

K12 Stepping Stones

Phases of Development: Kindergarten and 1st Graders

What's Going on with my Kindergartener or 1st Grader?

Adjustment

Whether your child is in kindergarten or first grade, he is finding his way through a season of change and adjustment. Your child is either entering school for the first time or only has a year under his belt. He may find the adjustment to structure, long days where he is expected to pay attention and be on his best behavior for many hours, taxing. In addition, peer groups are becoming important to your child. By being attentive to these changes in your child's life, you can help him navigate through this season and adjust well while pointing him towards faith in God.

How Do I Share my Faith with my Kindergartener or 1st Grader?

As a parent or caregiver, you have the ability to influence your child's faith more than anyone else because of the sheer amount of time you have together that no one else has. School-aged kids are ready to learn about a God who loves them and how to show love to others. As you support your child through his transition to school, you have the opportunity to demonstrate practical life application that reflects the values of our loving God.

The Bible teaches us that we should make talking about God part of our everyday life:

⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

The above passage tells us that we should talk about faith with our children, and talking to them about our faith should be natural. You can tell your child about God every day, any time of the day, but there are natural rhythms built into most family's schedules that will lend themselves to these learning opportunities. During these times, look for opportunities to teach and to show your faith:

- **Morning Time**
- **Drive Time**
- **Meal Time**
- **Bed Time**

What Do I Want my Kindergartener or 1st Grader to Know?

- **He is loved by you, and he is loved by God.**
 - *“Jesus loves you so much!”*
 - *“I will always love you, no matter what!”*
- **God sent Jesus to save us.**
 - *“Jesus loves you so much!”*
 - *“No one is perfect; only Jesus is!”*
- **God made the world and everything in it.**
 - *“How many stars do you think are in the sky? Isn’t God amazing?”*
 - *“I like watermelon, too! God made a delicious fruit!”*
- **God made his body, and his body is beautiful.**
 - Teach your child his body parts and the correct names for them.
 - Look for opportunities for continual conversations regarding keeping private parts private and what to do if anyone violates this principle.
- **Simple Bible Verses**
 - Download the Parent Cue app. You will find the Bible verse that your child is learning for the month.
- **The Parts of the Bible**
 - Teach your child that the Bible has two parts: The Old and the New Testament
- **God wants him to love God and love others.**
 - *“It’s hard when people aren’t kind to us, but Jesus loves the mean kid at school, too. Can we pray for him?”*
 - *“One way we show God we love him is by treating people the way we want to be treated.”*

What Can I do to Encourage my Kindergartener’s or 1st Grader’s Faith?

At this age, your child is adjusting to sharing her time with a teacher all day while beginning to learn the importance of friendships. You can teach your child about God’s love and His love for others in the following ways:

- **Give your child your undivided attention:** After a full day of school, your child craves being the center of your attention. Find opportunities to give your child this alone time, and listen for natural points in the conversation to talk about God and your faith. Check out studio252.tv for fun activities to do with your child.

- **Pray:** You can pray any time. Look for natural moments to pray with your kindergartener or 1st grader, and pray for those things that seem important to her. Allow your child the opportunity to pray, as well.
 - *Morning Time:* “Alex, will you pray that God helps us to love others and love Him today?”
 - *Drive Time:* “Dear God, please be with those in the ambulance.”
 - *Meal Time:* “What’s one good thing that happened to everyone today? Let’s take turns thanking God for that good thing!”
 - *Bed Time:* “It’s hard when we’re not getting along with our friends. Let’s ask God to help you know how to be a good friend to Lucy.”
- **Sing:** Follow K12Worship on Spotify to sing the songs your child is learning on Sunday, or simply celebrate God’s gift of music!
- **Read:**
 - Your child may enjoy reading to you now. Allow her to pick out books to share with you, and talk about character traits or values the different characters hold. Click [here](#) for book ideas.
 - Consider giving your child her first Bible, such as the NIRV.
- **Serve:** Invite your child into serving opportunities, such as bringing cookies to a widower in your neighborhood or packing a backpack with school supplies for a local charity.
- **Go to Church:** Pick a service time and attend that service weekly. Consistent attendance allows your kindergartener or 1st grader to develop relationships with her small group leader and the kids in her small group. She will learn the importance of church community by having her own!