

How Adults Can Nurture Children in the Christian Faith by **Mary Alice Gran**

Below are some ways adults can nurture children in the Christian faith.

In Families:

- Read Bible stories together.
- Talk about pieces of their faith journey and your own faith journey.
- Make a regular habit of doing good for others and talk about "why."
- Pray together.
- Read the Bible and pray at times when children can see you.
- Include God and the use of religious ritual at special family celebrations.
- Stop and pray together when having a family disagreement.
- Sing songs of faith.
- Practice spontaneous prayers together — when hearing a siren, seeing the first bird in the spring, after a joy-filled moment, or when feelings are hurt.
- Work at keeping religious holidays religious (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost).
- Write letters to children who are away, telling them about God, your faith, your prayers for them, their importance to God. Include something of your faith in each letter (or e-mail).
- Include age-appropriate Christian symbols, Bibles, Bible storybooks, or Christian music when giving gifts.

In the Church Family:

- Learn children's names and use their names when having conversations with them.
- Seek out children to include in conversations.
- Sit with families at church dinners. Visit with the children as well as the parents.
- Smile at children during worship. Encourage their attendance and inclusion in worship.
- Plan for the inclusion of children for every event.
- Offer to share your interests and talents with children and youth in the church. (Take a small group fishing, help them make wooden crosses, teach them needlework, share your backyard for a Sunday school class outing, tell Bible stories, and so on.)
- Become a mentor for a child or youth who is not related to you. Develop an ongoing, supportive relationship.

With Neighborhood Children:

- Be a loving, caring neighbor.
- Invite children (and their parents) to join you in attending a church event.
- Bring children with you to Sunday school and church every Sunday. (Make certain you have parental permission.)
- Share Bible stories with children, as appropriate.
- Share Christian gifts with children, as appropriate.
- Write prayers for children, and give the prayers to them (particularly important for a life event — birth, death, marriage, first day of school, getting driver's license, losing first tooth).

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