

Week 3: Years 3-5



Developmental Stage: Initiative vs. Guilt

Though this next stage (from 3-6) spans a bit more time, it has one primary goal developmentally speaking: Initiative vs. guilt. Building on autonomy, initiative adds the ability to undertake, plan, and attack a task. They are learning about the physical world around them (things fall down not up... round things roll). They learn how to zip, button tie, and communicate their meaning clearly through words.

This is the moment when children will begin to exhibit risk-taking behavior and will try and confront problems that may be outside their realm of ability. The goal is to encourage and support these behaviors and help them make realistic and appropriate choices. If parents dismiss these initiative-developing behaviors as silly or discourage them altogether, children can develop a sense of guilt about their needs and desires.

Imagination Central:

Take one or two of the stories from this list and use the questions to think about what types of things you can do to make them a fun imagination game:

David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)
Samson (Judges 13-15)
Queen Esther Saves the Day (Esther 5-7)

1. What is the basic plot of the story?
2. What sorts of costume pieces might be appropriate?
Can you make them together?
3. What types of everyday items might be used as props to make imagination more fun?

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Why?.

Pair up. Decide who will be the parent, and who will be the child and take the Bible story out. The adult will begin reading and the child will occasionally ask a why question about the story. The person playing the adult should try and explain in a simple way the answer.

Debrief with your group:

1. How easy was this for you overall?
2. Which questions were more difficult?
3. What made those questions difficult?

Now, take a moment to consider the following questions and share them with the group afterwards.

1. What are some of the basic values about how one should live that you want your child to understand?
2. What are some of the things that happen in the world that you want your child to know are not acceptable?

Prayer in the Second Year

1. What were some of the pre written prayers/blessings that were important to you in your early faith development?
2. When did you use these prayers as opposed to speaking off the top of your head?
3. What do you think was good/bad about that? Would you do the same with your children?
4. How can you encourage initiative even when using pre-written prayers?

Questions to Ponder:

1. How much trust do you have in God?
2. How much time have you invested in the relationship?
3. What kinds of risks do you think match the level of trust and autonomy you have?
4. Which one of those will you pursue?

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