



Creating a Faith Filled Home

As the parent of a preschool child, you are enjoying the world and all things in it with new eyes and unbounded enthusiasm. The preschool child meets each day with eagerness and energy. The child rushes through their day trying to take in all they can in the environment around them. During these years children are gathering input constantly and storing all they have gathered for use in future years. It can appear that the preschool child is unfocused and scattered. Actually, they are being bombarded with stimuli and are easily distracted by the next thing that comes into their view.

The preschool child is open to all of life, has little fear of anything and has mega amounts of energy to use in the pursuit. The waking hours of a preschool child are all about gathering information using the five senses. They want to look at everything getting as close as they can, smell anything that has a scent, touch every object within their reach, take in all the sounds indoors and outdoors, and watch with searching eyes. The preschool child asks endless questions often starting with the word "why." While this may become tiresome to the adults who live with them, their motivation is authentic. They really want to know and understand something they are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or tasting. Preschoolers are trying to make sense and order out of the huge amounts of information they are experiencing. Welcome their questions; answer simply. This is not the age for long explanations. When a preschooler meets a spider, they are needing the most basic information, such as they live outside most of the time, they eat bugs and make webs to catch them. This is not the time for an entomological lecture on arachnids. Keep it simple.

The preschool child is willing and wanting to learn about all things. Their openness to learning has no limits. The preschool years is the best time to introduce them to faith images and ideas. God, Jesus, creation, Mary, the saints, prayers, and rituals will interest them equally as much as the rest of their busy world. As a parent, you desire that your child grow and learn about many things. During these formative years, introducing your child to your faith practices is essential. The memories they are storing up need to include prayer, as well as formal and informal and religious images. We may be tempted to think that these young children won't understand these things, so why invest the time and energy. Certainly they won't understand everything or grasp the depth of faith. However, they will absorb the high value you place on faith and its practice. What they see you doing and hear you saying has a very high value, since you are the ones who love and care for them unceasingly. Your value of Jesus as a friend and model for living becomes their value. Home experiences of faith are invaluable. Praying at meals, before bedtime, thanking God for blessings throughout the day and visual images of faith in your home will be stored forever in your child's memory bank. Becoming a faith-filled family is one of your many responsibilities as a parent. Take it on with enthusiasm and creativity. Your efforts when your children are young will be blest in the years to come.