causes the phenomenon they see in the world around them. Base on their experience, children assume every thing is caused by someone acting on it.

Children think their parents can do anything, and then they discover that God is greater than their parents. Children are greatly impressed with God's power and perfect in this first conscious awareness of God.

In the context of relating to their parents and other significant adults, children form their image of God. Children who experience faithful care and are reassured of love even when disciplined are likely to have an image of a God who loves them dearly and constantly. In abusive situation, some children develop an image of God as the idealized parent, and their God bring them great comfort.

Children need something to give comfort when parents are absent. Toddlers still suffer from the fear of separation from their parents when they begin to walk and to enjoy increasing autonomy. Children imagination creates for them what it calls a transitional object. Children who attach to God feelings of security and love, God may be such a transitional object .Children who carry their blanket carry the comfort of the parents' love in the blanket. It is an object that symbolizes the relationship with parents which has the feeling of the parents' presence connected to it.

The unseen God is real to children, therefore young children believe easily in the reality of a God who cannot be seen. God is very different from children's other imaginations, although God is believed in, along with fairies, and monsters.

Young children want to know about God, they also think deeply about God as they want to know more about their parents and how they do things.

Either at home or in the church, we do not give children our understanding of God as we teach them. Instead, we guide children as they reshape their God in the light of what they learn from us and in their every expanding life experiences.

Even children's questions seem unimportant to us, we assist them in the refining and reshaping of their image of God by responding to their questions.

Never give a child an answer of which we are not sure. It is important to answer the question being asked, not to give an answer for which the child is not yet ready or an answer bigger than the question.

Genesis 1:27 states, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Whether or not children have religious influences in their home, the tendency to create an image of God seems to exist within them.

God's intention was that from birth the faithful, loving care of parents would provide experiences out of which the child could construct a clear, health-giving image of God. God has equipped human beings to begin that quest very early.

God chooses to work through the families in which children live and grow not only within individual children. When we experience a growing relationship with God, we give our children a precious gift. As children sense that reality, love, and worship in the lives of adults around them, their image of God is confirmed and enhanced. God becomes increasingly real to children as they have opportunity to participate with us in the living of our faith and in the worship of God.

In searching for answers about God, biblical stories play an important role in the elementary child. The experiences of biblical characters relate to the events of children's lives. Children see themselves in the characters and see God working and relating to those biblical people as they think about these stories.

For many children Jesus was far more than a historical figure. When children need help to be good or with their personal problems, they often turn to Jesus to guide them, because he was once a child and understands.

We can help children get better acquainted with biblical characters and encourage their interest in and their relationship with Jesus. By taking seriously what God is saying to older children and believing that God is at work in their lives we also can bless them.



CHAPTER 7  
Growing in Faith  
(Catherine Stonehouse)

When We talk about religion or the spiritual life, the word "faith" show up frequently. It will be very helpful to explore the biblical meaning of faith before looking specifically at the faith of children.

A three-part definition of faith that offered by Fowler are as follows. 1) A dynamic pattern of personal trust in and loyalty to a center or centers of value. 2) Trust in and loyalty to images and realities of power. 3) Trust in and loyalty to a shared master story or care story. Trust and loyalty are the threads woven through all dimensions of faith or the foundation of faith.

Our image of God is an important part of our faith, and the images of God our children are forming will greatly influence their faith. Our images of God enhance our faith with bright splashes of joy and love, comfort, and peace.

God created human beings with the capacity and the deep need to have faith. Without faith, life is a lonely, meaningless existence. Faith does not automatically unfold, but God intended for trust and loyalty to develop in relationships with others. With each stage of faith development, persons lave new capacities for relating to and trusting one another along with new potentials for a relationship with God.

Primal faith is believed most likely has its beginning before birth. The sense of being wanted and cherished quite possible can be communicated to the unborn child as parents expect

with joy the coming of their little one. Primal faith forms before children are actually conscious of the worth and trust they feel and before they have language to describe it.

Children begin to develop what it calls intuitive-projective faith, as they begin using language to represent their experiences and to communicate. Young children tend to project their own meanings into events without questioning whether they have it right because of the egocentric nature of their thinking.

Children learn during their early childhood, they take the initiative and able to do things for themselves, decide and do what they want to do. Young children are great imitators. They watch parents, older siblings, and other adults and imitate what they do.

During early childhood, several factors contribute to faith developments. In forming of intuitive-project faith, imagination is at work. The root meaning of imagination is the "power" of "forming." Children are using a natural tool for learning, when they use imagination to form their image of God. Children spend hours acting out the flow of events their imaginations create, they are dramatic and playful.

Children love stories, they enter stories and live them through imagination. Faith stories that capture the imagination of a child can awaken and shape beliefs, values, and loyalties that take deep root in the child's heart. Children learn about life and possibly goodness of God, as they live the stories and they are entertained by the story.

Many children develop a fear of death around age of three or four, especially the death of their parents. Children need adults who will listen to their questions, as they struggle with fear. Adults should provide honest answers and assure children of God's love in every situation. In intuitive-projective faith, the child's active imagination is the great strength at work. Children can construct powerful, sustaining images of God with imagination. Adults have the responsibility of introducing children to symbols and rituals that point to God's faithfulness,

love, and protection. Parents and teachers also have the privilege and the responsibility of giving children stories rich in positive images of God's goodness and love.

A myth is a traditional story that explains origins, customs, the gods' activities, and the religious practices. Children begin to develop a mythic-literal faith around the age of six or seven.

This faith stage continues to form during the elementary into the middle school years.

Most school-age children understand the working of cause and effect and the ordering of events in sequence. The development of the capacity for concrete logical thought makes possible this new stage. For children in the mythic-literal faith stage, their image of God is in transition.

Mythic-literal faith requires that children be able to see things from another person's point of view. They can choose to look at a situation from another person's perspective and see how the perspective is similar to or different from their own.

School-age children do not only enjoy hearing stories, they can look back over the events of their lives and weave those events together into a story or narrative. In the process, children discover meaning in those concrete experiences, they become storytellers.

Stories capture and communicate theology for children. Stories are at the heart of faith development of children. Those stories give children basic beliefs that they will want to own and help them develop a faith identity. Children can begin to develop an identity as one who stands against prejudice and anything that oppresses others, as they hear and own such stories.

Early adolescents begin to develop new faith stage, synthetic-conventional faith, between the ages of eleven and fifteen. As they form their faith, the conventions or accepted standards of their peer group, society, church and family are the givens with which adolescents and older children work.

Interpersonal relationship become increasingly important to children as they move toward adolescence. Many young people have a special friend with whom they spend big amounts of time talking and being together. They want to invest more time with friends than with family. Many young teens experience a deep hunger for a personal relationship with God as synthetic-conventional faith forms. Young people long for acceptance from God that affirms the worth of their personhood.

Adolescents need a community of peers and adults with whom to begin forming a synthetic-conventional faith. Therefore, they can begin establishing for themselves a set of values, beliefs, and commitments. Children need a community that provides stories, ideas, belief systems, rituals, disciplines, and role models, as they move into adolescence. In addition, older children need friendships with adults in the faith community. It is important that adults are persons of integrity, living what they teach and growing in the understanding of God.

Adults must be sensitive to children's readiness for response and must never try to force them into an early conversion experience, when accompanying children on the faith journey. Do not emphasize the children's sinfulness and fear of hell in an effort to bring them to conversation. Responding out of fear before children have the inner desire for a deeper commitment to God often results in a rigid faith of external authority rather than in a trusting relationship with God.

Children are created with the potential for faith development, and we have the privilege of helping to release that potential. Faith development and refining must continue through the changes of life so that faith is not out of step with development in other areas.



CHAPTER 8  
Setting the Stage for Knowing God  
*(Catherine Stonehouse)*

A new born faith, children, adolescents, or adults must learn God's name and the stories of God's people. To live and grow in faith, they must join with others in rituals that express and affirm their faith.

We may draw near to God and experience God's presence through religious languages. Religious language gives us words, narratives, and parable that help us to make sense of our experiences with God. It helps us to come to know God better, and to make meaning of what we experience and learn in all of life.

In the moment of stillness the reality of God breaks in upon us, we experience the presence of God, and the first layer of language occurs. We respond not in words, but with "Ahh! Aha!" in awe. The surprise of God's breaking in causes us to catch our breath in an Ahh!" It is actually prelanguage, since no word are used.

We enter the parables, the stories of Scripture, and through our imagination, and reflect on their meaning. To children, they can meet God and know God in affective ways as they enter the stories and experience the liturgy. God can minister to children's deep inner needs in those stories, parables, and symbolic rituals.

We begin to discuss the meaning of the liturgy, stories, and parables we have experienced in the third layer of religious languages. The sacred stories become laws and codes to guide our

lives, when we begin to analyze and identifying example in the narratives. In parabolic saying, the meaning of a parable is captured and probed to sum up the parable.

The language about God, theology, is the outer layer of religious language. What we have learned about God through the study of Scripture and experience is a system of abstract words. It precisely describes who we are, how we relate to God, what God is like, how God acts in the world, others, and the world.

The second layer of religious language provides a common ground to various ages, children and adults. It is the language of liturgy and story that we all understand in a way uniquely suited to each of us. Through this language, children and adults can meet and experience God together.

Many children lose touch with the God for whom their hearts hunger. We should find ways to give children a quiet moment, the worship, in which to meet God, instead of trying to compete with the rapid paced entertainment of television. Church offer varied settings for the spiritual nurture of children such as Sunday school, children's worship, choirs, midweek clubs, and other activities.

Children should worship with the whole congregation at least the first part of the service on Sunday morning. In the children worship area, the worship leader should take place in the worship circle before the children arrive. Welcome and greet children by name, learning the names of any children who are new.

Worship leader will warmly tell the children that worship area is very special place. It is very special because they have come to be with God, to listen to God, to talk to God, and to hear the stories of Him. Children are to be friendly reminded to slowly when they walk, and softly when they talk, because the others may be listening to God, and they don't wanted to be disturbed.

During the quiet time, worship leader should gather children in circle and lead them in prayer. Children are to bow their head and close their eyes to pay respect to God and talk to Him from their hearts.

Since the worship room is not a place for person-to-person interaction, adults as well as children use quiet voices so that no one who is talking to God will be disturbed. From the time the children enter the worship area until they leave, an atmosphere of quiet is maintained.

Although children listen and watch intently as the stories are told, not all of them encounter God so profoundly. Children enjoy working with the story materials and getting to choose what they will draw or make with the art materials.

Children's behavior during worship is observable, some are sit still, many are slow moving, and other are very active. Children who have deep inner struggle, such as dealing with death, or the breaking up of their family, are the ones whose work reflects the deepest insight or the most time spent with the Good Shepherd. Children for whom life is sage and happy value a time and a place to be with God. The hurting children, who desperately need healing for their spirit, find healing in that time and place.

When children have had a simple orientation on how things are done in children's worship, it is amazing how comfortably they fit into the quiet. Our society is stimulus addicted, so children need a place where they can come off that addiction and can discover the peace of quiet.

Adults may provide a place, stories, and materials for the children. Parents and teachers must trust God not their methods to bring children to an awareness of God. The form of religion and the relationship with God that they observe in us may influence some of their perceptions.

Often children experience God in fleeting moments of awareness and may not be fully conscious of the encounter. To say that children are spiritual beings does not assume that they

are ready for spiritual disciplines or that they can be expected to consider that pleases God in all their interactions.

Early childhood is a time for being loved and protected by God, for enjoying God's love and responding in love. This love relationship is the firm foundation on which to build the moral life. We also want children to discover that their loving God forgives and wants to help them to do the right thing as they become aware of their moral failures. The importance of the initial love relationship with God cannot be overemphasized for everything else in spiritual formation builds on it in the proper time.

Children need a sense of belonging in the larger faith community and in their worship setting. When the participating adults see themselves as learners and worshipers along with the children, these special worship groups will be more truly a community. When the adults in their community model those behaviors, children can be encouraged to enter the stories, reflect on their meaning, and respond in worship.

Proclaiming the Good News to children in a special pace of worship involves words. Adults must provide a community in which children can hear the Word and can meet God. Words are wonderful tools of communication and the cause of much miscommunication. The words used in telling stories should be carefully chosen to simply and briefly, in narrative form, lay out the great truths of the gospel for the children.

From time to time adults may share one of their discoveries to let children see their joy and that they are still finding new treasures in the Bible, not to make sure the children get that point. Let the children have the joy of discovery by inviting them to enter stories and giving them the time to make their own discoveries.

If we prepare children for the wondering and stillness, they can enjoy it. We then show them how to walk more slowly and talk more softly, how to get their art materials and work with

the stories. We walk them through each of the expectations of the structure of our time together, and they learn the structure well. When children forget, we go to them and quietly tell them about this special place. They need to talk more softly, and do their own work because someone may be talking to God, and they don't want to be disturbed.

Children in a Christian church should be introduced to God through Jesus Christ. Because we believe that Jesus Christ was God in human form and is our most complete revelation of God. Our goal is to set the stage for children to encounter God. In early childhood, a relationship with Jesus the Good Shepherd can be established and grow for a lifetime. Godly play, then, is Christ centered. Godly play, children learn about key events in Jesus' life, emphasize on a relationship with Jesus and with the mystery of his life. Godly play, when used with children in worship, is structured to follow the order of worship observed by the child's faith community.

To help children get the great realities of the faith, those realities have to be in the form of story. Great theology theme can be integrated with sacred stories and parables story form. This is a reason why the parables are important and engage children effectively.

CHAPTER 9  
Pilgrims Together on the Journey  
(*Catherine Stonehouse*)

As Israelite, God's people, delivered from slavery in Egypt, they journeyed through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land. They, old and young, walked and learned together along the way. On the journey they started off as a group of freed slaves, then became a people, and a nation. Through the journey they learned great things God could do, they experienced when God answered their prayers and granted their desires. The Israelites also discovered the consequences when they refused to trust God.

From time to time children sensed a spiritual purpose as they traveled the ordinary day of life. Like adults, they looked back over the section of life's journey they had completed and look forward to the destination of their path.

The spiritual journey is the path of everyday living where God meets and walks with us, it is not a path separate from the rest of life. Every portion of the journey is important because we can learn, see, hear, and become in the future. The journey begins at conception and continues until we no longer walk on this earth.

When young and old in the family of God, journey together in commitment to one another led by God, enriching spiritual formation occurs for all.

Our world is not a safe place. Danger lurks along the paths walked by both children and parents. The committed companions must join children on the way, so they feel safe with increasing strength and sensitivity without suffering debilitating wounds. The church has a

greater potential than any other institution for providing the community so desperately need by all ages of people. God designed to provide support and resources for life's journey through the church.

The journey of many families today is rough, with likely experiencing deep painful wounds along the way. This is not only for those unrelated to the church, but it is true for many families in the church as well. Many families find themselves separated from their key family members or normal support system. The families experiencing poverty with no hope of adequate income close to home was the reason of separation. So, it is necessary for one parent to leave the home land, find work, and send money home so support the family.

As we have seen, both father and mother in many of families work outside home. After the stress of the day, they returned to the family with depleted energy and emotional resources. God did not intend for parents to bear the full load of child rearing without support of an extended family and a faith community. Children are deprived of enjoying their parents' love, although the extended family cares for them. Our faith communities should connect with young people and become an extended family for them.

The television is the most influence in our culture. Most of teenagers spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom. Children sit passively receiving the messages and values delivered by the media, instead of exploring, using their imagination, or building relationships with others. The hours invested at church with the faith community much less than the hours spent in watching television.

Television keeps children from actively exploring the wonders of God's creation. To let the television run uncontrolled is to let the media shape our worldview of our children. Television viewing must be limited, if families are to develop Christian values. With

acknowledge the challenge of television, Christian parents must find some way to reduce and control its influence of their values and those of their children.

Millions of the world's children are in crisis, they live on the street or work long hours to help support their families. They have been abducted, tricked or sold into sexual exploitation in the brothels of large cities. A high number of these children contract deadly disease such as AIDS, many of the victims die in terrible condition.

In most cases the children are home alone due to family's income, both parents had to leave home to work. The latchkey children are vulnerable to anxieties, fears, and abuse. Church can provide after-school programs, help them to do home work, give them snack, and involve them in activities while they wait for their parents.

Children are often overlooked in these times of crisis. Children need pastoral care and the special support of caring Christians, especially when a home is broken by death or divorce. Children do not express their pain as adults do, often we do not realize how deeply the children are hurting. In the church, we do not want to assume that children with whom we minister are safe from such trauma. We must be alert and responsive to evidence of children in crisis.

How important community is to children whose journey leads through difficult time. The important role played by the faith community in support and spiritual formation of adults faced with what could be devastating realities. By working together the community could be there for the long haul, long enough to discover new dimensions of God's unfailing love and His faithfulness.

Participation in community is essential to the healthy formation of all persons in every period of life, although the need for and values of community become most obvious in crisis situation. Awareness of developmental differences has led the church to organize most of its ministries for particular age groups.



When planning events, such as a mission trip, a community service, consider making them intergenerational. Be sure to encourage the participation of all age group and there are appropriate tasks for all. Ongoing small groups, a Sunday school class or home base groups, can be encourage to build with a mix generations in regular time together.

Parents must walk against the crowd, if they choose to let love for God and others guide their living. Parents can explore what it means to live out the principle of Jesus' teaching in every area of life in the faith community of the church. The support of others with a similar vision supplies strength necessary for countercultural living. Many families and Sunday school classes involve children in supporting a child from a developing nation through a monthly contribution for food, education, and medical care.

One of the best gifts we can give our children is the biblical master story. Telling Bible stories is one of the major responsibilities and most effective teaching methods to those who ministering with children in the church. Faithfully telling the story to the children kept adults from forgetting and also helped them to bring it back to mind for their further reflection and understanding. Adult education in the church should also offer the opportunity for people to learn the stories.

Christian education must provide children, youth, and adults with opportunities to learn the whole story. When interpreting without knowing the flow of the master story, or examining isolated stories can lead to misunderstanding. The Bible gives us one story for all generation to share. We each benefit from the discoveries of others and are bonded together in community by our shared master story as we learn and reflect it together.

Other quality stories are also valuable to both adults and children. As adults and children share other stories together, their lives can also be enriched. Many stories are delivered by way of movies, television, or videos in contemporary culture. One characteristic of quality children's

literature is that the story fascinates the child and also provides insight and humor for the adults. Quality stories portrayed on the screen can provide children with significant insight and stay with them a lasting impression.

Imagination brings to life for both children and adults. Children often use imagination in play and then discard and put away childish things when they become adults. Therefore we are not surprised to learn that children use their imagination to enter stories, to experience them, and even to meet God. We need to make our imagination clear and enter the story as the children will, as we prepare to tell Bible stories to them. If the stories have become real to us, the children will sense our excitement and join us in the story through their imagination.

Life does not remain static or wait for us to get ready. It is dynamic, challenging, and changing as we journey together. We must learn to change, and grow in the process of living and relating to one another.

Because God is with us, the responsibility of sharing our life and walk with others need not weigh us down and make us anxious. Christian can take comfort in knowing that they have a guide by the Spirit of God on the journey.

Adults are better prepare to enhance the journey for children, to relax and enjoy the journey with them, if we understand how children are developing and what influences that development. Trusting availability is all God asks of us, the Holy Spirit will work within us and within those walking with us, transforming and forming us all.