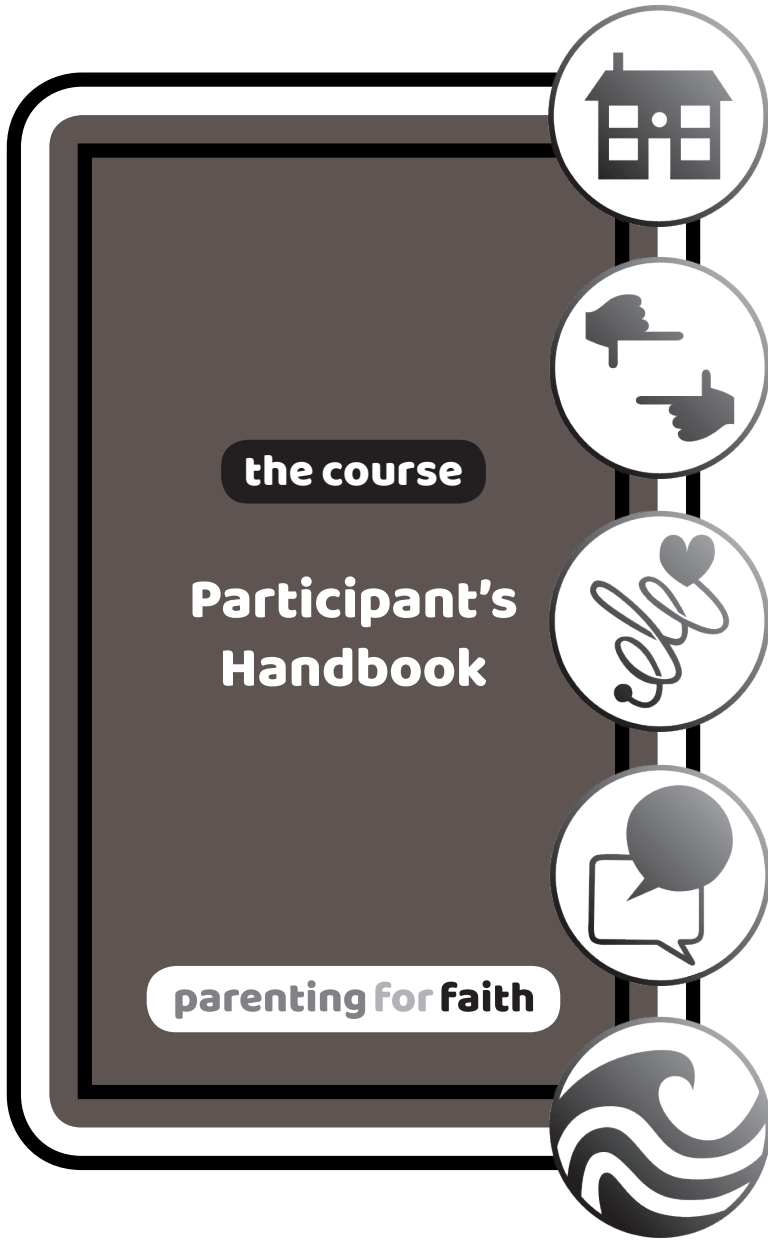


parenting for faith

the course

Participant's Handbook





The Bible Reading Fellowship

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Welcome to the Parenting for Faith course

God has placed you in the lives of your children for a great and joyful purpose, and this course is purely to empower you to release and coach your children in their heart-to-heart connections with God. It will give you tools, skills and models to use to encourage your children, whether aged 3 or 43, to step into a vibrant two-way relationship with God.

This booklet is for you to use as you would like. For each session, there is:

- a session outline summarising that week's teaching;
- a guide to that week's session, with spaces for you to take notes and your own personal reflections – or just to doodle in, if you wish;
- some suggested next steps for you to take throughout the week – pick and choose one or two that may encourage you to explore the topic deeper.

The course is based on the book *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (BRF, 2018), but is not limited to it. Our website – parentingforfaith.org – is full of stories, ideas and wisdom from lots of people who are passionate about parenting for faith. There's content from and for parents, grandparents, carers, church leaders, course leaders and those with a particular interest in parenting for faith and additional needs; in fact, all sorts of people who are committed to this journey of learning to spiritually parent our children.

There are several ways you can keep in touch with Parenting for Faith:

- join our email newsletter to stay up to date at parentingforfaith.org/email
- follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/parentingforfaithBRF
- follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/godconnected
- follow us on Instagram at [@parentingforfaithbrf](https://www.instagram.com/parentingforfaithbrf)
- follow the **Parenting for Faith** podcast

May God bless you with clarity, hope and boldness as you go on this journey.

BRF's Parenting for Faith team



Session 1

Positioned for Influence

You are perfectly placed to do this!

As parents, we are perfectly positioned and perfectly equipped to daily and easily show our child the reality of a day-to-day life with God – and God has shared with us in the Bible a simple plan for us to encourage our children into a vibrant, two-way relationship with God.

Video introduction

- God-smart or God-connected?

- Inviting our children to connect with God alongside us instead of with us

Group discussion

In your groups, discuss some of the following questions:

- What is your experience of learning to have an individual, connected relationship with God? How did you learn this?
- How are you already travelling with your child on this journey of faith?
- Thinking about the ideas of creating windows and inviting children into your relationship with God, how might you do this with your child?
- What struck you from today's session?
- How might focusing on relationship with God rather than a discipline of Christianity impact your spiritual parenting?

Suggestions for exploring this topic further

- Look back at your individual reflection. Ask yourself ‘What is the next step for my child and how can I help them take it?’ Ask God what he is already doing in your children’s lives and how you can partner with it. Take some time to jot down some proactive steps you want to take to help your children move on in their journeys.
- If you have a partner, try discussing with him or her their spiritual journey as a child or how they were spiritually parented. It can be enlightening to hear their story, whether or not they are an active believer. For some of you this will be a great time to ‘get on the same page’, but don’t feel the need to totally agree. Each person’s journey with God is unique and it’s okay for your children to see different ways of doing it. You can feel empowered to display the reality of your relationship with God to your child, regardless of what your partner is doing.
- Have a go this week at trying to create windows into your relationship with God to enable your child to see the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of your relationship with God. Experiment and see how it feels, and begin to see how your children respond. You may also want to invite them into your experience as well.
- Think about the opportunities Deuteronomy 6 suggests – at home, walking along the road, at bedtime or in the morning, at mealtimes – how can we do regular home life with God in it?
- Flip through a gospel and look at the different ways Jesus displayed the reality of his life with the Father to his disciples. Can you identify times when he created windows and invited them to try it alongside him?
- Have a good chat with God about each of your children and who you want to be as a parent spiritually growing them. Ask him to equip you and give you any additional gifts you need to do this calling well. Just be quiet for a bit with him, letting him chat to you and give you what he wants to bless you with.



Session 2

Making Sense of Life

Giving your child a spiritual framework

As parents and carers, one of the most powerful things we do is to help our children and teens make sense of the world so they can engage well with it. We give them a framework for navigating life. They need a spiritual framework, too, so they can learn to understand the world with God's truth all over it.

Video introduction

Seeing God in our world – building a spiritual framework for our children

Video main session 1

How to verbally frame, part 1 – explain everything!

Group activity

In a small group, have a go at framing one or more of the following:

- Explain why we sing to God at church.
- Talk about a change your family has had to make and where God was in that.
- Explain why some people are really poor.
- Tell the story of the last big decision you made and the part God played in it.

Video main session 2

- How to verbally frame, part 2 – help them see the relationship between God and Bible stories

Group activity

In your small groups, have a go at retelling a Bible story, stopping to add in aspects of God or to ask others what God was feeling, thinking or doing at that point. For example, in the story of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37), you might ask, 'What was God doing while Joseph was bragging to his brothers about his dreams', 'Where was God when Joseph was in the pit?' or 'How was God feeling when the brothers lied to their dad?'

Alternatively, your group could choose a simple Bible story (such as Daniel in the lions' den, David and Goliath, or Noah) and write a bullet-point outline of how you would tell it so that it highlights the relationship between God and the character rather than just the events of the story. After five minutes, get together with another group and tell it to them.

Group activity

In your small groups, have a go at answering some of the following questions using the four tools:

- How many ears does God have?
- Will my friend who is a Muslim go to heaven?
- Were there dinosaurs on the ark?
- Why does God let bad things happen?
- Is there McDonalds in heaven?

Group discussion

In your groups, discuss some of the following questions:

- Can you think of something you have framed for your child – for example, moving house or starting school?
- How could you bring the reality of God into your everyday conversations with your child?
- What frameworks might you need to start building for your child to prepare them for something coming up? What stories from the Bible might help with this?
- Does your child ask questions about God and life? If not, what is a question you could ask them to get them thinking about how God sees a situation and what he's doing?

Suggestions for exploring this topic further

- Revisit some famous Bible stories and reread them, asking yourself at each stage, 'What is God doing or feeling?'
- If you have an older child, while you are bored in the car or walking ask them to tell you a Bible story with God as the main character. Ask them what he was thinking or feeling as they tell it. Just enjoy the experience. Wonder together.
- When you find a question that's difficult to answer – Why hasn't God healed Uncle Paul? Why didn't he stop the earthquake? How can God hear everyone at the same time? – try exploring it using the four questions above. Engage the whole family if you can!
- Find other wise people and ask them to explain something that you don't fully understand in front of your child. Reflect together.



Enabling all ages to grow in faith



Anna Chaplaincy
Barnabas in Schools
Holy Habits
Living Faith
Messy Church
Parenting for Faith

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is a Christian charity that resources individuals and churches and provides a professional education service to primary schools.

Our vision is to enable people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible and to see more people equipped to exercise their gifts in leadership and ministry.

To find out more about our ministries and programmes, visit
brf.org.uk