

How to Talk
to Children
about



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Introduction

“How do I talk to my child about...?” This is not an uncommon question among parents as well as teachers and catechists. Abstract concepts, hard-to-broach subjects, and sensitive issues all require a particular kind of language that gives a child enough information without being overly complex or confusing. The same is true for aspects of our faith. How do we talk to children about the great big concept of God or about the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus? How do we explain the gestures, symbols, and ritual of the Mass or approach issues of morality and making sound choices?

This series of books provides parents as well as teachers and catechists with a range of questions about these topics. Each one offers terminology relatable to a young child’s experience as well as family activities to stimulate further conversation and comprehension. In sharing these responses, you are likely to find yourself more than capable of talking to your child about these and other topics of faith and practice.

God, the Creator

For your information

The very first image we see of God in sacred Scripture is that of *Creator*: Creator of the heavens and earth, the light and dark, the sky and the waters. The Book of Genesis paints a vivid picture of God as architect of our universe, from the big picture of earth and sky to the lush details of the vegetation and creatures that call them home. The pinnacle of the story is of course the creation of man and woman in God's own image and likeness.

When talking to your child about God, the image of God as *Creator* is a natural starting place, just as it is in the Bible. Sharing the creation story is a wonderful introduction to a discussion of God as Creator. The story draws connections to the natural world that surrounds your child. Reading the Genesis story together from your child's Bible is foundational for engaging your child in conversation about our Creator God.

Talking to your child

Children are as naturally curious as they are creative. The idea of a creative God is one that will resonate with children from their earliest years. Perhaps the best way to talk to your child about God as Creator is in the context of God's creation. You can talk in both intentional and spontaneous ways.

A God-as-Creator conversation starter can be as simple as an afternoon in your own backyard or park. When you and your child are out enjoying God's creation together, remark on the awesomeness of God's design. Give words to your own wonder. Hearken back to the creation story from Genesis that you shared together. Ask what your child notices about God's creativity. Your child may observe the shape of the clouds in the sky, the patterns of plants,

the colors of sunset, the sounds of the breeze, or the amazing adaptations of animals. Try to activate all your child's senses for a fully immersing experience. You can also engage your child in a conversation about the wonder of God's greatest creation—us—and what makes us unique as a people and as individuals.

Tap into your child's specific interests or talents to connect them to our Creator God in meaningful ways. The places or people your child is drawn to make the best examples to showcase God as Creator, since God made them good and they already inspire your child. Make it a habit to point out God's creativity as you observe and experience it in your own life, too.

When you talk with your child using the language of God as Creator, you will activate natural curiosity and creativity, sparking wonder about and appreciation for the world and God's divine design. Use these descriptive words as you talk with your child about God as Creator:

- artist
- designer
- builder
- maker

Pray together

Praying together helps your child to talk to and listen to our Creator God. Use these words or design your own prayer that reflects your shared experiences and conversations.

Creator God, the universe reflects your love. Your creation fills us with awe and wonder! Help us to care for creation and for one another as you, the artist, have asked. Amen.

Our Good God

For your information

Good is very likely a word that your child hears and uses with regularity. “Good job!” “Good work!” “Be good.” “My day was good.” So when your child hears the word *good*, your child will understand what it connotes. But *good* is a term that can be overused, and as a synonym for “satisfactory” it can seemingly pale in comparison to other descriptive words, like *great* or *amazing*.

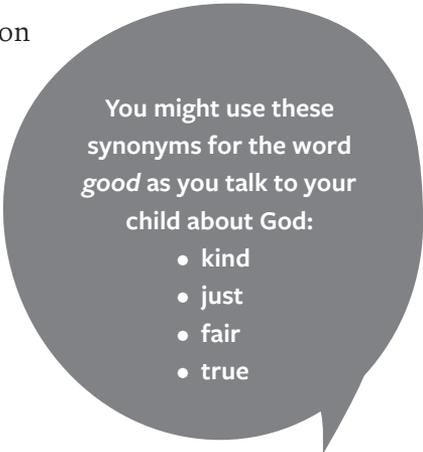
God as good might be better presented to children with different language. God is *goodness itself*; the source of good in our lives and in the world.

Everything God created is good. And God wants us to be good! Both individuals and families can reflect God’s goodness. Even the youngest children can be a force for good in the world, by following Jesus. Children can speak up when they see injustices happening around them, confiding in trusted adults. They can treat others, particularly siblings and parents, with kindness. And they can learn to be generous by sharing what they have with friends and others.

Talking to your child

Talking about and reflecting God’s goodness goes far beyond a conversation and becomes a way of life. To begin a discussion of God’s goodness, point out the many good gifts that God has given to your family. As you explore God’s goodness together, revisit the creation story in which God made everything good. Tell your child that since God made us in God’s own image, we are good. We can be signs of God’s goodness in the world by the way that we treat others and by the choices we make.

Model and coach your child on behaviors that reflect God's goodness in the world. When you observe your child doing good deeds, encourage and support these endeavors, which will amplify your child's efforts for good. Your attention and support can have a lasting impact on your child's character, generosity, and empathy.



You might use these synonyms for the word *good* as you talk to your child about God:

- kind
- just
- fair
- true

Pray together

Continue your conversation about God's goodness in prayer. Use these words, or design your own prayer that reflects your shared experiences and conversations:

God, everything you made is good, and you are good to all of us. Help our family to reflect your goodness in the ways we treat each other and your creation. Amen.