

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

On April 26, 2013, we received the following comment:

“I have a question. I want to do some "family study" a little every night and I wonder....would you have any suggestions on reading and engaging in study with my children? My oldest is 3 and will get the most out of it, but my youngest is 1. I don't really want to use the Bible Story book or the Great Teacher because I'm afraid there are many organizational biases in the literature. Any thoughts?”

To the author, thank you for your email. We intend to publish something this year with regard to our young people. However, your inquiry allows us to share a few brief comments that form the basis of our view of teaching children.

First, do not underestimate the spiritual capacities of even your very young ones. Jesus said the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them, too.

“Now people began bringing him young children for him to touch these; but the disciples reprimanded them. At seeing this Jesus was indignant and said to them: **“Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to suchlike ones.** Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a young child will by no means enter into it.” **And he took the children into his arms and began blessing them,** laying his hands upon them.” – *Mark 10:13-16*

Up until the age of about 5, the most important lesson you can teach your children is the value of a healthy parent/child relationship. That will lay the foundation for their growing understanding of a Heavenly Father. Let them know that you are their earthly father, but they have a Heavenly Father, too. Teach them about the God that Jesus revealed, and refrain from teaching them the old Jewish concepts of an angry, jealous, wrathful God.

Encourage them to use their imaginations to envision what heaven is like, and what God and Jesus are like. Make heaven live in the minds of your children. Teach them the beauty and goodness of our world – in music, art, and culture. And refrain from inculcating separatism, superiority, intolerance, condemnation, or fear of a cataclysmic end. They should be taught that the Father will faithfully carry us through whatever befalls us.

And above all, make sure you as a father properly represent the Heavenly Father. This will have a more profound and lasting effect than any teaching.

As you can tell, the counsel we have for teaching children is much the same as we have for adults. That is because the purity and innocence of children is what adults should strive for as Jesus said in the above scripture.

We also are reminded of Paul's counsel:

“If, however, you were raised up with the Christ, go on seeking the things above, where the Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **Keep your minds fixed on the things above**, not on the things upon the earth. For you died, and your life has been hidden with the Christ in union with God. When the Christ, our life, is made manifest, then you also will be made manifest with him in glory.” – *Colossians 3:1-4*

And his words to the Philippians:

“Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, **continue considering these things.**” – *Philippians 4:8*

We should all focus on love of the Father and Jesus Christ, and the beauty and goodness in our world and in the heavenly kingdom in our future. This is the path to life.

These are our thoughts. We wish you the very best.

“Elaia Luchnia”
