

4 Keys for Practicing Faith - Caring Conversations

Don't make this harder than it has to be. Look at the moments you already have with your child/kids and imagine how you can use that space more intentionally –

- Driving to school or sport/music lesson
- Picking up from school or sport/music lesson
- Sitting with one child while the other is playing their sport game
- Putting kids to bed (*See Rituals & Traditions*)

Often this means putting your phone on silence/away and setting your own stuff aside so you can listen with all your senses to your child's heart. What emotion are you picking up? (See list on backside.)

- i.e. *Mary, you seem rather gloomy. Please tell me about it.* (After listening without judging, assure Mary of God's love, understanding, forgiveness as it fits the situation. We always have hope with God.)
- i.e. *Joe, you are bursting with delight. I would love to hear about it.* (After listening without judging, bring God to the story. *That's so exciting! I'm thanking God along with you!*)

If the conversation is cut short, be intentional about returning to it later that day.

Here are some stories from parents who created intentional space for caring conversations with their children:

Set a "game night" –

Together with our two daughters (6 & 8), we decided Tuesdays would become our "game night." The girls suggested it start with pizza for supper, on paper plates so there would be little clean-up. My husband and I put it on our calendars and made a commitment not to schedule anything else on Tuesday nights. We take turns picking what game will be played and phones/TV are turned off. Often in the midst of a game, real-life stories come up and are shared. Bedtime on these nights usually goes smoother and the highs and lows the girls share seem deeper and more meaningful.

Set a "date" with one child at a time –

My 10-year old nephew was just beaming as he told me about his "date" with his dad. "It was the best ever! First just the two of us went to McDonalds to eat lunch – it's my favorite restaurant. I've been having some trouble with a kid in my class and it really helped to talk about it with my dad. Then I thought we would head home, but we were on different roads. Guess where we went? To the high school football field! And my dad had an old football in the back of the Jeep. It was so awesome to play catch with my dad! Best day ever!"

When we recognize love, we see God!