

Your Four-Year-Old's Growth

Four-year-olds are ready for everything! They soak up the world of knowledge and seem to have boundless energy and drive. To foster your child's spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

Mental (Know)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- enjoys being read to—especially “reading” picture books over and over
- distinguishes between reality and fantasy
- pronounces most sounds and words correctly; recognizes words that rhyme
- tells and recalls stories (both true and fanciful)
- shares his/her thoughts in conversation; speaks in 6-9 word sentences; uses 1500-3000 different words
- follows more complex instructions
- recites the alphabet; counts ten or more objects; knows numerals 0-9; correctly identifies primary colors
- wants to help make decisions and plan some activities
- recognizes that: God created everything—including him/her; God is in charge—and to be obeyed; God gave the Bible; Jesus died to forgive the sins of others; God wants him/her to attend church

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Continue *Daily Blessing Time*: read a Bible story together, sing a simple praise song, pray for family and friends.
- Take note of subjects that really interest your child (music, animals, cars, houses, etc.) and provide opportunities to learn more about them.
- Memorize age-appropriate Bible verses together.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's enabling grace, energy, and wisdom will sustain you.
- Take field trips to the zoo, museums, and special events.
- Communicate that the Bible is God's instruction manual that tells how God wants His people to live.
- Encourage your child to always tell the truth.
- Make church-time special. Ensure that your child's church experiences are positive and that he/she learns about God each week.
- Encourage him/her to learn your home address and parents' first and last names.
- As you go about daily routines together, talk about who God is, what He is like, and what He does.
- Pray for your child's spiritual receptivity, mental development, and enjoyment of learning.



Emotional (Feel)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- is usually friendly, gregarious, and very talkative
- senses the difference between right and wrong, good and bad
- begins to enjoy and appreciate friendships outside the family
- likes to please friends and wants to be like them; adopts the interests, values, and opinions of peers
- becomes somewhat demanding, displaying his/her innate selfishness
- swings between emotional highs and lows (from joy and laughter to tantrums)
- shows more independence; wants to be increasingly self-reliant
- expresses sensitivity for the feelings of others
- shows a special fondness for the parent of the opposite gender
- is increasingly aware of his/her place in the family and the world

Spiritual Growth Activities

- As you establish daily routines and maintain a weekly schedule, your child's confidence and responsibility will noticeably increase.
- Carefully monitor your child's exposure to various media—avoid violent, crude, and sensual programs.
- Foster positive relationships by inviting his/her friends into your home for playtime, snacks, etc.
- During challenging moments with your child, maintain a calm spirit. Embrace God's strength and peace as you deal with the situation.
- Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings and moods—and why they may change.
- Give him/her opportunities to make simple choices—what to wear, what to eat for snacks, etc.
- Teach your child to say “please” and “thank you” whenever appropriate.
- Make meals a time to teach and reinforce: good manners, positive discussions, and family harmony.
- Frequently tell (and demonstrate) how much you love and respect him/her.
- Pray for your child's emotional development, childhood friendships, and family relationships.



Physical (Do)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- enjoys physical activity—running, jumping, climbing
- shows the balance and coordination of an adult: can hop, stand on tiptoes, do somersaults
- likes to play simple board and card games
- brushes teeth; gets dressed and undressed without assistance
- takes care of his/her own toilet needs
- draws with more precision and detail; copies simple shapes and patterns
- enjoys singing, dancing, and acting
- uses a fork and spoon
- creates complex, 3-dimensional structures with blocks, etc.
- is aware of gender differences between boys and girls
- takes things apart and puts them back together

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Strive to maintain a Christlike role model in your words, actions, and habits. Identify weak areas and invite a trusted friend to keep you accountable.
- Encourage or assist your child to finish what he/she starts.
- Establish and reinforce the principle of obeying God and parents.
- Expose your child to a broad range of activities that encourage discovery of his/her God-given talents.
- Establish reasonable rules for behavior, apply them consistently, and explain the consequences of obeying and disobeying.
- Acknowledge your child's achievements and milestones; affirm him/her accordingly—especially in front of others.
- Plan for 30 or more minutes of active exercise or play each day.
- Assign appropriate tasks that he/she can perform; give praise when each is completed successfully.
- Act out Bible stories and your child's favorite fairy tales.
- Expect your child to clean up and put things away after play sessions.
- Pray for your child's safety, health, and for his/her continued physical development.



DiscipleLand
Disciples for Life

You probably realize that those three elements are essential for your spiritual progress, too. Your own growth is pivotal to doing what's very best for your four-year-old! Every Christian parent who genuinely endeavors to grow in these three ways is on God's path toward raising godly children.

Your Parenting

How can you raise your four-year-old to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Effective parenting interweaves three components: knowledge + character + conduct.

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own child.

Children today rarely receive proper correction for their selfish or sinful actions. As a result, there has never been a greater need for parental discipline. Throughout the Bible, God uses a variety of cause-effect techniques to correct His people. Some are positive and some are punitive; some are earthly and some are eternal. They will direct you to properly discipline your child toward holiness.

Twenty-First Century Parenting

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First Century Parenting

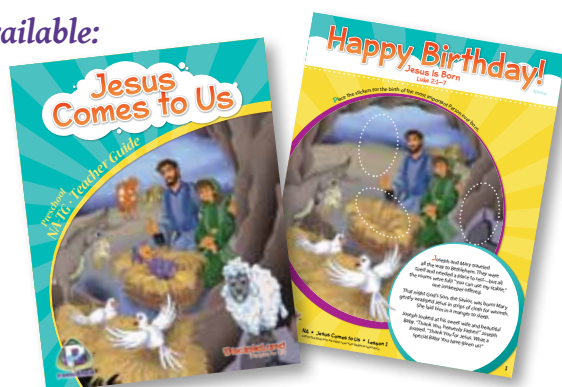
Your Discipline—God's Holiness

Do you want your four-year-old to grow into a fully-devoted follower of Jesus Christ?



This parenting series, **Raising Godly Children**, will assist parents and teachers in the disciple-making process. Each brochure is packed with proven activities that will assist you, along with your local Church, in nurturing your child's faith.

Also available:



Your preschoolers will discover God's greatness and plan. 3's, 4's, and 5's will fall in love with the Bible and become Jesus' friends.

- Old Testament Series: Discover God (8 Quarters)
- New Testament Series: Discover Jesus (8 Quarters)



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Raising Godly Children

What Your Four-Year-Old Really Needs



(Hebrews 12:5-11, NLT)

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own child. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."

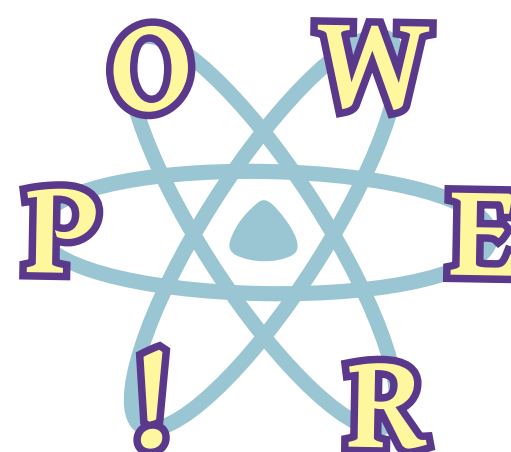
God is delighted to partner with you in the parenting process! He knows just what your child needs to keep growing and learning. It shouldn't surprise you that "discipline" is essential to progress. In fact, the word "discipline" comes from "disciple" which means "learner." These verses explain why discipline is so important:

Your Four-Year-Old—God's Child!

Your P-O-W-E-R Walk

Parents who embrace the responsibility to raise godly children must assess their own spiritual condition. First and foremost, Jesus Christ calls every believer to follow Him. Walking in Jesus' steps and being His disciple is the Christian's highest privilege and priority!

God invites you to walk with Him every moment of every day. As you practice these five disciplines, the Lord will live His life in and through you! God gladly supplies His incredible P-O-W-E-R as He directs your steps as a parent. (See Isaiah 40:31; Acts 1:8; and Galatians 2:20.)

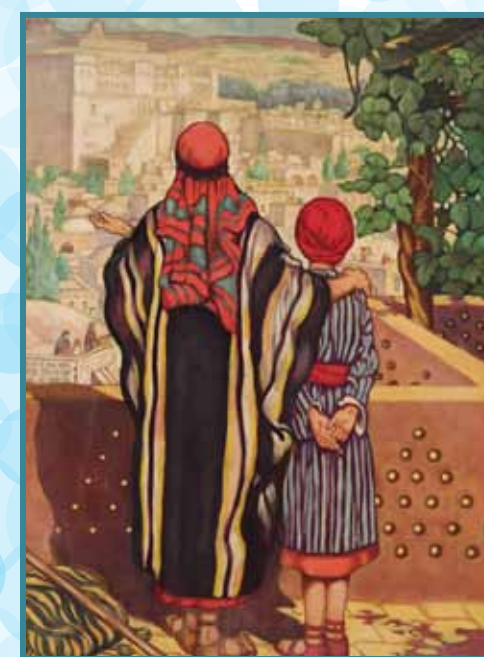


Four-Year-Olds Need Correction

"Why are you punishing me?" kids protest. Children can see only that correction results in a rebuke, spanking, or loss of privileges. They cannot yet appreciate the long-term value of learning an important lesson that molds, strengthens, and perfects their character.

A seasoned preacher observed, "About the time folks stopped training horses, parents lost their child-raising skills." He knew that both horses and children have individual needs and personalities. Both learn through correction. Both must be led. Children are predisposed to make foolish choices. Correction—though painful at the time—leads to righteous living.

What You Can Do: Encourage your child to view correction as an essential good rather than an unwarranted evil. The Lord identifies Himself as a loving Father who always shows concern for the welfare of His children. God knows what each person



truly needs, and He disciplines us accordingly. Establish an appropriate system of rewards and penalties. Reinforce attitudes and behaviors that honor God. Never discipline in anger. Always follow up correction with affection and affirmation.

Four-Year-Olds Need Challenges

Preschoolers complain, "This is too hard for me!" They protest when assignments, chores, or situations they face seem to be unreasonably difficult. Children are short-sighted. When left to themselves, they almost always choose the "path of least resistance."

Adults are tempted to respond to complaints by "dumbing down" a task. This results in a cycle of continually lower expectations. But God doesn't want believers to trust in their own strength. Sometimes the Lord places challenges in your child's path so he or she will learn to rely on Him. The Bible is full of examples of people who pushed through difficult challenges and emerged with a significant victory!

What You Can Do: Discuss with your child why it is always more difficult to climb to the summit than to coast downhill.

Emphasize that the summit offers exhilaration and a sense of genuine accomplishment! Explain that someday God will reward each Christian according to his or her good works. Encourage your child to tackle difficult assignments (perhaps breaking the challenging task into manageable pieces) and to always do his or her best!



This poster tells how to boost your four-year-old's spiritual growth!

Pray from Your Heart

Prayer is talking openly with God. He eagerly responds to your requests! (2 Chronicles 7:14; John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15)

Obey Your Loving Shepherd

God is your Shepherd and your Lord. Things always go better when He's in charge. (John 10:27-28; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:23-24)

Worship with Your Church

The Church is your Christian family. Unwrap your spiritual gifts to help you worship God and serve the Church. (John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:10)

Explain Your Faith to Others

Everyone needs to hear about God's love and forgiveness. Share your faith with those around you. (John 3:16, John 14:6; Acts 1:8)

Read Your Bible Daily

The Bible came from God. He speaks to you on every page. (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

You can trust God's wonderful plan. God chose you and your four-year-old for His special purposes. The Holy Spirit wants to guide every step of your journey together (Jeremiah 29:11; John 16:13; Romans 8:28).