

# TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

Part 9 of Foundations 260 - OT. Exodus 13:14-16.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. March 22, 2026.

## Dismiss the Middle School

### WHAT PARENTS WANT

**Parents, grandparents, what do you want most for your kids and grandkids?** What weighs heavy on your heart for them?

We want them to be healthy and happy, don't we? We'd like them to be honest and kind, to do well in school, and things like that, right?

But those are good things all parents, regardless of their spiritual commitments, want for their children. That's more cultural than spiritual.

**No surprises there. But here's what did surprise me:** When the research firm, Barna, collected data in 2021, it revealed that 48% of U.S. parents and 51% of *"parents who are practicing Christians ... are 'very' concerned about their children's spiritual development."*<sup>1</sup>

Does that shock you? That's an awful statistic. Christian parents aren't much different from non-Christians. And only half of us are very concerned.

**Don't you think that our kids' spiritual welfare should be our main concern?** Shouldn't we prioritize it? Don't we desperately want our children to put their faith in Jesus as their God and Savior as early as possible, and then to grow and persevere in that faith for life? **51% is unacceptable.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/christian-parents-concerns/>

## EXODUS 13

**If we want our children to have faith,** we have to remember this: God uses teaching to pass the Christian faith from one generation to the next. That was one of the main lessons from last week's Foundations 260 readings. God cares deeply that our children learn the faith.

We saw this in the Passover, when God revealed both His judgment and His salvation as He delivered Israel from Egypt. Then Exodus 13 makes it plain: parents are to pass that story on to their children.

Let's read Exodus 13 now:

### **Exodus 13:14-16**

*14 "In the future, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'By the strength of his hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of humans and the firstborn of livestock. That is why I sacrifice to the LORD all the firstborn of the womb that are males, but I redeem all the firstborn of my sons.' 16 So let it be a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead, for the LORD brought us out of Egypt by the strength of his hand."*

**How would the future generations in Israel discover faith?** Their parents would teach it to them.

**Parents, our main concern should be to pass on our faith by teaching it** to our children. That's the priority. Nothing else is more important than to *"bring our children up in the training and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4, CSB).

# THE THREE-PART CURRICULUM

What should we teach our children? Exodus 13 is a good template. It contains a three-part curriculum. Let's explore it now:

## PART ONE: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN GOD STORIES

*4 “In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ say to him, ‘By the strength of his hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.’”*

**Children love stories**, and they learn about life and faith from the concrete, relatable events in the Bible: the people, battles, temptations, victories, and setbacks. Tell your kids what God has done using stories.

**Israeli parents could tell the Passover story** to describe God's saving power. And today, **we have the story of Jesus**. Give them tales of Jesus healing the sick, casting out demons, and feeding the crowds. Describe the big events: his trial, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and intercession.

**Be a storyteller.** Create excitement and wonder. Spark their imagination. Today, in addition to the Bible, there are so many resources to help us with this:

- **Cornerstone teachers:** They lead our children through the stories of the Bible. The Kids Zone is covered in posters and objects describing Bible events and principles. The youth group is centered on Bible study.
- **Illustrated Bibles and the Bible Project videos:** So beautiful and powerful. Make it a routine at home to read or watch. Excite them with what God is like and what he has done.

## PART TWO: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN GOD'S CHARACTER

15 *“When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn male in the land of Egypt...”*

Does that sound harsh? It's because we don't know God's character, so we're surprised when he reveals his justice. **Teach to treasure ALL that God truly is.** This humbles them, creates awe in their hearts, and a healthy fear and respect.

**The Passover revealed that God gets angry when people reject him.** When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let Israel go, God displayed his justice. The Bible reminds us that, *“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31, CSB).”*

**The Passover also revealed God's patience and mercy.** God repeatedly warned Pharaoh and his people through Moses and in plague after plague. He revealed his mercy by saving anyone who came under the blood of the lamb.

**Christian parents, we can tell the story of Christ and the Cross** in a way that reveals God's character. One way is to ask questions such as:

- Q: Why was Jesus crucified? A: Because God is just. He poured out judgment on Jesus.
- Q: Why did God pour out judgment on innocent, holy Jesus? A: Because God is merciful. His Son took our sins onto himself and endured God's justice in our place. Just as Israeli's redeemed their children from God by offering a sacrifice in their place, so we are redeemed by Jesus's sacrifice in our place.

**Teach God's character to your children, all of it;** his love, mercy, grace, faithfulness, power, wisdom, knowledge, justice, righteousness, and holiness. So, they treasure and highly value God as the “greatest thing.” This is the foundation for faith. Plant those seeds deep into their hearts with prayer.

## **PART THREE: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN GOD'S SAVING POWER**

*16 So let it be a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead, for the LORD brought us out of Egypt by the strength of his hand."*

**When we teach our kids the God-stories and God's character,** they will gradually figure out that they are very great sinners in need of a very great Savior. They will ask you how they can get right with God.

**Teach the Passover and Cross as salvation stories.** Teach them that God is a mighty Savior who rescued Israel *"by the strength of his hand."* And teach them that God is a mighty Savior who rescues us from all our sins: *"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Romans 10:13 (CSB)).

**Pray for three things. Ask the Lord for:**

1. The opportunity to be your child's evangelist, sharing Christ and leading them to the Savior.
2. Ask the Lord for grace upon grace to open your child's heart to repentance and faith in Jesus.
3. Grace to live the kind of consistent, committed Christian life that makes your teaching credible. That's what verse 16 means by *"a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead."* By our changed lives, our faithful discipleship, we bear the marks of people who have been redeemed by our mighty, saving God. Make it obvious that you follow Jesus. Show it by what you say, and how you live.

## ARE YOU RAISING A PHARAOH, A PHARISEE, OR A FOLLOWER?

**Parents, you will raise one of three kinds of children:** either a Pharaoh, a Pharisee, or a Follower, and teaching is the difference.

**A Pharaoh rejects God and refuses to bow to Him.** If you want to raise a child like that, it's simple: don't teach them the Christian faith. Don't tell them the stories of God. Don't plant the fear of God in their hearts. Don't point them to Christ and the Cross. And live like God does not matter. If that is the pattern in your home, you should not be surprised when your child grows up far from God.

**A Pharisee is religious, but not saved.** This is the child who knows church, knows the language, and knows how to behave, but does not know God. They lean on their parents' faith and think being around Christian things is the same as belonging to Christ. How do we raise a Pharisee? Easy: Fill their head with religious talk, but never press them toward their need for a Savior. And live like a cultural Christian, where religion is present, but Christ is not.

**Or, you could raise a Follower. A follower is truly born again and fully committed to Jesus.** As parents, that's what we're after. You've done your part—you've taught your kids to know God and trust Jesus. You've made church a priority, built your home around Christ, opened the Bible with them, prayed for them, and helped them see what it means to fear God and long for a Savior.

**But we know this: there are no guarantees.** Even well-taught kids make their own choices. Still, the best thing a Christian parent can do is follow the pattern we see in Exodus 13. Keep praying, trusting God for the breakthrough only He can bring.

**Let's raise a generation of Jesus followers**—kids who grow into men and women who stand unashamed for Christ and faithfully teach their kids.

# SMALL GROUP GUIDE

## Review

- Review Peter's March 22<sup>nd</sup> teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

## Discuss

1. What are some roadblocks Christian parents encounter that make prioritizing spiritual formation over academics, behavior, or success a challenge?
2. What Bible story or gospel truth most clearly helped you understand who God is when you were young? How can parents or grandparents make Bible stories feel vivid, memorable, and emotionally meaningful for our kids?
3. Which attributes of God are easiest for people to explain to children, and which are easiest to avoid? Why is it important to teach both God's mercy and God's justice? What are some ways to explain God's justice and judgment?
4. What is the difference between teaching a child to behave religiously and teaching a child to need a Savior? How can parents tell when a child is leaning on borrowed faith rather than truly trusting Christ?

## Prayer Focus

- 247: "Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved."
- Pray for parents to teach their children well, and for the next generation to believe and follow Jesus.