

Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters

Early Childhood Development

Legend:



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Instructions:

For durability, print the document on cardstock if possible. Cut the cards on indicated dashes and place them in a jar or basket on a table. Choose a day of the week when family members take turns asking each other questions. There are specific questions for adults to ask children/youth, children/youth to ask adults and questions for everyone to ask and answer.

There are seven cards in total. They could be spread over seven weeks at mealtime, used as a family road trip resource, used as table talk cards for intergenerational formation sessions, or printed and mailed to the families in your congregations. There are also two additional blank cards for you to add a conversation starter that is meaningful to your family or community. The possibilities are endless!

Let's Talk cards are composed to be open-ended, without a simple yes or no answer to create a time of storytelling. Sometimes parents and grandparents feel they must always have answers for children, but that's not true. A story that includes your feelings will connect you to your children much more than having a concrete answer. For instance, the Prayer card has children and youth asking adults how they can tell that God hears our prayers. Be honest but hopeful in answering these questions. Do you have a story of when you did not feel your prayer was answered? How do you reconcile that in your faith? Do you have a story of when God gave you what you needed? What other stories of your faith journey can you share with your children?

All of these questions are designed to bring families together. Be prepared for answers that surprise, delight and even startle you. For instance, if your teen says they don't think you ever listen to them, take a breath and ask how they think you could be better at talking and listening to each other. If your youth is playing music with references to violence, don't just make them turn it off. Ask open-ended questions about what they like about that music, how it makes them feel and share why it concerns you, without judgement.

Enjoy the conversations!

Building Nurturing Relationships



When do you remember feeling loved and safe? What does it feel/sound/look like to know you are safe? Where do you feel safe?



What were my favorite games to play with you when I was a baby? What about when I was a toddler? What games did you play when you were my age?



What are some of our favorite traditions and things we love to do together? Do we have holiday traditions? Do we love to celebrate with a certain meal? How do we prepare for special moments? Are there new traditions we'd like to create?

Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another. (Proverbs 27:19)



Encouraging Children's Growth



What are the most important things we've taught you so far? What do you wish we would teach you? What is something you hope to be able to do when you're older?



What was my first word? Where were we when I took my first steps? How did you know I was tired when I was a baby? What do you hope I learn in the next few years?



What do we think every child needs to be healthy in their first 3 years? How many things can we name as a family?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)



Feeling Safe and Knowing We Are Loved



What do we do to keep you safe? What do you know how to do to keep yourself safe? What things should we trust you to do by yourself now?



How did your parents punish you when you were growing up? Did you think it was fair at the time? Do you think it was fair when you look back now? Do you use any of the same words or actions that your parents did when you're teaching me?



What are the best ways for children to learn right and wrong? How does our community help us make hard decisions? What can we do when we know we've treated someone badly?

Keep alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)



Growing Healthy Bodies



What makes a food healthy or unhealthy? Is there a healthy food you hope we never give you again? Is there a different healthy food we can put in its place? What meals would you like to help prepare?



What was your least favorite food growing up? Did your parents make you eat it? What were your family's special meals for special occasions? Did you like to help prepare meals with your family?



How can we work together to eat more healthy foods? Do we have a garden where we could grow vegetables and herbs, or do we want to go shopping together? Are there recipes we'd all like to make together?

*God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."
(Genesis 1:29)*



Connecting Through Music



What are your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music right now? What do you like about them; is it mostly the lyrics (words), the melody (the tune), the percussion (drums and bass) or something else?



What were your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music when you were our age? Did your parents like them too? Do you still like them?



Let's take turns playing DJ for a family dance party or a long car ride where everyone gets a turn to choose the music. We all promise not to complain if someone's choice isn't our favorite because we will get another turn soon.

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
(Psalm 98:4)*

(We can set limits around explicit lyrics, but remember that the most important part of this game is to learn more about what kind of music each person in our family connects to, and why.)



Building Strengths like Patience



Tell us about the times when we are waiting for something exciting or joyful to happen. Why is the waiting so hard? How can we help each other practice patience during these times of waiting?



Tell us about a time when you had to wait for something you really wanted when you were a kid. Is it harder to be patient as a child or as an adult? Do adults need patience? Can't they just do whatever they want whenever they want to?



What is a big thing our family dreams of doing together? Is it going on a big trip, or buying a house, or getting a dog someday? How can we work together as a family to plan and work toward that goal?

*Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)*



Let Us Pray



Do you think there's a right or wrong way to pray? Do you think God hears our prayers if they're silent (just in our head and heart)? Can a song, a drawing, or a poem be a prayer?



When do you pray? What are some of the things you pray for? How do you know if God hears your prayers?



When can we pray together as a family? Is there a prayer practice we'd like to try together? We could place a basket or bowl on a table, write or draw our prayers and place them in it, and then pray together every night or every week.

(There are daily devotions for families in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 137-140.)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)



My Family—Conversation Starter



My Family—Conversation Starter

