Why Do We Struggle with This?

- Pace of Life
- Cultural Priorities
- Feeling Inadequate
- We value compliance, over dialog (or relationship)
- We look for quick fixes rather than long-term bridge building

We serve the wrong agenda
“Our responsibility as parents is to develop in our children a hunger, taste, or desire for spiritual things. This is not the picture of ‘you do as I say,’ but a process of cultivating the personal urge to love God and follow Him.”

- David Jeremiah
“And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts or your house and on your gates…”
Deuteronomy 6:6 – 9 (and following verses)
Incarnational Relationship: What Are We Aiming for?

- That every facet of my child’s life is understood in the context of God’s design for us, His good will and pleasure, His delight in us, and reflected in our relationships.
Parental Love vs. God’s Love

Love is limited
Love is flawed
Is not always accessible
Prone to disappoint

Love is limitless
Perfect Love
Always available
Incapable of disappointing

There are places inside a child’s head & heart that we can not go – places only God can reach.
Incarnational Parenting

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

“Comforting others with the Comfort we’ve been given…”
Greater is He that is within you, than he that is in the world....

What others meant for evil, God meant for Good.

Do Not Fear, I am with you.

Have Courage; Don’t be afraid

You are not alone.

God offers Himself

His presence is the Answer
Rules   Without Relationship

Rebellion

“Trust, and not submission, defines obedience.”

A Gathering of Days, Joan W. Blos, 1979
“Have we talked with our children this week about the delights of living more than the disciplines of living? Have we inspired and guided them more than we have corrected them?”

– V. Gilbert Beers
Kids need to know how to interpret the Life and Their experiences in godly ways.

If not by parents, who will?
Don’t be Reactive in your Parenting

- It is far better to proactively shape a child’s understanding of a subject, than to debunk an inaccurate view.
“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or the other of these destinations.”

The Weight of Glory by C.S. Lewis
Commit to Understanding Your Child

“The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but man of understanding draws them out.”
Proverbs 20:5
Children are Interpreters

Children interpret life and experiences, whether or not we talk to them about it. Often we avoid discussing what we don’t want to deal with, thinking that children will not think about it. The problem is that children already are thinking, interpreting, and drawing conclusions about their life – and they are doing it without any loving guidance or a redemptive worldview.
INDIVIDUAL

Image Bearer
Redeemed in Christ

Creational
(strengths/weaknesses, abilities, limitations)

Situational
(personal history, experiences, suffering, blessings)

Fallen & Sinful
Fostering Conversation

“The skill is to listen, the gift is to hear.”
Talk Often.
Talk Freely.
Talk Soon.
“When children are not able to tell about themselves, it often has as much to do with the competence of the adults who interview children as it does with the children’s abilities to relate their experiences.”

Ann Ahlquist
“In many a Christian home a child is told what he may and may not do – but is not trained to understand why. That method, quite frankly, is lethal… Deep within, he lacks the rationale, the conviction necessary to stand alone against a powerful world system.”

– C. R. Swindoll
Is There Sex in Heaven?
And other Questions they ask.....

“\textbf{We are told the average child asks 500,000 questions by the age of fifteen. That’s half a million opportunities to teach. Many of these are “why” and “how” questions which take us right to the feet of God.”}  
\textit{– John M. Drescher}
Guys, you ever hear anyone say bad words in school? What do they say? How do you feel? What do you do?

Do they talk about sex? What do they say? What do you think about it?

Do you ever see kids showing off? Why do you think they do that?

How do guys talk about girls?

How do you feel about grades?

How does the Bible address it?
Practical Ideas for Building Bridges

- ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION
- Foster godly Disagreement
  (Agree/ Disagree exercise)
- Dinner/ Mealtime
- Enter their world & experiences
- Be open to correction
- Genuine care is Priceless
Explaining Concepts to a Child

- One mistake we make in working with children is to talk like they are adults. Watch the language and concepts you use.
- Make truths simple and clear. Ask yourself “Is there a simpler way to communicate this?”

*If you can’t explain it *simply, you don’t understand it well enough.*

– Albert Einstein
Put all the people you are closest to in the 1st box.

People you are slightly less close to in the 3rd box.

Continue with adding people you feel are a part of your life, but not as close to.

People who are a big part of your life, but you do not get along with.

Where would you place God?

• Who do you go to when you need help? (Circle)

• Who do you spend the most time with? (Underline)

• Of all the people you know, who do you think likes you best? (star)

• Who do you struggle with most? (box)

Name
The Power of a Story

When we find our stories embedded in the midst of God’s Story, our lives - our stories become so much richer, purposeful, and hopeful. We naturally begin to bear image to Him and it will manifest itself in every area of life.
The Use of Superheros

- Colorful & engaging
- Complex & mysterious
- Long-hidden fantasies of power
- Rises above the tragedy/difficulty
- Fights bigotry, racism, & crime
- Patriotic, loyal, good
  overcomes evil

Your Favorite Superhero: Who? Why When?
What Would You Do If You Could:

- Fly and move and super speed
- Travel Through Time
- Change Shape
- Be Invisible
- Have Super Human Strength
- Commit Crimes Without Detection
- See the Future.....
What’s Bugging You?
Telling Stories in the Sand
Words Sting

- What words sting you?

- What words take the sting away?
What Has Captured You?
Resources:

“X-ray Questions: Drawing Out the Whys and Wherefores of Human Behavior” by David Powlison, The Journal of Biblical Counseling, Volume 18, Fall 1999

“Seeing Relationships through the Eyes of a Child” by The Journal of Biblical Counseling Volume 26 | Number 1

• The Children’s Bible – Catherine Vos
• Give Them Grace by Elyse Fitzpatrick
• Everyday Talk by John Younts
• Instructing A Child’s Heart by Tedd Tripp
What Is Your Fine Print?