

Good Dads Should Guide Their Children's Faith and Morality

Does faith impact your fathering? Should it?

From our research, one of the key areas of the *Championship Fathering* fundamental of modeling is nurturing our children's faith. I have strong convictions about faith, and maybe you do, too. Or maybe you're suspicious of religion and church.

Whatever it looks like for you, I want to encourage you to equip your children in matters of faith and morality. They need your guidance. And if your beliefs are important to you, this is one of the most important legacies you can leave for your kids.

When my son Chance was 10, we started a one-on-one habit that has been a good thing through the years: every morning we read from the Book of Proverbs together.

It takes about four or five minutes, depending on how many questions he has or how often I stop to talk about a specific point. Sometimes there's deep discussion; sometimes not. No matter what, it has been a great way to connect as father and son before he leaves for school and I go to work.

During those first few years, Chance would crawl into my lap in his pajamas for that morning routine. Now, as a teenager, he's all dressed and ready to head out the door. If he's in the same room and he listens, that's usually good enough for me.

As the years pass, I guess this time together has become even more special to me. Maybe I realize how precious those opportunities are, or I know that in this life any day could be my last, so I want to make the most of it.

It also helps that every once in a while, I'll see a clue that our morning reading has become important to my son, too. Maybe *he'll remind me* about it or he'll come up with a fresh perspective that I hadn't thought of before.

How do you pass on a spiritual legacy to your children? There are many ways, but let me share two suggestions:

First, live it out yourself. If you're ever frustrated or concerned about how committed your children are to their faith—especially your teens—the first place to look is at yourself.

I don't know how genuine your faith is. But in your heart of hearts, I think *you* know. You can tell whether you really are sold out to the beliefs and the principles you talk about, or if it's just a lifestyle choice that doesn't really affect you on a deep level.

You can tell, and I believe your children can, too. If they see the evidence of strong convictions in your life, then the basis of those convictions becomes more real for them. But if they don't see it, then you'll likely become an obstruction to their spiritual growth. Few things will confuse and hamper your children more than watching you *not* practicing what you claim to believe.

And second, be intentional. I want to encourage you to commit—or recommit—yourself to building a strong faith in your children through regular routines. Sometimes the routine itself—having that consistent practice of reading and/or praying together—will speak volumes to your children and live on in their memories more than any specific lessons or truths they hear. (That's why all dads can do this; you don't need a seminary degree.)

As dads, we set the tone in many areas of our home life, and this is no exception. Our purposeful leadership makes a difference. We can't just sit back and expect it to happen. We

have to carve out time, build stronger relationships, and have a plan.

Now, I admit, not every morning is a spine-tingling experience for Chance and me. Sometimes I'm not at my best, or it feels like just a routine. Still, I believe good things can happen when we follow through anyway.

So even if your kids groan about your efforts to do this, keep it up! Do all you can to make it inviting, and don't let their bad attitude affect yours. In the end, I believe that your kids, more than they'll ever admit, find real security and comfort in your efforts to make spiritual conversations a habit in your home.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Ask your wife and children—point blank—if they think you're really living out what you say you believe. It's frightening, but what they say will give you valuable insight and a renewed motivation in your spiritual disciplines.
- Put your faith into action—and include your kids. Get involved sharing experiences and talking about *why* you do what you do, make certain decisions, and so on.
- Taking advantage of “teachable moments” that come along during everyday life when you're with your child; talk about what you believe and why it makes a difference.
- Make yourself accountable to other men who share your beliefs. Give them permission to ask you pointed questions about your habits, decisions, and so on.
- Try to respond to your children's requests in a way that's consistent with your values ... *every time*. Put their desires and what's best for them above your own mood or preferences.
- Write each of your children a short note that includes a spiritual blessing that's appropriate for him or her.

What other ideas would you add for equipping your kids spiritually? Please join the discussion. For the original article, visit .

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes that every child needs a dad they can count on, and uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: [I want tips on how to be a great dad who loves, coaches, mentors and inspires my children.](#)