

“TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO”:
PARENTAL USE OF BIBLICAL STORIES IN TEACHING FOR MORAL GROWTH

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Chapter 1: Today's Moral Crisis	1
1. A Biblical View of Moral Parenting	1
2. A Sociological View of Moral Parenting	3
3. A Current View of Moral Parenting	4
4. A Historical and Theological View of Moral Parenting	8
a. Martin Luther	9
b. John Calvin	12
c. The Puritans	14
5. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System	15
6. Summary	16
Chapter 2: Cognitive, Moral, and Faith Development	18
1. Cognitive-Developmental Approach	18
a. Piaget	18
i. Cognition	18
ii. Morality	21
b. Kohlberg	22
i. Preconventional Stage	24
ii. Conventional Stage	25
iii. Post-Conventional Stage	26
iv. Summary	28
v. Blasi's Criticism: Moral thought versus Moral action	28
vi. Clouse's Criticism: A Christian critique	29
2. Feminist Approach	30
3. Socio-cultural Approach	32
a. Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development	32
b. Criticism	34
4. Narrative Approach	35
5. Faith Development	37
6. Relationship between Moral and Faith Development	44
7. Summary	45
Chapter 3: Parents as Moral Educators	46
1. Implicit Moral Education	46
a. Parenting Styles	46
b. Moral Modeling	49
2. Explicit Moral Education	50
a. Moral Discussions	50

b. Discipline	51
c. Household Responsibilities	52
d. Family as a Just Community	53
e. Developing a Moral Schemata	53
3. Interaction between Implicit and Explicit Moral Education	54
4. Other Socializing Agents	55
5. Summary	58
Chapter 4: The Use of Stories	60
1. Moral Education in the Schools	61
a. Character Education	61
a. Values Clarification	63
b. Values Reconstruction in the Context of Community	65
c. Narrative Psychology Revisited	66
2. Warnings	68
Chapter 5: Teaching Moral Virtue through Stories	69
1. Teaching Virtue through Stories	70
2. Unique Role of Biblical Stories	71
3. Overview	73
4. Many Meanings and Applications	73
5. Controls Influencing the Original Meaning	74
6. The Characters, Scenes, and Episodes	74
7. Summary	75
Chapter 6: Infants and Toddlers	76
1. Attachment and Trust	76
2. Sensory Information	76
3. Summary	77
4. Biblical Example: Peter's Denial	78
Chapter 7: Preschoolers	79
1. The Characters	81
2. The Story	82
3. Use of Role-Playing	85
4. Summary	87
5. Biblical Example: Peter's Denial	87
Chapter 8: Younger School-Aged Children	90
1. School-aged Children	90
2. The Characters	90
3. The Story	92
4. Role Playing and perspective-taking	92

5. Summary	94
6. Biblical Example: Peter's Denial	95
Chapter 9: Older School-Aged Children (Around Age 8 to 12)	98
1. Story and Theme	98
2. The Characters	99
3. Human Connection	101
4. The Cause/Effect/Far Reaching Effect	103
5. Perspective Taking	104
6. Summary	104
7. Biblical Example: Peter's Denial	105
Chapter 10: Adolescents	110
1. Characters	111
2. Scenes	111
3. Moral Message	114
4. Combining Biblical Stories with Autobiographical Stories	116
5. Moral Exemplars	119
6. Challenges of Complex Moral Interactions	120
7. Individual, Community, and Cosmos	120
8. Summary	122
9. Biblical Example: Peter's Denial	123
Chapter 11: Using the Church Calendar	128
1. Weekly Recommendations	128
2. Individual Family Variations	129
3. Summary	129
Appendices	
Appendix A. Moral Theories Chart	132
Appendix B. Biblical Stories Worksheet	133
Parental Consent	133
Infants and Toddlers	134
Preschoolers	136
1 st and 2 nd Graders	138
3 rd to 5 th Graders	140
Teenagers: Option 1	142
Teenagers: Option 2	144
Appendix C. Advent Recommendations	146

Dedicated to my 3 children:

Eliza, Gracie, and Miller

May you see Christ in what your parents
say and do

List of Figures

- Fig. 1. Sensory Examples with Infants
- Fig. 2. Peter's denial as an example with infants
- Fig. 3. Person-Action-Consequence with Preschoolers
- Fig. 4. Peter's denial as an example with preschoolers
- Fig. 5. Character information provided by Caleb and Olivia Martin
- Fig. 6. Caleb Martin's narrative analysis
- Fig. 7. Alternative narrative analysis
- Fig. 8. Peter's denial as an example with school-aged children: character analysis
- Fig. 9. Peter's denial as an example with school-aged children: narrative analysis
- Fig. 10. Hunter Holliday's character analysis
- Fig. 11. Cause- Effect- Far Reaching Effect
- Fig. 12. Peter's denial as an example with older school-aged children: character analysis
- Fig. 13. Example of human connection using Peter's denial
- Fig. 14. Example of Cause- Effect- Far Reaching Effect in Peter's Denial
- Fig. 15. Example of dilemma or crisis resolution
- Fig. 16. Rahab as an example of moral dilemmas
- Fig. 17. Peter's denial as an example with adolescents: character analysis
- Fig. 18. Using Peter's denial as an example of scene and episode divisions
- Fig. 19. Moral dilemma chart with adolescents

CHAPTER 1

TODAY'S MORAL CRISIS

There are several signs in American society today that demonstrate a moral crisis (Lickona, Educating for Character 12-19). High rates of violence and vandalism, stealing, cheating, peer cruelty, bigotry, disrespect for authority, bad language, and self-destructive behavior among today's youth reflect this moral decay.

In this age of moral decay, Christians parents need to be proactive in fostering moral development. In the recent past, schools have been considered the primary moral educators. But our culture and its schools no longer have a basis for morality and are reduced to teaching relative values. Increasingly, parents need to see themselves as the primary moral educators of their children. This thesis will discuss the moral crisis in America today, providing a developmental framework and emphasizing the role of parents in moral development. This thesis will provide a narrative and developmental lens to help parents effectively teach their children moral lessons using the Bible's stories. By using a developmental framework, parents will be able to adjust their presentation of the stories for different ages and stages.

This thesis will summarize the developmental theories of children's moral growth and emphasize why the parent's role is primary over other social forces in teaching children morality. Then, these ideas about morality will be specifically applied to the use of stories with children, focusing on the pedagogical uses of stories in education. Finally, parents will be given a model of how to use biblical stories with children. Based on Richard Pratt's book, He Gave Us Stories, parents will be provided specific questions for children of differing developmental levels. A larger plan using the church calendar focusing on Advent and Lent will conclude this thesis.

A Biblical View of Moral Parenting

Parents, realizing how serious our current moral crisis has become in a fragmented society, can no longer rely on other social institutions to reinforce morality. Unfortunately, even

schools can be teaching values in opposition to the parent's worldview (Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 252). Christians do not or should not see the schools as the primary moral educators.

Parents are given specific instruction in the Bible to nurture children and teach them about God. The family has a unique and supreme responsibility as moral educators. We are instructed to procreate (Gen 1:28) and to instruct these children in the ways of the Lord (Ps 78:2-6). Deut 6:6,7,20-25 (NIV) clearly states our responsibility:

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. In the future, when your son asks you, 'What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?' tell him: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt... But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.

This passage makes it clear that parents are to be the initiators of moral discussions. "Teachable moments" need to be used for direct instruction of moral character. Parents are to teach their children from generation to generation (Ps 78:2-6 and I Tim 3:4,12). Genesis 18:19 clearly explains that we are to teach our children:

For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.

In other words, parents are to carry out the type of instruction that some moral psychologists had delegated to the school. The Deuteronomy 6 passage goes on further to suggest that parents are to explain God's salvation as well as his expectations for all of us.¹

A Sociological view of Moral Parenting

Although the family is part of the larger culture, it can be a culture in itself. A family is more than just a group. It is a powerful relationship system in which children will learn how to conduct themselves. Parents need to create "moral ethos" (Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 256) or "family culture" (Mones and Haswell 98). "There are practical methods for promoting character formation, but the most practical is to create a culture of the home" (Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 256).

Parents have the responsibility to nurture and mature the children entrusted to their care. God has created families and placed us in a unique community with one another. Parents serve as a filter between children and society. "The family system serves as a funnel and filter from culture to family members and back again to culture in an ongoing feedback loop. It is our belief, therefore, that the most powerful influence on moral learning is the 'family culture'" (Mones and Haswell 98).

Damon explains the family's responsibility to teach morality so that the child will eventually be a functioning member of society (Moral Child 51). The family is responsible for communicating rules and regulations and teaching children to obey. "The child's respect for this authority is the single most important moral legacy that comes out of the child's relations with the parent... The child's respect for parental authority sets the direction for civilized participation in the social order when the child later begins assuming the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship" (Damon, Moral Child 52).

¹ Inherent in that salvation are his forgiveness and mercy, and inherent in His expectations are His holiness and judgment. Jesus Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the law so that He is now the believer's righteousness rather than his/her obedience to the law being that righteousness. Now, instead, the law is kept as a result of the believer's love of God through sanctification.

Academic literature, as well, has recently emphasized parents' fundamental role in this domain (Boyes and Allen 551-556; Walker and Taylor 264). Lickona maintains that parents are constant moral agents throughout their children's lives. They transmit a spiritual heritage to their offspring and provide a supportive environment conducive to development (Educating for Character 30). Furthermore, mothers and fathers can appropriately instruct each child according to individual needs based on age and temperament.

A Current view of Moral Parenting

One reason parenting is so difficult today is the role of postmodernism in society. Though many parents will say that societal beliefs do not affect their family, there is a great influence. Alan Cairns defined postmodernism in the following way: "Postmodernism or postmodernity is the philosophical and theological rejection of the dominant philosophy and practices of the churches and states of the Western world between the 17th and the mid-20th centuries" (334). Gene Edward Veith in his book, Postmodern Times, defines postmodernism as the worldview that denies all worldviews and argues that there are no absolutes (15). Postmodernism argues that there are no absolutes. Morality is relative to each individual.

How does postmodernism affect our view of the family? There is a fragmentation of relationships in society and postmodernism believes we should live with and affirm the chaos. The postmodern family is more fluid, more flexible, and more vulnerable to outside pressures (Elkind 1). The family is more permeable to all outside forces. The postmodern parent believes their needs are as important (if not more so) as those of their children. "Postmodern parents know they have to put their own oxygen mask on first, before they can attend to the safekeeping of their children" (Elkind 4). In order to understand the postmodern family, it must be contrasted with the modern family.

“Whereas modernism emphasizes purpose and design, postmodernism emphasizes play and chance. Modernism establishes a hierarchy; postmodernism cultivates anarchy.” (Veith 43)
The modern family is characterized by regularity and parent-child contracts according to Elkind:

In the nuclear family, parent-child interactions were dictated by a set of underlying contracts-unverbalized rules, understandings, and expectations that assured orderly and predictable attitudes and habits, that is to say, regularity. (Elkind 29).

Elkind’s three contracts were the following: (1) parents provided increased freedom as children demonstrated increased responsibility, (2) parents provided support in response to the achievements of their children, and (3) parental commitment was met with children’s demonstration of loyalty. Though not explicitly moral, it is clear how these taught moral virtue and responsibility.

The postmodern parents no longer regard themselves as solely responsible for meeting the needs of their offspring. “It takes a village” is clearly reflected in the multiple activities of children today. Their teachers, church teachers, and the coaches of their many athletic teams parent children. We are so busy taking children from one activity to the next, that we miss the vital time of just being with our children. Because of the work demands on postmodern parents, parents are not able to support children in all these activities. Parents are not able to attend all the recitals, games, and field trips as modern parents once were. One economist argues that children have lost from 10 to 12 hours of parental time per week since 1960 (Elkind 36).

The postmodern family is also making a transition from using intuition in parenting toward directive techniques. Psychologists no longer provide a philosophy of parenting but rather provide technique instruction. These prepackaged structure techniques make it easier for parents and other caregivers who need to provide some consistency for a child shuffled back and

forth. Thus, children in the postmodern age are more likely to be told what to do morally and not given as many reasons and rationales behind the moral rules. Elkind explains:

Many parents in the modern era could tailor-make their parenting practices, but many others could not. In contrast, postmodern writers often neglect much of the child development literature and focus instead on specific issues and techniques. This is beneficial for those parents who need techniques, but it fails to provide them with the knowledge of child development that gives them an understanding of why techniques succeed or fail. (Elkind 117).

This clearly applies to moral development as well. We need to teach parents the reasons behind the moral development techniques so they may more broadly apply principles instead of just practicing techniques. The following chapters provide both the developmental theory and biblical theology behind the method provided. Please take time to grasp the meaning behind the method.

As the view of the family is changing, the way we conduct moral instruction will need to adapt as well. Since society is reflecting more relativism, secularism, and humanism, this section will briefly focus on the role of postmodernism. With the increase in crime and inhumane activity, people are asking what has society done or not done to result in a moral crisis. There are several things worth mentioning: relativism, secularism, and humanism.

Relativism contends that because values are subjective everyone is entitled to define moral truth. Thus, the moral truth created in one family may not be true for the family next door. A child must be encouraged to a self-determined right and wrong. Therefore, parents do not always see themselves as moral educators but rather just provide their own relativistic moral perspective when asked. Children are encouraged to develop their own set of moral principles that enable them to function in society. Moral ideas and values are relative to the parent or the child. Children need only to develop their own set of self-determined moral principles.

Ron Nash explained:

In order to be a bona fide relativist one must go beyond mere observation of such disagreements and make the astonishing claim that all of these conflicting beliefs are correct at the same time and in the same sense... We do not make actions good or bad by the judgments we make about them. They are good or bad regardless of what we think, what opinion we hold, and what judgments we make (62-63).

So, the relativist's claim that all of these conflicting beliefs are correct at the same time is false. Our judgments do not make things true or false. Thus, although relativism contends there are no absolutes, relativists act as though absolutes do exist. A relativist will eventually appeal to an absolute of his or her own making. The argument is self-defeating. "There are no absolutes" is a self-defeating absolute. They argue from the basis of an absolute. Despite this reality, it is still a major element of current moral theory.

Secularism focuses on the denial of a supernatural and man's ability to develop morally without any help from God. We do not need God. Humanism further contends that man is the ultimate judge of what is right and wrong. We have the capacity within to be moral. Children just need to be encouraged to foster this innate knowledge. Thus, children are taught in a sociological context that they are to be their own judges of right and wrong. Nash argues that the greatest threat to society is not the man who lacks knowledge. Rather, it is the "astute rascal," "the individual who had all the practical knowledge to achieve what he wanted but lacked the moral character to seek the right ends" (30). It requires more than secularism, humanism, and relativism to create a moral being.

The creeping notions of relativism, secularism, and humanism have led to an over-emphasis on individuality, or individualism. Society values individuation. It is important that each individual self-actualizes. The societal influence is on "rights" and not "responsibilities," on "freedom" and not "commitment." (Lickona, Educating for Character 9). Knowing who you are

individually is more important than who you are in relationship to others. All relationships with others are temporary and can be terminated if “dissatisfactory.” Children can leave home and live with other families; parents can desert his/her spouse and children. In an age of divorce, the reasons can be merely trivial to justify divorce. Children rapidly learn that all relationships are temporal and marriage is merely “serial monogamy.”

In a Christian worldview, each person is important. We are all individually created in the image of God; we individually have a relationship with Christ; and we individually will be held accountable for our actions. It is important to see that we are individuals in the eyes of God. There have also been benefits sociologically to the current emphasis on the individual. At the same time, however, we must be careful not to go to an extreme in valuing our personhood.

From this new focus came many good things such as the civil rights movement, a concern for the rights of women, and a new respect for the child as a person. But along with these advances came problems. People began to regard any kind of constraint on their personal freedom as an intolerable restriction of their individuality... Personalism spawned a new selfishness. (Lickona, Educating for Character 9)

Christians need to adjust current developmental theories of moral development for signs of relativism, secularism, humanism, and individualism. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, Christians need to be wary of the emphasis on self-actualization. Morality based on the individual’s self-actualization alone without parental structure is dangerous.

A Historical and Theological view of Moral Parenting

In light of the biblical mandate and the current moral crisis in our postmodern society, it is worth asking whether historical theologians have emphasized the role of parents in a child’s moral growth. A brief historical glance at Luther, Calvin and the Puritans illustrate historical views on the importance of parents in a child’s moral world.

On a sociological note, it bears mentioning that with the emergence of the printing press around the time of Martin Luther, we see the emergence of childhood. Before the press, children were merely seen as little adults. Once they reached the age of 7, they were considered adults. Before the age of 5, there was such high childhood mortality that parents resisted strong attachments to their children until they determined whether they would live past 5. With the emergence of the printing press, children need to be separated from adults and taught how to read; thus, there is the sociological emergence of childhood. The Reformation and the emergence of childhood happened simultaneously in history.

Luther (1483-1546)

At the beginning of the Reformation, the invention of the printing press increased the circulation of religious documents. The highly circulated documents and catechisms stressed the weight of guilt rather than a sense of forgiveness. “Nowhere is the burdensome character of late medieval religious life more evidenced than in the confessional manuals and lay catechisms which came forth in abundance from the newly invented printing presses.” (George 26) Thus, while writers and church officials could have been communicating the grace and forgiveness of God, they rather stressed the weight of guilt, the necessary works of man, and the need for penance, freeing others from purgatory, and indulgences. The weight was even felt by children. Once past the age of 7, the age of accountability, children attended confession to recite the Lord’s Prayer and the Creeds and to confess their sins to the priest.

Luther emphasized the role of parents in helping children become responsible members of their community and mature confessors of the faith. (Bunge 21) Parents played the important role in socializing children through reading the Bible with them, praying with them, baptizing them, teaching them, and providing good moral examples. Luther’s “Table Talk” provides many written examples of lessons he taught to both his students and his children around the meal table.

Luther also penned a catechism to help parents nurture an active faith in their children. Although Luther emphasized that faith comes from God alone, “he did believe that nurturing faith in children is an urgent task and that faith comes in large part as a result of the diligent work of parents, teachers, and other adults.” (Bunge 22)

Luther regarded the work of mothers and fathers as a most holy calling and obligation. He also recognized what contemporary society struggles to internalize: that it takes more than a family to raise a child. For Luther, the wider community and the civil authorities played critical roles in the vocation of parenting. (Strohl 134)

Parents played a central role in the development of children in Luther’s theology. Luther expected parents to make children useful Christian subjects through the catechism. Due to the ignorance Luther observed among the common people and the church leaders, Luther mandated the memorization of the catechism.

As for those who refuse to study the catechism, he says they should be reviled for denying Christ, barred from participation in any Christian privileges, and turned over to the devil. Moreover, parents and employers should refuse to provide them with food and drink and should threaten them with the possibility of banishment by the prince. (Luther 339 cited in Strohl 146)

Though this quote seems extreme, consider Luther’s desire for all to be bound to freedom in Christ not social norms or merely religious legalism. The catechism questions provided a biblical framework for child to test and understand life experiences as they grew. Though the mandate to learn a catechism is extreme, Luther was attempting systematically to give children and parents a specific orientation to life in this world (Strohl 149).

Luther found that one couldn’t find salvation through moral perfection or religious activities. A believer’s life was secure only in Christ for salvation. Believers should let their

light shine before others so that they may see the believer's good works and glorify God in heaven. "For Luther, there is no neighbor closer than one's own children, no claim upon society more pressing than that of the young. Whether or not they have biological children, all adults must exercise the vocation of parenting in one way or another." (Strohl 158)

In commenting on the qualifications of elder in I Timothy 3, Luther wrote:

Paul explains this in this way, that the children, servants, and maids are well mannered in customs, clothing and behavior, that it be a virtuous household... That household should follow the road of disciplined decency. That is, he can keep them in discipline. If he does not control his own household and if he cannot discipline his own children and family, how will he discipline others outside the family? (28:288)

Genesis 18:19 reiterates the importance of teaching our children: "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." In Luther's commentary on this verse, he remarks:

So much importance is attached to this knowledge that the Lord wants this report spread abroad among the descendants and made known forever as an example for others, in order that they may learn to fear God and to shun the kind of sins that were the cause of such a great evil. Similarly, the Lord also wants the examples of His mercy, such as the deliverance at the Red Sea, made known; for there is need of such reminders in this life. (3:221)

Luther reiterates the importance of teaching moral truths to our descendants.

Calvin (1509-1564)

To Calvin, children were a gift of God's providence and provision. This insight increased the parent's responsibility to develop moral character and piety in children. Parents

have a moral responsibility to communicate biblical truth to their children. In his commentary on Genesis 18:19, Calvin explains: “Wherefore, it is the duty of parents to apply themselves diligently to the work of communicating what they have learned from the Lord to their children” (Calvin 1:481). He further explains this parental obligation: “And truly, God does not make known his will to us, that the knowledge of it may perish with us; but that we may be his witnesses to posterity, and that they may deliver the knowledge received through us, from hand to hand, (as we say,) to their descendants” (Calvin 1:481).

When commentating on Psalm 78:7, Calvin remarks:

In the first place, the fathers, when they find that on the one hand they are instrumental in maintaining the pure worship of God, and that on the other, they are the means of providing for the salvation of their children, should, by such a precious result of their labours, be the more powerfully stirred up to instruct their children. (Calvin 5:233)

Though under God’s care, children needed direction and instruction from the family. Children are a reminder of the parental responsibilities and obligations given by God. In Calvin’s commentary on I Timothy 3:4, Calvin speaking about the qualifications of deacons, states the following:

The apostle does not recommend a clever man, and deeply skilled in domestic matters, but one who has learned to govern a family by wholesome discipline. He speaks chiefly of *children*, who may be expected to possess the natural disposition of their fathers;... He therefore means, in a word [reverence], that their morals shall be regulated by all chastity, modesty, and gravity. (Calvin 21:82-83)

God reminds us of His grace for us, through our relationship with our children. “Parents ought to consider that children in the home constitute a ‘mirror of God’s grace,’ a sign that God

cares for the family, and from this consideration be moved to fulfill their parental obligations.” (Pitkin 173)

Calvin stressed the responsibilities of a child over his rights. The child possessed a moral obligation to obey parents and the governing structures above him. The rights of the individual were secondary to the common good. “For Calvin as for others, the task of rearing children to place the common good above their individual desires fell not just to the family, but was in fact a coordinated effort of family, government, and church.” (Pitkin 174) Society was responsible for providing the right conditions for parents to raise moral and godly children.² (Pitkin 174) Calvin brought a corporate rather than individualistic social structure, empowering the magistrates and church leaders in church discipline and moral accountability. (White 185) As a founder of many schools in Geneva, Calvin did not rely on the schools for moral instruction: “and as he had no faith in education apart from religious training, he drew up a catechism of Christian doctrine which the children had to learn while they were receiving secular instruction.” (greatsite.com)

Moreover, when one takes into account the full range of [Calvin’s] reforming activity, especially his preparation of ordinances for regulation of the Genevan church (1541), his two catechisms (1537 and 1541-42) and his promotion of school reforms in Geneva, it becomes clear that Calvin, like many intellectuals and reformers of his day, was intensely interested in children and child rearing. (Pitkin 162)

The Puritans

The Puritans held the family in high esteem. “The Puritans crusaded for a high view of the family, proclaiming it both the basic unit of society and a little church in itself, with the husband as its pastor and his wife as his assistant...” (Packer 270) Based on covenant theology, the Puritans focused on the contractual relationships among members of the family (Ryken 79).

² For other reformer’s similar thoughts, see the following: Bast 60-65, cited in Pitkin 16; Strauss 214, cited in Pitkin 16; and Ozment 163-164, cited in Pitkin 163

This emphasized their sense of parental responsibilities to their children. They strongly believed that children were entrusted to parents for a time and ultimately belonged to God (Ryken 78). Parents were stewards of their children and were responsible for training their children.

Interestingly, Puritans were progressive in their understanding of childhood development. They were the first to stress the importance of early learning (even in infancy) as well as the importance of leading by example as well as word. The Puritans emphasized the education of the mind through studying scripture and through memorizing the catechism (Packer 69). “The technique that the Puritans found most effect in Christian instruction was catechizing. This question-answer format accorded well both with the Puritans’ stress on the intellectual content of the faith and their penchant to have matters well defined... The goal of catechizing was not memorization but understanding.” (Ryken 86)

Thus, parents were responsible for the moral instruction of their children and took the responsibility for the moral development of their children. The moral education of their children was not the responsibility of the school but rather began at home. The education of the child began at home and the school was merely an extension of the parents’ moral instruction in the home (Ryken 162). The Puritan writings on education are addressed to parents, not to educators. (Ryken 162)

Leland Ryken eloquently summarize these thoughts on the Puritans:

The Puritan theory of child development stressed that children were, like their parents, fallen creatures whose sinful bent needed to be redirected toward God and moral goodness. The threefold foundation of Puritan childbearing was the importance of early training, the influence of example as well as precept, and a balance between restraint and positive support. (Ryken 87)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System

Though the focus thus far has been on the role of parents as educators, it is important to place both the child and the parents in a larger social framework. A wonderful model for understanding a child's context is the ecological model proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner.

A child develops within a complex network of social forces having both a direct and an indirect influence on the child (Berk 23). Consider a set of concentric circles with the child in the inner most ring. The first ring around the child is called the "microsystem" and includes all direct influences on the child. This level includes schools, day cares, peers, churches, neighbors, and immediate family. All of these socializing forces have direct interactions with the child involving bi-directional and reciprocal relationships (Berk 23).

The second ring is the "mesosystem" and refers to the connections between the people or groups in the "microsystems" that foster development (Berk 24; Feldman 9). These are the relationships between parents and teachers, siblings and parents, friends to friends. Examples include interactions between the school and the church, the parents and the neighbors, and the parents and the child's peers. Though not directly involving the child, they do have an impact on the child.

The third ring is the "exosystem." These are societal elements having a direct impact on the "Microsystems" but only an indirect impact on the child. Examples include local industry, the school board, mass media, local government, and a parent's workplace (Cole and Cole 20). For example, stress at a parent's job indirectly affects a child. Even though a child does not typically interact directly with the parent's job on a daily basis, the child is indirectly affected (Berk 24).

Finally, beyond the "exosystem" is the fourth concentric ring, the "macrosystem." The "macrosystem" is not a specific context, but rather the values, laws, customs, and resources of a

given culture (Berk 24). “The priority that the macrosystem gives to the needs of children and adults affects the support they receive at inner levels of the environment” (Berk 24).

These systems are constantly changing and experiencing ecological transitions (Berk 25). The people in our “microsystem” are constantly changing. For example, the child is changing schools, classmates and neighbors, and parents are changing jobs.

This ecological model is important because parents live in a larger societal framework as they try to foster moral development. Parents need to determine if schools, churches, neighbors, or peers are reinforcing moral messages being taught at home. The interactions between the levels of the ecological system all impact the child’s moral development. Even though we will focus specifically on the microsystem and then focus even more on parents, an understanding of the larger systems is important.

Summary

As we move forward in our post-modern culture, Christian parents’ understanding will be enlightened if they remember where we have been and where we currently reside in history. The following quote is helpful in framing the past for the future:

Christians are embedded in a highly structured social framework which orients them in relation to God, the natural world, and other people... The Christian story locates, orients, and orders the lives of believers so that they are never isolated or left to their own devices in choosing who they are to become.

Christians are not self-creations but creatures bound to God and one another; their behaviors, attitudes, and strivings take shape within those boundaries.

(Charry 45)

Chapter 2 will summarize the developmental theories on children’s moral growth. The emphasis will be on the cognitive-developmental approach since this was not only the origin of theories about moral development (Piaget and Kohlberg) but remains the dominant theory today.

CHAPTER 2

COGNITIVE, MORAL AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

How does a child develop morally? Is morality innate to the child? Must morality be taught? Does a child possess the ability at birth to make the right moral decision given the right environment? Given the right environment, will a child naturally choose the wrong moral decision? There are many aspects of our worldview about human nature that determine our view of moral development. This chapter will provide a psychological overview of what we know about children's cognitive and moral development. These foundational views greatly impact contemporary views and practices in moral development.

The Cognitive-Developmental Approach

Piaget

Cognition

Piaget is considered the father of modern day cognitive psychology. As a student of biology, he was interested in how children adapted to their environment. While a student under Binet, the developer of the first intelligence test, he was more interested in why certain children got the intelligence questions wrong rather than just counting the number of correct answers. Piaget observed developmental shifts in children's thinking. Instead of seeing a gradual development in understanding (i.e., as an inclining slope), Piaget observed developmental shifts in children's thinking (i.e., as a set of stairs). Children seemed to have mental shifts allowing them to process information differently. These were abrupt changes and each stage was qualitatively different from the others.

Piaget described mental organizational boxes called schemas. A schema is a way of organizing information to allow the individual to sort data. For example, when a child is asked to describe a dog, he will mention characteristics common to many kinds of dogs. These characteristics are mentally connected so when a child sees a four-legged, hairy object such as a

horse, the child would consider it a “dog.” As we teach children right from wrong, parents are helping the child develop the “schemas” of right and wrong. In the following chapters, parents will be given tools to form moral schemas or lenses in your children. Thus, when a family encounters a moral dilemma in the life of their family or their child, they will correctly categorize it as a “moral situation” and discuss it with their child. When a parent reads the Bible with their child, the parent will be able to reason about the moral situation of many biblical characters because the child will now have a schema to evaluate the moral message.

Piaget argued that organisms try to maintain a cognitive equilibrium to reconcile how we perceive the world and how it really is. He described two different ways of do this: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is changing the incoming information to fit the way one already views the world. For example, a young child who calls a horse a “dog” is assimilating the information by ignoring or distorting incoming information to fit a pre-existing schema. On the other hand, accommodation involves changing a pre-existing mental schema to reflect the new information. A child calling a horse a “big dog” demonstrates that the child recognizes the discrepancy between the incoming information and the pre-existing schema. Thus, the child created a new schema to separate “little dogs” from “big dogs.”

Assimilation and accommodation inform the discussion of moral growth because as a child grows, parents want to teach the child both to accommodate and to assimilate incoming moral messages. Parents do not want her to change her moral schema and continually accommodate her friends’ views just because of peer pressure. Parents also do not want her to be so rigid in her own moral view that she only assimilates moral information and ignores incoming moral messages. Rather, parents want her to be able to evaluate critically any moral messages in a biblical light and assimilate or accommodate based on her knowledge of the Bible and a Christian worldview.

Parents need to understand the basics of Piaget's cognitive theory because moral developmental theories use this theoretical foundation. Piaget argued children develop in the following progression of stages. These stages do not overlap but rather involve the movement from one to another as moving up a staircase. Each step is qualitatively different from the previous step.

Sensorimotor Stage. Young children before the age of two organize incoming messages through their five senses: seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. Infants and toddlers gain new information by interacting with their environment. They demonstrate little mental processing or mental representations and lack the ability to organize messages using symbolic or analytical thought.

Preoperational Stage. Children between the ages of 2 and 7 do not use sequential, logic arguments, they do have the ability to solve problems. For example, preschoolers do not have to throw a ball to know what happens when a ball is thrown. They understand that a ball will rise and then eventually fall even though they do cannot logically explain why this happens based on the laws of physics and gravity. In the preschool years, children already have mental representations (i.e., schemas) demonstrated by their pretend play, imaginations, and imitations. As their language skills increase, they gain the ability to use verbal symbols.

Concrete Operational Stage. Because of the Piagetian influence on the American educational system, children begin school around age 6 or 7. At this age, children are usually able to use logic and solve hypothetical situations but just not both at the same time. School-aged children use logical operations but are unable to use deductive reasoning. They cannot step back from a situation and look at multiple perspectives at the same time.

Formal Operational Stage. This stage emerges around 11 to 15 when adolescents are able to use logic and hypothetical reasoning simultaneously. This stage of cognitive thought is the

highest and most complex. These students can think logically and hypothetically about problems at the same time.

Morality

Concurrent with these stages of cognitive development, Piaget proposed only 2 stages of moral development. As the first developmental psychologist to propose a theory of moral development in children, Piaget argued that the emergence of rules in children's games parallels the development of rules in society. By observing the way children negotiate games, adults could better understand human relationships and negotiations. Through interviews with children, Piaget studied the children's description of the game, the origin of new rules, and resolution of conflicts during game play.

Piaget discovered younger children make moral decisions based on external events and consequences. This "moral objectivity" or "heteronomous morality" is not based internally but is based on an external focus. Morality is based on another's perspective and is originated in another and not one's self. In his research, Piaget asked children to make moral judgments about hypothetical stories. For example, he asked children to decide which child was naughtier, a child who breaks 12 glasses obediently trying to help his/her mother by carrying a tray of glasses or a child who breaks 1 glass while disobediently reaching into a cabinet to get a cookie. Younger children focused more on the outcome of the situation and most often concluded the child who broke 12 glasses was naughtier. Even though the outcome is worse in the first story, the child intended to help his mother and accidentally broke the glasses. Younger children focus on the outcome of actions rather than the motivation of the actor.

Around age 8, children transition to a "moral subjectivity" or "autonomous morality," making moral judgments based on internal events and the intentions of others. When asked about the above hypothetical story, older children recognized the intentionality of the children and

judged the disobedient child getting a cookie as naughtier. Older children focus on the motivation of actor rather than the outcome of the actions.

Piaget paralleled the early cognitive stages with moral stages. Sensorimotor and preoperational children demonstrate “heteronomous morality.” Younger children feel an obligation to comply with rules because rules are sacred, unalterable and external. Older children demonstrate “autonomous morality” because rules are socially constructed and can be changed. Rules are established and maintained through reciprocal social agreements.

Kohlberg

The first significant extension of Piaget’s work was the “cognitive-developmental approach” to moral development first articulated by Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg argued that as one develops morally, they progress through six stages. The underlying cognitive structure of how one thinks of justice and fairness changes at each step.

In defining morality, Kohlberg argued for three underlying assumptions: phenomenism, structuralism, and constructivism (Colby, Kohlberg, Speicher, Hower, Candee, Gibbs, and Power, 1-5). Phenomenism refers to the centrality of one’s rational judgments and decisions in moral reasoning. These judgments are central to one’s moral being. Structuralism focuses on the cognitive frameworks or mental schemas allowing one to process moral information. Kohlberg focused on the mental approach to a moral situation rather than the specific moral decision. Thus, at any particular moral stage, the schemas an individual uses in any moral situation will be the same across individuals. Constructivism refers to the life context in which individuals make moral decisions. The context of living life constructs meaning. Morality is actively constructed and reconstructed in the process of interacting with the world around the individual.

Three philosophical presuppositions in Kohlberg’s work are particularly worth noting. First, for Kohlberg the ultimate underlying virtue is justice. A single homogeneous and

prescriptive moral principle, justice, cuts through all competing moral values. A judgment of the justice and fairness determines a person's moral decision.

Second, no moral chasm exists between knowing good and doing good. For Kohlberg, similar to Plato and Socrates, if one knows the good, they will do the good. For example, if a parent can just teach a child what should be done, then the child will do that good. This demonstrates Kohlberg's post-World War II optimism and his view of man as rational, autonomous and good. Kohlberg's thought reflects Kant's "categorical imperative:" one must act out of a sense of duty that is imperative, universal, and unconditional. For Kohlberg, although one's moral inclination runs counter to one's nature, the individual will ultimately follow his moral inclination and act out of duty. Furthermore, a direct relationship exists between the moral value of an action and the lack of desirability of that action. The less desirable the action, the greater the moral value (Walker and Henning 306).

Third, cognition underlies moral development. One must know the good before doing the good. This contradicts Aristotle's view that one becomes virtuous by acting virtuously. For example, Aristotle allows that one may act morally before developing a moral understanding. Kohlberg's explanation of "cognitive disequilibrium" between knowing the good and doing the good focuses only on cognition and ignores other ways of acquiring moral knowledge.

Kohlbergian psychologists use the Moral Judgment Interview: a series of hypothetical moral dilemmas followed by probing questions to elicit the person's best and most advanced moral reasoning. Because these stories require the individual to evaluate conflicting moral responsibilities, the individual's reflective thought must resolve the "cognitive disequilibrium" created. The classic example of a Kohlbergian dilemma is the following:

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to

make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$400 for the radium and charged \$4000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only get together about \$2000, which is half of the cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, 'No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it.' So having tried every legal means, Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz steal the drug? Why or why not? (Colby et al. 229-230)

When coding the subject's answer to a moral dilemma, Kohlberg developed 3 stages of moral development: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Each stage contains 2 substages.

Preconventional Stage

The Preconventional stage corresponds to Piaget's moral objectivity; the child makes moral judgments based on self-centeredness and autonomy. The child's desires are most relevant and the child focuses on his or her concrete individual perspective. For example, Joe (age 10) said: "It's not good to steal from the store. It's against the law. Someone could see you and call the police" (Colby et al. 17).

Stage 1 of Preconventional Stage is "Heteronomous Morality." Fear, obedience, and punishment determine the Stage 1 child's answer. Laws are to be obeyed and cannot be broken. Rules are to be obeyed and not questioned. Moreover, this child is particularly concerned with rules backed by punishment.

In a biblical example of Stage 1 reasoning, Job's comforter, Eliphaz, asks, "Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those

who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.” (Job 4:7-8). Eliphaz focused merely on the consequence of Job’s previous action (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 10). Misfortune directly results from disobedience. Today, the health-and-wealth gospel demonstrates this thinking. If you obey you, will be blessed; if you disobey, you will be punished.

Stage 2 of the Preconventional Stage, “Instrumental Reasoning or Individualism,” remains egocentric yet considers another’s perspective. The person acts to meet her own interests and let others do the same. This child realizes that other people have different interests possibly conflicting with her own, yet is still motivated by her own self-interest. She follows rules only when it is to her own immediate interest. Individualism, reciprocity, exchange, and pleasure motivation characterize this stage.

The Israelites during the Exodus period demonstrate Stage 2 reasoning. They were promised blessings if they obeyed and punishment if they disobeyed (Deut 28:1-20). In the Bible, God dealt with the Israelites at their level of moral understanding. “There should have been no doubt in the mind of the Israelites that obeying the commandments of the Lord was a good thing to do” (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 11).

Conventional Stage

The Conventional Stage demonstrates the child’s perspective as a member of society. Morality is based on what other people think and what society as a whole has set as standards. For example, years later, Joe (now age 17) demonstrates this social standard:

It’s a matter of law. It’s one of our rules that we’re trying to help protect everyone, protect property, not just to protect a store. It’s something that’s needed in our society. If we didn’t have these laws, people would steal, they wouldn’t have to work for a living and our whole society would get out of kilter (Colby et al. 17).

Stage 3, “Good Child Morality,” is seen in a person who seeks approval and wants the best. This person focuses on living up to the standards set by people close to her or the general expectations of her in a particular role (i.e., mother, wife, student, neighbor, etc.).

The Stage 3 individual becomes more concerned about pleasing God. “... the concern is not so much what God will *do* as those who obey or disobey divine law as it is what God *thinks* of those who follow or do not follow God’s commands” (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 11). Children are to honor their parents because this pleases the Lord (Col 3:20). It becomes more important to please God than get a reward for obedience (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 11).

A person in Stage 4, “Law and Order Morality,” makes decisions based on authority and abiding by the law. Little internal moral conviction exists. The expectation is to meet the social duties one has been assigned (i.e., parent or child) or accepted (i.e., wife, friend, or employee). There is an obligation to fulfill these actual duties. Laws are to be upheld except under extreme circumstances when there is a conflict between fixed social duties.

King David emulates the Stage 4 appreciation of the law. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul... the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” (Ps 19:7-8)

Post-Conventional Stage

Post-Conventional Stage is a prior-to-society perspective. This person makes moral decisions based on abstract moral principles which supercede one’s social obligations. Joe, now age 24, demonstrates the Post-Conventional Stage:

I think human relationships in general are based on trust, on believing in other individuals. If you have no way of believing in someone else, you can’t deal with anyone else and it becomes every man for himself. Everything you do in a day’s time is related to somebody else and if you can’t deal on a fair basis, you have chaos. (Colby et al. 21)

Stage 5, “Social Contract Reasoning,” focuses on the good for society. Moral decisions are made with the awareness that people hold a variety of rules and opinions and that most values and rules are relative to the group that holds them.

Stage 6, “Universal Ethical Principles,” focuses on ethics. Morality is based on your own integrity and internal convictions. This involves the combination and integration of subsystems (for example, metaphysics and psychology). One must follow self-chosen ethical principles. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such principles. Very few people have ever reached this final stage (resulting in questions about its validity). Moral exemplars of this final stage include Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Buddha, and Jesus (Hanford 309).

The best biblical example of post-conventional moral reasoning is Christ Himself. Though Christ understood the importance of the law and his relationship to this law, He was not bound by the rigid observation of the law (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 13). Christ criticized the Pharisees for the ritualistic observation of the law as the basis of their righteousness. In contrast, He demonstrated the human worth of every individual including social outcasts (i.e., prostitutes and tax collectors).

He did not discriminate against the poor (Lk 4:18), the handicapped (Mk 10:46-49), the young (Mk 10:14), women (Mk 16:9), or those who were not of the Jewish faith (Jn 4:9) even though it was the custom of the day to do so. Each person mattered. He told the story of a shepherd who had 100 sheep, and although 99 were safely on the hills, there was one that had gone astray. (Clouse, Jesus’ Law 13).

Jesus clearly communicated his relationship to the Law. He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17). He summed all laws into the greatest commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. This communicates the role of both the conventional (concern for

following the Law) and the post-conventional (going beyond the Law to the next step). He communicated that one should not only avoid adultery, but should not even look upon a woman lustfully. Thus, he emphasized not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the law (Stage 6).

Summary

A person who has reached the ultimate goal of morality in the Kohlbergian model would possess the following traits: (1) the ability to consider other's perspectives in reaching a decision, (2) the ability to make a universal decision (applied to all in every situation), (3) the ability to first consider her responsibility to other human beings as autonomous moral beings having dignity and worth, (4) the ability to integrate responsibilities of rights and caring, and (5) the ability to be a non-relativist but not an absolutist (Colby et al. 35).

“Just Communities” resulted from Kohlberg’s “cognitive-developmental approach.” In these communities, high schools were restructured so that students and faculty formed a small community group establishing and maintaining rules affecting all aspects of community life. All members had an equal vote and took collective responsibility. Rising skepticism, however, challenged this approach because of fundamental incompatibilities between the needs of the individual and the need of the community. Most of these schools were very expensive to maintain and have actually been closed.

Blasi's Criticism: Moral Thought versus Moral Action

Blasi criticized Kohlberg’s focus on “cold” cognition with little regard for a person’s moral action. He questioned whether or not people actually act in line with their moral judgments. (Blasi 1) Blasi argued that we should not assume a relationship between moral judgment and moral action (1).

There are 3 components of Blasi’s model that determine whether a person’s actions follow his judgments. First, the moral self focuses on the significance of morality to a person’s identity or sense of self. Does the individual consider morality an important part of his or her

person? For example, some individuals may consider every decision they make as having a moral component while others may think they make moral decisions very infrequently. Secondly, does a person possess a sense of moral responsibility for her actions. If people do not have a sense of responsibility for their actions, they will be more likely to tolerate the inconsistency between their moral judgments and moral actions. Thirdly, Blasi argued that self-consistency or integrity is needed for a person to both think and act morally. A person must value the consistency between what they think and what they do.

Clouse's Criticism: A Christian Critique

Christian Critique Christians consistently score at a lower Kohlbergian stage than their secular counterparts (Clouse, Moral Reasoning 196). In the Kohlbergian model, advanced moral thought is associated with more independent thought and less dependence on any being outside of the self. Thus, Christians articulating a dependence on God can consistently score lower than their secular counterparts.

In a growing world of lawlessness, Clouse argues the problematic nature of supporting individual judgments of the law. Since the cognitive principle at the conventional level is to conserve, it is not surprising that religiously "conservative" people are more likely to reason at the conventional level and not the post-conventional level.

The conservation or preservation of the society is based on getting along with others (Stage 3) and on obeying the law of the land (Stage 4). Faced with an increasingly lawless society and being the victims of that lawlessness, conservative members of the society tend to oppose any ideology they perceive as contributing to this unfortunate state of affairs (Clouse, Moral Reasoning 195).

Thus, the Christian critique raises the question: If advanced moral development is characterized by increased individualism, should Christians foster the highest level of moral development to increase individualism in today's society? The answer is yes when we look at the biblical model

of Christ. Christ redirects our attention to an appropriate relationship with the Law as we develop morally.

Clouse's argument transforms the Christian's understanding of Kohlberg's final stage:

Surpassing the egocentrism of children and the sociocentrism of law-abiding adults, mature Christians can be Christocentric. Our basis for moral understanding centers on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The enhancement of self, as important as this is to all of us, and the conformity to the social order, as basic as this is to the survival of the culture, are not expressions of Jesus' command to love. Jesus' Law of Love provides the ultimate in moral understanding (Clouse, Jesus' Law 14).

Thus, the Christian is centered on the person of Christ and not their own morality. Jesus' command to love drives us to conform to His example by being concerned with our neighbor. It is more than just conformity to a social law, exhibited in Christ's rebellion against the social order of His own day.

Relativism, secularism, humanism, and individualism underlie Kohlberg's theory. For Kohlberg, morality is relativistic and individualistic because the individual determines their own morality. Morality is secular because this individualistic morality does not necessarily reflect any consistent, underlying moral principles and often does not include an idea of a higher power or God. It is humanistic because the ultimate morality is based inside the individual and is self-determined. Many warning signs exist for the Christian in accepting all of Kohlberg's theory.

Feminist Approach

The reaction of feminists provided the most severe and significant criticism of Kohlberg's work. In response to the focus on rights and justice in the Kohlbergian model, Carol Gilligan, feminist professor of education at Harvard University, argued that women consistently scored at a lower level of moral reasoning (Gilligan 1982). She argued women tend to focus on

interpersonal relationships and a “morality of care” and not a “morality of justice.” Women tend to focus on altruism and self-sacrifice and not rules and rights when making moral judgments (Feldman 346). Women cue to attachment issues and their responsibilities to others.

Gilligan develops these ideas further into 3 stages (Feldman 346). In Stage 1, “Orientation toward individual survival,” the person makes moral decisions based on individual survival. This person focuses on meeting her own needs and what is best for her. Gradually, this person transitions to considering what is best for other people. In Stage 2, “Goodness as self-sacrifice,” she learns to sacrifice her own wants and needs for the good of others. She transitions from “goodness” to “truth” as she takes into account the needs of others as well as herself. In Stage 3, “Morality of Nonviolence,” the woman comes to realize that hurting anyone, including herself, is immoral. Thus establishing a moral equivalence between the self and others (Feldman 346). This is the highest level of moral reasoning in Gilligan’s model.

Gilligan centered her moral research on an individual’s real-life moral dilemmas instead of answers to hypothetical questions. Gilligan’s methodology codes the transcript of a structured interview about a real-life moral dilemma and involves several readings of the text. One time the coder would listen for the justice “voice,” and another time listen for the caring “voice.”

Although Gilligan argued women perceive moral dilemmas when attachments and relationships are threatened and men perceive moral dilemmas when justice is challenged or goals are unmet; the Christian worldview encompasses both. From a Christian perspective, we are to be concerned both with justice and relationships. God is a God of justice and He is a God of personal relationships. He has also placed us in community with other believers and we are to consider others in the resolution of our moral crises.

The Christian critique sees signs of relativism, secularism, and humanism in Gilligan. Again, moral virtue is self-determined and based on the self apart from God. Though this approach seems less individualistic, the individual is still central. The person has some control

over determining his relationships, and does not necessarily have a responsibility to God-given relationships. Feminism through the years seems to stress the woman's control over her life and relationships.

Socio-Cultural Approach

Vygotsky: The Zone of Proximal Development

Tappan proposes a model of moral development that would take into account the weaknesses in both the cognitive-developmental approach and the character education approach. Retaining the developmental perspective of the cognitive-developmentalists and the educational focus of the character educators, Tappan proposes a socio-cultural approach offering a sensitivity to culture and context, the centrality of human relationships, and articulated developmental and educational assumptions (Tappan, Moral Education 143). This socio-cultural approach is modeled after the work of Vygotsky.

Vygotsky argued that to maximize a child's developing potential, one must not only consider the child's "actual developmental level," what the child can do at the present time, but also the child's level of "potential development," what the child can do with assistance and guidance from more competent others. The "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) takes both into account capturing abilities in the child that have not yet matured. Vygotsky called these "buds" or "flowers" of development to distinguish them from the "fruits" already present in the child's abilities. These buds are capable of maturing with assistance from others.

There are two fundamental assumptions in this socio-cultural theory: (1) learning is mediated by words and language, psychological tools used to transform the child's current developmental levels, and (2) the transition to higher levels of understanding are mediated by interpersonal relationships.

"Scaffolding" is another helpful Vygotskian concept. Since development happens in a social context, social forces, particularly parents, provide a "scaffolding" for the developing

child. As the child grows, the scaffolding is gradually removed. “[T]he scaffolding work does not see the parental teaching role as one of applying ‘contingencies’ - rewards, punishments, or corrections- following children’s correct or incorrect responses. Rather their role is to provide a structure for learning that will increase the likelihood of children’s succeeding in their attempts to learn” (Maccoby 1992).

Tappan explains how moral education occurs in the ZPD:

From a Vygotskian perspective, therefore, moral education entails a process of guided participation whereby children are helped by parents, teachers, and more competent peers to attain new and higher levels of moral functioning. These attainments occur initially within the ZPD, as new forms of moral thinking, feeling and action are introduced to children, and they are guided and assisted in their efforts to think, feel and act in these new ways (Moral Education 148).

Walker and Taylor empirically support the theory of a ZPD. Children reasoned at a higher level of moral reasoning in a family discussion format compared to a formal interview (279). “In this case, children’s level of actual development was indicated by their independent reasoning about moral dilemmas in the interview, whereas their level of potential development was indicated by their performance in the family session, a somewhat instructional social context where parents were providing support for the child’s acquisition of new moral concepts” (279). Thus, the interaction with parents enabled the child to demonstrate a higher level of moral reasoning.

Moral learning then occurs as a result of this moral education. The child begins to internalize moral lessons because of this moral dialogue in the ZPD. The ZPD goes beyond the transformation of a cognitive stage as in the cognitive-developmental approach. The socio-cultural approach uses cultural practices and activities to help children internalize moral lessons resulting in changes in moral thinking, feeling, and actions. Though developed more in a later

chapter, it becomes apparent how this approach would advocate the use of stories in the transmission of morality. By teaching children through stories in the ZPD, children will progress in their moral development.

Criticism

Rogoff revised this socio-cultural view to include the vital role the child plays in facilitating his or her own development (Tappan, Moral Education 146). There is a cooperative collaboration between the adult and the child that is more interactive than originally communicated by Vygotsky. The original model is more behavioral as the environment merely acts on the child to create a moral being. Rather, the socio-cultural model also includes the vital role of the child interacting with the environment in the process of development.

Again, the question is raised between moral learning and moral action. Just because a parent and child interact in the ZPD about a moral issue, this does not directly cause the child to act morally. It also does not insure the internalization of morality. The socio-cultural theory further does not address the content of these moral discussions. Parents could merely be sharing their moral ignorance or relativity with a child. This does not create a moral child. There is also a difficulty in defining a child's actual level of development and his or her potential level of development. These might be very difficult for parents to determine. There is also no guarantee that the cultural values transmitted are virtuous. Some cultural values (i.e., consumerism, materialism, and individualism) might be better not transmitted.

Correctly applied, the concept of a ZPD is helpful for Christian parents. In teaching our children, we need to take responsibility for providing a personal and biblical scaffolding for the growing child. The centrality of human relationships is a very biblically based concept. For example, young children require more direct teaching and interaction around moral themes. As they grow into adolescence, parents still play a vital role but serve more to support and correct the child's developing moral sense. Finally, as children develop into adults, parents serve an

advisory role when the child requires moral insight. Thus, parents gradually remove the scaffolding as the child requires less.

Narrative Approach

The narrative approach grew out of Carol Gilligan's argument that "voices" beyond justice were missing from Kohlberg's model. The narrative approach focuses on the voices of thought, feeling, and action not the voices of justice and care; it involves interviews dealing with real-life moral dilemmas similar to Gilligan (Tappan, Narrative 6).

Narrative psychology argues that "lived moral experience" is communicated through stories and narratives (Tappan, Moral Education 151). People give meaning to their life events by representing them in narratives (Tappan and Brown 183-185). Tappan further argues individuals grow morally by "'authoring' their own moral stories and by learning the moral lessons in the stories they tell about their own experiences" (Tappan and Brown 183-184). Both the telling and interpreting are important in the narrative approach.

First because constructing a narrative necessarily entails moralizing, based on a particular moral perspective, telling a moral story requires that she authorize that perspective- hence telling a moral story also provides an opportunity for her authorship (and authority) to be expressed. Second, telling a moral story also necessarily entails reflecting on the experience narrated, thereby encouraging her to learn more from her experience- by claiming more authority and assuming more responsibility for her thoughts, feelings, and actions-than would be possible if she were simply to list or describe the events in question (Tappan and Brown 193).

The benefit of the narrative approach is that the person learns through retelling and thus reflecting on his life story. All narrative is in the context of relationships either with self or another. The self is constantly in dialogue with others. Moral reflection happens in the socio-

cultural context in relationship with others which eventually results in the internalization of the child's own voice. Early in development the dialogue is between the child and others; as the child grows, there is an inner dialogue between the self and these internalized voices (Tappan, Narrative 12):

Thus, we might imagine that a child grown up would have internalized the voices of his parents his grandparents, his teachers, his friends, his favorite characters from T.V. and the movies, and even perhaps favorite characters from books that he reads. All of these voices would exist in some kind of ongoing, dynamic, inner dialogue within his psyche- in dialogue, gradually with his own emerging voice (Tappan, Narrative 12).

Thus, the goal of moral education is to foster the internalization of morality so that children can claim responsibility for their own moral thoughts, feelings, and actions (Tappan, Narrative 19).

Personal stories about moral struggles are best because telling one's story requires the authorship of the personal perspective and necessitates the moral reflection on the event. Thus, the narrative approach enables the person both to articulate and to moralize his experience and to reflect and to learn from the moral experience. Moral development is the result of a child "authoring" his own moral narrative (Tappan and Brown 184).

Tappan emphasizes the role of moral emotion and moral action as well as moral thoughts. For example, in coding a subject's moral dialogue, the transcript is read five times: first for the overall perspective, second for cognitions and cognitive processes, third for emotion and emotional processes, fourth for action and conative processes, and fifth for the interaction between the latter three (Tappan, Hermeneutics 253).

Criticism

It is important to note Tappan's avoidance of indoctrination and the encouragement toward individually determined self-guiding moral principles. The child is encouraged to merely

clarifying her own self-chosen moral guidelines. The narrative approach is dangerous and will lead to individualism, humanism, and relativism. Just reflecting on previous moral experiences and decisions would encourage the child to believe all answers are in himself, mankind holds the ultimate answers, and each individual is capable of determining his own moral pathway. Though Tappan tries to argue his theory is not individualistic and relativistic, the argument is not acceptable (Tappan and Brown 198). Tappan argues morality is contextual and grounded in the relationship of author and audience and thus not relative. On the contrary, Tappan's mediator is "a mediator who has the dual task of both presenting problems and clarifying discussions." Tappan argued that the mediator/teacher is not communicating his values as an authority. Child and teacher co-constructing morality is still relativistic since the teacher's value system is individually constructed. Though Tappan argued that the teacher does not provide a values system, this is not true because the teacher significantly shapes even "co-constructed values".

Faith Development

Developing the concepts of Piaget and Kohlberg, James Fowler developed a theory of faith development. Paralleling the stages of moral development in the cognitive-developmental approach, he proposed a stage model for one's personal worldview. This proposed model illustrates how a person's set of beliefs about faith and worldview change throughout the lifespan. A person develops core beliefs through faith developing throughout her life. Though moral development and religious development are related and have areas of overlap, they focus fundamentally on different things.

Moral development seems to be a description, then, of one's behavior toward others, based purely on one's level of reasoning, in recognition to varying degrees of an inner audience that represents the authoritative principles. Religious faith, in contrast, seems to be characterized by an inspired,

impassioned, affirmative response to a divine directive on human relations, such as “Love thy neighbor as thy self” (Lownsdale 54).

It is important to know Fowler’s definition of faith. It is much broader than a traditional evangelical definition. Fowler states that faith is “a generic feature of the human struggle to find and maintain meaning and ... it may or may not find religious expression” (Fowler 91). Images are important. Faith is involved in understanding internal images and a person’s relationship to these images. God is the “ultimate environment.” Faith involves not only one’s internal representation (i.e., image) of God but also a person’s relationship with that God. Thus, faith is not only cognitive but also relational. Fowler’s stages of development are not goals to be reached but rather a descriptive framework for explaining and understanding people.

Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith (infancy)

As an infant, a child learns by experience to trust the environment to meet his or her basic needs. The seeds of loyalty and trust or fear and despair are present in the early months of life (Fowler 120). There is an obvious parallel to Erik Erikson’s first stage of “trust versus mistrust” when the infant learns whether the environment can be trusted to consistently meet her basic needs. Initially, this child believes she is one with the environment and only gradually learns her separateness from her environment. The transition to Stage 1 involves the emergence of thought and language.

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith (Early Childhood)

As language and thought converge, these children, aged 3 to 7, operate on the environment in an egocentric manner. They use fragments of images and stories to form their own view of God and the world. In trying to make sense of the world, they use self-determined combinations to make significant associations between God and the world. Preschoolers enjoy stories rich with detail but lack the ability to retell these stories sequentially or with detail (Fowler

129). Fowler argues that using stories- particularly fairy tales and biblical narratives- enable children to address their fears at this stage:

The useful realism of fairy tales- and of many biblical narratives- provides indirect yet effective ways for children to externalize their inner anxieties and to find ordering images and stories by which to begin to shape their lives (130).

The fertile imagination of these preschoolers leads to many questions about details of stories and also allows for imaginative dreaming of such stories (132). Because of children's natural curiosity, Fowler articulated the vital role of family, church, and school in fostering children's interest in narratives, images, and stories. There is a great responsibility to provide quality images and stories as both "gifts and guides for our children's fertile imaginations" (132).

The dangers of this stage are limiting a child's creativity and imagination as well as not limiting their fears and terrors. For Fowler, the child's imagination should not be the basis for reinforcing taboos or moral indoctrination.

Stage 2: Mystic-Literal Faith (School Years)

The transition to Stage 2 involves the development of concrete operational thought. This Piagetian concept labels the child's ability logically to understand and systematically to piece things together. Though they don't use abstraction and logic simultaneously, they are considered little empiricists subjecting their imaginative thoughts to logical scrutiny.

The Stage 2 child is now able to narrate her own personal history and find stories and narrative fascinating and useful because she is now able to use stories to conserve the experiences of herself, her family, and community group. "Stories of lives and of great adventures –true or realistically fictional- appeal because of their inherent interest, but they also appeal because they become media for the extension of the child's experience and understanding of life" (Fowler 136). Meaning can now be conserved and expressed by the child.

Whereas the Stage 1 child cannot take the perspective of another, the Stage 2 child can take another's perspective and hypothesize about the other's feelings, motives, and future actions. For example, a Stage 2 child will hypothesize about what God looks like, what he might be thinking, feeling, or doing. This child does not merely parrot back the images given by the culture and family but filters this information through her developing cognitive structures (Fowler 140).

Stories become the major way of giving unity and value to experience... Marked by increased accuracy in taking the perspective of other persons, those in Stage 2 compose a world based on reciprocal fairness and immanent justice based on reciprocity... The new capacity or strength in this stage is the rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama, and myth as ways of finding and giving coherence to experience (Fowler 149).

When we remember that some adolescents and even adults are in this stage, the dangers of this stage are even more interesting. The danger of Stage 2 is the tendency toward an over-controlling perfectionism or "works righteousness." On the other side, a Stage 2 individual can also go to the opposite extreme and embrace evil because of neglect or mistreatment by significant others (Fowler 150).

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence)

The cognitive dissonance caused by clashing stories or authorities forces the child to assimilate contradictions (Fowler 150). This marks the transition to Stage 3. Conflicting messages result in a dissonance that must be resolved.

Now the child becomes able to step back from the personal, familial, and communal stories and communicate them through more abstract and general statements (Fowler 137). The adolescent or adult is able to assimilate or accommodate contradictory information or accept the unsolvable dissonance. Since an adolescent's experience extends beyond the family, he must

assimilate the demands of many different spheres. “Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and diverse range of involvements. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook” (Fowler 172). For many, this is the final stage reached even in adulthood. This stage is marked by the constant attention to significant others’ expectations and judgments without a determined personal identity to maintain an individual perspective (Fowler 173). This person has a “cluster of values and beliefs” (173); they have not been able to step outside their perspective to systematically determine their ideals.

The dangers of this stage include the compromised personal identity because the person is too externally focused on pleasing others. One might also make incorrect conclusions about God after interpersonal failures. This despair might lead to a separation between one’s interpersonal relationships and one’s relationship with God (Fowler 173).

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young Adulthood)

The transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 might involve clashes between authorities or changes in practices previously considered unalterable. “[T]he encounter with experiences or perspectives... lead to critical reflection on how one’s beliefs and values have formed and changed, and on how ‘relative’ they are to one’s particular group or background” (Fowler 173). Often, the process of “leaving home” causes this deep reflection on how values have been determined (173).

A genuine transition to Stage 4 involves a break with external sources of authority. The individual must relocate the center of authority to one’s inner self and critically evaluate previously assumed values (179). Fowler refers to this as the emergence of the *executive ego* (179). Some adults may never reach this stage. Others may reach this stage only in their 30s and 40s. A traumatic event or upheaval in a person’s life may trigger this transition and the transition may last several years.

Stage 4 shares similarities with Erikson's Intimacy versus Isolation. A person must risk personal relationships and the fear of being left alone in order to determine her own set of values and beliefs. One's developing identity may leave them vulnerable to rejection by others who don't share the same value set (Fowler 181).

Erikson identifies the crisis of Intimacy vs. Isolation with this period. Intimacy requires the ability to stand alone as well as to risk one's forming self and sense of identity in close engagement with other persons and with ideological commitments that channel one's actions and shape one's vision of life goals (Fowler 181).

The dangers for a Stage 4 individual involve too much confidence in her critical thought. The thoughts of others, family, and community are merely assimilated into one's own unchanging worldview.

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life)

The transition to Stage 5 is marked with a frustration and recognition that life is more complicated than the Stage 4 view allows. The Stage 5 individual recognizes that life is more complex than the Stage 4 mind will allow.

Stage 5 is marked by a more dialectic and multilevel approach to life truth (Fowler 183). For Fowler, the emergence of Stage 5 is like "looking at a field of flowers simultaneously through a microscope and a wide-angle lens" or "discovering that one's parents are remarkable people not just because they are one's parents" (184-185). Instead of viewing life as *either/or* it can view life as *both/and*. This person has the ability to look at the interrelatedness of things simultaneously without having to fit them into pre-existing mental schemas. This person is capable of listening to others speak in their own language without forcing them to speak within a certain form.

This stage involves an acknowledgement of a deep subconscious- “the myths, ideal images and prejudices built deeply into the self-system by virtue of one’s nurture within a particular social class, religious tradition, ethnic group or the like” (Fowler 198).

The danger in this stage is inactivity or passivity resulting from the acceptance of paradoxes in life. When a person accepts the paradoxes and inconsistency, she might become cynical and complacent (Fowler 198).

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (Post Mid-Life)

The transition to Stage 6 is marked by a radical actualization of the untransformed and transformed realities in Stage 5. Since this stage is so difficult to describe, even by Fowler, his description will be best:

Stage 6 is exceedingly rare. The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community... Many persons at this stage die at the hands of those whom they hope to change. Universalizers are often more honored and revered after death than during their lives. The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us. Their community is universal in extent (Fowler 201).

There are few examples of this stage. Fowler hypothesized this may exist in 1 to 2 out of every 1000 people (Lownsdale 59). Fowler mentions Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton and Dietrick Bonhoeffer (201). These faith exemplars are not perfect nor are they necessarily self-actualized. Rather, Fowler communicates that these individuals were set apart by God. “It is as though they are selected by the great Blacksmith of history, heated in the fires of turmoil and trouble and then hammered into usable shape on the

hand anvil of conflict and struggle” (Fowler 202). They commit their whole being to a universal cause and are willing to lose their lives for the vision. This highest stage involves a commitment to the Kingdom of God, the unity of all people, and the completion of all human rights and justice (Hanford 307). These concepts are so universal and global that only individuals at the highest stage of faith development have an understanding of these concepts.

Relationship between Moral and Faith Development

There are several similarities between Kohlberg’s moral stages and Fowler’s faith stages. Both assume the foundational virtue of justice. The higher the stages, the greater the person’s universal understanding of justice. Both argue that justice is learned through communities. These communities enable a person to learn how to see others in light of one’s self and to treat others fairly, not just for one’s own benefit (Hanford 308). Both argue intellectual development in logic is necessary but not sufficient for moral and faith development. Both are built on the Piagetian concept of abstract and logical thought. Both Fowler and Kohlberg assume a person must be able to think both abstractly and logically simultaneously (Hatford 308). As previously noted, they share several moral exemplars of the final stages of moral and faith development (Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr.).

The differences between these two stage theories merit mentioning as well. While Kohlberg based his empirical data on subjects’ answers to hypothetical dilemmas, Fowler used subjects’ actual life events. For Kohlberg, liberalism is the acceptable underlying ideology while Fowler argues Christian faith as the underlying ideology. Indeed, the individual plays too important a role in Kohlberg’s moral development. While Kohlberg seems to argue for increasing humanism and relativism, Fowler’s faith stages demonstrate an increased dependence on a being outside of the self. For Kohlberg, the ultimate answers are found in the individual while Fowler’s ultimate answers are founded in the kingdom of God. A Christian can often be classified lower on Kohlbergian stages because of his dependence on a being outside of himself.

Kohlberg's fundamental mechanism is reason and cognitions. For Fowler, the fundamental mechanism for higher advancement is religion rather than reason. Religious commitment is essential to the highest level of faith development.

Though Fowler's inclusion of religion is essential to Christians, his theory has been criticized for defining faith too broadly. The theory is not explicitly evangelical but could encompass many other religious beliefs. Kohlberg actually defines faith too narrowly. Faith is merely one's private beliefs. Kohlberg did not even consider his own faith foundational to his formation of his moral development theory (Fernhout 191).

Summary

In light of this theoretical summary of the different psychological theories of cognitive and moral development, who is responsible for a child's moral development? Is moral growth the responsibility of the child or the environment? In the environment, does the community, the church, the family or the school bear the major responsibility? The next chapter will look at the role of different socializing agents on children's moral development and will focus on the primary role of parents in moral development.

CHAPTER 3

PARENTS AS MORAL EDUCATORS

To discuss how parents should teach morality, two categories will be used: implicit moral education and explicit moral education. “Implicit Moral Education” does not involve direct dialogue with the child about morality. These methods are “implied” and unstated in the parent-child relationship. For example, a mother’s parenting style communicates volumes to the child and yet might not ever be explicitly articulated to the child. “Explicit Moral Education” involved direct dialogue with the child about morality. For example, moral discussions with a child about interpersonal conflicts at school involve direct moral teaching.

Implicit Moral Education

Parenting Styles

Psychological research has for years been interested in parent-child interactions outside the domain of moral development and has recognized that parents have a profound impact upon their children in a multitude of ways (Maccoby 1006; Clayton 280). One of the most greatest contributions of this research has been on parenting styles, which influences every other domain of parent-child relationships.

Because different parents have different parenting styles, it is important to see how moral development in the home is affected positively and negatively by the different approaches. Christian parents need to realize that their parenting styles affect how moral lessons and instructions are being perceived.

The classic explanation for parenting styles was described by Baumrind as permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative (qtd. in Clouse, Teaching 68; Maccoby 1012). The key for Baumrind is the amount of nurture and control. The permissive parent is high on nurture but low on control. This child knows they are loved but they are not given many constraints or boundaries. Therefore, there is a bit of insecurity in knowing what is socially acceptable and

what is not. There are few demands place on this child and they are free to do what they please. Ironically, these children are the least self-reliant and self-controlled.

The authoritarian parent is high on control but low on nurture. These parents micromanage and control the child's actions without considering their relationship with the child. The relational context of the parent-child connection is lost amid the rules and regulation. The parent communicates to the child that moral motivation is external and has no internal value. A child learns to obey for the sake of avoiding punishment. "The authoritarian parent works from a position of power encouraging little independent thinking or individuality on the part of the child" (Clouse, Teaching 68).

The authoritative parent is high on nurturance and high on control. They provide both the relationship and the boundaries for their children. These parents use firm control without hemming the child in with too many restrictions (Clouse, Teaching 68). Clouse has the following to say about the strengths of the authoritative parent:

Authoritative parents use a unique combination of high control and positive encouragement of the child's autonomy and independence. There is no question but that the parent is in charge. Guidelines and rules are given within which the child must operate, and standards for future conduct are set. But parents share their reasons for the rules and encourage give-and-take on the part of the child.

Both the rights and interests of the parents and the rights and interests of the child are taken into consideration (Teaching 68).

Thus, the moral implication is that being high on nurture but low on control or guidance is not helpful for children. This runs contrary to our culture's "permissive" mentality. Children will make the most mature moral decisions in a context of both high nurturance and control. Clouse argues for a "firm but kind" approach to parenting (Teaching 68). This balances the nurturing and control aspects. Baumrind also explained why a balance is so important:

In the various observable areas of the child's life... the success of the parent-child interaction can be assessed by how well the parent balances disciplinary demands with respect for the child and by how well the child balances reliance on parental care with willingness to progress toward emancipation (Rearing Competent Children 371).

Maccoby and Martin identify the indifferent-uninvolved parent as a fourth category. This parent is neither high on control or high in nurturing but is rather detached and does whatever necessary to minimize interactions with the child. (48). These parents are often depressed and uninterested in the child. They may exhibit child abuse, neglect, hostile verbal abuse, or unavailability (Maccoby and Martin 49).

Darling and Steinberg distinguished between parenting style and parenting practice (488). Parenting style encompasses those traits that make up the overall atmosphere in which parents interact with their children. Practices are specific actions either continuous in nature or occurring only once in response to the child. A continuous action is attending a child's little league games all season or praying with the child before bedtime every night. An isolated practice is not allowing a child to attend a particular party due to misbehavior.

Furthermore, in applying this to the fostering of moral development, how parents teach their children right from wrong is primarily a parenting practice. Darling and Steinberg envision a parent's goals or beliefs impacting both his or her parenting style and those practices engaged in as part of parental duties. Moreover, parenting style mediates how parenting practices impact the development of the child by directly affecting which practices the parent engages in and by prompting the child's personality and response toward the parent. In relation to moral development, Darling and Steinberg imply that the impact of how parents teach morality on what a child considers when making moral judgments is mediated by parenting style. This model demonstrates just how influential parents are in fostering morality.

De Vos, Stehouwer, and Stehouwer documented the Darling and Steinberg model by linking the parents' perspective on authority with parenting style and discipline. Authority, they asserted, is a two-pronged concept initiated at Creation, involving both dominion and service (343). Parents who have dominion without service misuse their authority and become tyrannical. Dominion with service looks after the best interest of the child in spite of the difficulty inherent in so doing.

De Vos, Stehouwer, and Stehouwer noticed four dimensions of parenting arising from this view: control, warmth, involvement, and instruction. Having an optimal measure of each corresponds to Baumrind's authoritative parent. The article also demonstrated how an authoritative parenting style can facilitate a parent's responsibility to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord. Parents work at this goal as a team, and thus must develop a specific plan of action that they employ consistently and cooperatively. They also noted that the methods adopted should be age-appropriate. Coming from the perspective of the child, Siegal and Rablin showed that 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds prefer a mother who intervenes in a child's misbehavior rather than permits it (499). Thus even children this young have a sense of needing discipline and guidance. Hoffman talked about facilitating the child's internalization of parental values through the use of discipline, bringing full circle the concept that parenting practice can foster moral development (26-28).

Moral Modeling

It is, however, important not simply to discuss situations arising in the child's world, but to also use the parents' lives as examples. This makes the parents appear more approachable through their transparency, demonstrates the relevance of moral decision making throughout life, and indicates to the child that adults must adhere to the same biblical standards as they expect their children to model. Schleiermacher (1786-1834), a Reformed theologian, saw faith as "caught" and not "taught." (Bunge 22). Family worship, Bible study, and a parent's example lead

a child to Christian faith. For Schleiermacher, the home is the primary and irreplaceable school of faith for children.

Thomas Lickona also contends that parents are to teach both by example and word (Raising Good Children 20-22). These ideas also find support in the Scripture. It is clear that children are not born with an innate sense of right and wrong. “And the little ones... your children who do not yet know good from bad...” (Deut 1:39).

When asked for examples of moral exemplars, children most often mention family members and friends (Walker, Pitts, Hennig, and Matsuba 316). Thus, parents must take their involvement in children’s lives seriously. The challenge is to live moral lives because children are quick to see the discrepancies between what is said and what is done. Children learn through imitating others’ behaviors. They need be surrounded with moral exemplars and heroes. “If there is a crisis in morality today then it is not so much due to the fact that people can no longer reason well about moral principles, but that we see too few people living virtuous lives” (Martone 118). Parents must remember that they are their children’s heroes and they need to model those characteristics they desire to see in their children’s lives (Cohen 170).

Explicit Moral Education

Moral Discussions

Children must be taught morality. This requires explicit teaching, not just modeling of the parent’s behavior. “Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deut 11:19). Moral instruction must be personal and intimate. There must be room for dialogue and interaction. Children must learn that morality isn’t self-determined but is learned through social relationships (Martone 118). A child must feel a level of trust in the moral teacher in order to bring the self forward into the moral arena.

One of the most strongly advocated methods for teaching morality is through moral discussions. Parents should verbally interact with their children about both daily events and hypothetical situations requiring moral insight.

The “plus 1” strategy (Blatt effect; Arbuthnot and Faust qtd. in Boyes and Allen 553; Walker and Taylor 265) is considered an appropriate way to advance children’s moral development. It suggests that an adult should reason with a child at one Kohlbergian stage higher than his or her present development, in this way stretching him or her just slightly to assimilate the thinking of the next level. Theoretically, authoritative parents, with their balance of warmth and control, would best direct their children toward a particular method of advanced reasoning. These parents expect their children to perform the mental exercise of thinking themselves, albeit only to the extent to which they are developmentally capable (Boyes and Allen 555, Maccoby 1015).

This approach, nevertheless, does not necessitate that parents abandon biblical absolutes to replace them with children’s reasoning. Rather, it simply recognizes that moral development cannot be forced upon children but must be internalized. Optimal moral growth results from authoritative parents who use a higher level of moral reasoning by discussing real-life dilemmas (Walker and Taylor 275).

Discipline

A parenting practice often employed to foster moral development is discipline. Although they differ on the method, both Christians and non-believers view discipline as an essential practice (Feldman 275-276). Though some secular psychologists disagree about the use of time-outs, spanking, and reprimands, there are some basic childrearing strategies recommended by psychologists.

One of the most challenging aspects of childrearing is how to change, stop, encourage, or otherwise influence children’s behavior. We can request, reason,

explain, command, cajole, compromise, yell and scream, or threaten with physical punishment or the suspension of privileges; or we can get down on our knees and beg. (Strong & DeVault 324)

Strong and DeVault follow this list with a few suggestions for parents. They conclude that the best disciplinary techniques involve respect, consistency and clarity, logical consequences, open communication, and no physical punishment. Though these secular ideas may provide useful information for parents, the Bible provides clear guidelines for discipline in Christian families.

Discipline should not be done in anger (I Cor 13:5; Jas. 1:19) or so that it exasperates the child (Col 3:21), but it must be carried out for the child's own well being (Prov 22:15; 29:15). In fact, it can be an influential method for expressing love, just as God disciplines Christians because of his love for us (Deut 8:5, Heb. 12:5-6). Love that a parent has for a child should parallel this love of God for His children (I Thess 2:7 & Titus 2:4). Through proper discipline and our own mistakes as parents, we communicate moral messages to our children about God's justice, love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Household Responsibilities

Another means for instilling values into children is through household responsibilities (Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 258). Children should be responsible for keeping their "space" picked up. Few toys and books make it easier for children to keep these toys organized in appropriate baskets. Rotating the accessible toys, enables the child to keep his room in order. As children grow, they can begin to contribute to the family in other ways through cleaning, trash duty, and special projects. "Working together on difficult projects is an activity that goes a long way toward solidifying family bonds "(Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 259). These household responsibilities also extend to social responsibilities to neighbors, other church members, and other community groups. By serving others, children can learn to curb the individualism and egocentrism reinforced in today's society.

Family as Just Community

In light of Kohlberg's proposal of a "Just Community" model for schools, this model also applies to families. How would our families be different if they modeled aspects of Kohlberg's "Just Communities"? These Communities are marked by the mutual respect of all individuals for one another, fair treatment of each other, opportunities for mutual experiences and role-playing, and open discussions of moral issues (Clouse, Moral Growth 277). Ward develops the Just Community model and proposes that parents should use rewards and punishments with the pre-conventional child, use models and rules for the conventional child, and dialogue and interpersonal transactions with the post-conventional child or adolescent (qtd. in Clouse, Moral Growth 277).

Richard Krebs wrote How to Bring Up a Good Child to show Christian parents how to apply Kohlberg's theory to their parenting (Clouse, Moral Growth 277). Parents of pre-conventional children (i.e., the autonomous and egocentric child) should not call them "bad" because these children are pre-moral and do not understand. This stage is foundational for later moral understanding so parents should consistently communicate and reward honesty, integrity, helping, and other moral traits (qtd. in Clouse, Moral Growth 278). Conventional-aged children understand social standards of right and wrong so these children should have adequate moral exemplars available. Post-conventional adolescents need to understand the principles behind the moral standards of society. "Young adults also come to realize that some actions are immoral even though the actions remain within the law, whereas other actions are immoral if a law is obeyed without regard to the underlying principle. If there is a discrepancy between the law and the principle, the principle should take precedence" (Clouse, Moral Growth 278).

Developing a Moral Schemata

It is vital to understand Piaget's concept of schemas to organize information. Parents need to develop a mental schemata or lens for morality. This will involve a very conscious effort

to see all human interactions in a moral light. All human interactions have moral implications (Martone 117). By putting on a set of moral glasses, one will recognize more moral dilemmas facing a child. Any emotion might result from a moral issue, crisis, or resolution. Is a child angry? Possibly there is an issue of perceived injustice. Is a child happy? Perhaps she is rejoicing over a hard-earned reward for recent behavior? When parents learn to filter information through this moral development schema, they will find ample opportunities for discussing moral situations, both hypothetical and real, with their child. “We become self-conscious in a reflective way that prompts us to think about the puzzles of life, the accidents and incidents that shape us, but also the moral urgencies that come toward us and demand our response” (Coles, Taking Learning 23). Becoming more self-conscious of these moral encounters in life and in the life of a child, enables one to process events through a moral lens.

A moral lens is secondary to a Christian worldview that is our initial filter. When one encounters a moral crisis, the initial filter is to seek to understand what can be learned about who God is and who man is in light of His character. Second, one processes information through a moral lens in order to determine the moral lessons to be learned. These moral lessons also fall under the umbrella of God’s sovereignty and grace in human life. All human interactions enable mankind to be more like Him. Thus, the moral lens further deepens man’s understanding about who God is and who man is in light of Him.

The Interaction between Implicit and Explicit Moral Education

There is an important interaction and overlap between implicit and explicit moral education. For example, a father’s parenting style (implicit) might affect how the father reasons through moral issues with his son (explicit).

Walker and Taylor discovered the best predictors of a child’s moral development was not the parent’s own level of moral reasoning (280-281). No significant relationship existed between child’s level and parental level of moral reasoning. Rather, the parents use of a higher level

moral reasoning (i.e., the Blatt effect) combined with an authoritative parenting style was best to advance a child's moral reasoning. The Socratic questioning and supportive interaction patterns of listening and encouraging enabled the child to advance in moral thought. Discussions of real-life dilemmas were less "operational" (or challenging) and more "representational" (asking questions and paraphrasing the child's thoughts) compared to the hypothetical dilemmas (Walker and Taylor 275).

When parents discussed moral dilemmas with their child, they adjusted their level of moral reasoning to accommodate the child. Parents significantly converged with each other in their level of moral reasoning when discussing dilemmas with the child (Walker and Taylor 272).

Other Socializing Agents

Cognitive developmentalists are beginning to recognize the family as a potent factor in moral training, although they do not (and rightly so) concede that family is the sole moral educator. The relative role of many agents must be considered for a complete understanding of moral development (Powers 209-219). Christians agree that parents are not the only ones who have an impact upon a child's moral development. In light of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system explained earlier, children are imbedded in many social relationships that both directly and indirectly affect them. The people and groups in these concentric circles surrounding the child interact with the child and with each other to impact the child's development and moral growth.

Throughout history, several theologians have emphasized the role of other socializing agents in the moral life of children. John Calvin believed the community needed to provide parents with the right conditions for raising children. Civil authorities should provide education for boys and girls since parents don't have the knowledge, time, or competence to educate their own child (Bunge 24).

Several other theologians also recognize that the state, the church, and the schools need to participate in the protection and the moral formation of children because they acknowledge that some parents are bad examples and even neglect their children. Schleiermacher and Francke, for example, address the problem of bad parental role models, and Aquinas provides at least theoretical grounds for civil protection of children from negligent parents. (Bunge 25)

Although parents have a central role in the lives of children, other socializing moral agents merit mentioning. Since they are beyond the scope of this project, only a briefly discussion is merited. It is important for parents to realize these other factors are working either to help or to hinder the moral lessons taught at home.

The Bible speaks to the church instructing not only adults but also children. Deut. 31:12-13 states:

Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, in order that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.

Jesus himself provides a further example of this during his earthly childhood by going to the temple when his parents traveled to Jerusalem for Passover, listening to the teachers there and asking them questions (Luke 2:41-50).

Of course, there are other moral educators to which the Bible does not directly allude. Because everyone has his or her own set of values explicitly or implicitly expressed in words and deeds, children are barraged with moral instruction. Peers and siblings can influence not only a child's interpretation of what is right and wrong but also how he or she will react in response to this knowledge.

Another factor is the media. “In general television is an additional authority, an additional messenger that interposes itself between the parental socio-cultural and the external peer-validated perceptions about the world” (Rogers 72). Regardless of whether parents view it as responsible for their children’s moral development, in permissive families it more often than not becomes a sort of substitute parent, introducing all sorts of worldviews with almost no cohesion between these views from one television channel to the next (Rogers 72).

In fact, the issue parents must decide is not whether or not any of these domains influences their children but which of them they believe has the responsibility to educate children in morality.

Society today contends that parents do not have the right to instill values in their children. Children should be allowed to form their own worldview and not be indoctrinated by parents. “But of course, children have precious little chance to do that, since the rest of the culture has no qualms about imposing values. Does it make sense for parents to remain neutral bystanders when everyone else- from scriptwriters, to entertainers, to advertisers, to sex educators- insists on selling their values to children?” (Kilpatrick, Why Johnny 249).

Many theorists and psychologists believe the schools are the primary moral educators. Kohlberg focused extensively on the role of the school, working closely with teachers as to the best methods for moral education. During these years of research, there was a purposeful leaving behind of the role of other influences such as parents, siblings, church or media. These institutions were not thought to stimulate morality through social interaction or cognitive activity (Powers 209-219).

Kohlberg’s justification for the school’s supreme role was founded on the Constitution as a moral document encouraging the perpetuation of justice. He viewed public schools as governmental instruments, the prime environment for the instruction of justice. In fact, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg go so far as to say that “American public school teachers have the

responsibility to teach values” (15), without, of course, imposing their personal values upon the children. They argue that by developing a child’s sense of fairness and teaching the child how to think through moral dilemmas, children don’t have to be explicitly taught particular answers to moral problems. In the Kohlbergian view, children will be able to apply their own morality to issues and determine the correct moral solution without the answer being provided by the teacher. Thus, teachers do not have to impose their personal values on the child. Kohlberg further argued that schools provide the perfect opportunity for this moral development because of children’s interaction with many adults and peers and the moral dilemmas thus arising (Oser 81-87).

Summary

Thomas Lickona summarizes many of the above ideas in his “Nine Big Ideas” for raising moral children. His first big idea is “Morality is respect.” “The first big idea says that the core of morality is respect for self and others- for the rights, dignity, and worth of all persons” (Lickona, Parents as Moral Educators 129). Though individual worldviews will develop this in differing ways, mutual respect for all people is a common value to all. Lickona’s other ideas include fostering mutual respect and teaching morality both explicitly (through words and discussions) and implicitly (by example). Children must be taught to think for themselves and to take on real responsibilities. Parents must balance independence and control and nurture children through love (Lickona, Parents as Moral Educators 128).

Explicit moral teaching is necessary; Lickona argues that direct moral teaching by parents has a profound impact on their children’s conscience.

If young people today are, as Robert Coles has said, ‘awash on a sea of relativism,’ it may be partly because teachers as well as parents do not seem to stand for anything, do not express positions on the great moral issues of the day, do not react even to the moral events in their immediate environment, do not talk or act as if morality really matters (Lickona, Parents as Moral Educators 137).

Therefore, parents cannot avoid playing an important role in a child's moral development. As Bateson observed, "One cannot not communicate." (Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, 51) Parents cannot avoid influencing their children's moral development. The decision facing parents is not whether they will teach their children morality; it is what view of morality will they teach. When the child or parent is faced with a moral dilemma and the other is aware of the moral situation, a moral message is sent regardless of the lack of verbal communication. If by nothing else, parents will communicate by not standing for a clear moral position. Thus, some children might be left to flounder in a sea of moral relativity. Children look for consistent moral messages from parents.

Parents have an obligation to present clear moral messages to children. By providing supportive dialogue, morality can be taught both directly and indirectly. The next chapter will address the explicit teaching of children through stories and the following chapter will then explain the vital role of stories in moral development.

CHAPTER 4

THE USE OF STORIES

Children and adults alike surround themselves with narratives. Many hours are spent watching, listening to, or reading narratives (Vitz 716). Most of television programming is provided in narrative or story format. Most books provide information in narrative form. For years, anthropologists have recognized the centrality of stories in our human experience (Vitz 716). “Given this enormous popular ‘narrative need,’ one would think that educators might wish to rediscover how to harness the power of the human response to narrative material” (Vitz 717).

Stories enable a child to make meaning out of their experience. Since our lives are embedded in a web of social interactions and since God has placed mankind very purposefully not only in a larger social context but specifically in families, stories naturally help to order human affairs (Robinson and Hawpe 112).

Stories seem to be the natural way to recount experience. We believe that this naturalness is an index of the success of narrative thinking in everyday life. Because we live in groups, we need ways of understanding the actions of others... In effect, narratives are a solution to a fundamental problem in life, viz., creating understandable order in human affairs (Robinson and Hawpe 112).

Since narrative thinking is such a natural way to organize information, it follows that a narrative approach to teaching morality would be effective. Robert Coles actually provides illustrations of children’s moral, political, and spiritual growth by retelling the child’s stories. Most of his writings are illustrations of children speaking in their own voices their perceptions of the world (Vitz 716). Children’s moral responses are deeply rooted in previous experiences. A natural conclusion of Coles’ work is to challenge children morally by having them read, hear, or watch morally challenging narratives (Vitz 716).

As previously noted, most of the major moral developmental theories relied on the use of stories to measure and develop morality in children. In the cognitive-developmental approach, the cognitive disequilibrium created in moral dilemmas cause the individual to balance moral duties to self and others. This involves the underlying ethic of justice for Kohlberg and underlying ethic of caring for Gilligan. For the character educators, stories are the primary way to transmit values to children. Through classic literature, children are taught the basic moral characteristics one desires them to internalize. In the socio-cultural approach, educators and children interact through stories in the “zone of proximal development” as children learn to think beyond their current moral understanding with the help of more advanced others.

So, the question arises: How are stories used to foster moral development? Four models have been proposed for schools: character education, values clarification, moral dilemma discussions, and the narrative approach. After a brief summary of these ideas and concepts a parent can consider if they should be applied in Christian families.

Moral Education in the Schools

Character Education

“Character education” assumes there are common values that all agree should be developed in children. Children ought to know these, learn them by example, and then put them into practice in their own lives. Once they have learned them, these traits need to become second nature.

The character education approach argues that a core set of values has eroded as a result of the growing relativism in American schools today (Tappan Moral Education 142). This approach should be trusted because it is “tried and true.” Through the modeling and teaching these core values by educators, children should practice moral behaviors until they become second nature (Lickona, Educating for Character). Advocates of this approach include Thomas Lickona, William Bennett, and William Kilpatrick.

William Bennett, former Secretary of Education, believes moral education involves not only rules and regulations but teaching, training, and instruction in how to be moral. Morality must be taught and modeled by adults who take morality seriously. The mode of communicating and teaching morality is through moral literacy (Bennett, Book of Virtues 11). By using stories, fables, essays, poems, and other writings, adults can help children make sense of life and enable them to live life well. Bennett argues we do not need to create this literature as we have an established wealth of literature to use (Bennett, Book of Virtues 11). He has compiled several anthologies of moral lessons and virtues (e.g., The Book of Virtues). These stories do not focus on large sociological, ethical, or political issues but rather on basic moral traits. In the introduction to one anthology he explains:

Most of the material in this book speaks without hesitation, without embarrassment, to the inner part of the individual, to the moral sense. Today we speak about values and how it is important to 'have them,' as if they were beads on a string or marbles in a pouch. But these stories speak to morality and virtues not as something to be possessed, but as the central part of human nature, not as something to have but as something to be, the most important thing to be (Bennett, Book of Virtues 14).

Thomas Lickona proposes a 4th and 5th R (respect and responsibility) (Lickona, Comprehensive Approach 46). By taking into account the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of morality, he contends parents and teachers need to capitalize on the opportunities to foster moral growth.

William Kilpatrick criticizes the cognitive-developmental approach by comparing old stories with the new dilemmas (i.e., see the Heinz dilemma in Chapter 2). In older stories, everything revolves around the character of the hero. In dilemmas, the hero has no character, only a decision to be made. In older stories, characters are tied to social relationships and

obligations adding depth to their story while dilemmas do not provides such social ties (Kilpatrick, Storytelling 33). Heinz is loyal to his wife but we receive no explanation why. The older stories provide endings communicating a moral message while the dilemmas have the individual provide the ending.

The telling of stories- as opposed to the presentation of open-ended dilemmas- implies first of all that adults have something to pass on to children, a valuable inheritance that children might not come by on their own (Kilpatrick, Storytelling 34).

Thus, the character educators communicate clearly that traditional stories play a vital role in transmitting morality to the next generation. The use of stories in the context of relationships is important.

Tappan criticizes the moral education approach for its failure to articulate the developmental assumptions being made (Moral Education 143). They have not demonstrated why their programs of character development are more likely to produce moral beliefs and actions in children. Tappan and Brown criticize the omission of personal moral experiences. “In a very real sense students in a character education program are simply not encouraged to learn anything from their own moral experience, because such a program denies students any real moral authority in their own lives” (Tappan and Brown 198). It is not enough to assume that just learning a set of moral stories common to all Americans is adequate to produce moral growth and moral action (Tappan and Brown 198).

Values Clarification

The second approach is called “values clarification.” It has also been called “decision making” or “moral reasoning.” This approach is based on the assumption that children are basically good and have the innate capacity to be moral. All we need to do, then, is foster the child’s inborn ability to do the right thing. Or at least to do what the child considers the right

thing. In a values clarification mindset, all morality is relative. It will be different for each individual. Therefore, what we need to teach is “how to think” not “what to think.” According to William Kilpatrick, this approach has had several consequences:

- It has turned classroom discussions into “bull sessions” where opinions go back and forth but conclusions are never reached (Why Johnny 16).
- For students, it has meant wholesale confusion about moral values: learning to question values they have scarcely acquired, unlearned values taught at home, and concluding that questions of right and wrong are always merely subjective (Why Johnny 16).
- It has created a generation of moral illiterates: students who know their own feelings but don’t know their culture (Why Johnny 17).

Values clarification often leaves the teacher frustrated with the views held by students. When students clarify their values, it is not acceptable to challenge these values. An example retold by Thomas Lickona in Educating for Character demonstrates the difficulty with this approach. One teacher asked her students, “How many of you have ever shoplifted?” When most raised their hands, the teacher was not sure what to do. She asked if they thought shoplifting was wrong. A student said they had a right to material things. “At that point I thought,” the teacher says, “Good grief, where do I go from here? Thank God the bell rang” (11).

This perspective is founded upon pluralism (multiple answers exist for what is moral), relativism (every individual has the right to determine what is right), and individualism (each person determines morality independent of others). Developing morally must be much more than just clarifying what someone believes- especially in view of what psychologists know of the stages of moral development.

A reaction to the relative morality encouraged by “values clarification” was the “moral dilemma discussions” of moral philosophers like Lawrence Kohlberg. This approach to moral education was designed to create ethically valid ways of thinking about moral issues. According to Fritz Oser, Kohlberg was trying to reach a new balance in moral education that avoided the relativism of the left and the specific morals of the right. He wrote:

People from the right wing assumed it to be a new form of value relativism; leftists suspected it to be a form of transmission of bourgeois values into children’s minds... He was avoiding the devil of relativism as well as the deep blue sea of indoctrination. It was a new core idea that came up: a developmental approach embedded into a social participatory fabric of our everyday life, that is, the everyday life of our schools and of the instructional and learning process. (Oser 81).

What Kohlberg proposed was values reconstruction in the context of community. A school becomes a “just community” where teachers and students work together to solve moral issues. It is valuable for students to be in real-life situations to resolve moral dilemmas. “[D]emocracy means more than giving everyone a vote. It is a process of ‘moral communication’ that involves assessing one’s own interest and needs, listening and trying to understand others, and balancing conflicting points of view in a fair and cooperative way.” (Power et al. 32) The question becomes whether or not these situations are enough to transition a child from one level of moral development to a higher stage. The key features of Kohlberg’s model schools, called “Just Communities,” encouraged student participation in school-wide decision making and introduced moral reasoning a slight step beyond the students’ current level in order to facilitate advancement (see Powers 209-219; Power et al. 33-62; Colby et al. 380).

Both “Values Clarification” and the “Just Community” models attempted to avoid the indoctrination of the student by the teacher. These proposed models would allow the student to

be the clarifier or defender of a self-defined morality. Yet, regardless of how the facilitator attempts to create a values-free environment, the values of the educator will be communicated. “In short, it now seems clear that there is no way to avoid indoctrination; the best one can do is to consciously acknowledge the problem and openly identify what kind of indoctrination is taking place” (Vitz 718).

Narrative Psychology Revisited

Acknowledging the weaknesses and concerns of the narrative approach discussed in Chapter 2, it is important to revisit the narrative approach here. The narrative approach in the context of a parent-child moral discussion is very useful. The questions used in the structured interview when adapted to the parent-child context are actually useful. Below are questions based on the narrative interview adapted for a parent-child discussion about lying (Tappan and Brown 195):

All people have had the experience of being in a situation where they had to make a decision about whether to lie or tell the truth, but weren't sure of what they should do. Would you describe a situation when you faced a moral conflict and you had to make a decision about whether to lie or tell the truth, but weren't sure what you should do?

1. What was the situation?
2. What was the conflict for you in that situation? Why was it a conflict?
3. In thinking about whether to lie or tell the truth, what did you consider?
Why? Anything else you considered?
4. What did you decide to do? What happened?
5. Do you think it was the right thing to do? Why/ why not?
6. What was at stake for you in this dilemma? What was at stake for others? In general, what was at stake?

7. How did you feel about it? How did you feel about it for the other(s) involved?
8. Is there another way to see the problem (other than the way you described it)?
9. When you think back over whether to lie or tell the truth, do you think you learned anything from it?
10. Do you consider the situation you described a moral problem? Why/ why not?
11. What does morality mean to you? What makes something a moral problem for you?

The stories people tell describe not a frame of mind apart from themselves, but outline, instead, the forms they rely on to know what to do, what will happen to them, and what the consequences will be for their further credibility and place in the world. Stories are actions, in that they shape place, craft relationship, ordain options, and prefigure consequences. They both structure the ways we choose what we do and make possible reevaluations of what has been done (Day and Tappan 74-75).

This highlights the major strength of a narrative approach. It provides a helpful technique to dialogue, reflect, and rework previous and future moral decisions and actions. In the context of a Christian family, however, these moral dialogues between child and parent provide a scaffolding and framework for providing moral feedback and explicit instruction about morality from a biblical perspective. Thus, this perspective provides a needed emphasis on morality in community. Though Tappan believes teachers merely present moral problems and provide clarifying questions (Tappan and Brown 198), Christians need to change this theory to add the vital role of the parent as a mediator and facilitator in a child's moral learning. By providing the

scaffolding and framework for the child, the child can be dissuaded from relying on self-determined moral principles.

Warnings

There are some warnings in the use of stories with children. Even though one can argue children should hear and read moral stories, this assumes the child can understand the moral themes presented (Narvaez, Bentley, Gleason, and Samuels 219). Rather, children develop the ability to understand themes in narratives. Narvaez argues children have difficulty extracting the moral message or theme of a story before the 4th grade (In third graders 220). Parents need to be sensitive to the child's ability to determine the moral theme of a story. Parents should not assume their child can understand the "main moral point" of a story. For example, researchers have found that third graders when compared to fifth graders were less likely to pick out the correct message of a story. Understanding a moral theme goes beyond story comprehension. "Reading moral stories to children does not guarantee that they will understand the moral message or theme as intended by the author. Although we do not argue that children should not listen to moral stories that they understand differently from adults, we do advise that adults who educate for character should be aware of children's differential interpretations of stories that seem perfectly clear to adults" (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, and Bentley 483).

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING MORAL VIRTUE THROUGH STORIES

You know that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken... Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?

We cannot... Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts...

--Plato's Republic

According to Dr. Richard Pratt, the hermeneutical process consists of the interaction between a person's individual Christian living, the examination of scripture, and the person's interaction in community (Pratt 41). The individual's Christian living includes a person's sanctification, endowments, and calling (Pratt 46). Though the focus is on the parent's role in teaching their children, we must remember that parents are called to mediate and study scripture on their own as they strive for Christian maturity. Dr. Pratt explains that "we deceive ourselves if we think we can read Old Testament narratives as detached, objective scholars; whether we acknowledge it or not, we actually interpret as warring soldiers, wounded by sin and strengthened by the Spirit." (Pratt 45).

Parents must study the scriptures as they teach their children and rely on the Christian community and church. Other believers and godly ministers are very important for fielding theological questions and concerns. We do not teach our children in a vacuum. God has placed

us in community with others (I Corinthians 12:13; Eph. 4:4-6). “We join hands to serve each other in the body of Christ. In the same way, we join with each other to understand Old Testament stories. We study together at church, home, and school. We serve each other by exchanging ideas in the hope that the Spirit will orchestrate our individual contributions into a symphony of understanding.” (Pratt 69)

Teaching Virtue Through Stories

It is valuable to not only mention how parents are to teach morality but to also demonstrate more specifically how this is to be done. The use of stories in moral development is critical. Many moral development curriculum for schools are based solely on the use of children’s literature. There are many books teaching morality to children of all ages. Parents should read these with their children and discuss the moral implications for all involved.

Others also argue for the use of stories in communicating values and wisdom with children:

Stories have always been an important way of transmitting values and wisdom. They become all the more important in a society that, like ours, has experienced so much disruption in the family and the community. The lessons contained in good stories are lessons the child might not otherwise get in a world of harried adults and fractured social institutions (Kilpatrick Why Johnny 28).

But more than entertaining, instructing, and making us wonder about our own lives, stories illustrate truths that are difficult to grasp in any other form. This is especially true for children who are not yet ready for abstract thinking (Clouse Teaching 16).

Being instructed about friendship is very different than hearing the story of David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, or Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan. Being told to tell the truth is very different than hearing the story of Pinocchio, the emperor’s new clothes, or the boy who cried

wolf. Being told to work hard is different than hearing a work ethic illustrated through the ant and the grasshopper, the little red hen, or Tom Sawyer. Children are drawn into stories, and through relating to the characters connect with the story and the moral message.

Thus, stories have a unique role in teaching our children. A critical piece, however, is teaching in a developmentally sensitive manner. If we are teaching at a much higher level of moral reasoning, children will not be able to understand the lessons being taught. If the lesson is at the child's developmental level (or just one above), he or she will be better able to interact with the moral message. For example, based on previous research, Buzzelli finds 5 similar characteristics of effective moral discussions with children:

- 1) the use of conceptual questions, paraphrasing, and discussion as part of parental requests and directives
- 2) engaging children at their level of understanding by tailoring comments to their cognitive and linguistic abilities
- 3) gradually shifting responsibility from adults to children through the use of direct relinquishing statements and/or physical withdrawal from the activity
- 4) placing reasonable demands upon children for mature behavior
- 5) the expression of affection, encouragement, and support to children (Buzzelli 380).

As you can see, these elements all take the developmental issues into consideration. We must understand our child's developmental stage and reasoning ability before we design her moral curriculum in the family. You as the parent hold a unique role in being able to determine what your child can understand. So, taking the child's development into consideration, let us turn our attention to the unique role of biblical stories in moral development.

Unique Role of Biblical Stories

What a wonderful blessing that we have been provided such a wonderful book, the Bible, to help us teach our children. All of scripture has a purpose: "For everything that was written in

the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

Paul emphasizes the purpose of the stories of the Bible. After Paul discusses the events of Exodus and Numbers, he reminds the reader the stories’ purpose: “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.” (I Cor. 10:11). Thus, Paul reminded the Corinthian church of the relevance of past events for people in other ages. “In these words Paul acknowledged that the Corinthians did not live in the days of the Old Testament. They lived after the death and resurrection of Christ. The Corinthians stood in a different place in the history of redemption.” (Pratt 15)

Not only does the Bible contain wonderful stories, but our Savior was the master storyteller who communicated with his disciples and followers using stories. The parables are wonderful examples of Jesus teaching moral lessons through storytelling. The women searching for a lost coin as the shepherd searches for his lost sheep uniquely illustrated the need to seek God above all else. The prodigal son communicates both our role as the older judgmental and self-righteous brother and the younger, wayward son who returns to his father. We also see Jesus role as the seeking shepherd, the woman, and by contrast, the seeking older brother. These stories and other communicate how God passionately seeks for the lost.

Joshua taught people to answer children’ questions with a narrative and examples from the past (Clouse, Teaching 21):

He said to the Israelites: “In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, ‘What do these stone mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the

peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” (Joshua 4:21-24)

In her book, Biblical Morality: Moral Perspectives in Old Testament Narratives, Mary Mills argues that morality in the Old Testament is reflected best in the narratives. She focuses on the person, their community, and the cosmos. Community refers to the complex interactions emerging from their communal settings and cosmos refers to the narrative’s relation in space and time (21). When considering a developmental lens on these perspectives, it became clear that younger children (preschoolers and younger elementary aged children) grasp the person characteristics, older children grasp the communal aspects, while adolescents and adults can comprehend the cosmos level. Thus, communal aspects develop person traits, and cosmos expounds upon the person and communal aspects. The progression through these areas can be seen in a developmental lens.

Overview

Though the following sections will break our analysis of the biblical stories into developmental stages, we do well initially to consider some overarching principles. Our cognitive schema for biblical narrative interpretation needs to incorporate the following:

1. Many meanings and applications
2. Controls influencing the original meaning
3. Characters
4. Scenes
5. Episodes

Many Meanings and Applications

When deciding the meaning of a text, some argue there is only one meaning- the meaning intended by the original human author (Pratt 112). It is dangerous theologically to argue that each text only has one meaning (univalence). On the other hand, it can also be dangerous to argue

that each text has many meanings. This can encourage relativism because the meaning you determine might be different from the meaning I determine. We can't adopt an "each-to-his-own" approach. How do we decide legitimate interpretations? The Roman church believes that the ecclesiastical hierarchy is given special rights in scriptural interpretation. Though it is helpful to determine the central theme of a passage, Dr. Pratt believes other facets add to the text's value. "In this study we will speak of a story's *original meaning*, *Biblical elaborations*, *legitimate applications*, and *full value*... [W]e must remember that the original meaning does not exhaust a text's value." (Pratt 114). Elaborations, however, must never contradict the author's original meaning. Although there might be one primary original meaning, there are many legitimate summaries of that original meaning (Pratt 126).

Controls Influencing the Original Meaning

The writer, the document, and the audience interact in many ways. We must carefully take all three into consideration in our interpretation. We must consider *what* the writer chose to write (the paradigmatic angle), *how* he arranged his composition (the syntagmatic angle), and *why* he wrote for his audience (the pragmatic angle). (Pratt 118). Why did the author include certain information and leave out other information? Although most of us are not reading the biblical narratives in the original languages, we can still think about why the author used certain words or concepts instead of others. Though our children will not be able to process the text on these deeper levels, when we think more deeply about the text, the writer, and the audience, we are provided more depth when teaching these stories to our children. Our deeper understanding will enrich our teaching and interactions.

The Characters, Scenes, and Episodes

As children mature, they will be able to understand more and more of the characters in a story narrative. For example, while a preschooler will be able to tell you who was present at the manger, older children will be able to take the perspective of each of these characters. As the

child matures, the reader will find it beneficial to break the narratives down into smaller pieces called scenes. This will help children focus on the development of the story through different stages. Older children and adolescents will be able to determine if the story contains a conflict, rising action, a turning point, falling action, and/or a resolution. These also provide important moral cues for children. Although these steps are developed in the following sections, it is important to show how they fit into the larger picture. When children are encouraged to see the literary qualities of a story, they begin to break the story down into bite-sized pieces. Otherwise, we might tend to speed through the story thinking we have already studied it too many times in the past.

Summary

In light of the importance of stories in the moral growth of children, the following chapters will provide a developmental perspective on activities to use with children of different ages and stages. In the following developmental sections, please don't limit yourself to just the sections for your child's age. Please read ahead. If you believe your child can handle to cognitive tasks explained for older children, please try it. This might actually help them progress in their cognitive and spiritual understanding of the text. By employing a "plus-1 strategy" like the moral psychologists, you can actually encourage your child to think at the higher level of moral and spiritual reasoning.

CHAPTER 6
INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Attachment and Trust

The key developmental tasks of infants and toddlers are attachment and trust (Fowler 120). A child needs to know his caregivers are available, consistent and can be trusted to meet her basic needs. Discussing stories at this stage exposes the child to the biblical stories through picture books as significant attachment relationships are forming. This time of bonding and interacting with the child is foundational to later development. Sitting and listening to a book helps the child prepare for later learning. Brandee Bratcher, mother of Emma, age 2, explained how the exercises provided in this chapter help to build her relationship with her child:

It is a great way to spend time with Emma. Her father and I are great resources for teaching her about her creator. We should not rely on Sunday school to teach her. She will learn that she can come to us with questions and we can find answers and direction from God together through His word and prayer.

The basic biblical stories provide the building blocks for later moral discussions. A child needs to know the story pieces so they can form meaningful relationships between the pieces at later developmental stages. Thus, the time spent interacting with biblical stories strengthens the early attachments and the child's growing sense of trust.

When describing using the proposed exercises, Brandee wrote:

I enjoyed spending time with my child. We were having fun and at the same time she was learning about God and His love for her.

Sensory Information

Piaget taught that children in the sensorimotor stage obtain information through the senses. Infants and toddlers gain information about their world through their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and fingers. If available, puppets of the biblical characters would be helpful if they are available. Reading the story in a child's Bible is also helpful as they contain few words and

wonderful illustrations to engage the child's eyes and attention. Brandee used a child's Bible CD collection with the following exercises to discuss the story of Noah:

Although Emma's attention span is short at this age and she really does not comprehend the full story, the Bible song CD really helped her learn that God created her and all things. She also loved the chorus in the Noah and the ark song and began putting Noah and the ark together. Having things she could touch like stuffed animals and other examples of what God created helped a lot too. Also pictures of Noah and the ark (boat) were helpful. She learned that the boat Noah built was called an ark.

A child can interact with a story in ways beyond just listening to a story and looking at pictures. Consider how all of a child's senses can be engaged. The above example demonstrates that Brandee interacted with Emma's sight with pictures, hearing with the CD story and music, and touch with the stuffed animals. Figure 1 may help generate further ideas.

Summary

By engaging infants and toddlers through the story and their senses, we are developing the building blocks for later narrative comprehension and understanding. These young children should be taught about the names of the different characters and the overall story. By teaching children the basics of the story, we will establish the building blocks for deeper understanding as they grow. Brandee Bratcher explains this further:

Emma benefits by learning that God is greater than all things since he created everything. If God can make the mountains and show he can protect her from all things and she should never be scared because God is always with her like he was with Noah and his family in the ark.

As parents reinforce these stories with their children, the truths become integrated with the fabric of their moral lives.

Story or Event	Eyes (seeing)	Ears (hearing)	Nose (smelling)	Mouth (tasting)	Fingers (touching)
Rahab hiding the spies	- Looking at pictures of the story of Rahab	- Listening to a story being read about Rahab - pretending to be a trumpet blowing	- Putting a child under a blanket with you as you both pretend to be the spies hiding	- Tasting crackers or other food Rahab may have given the spies when they were hiding	- Touching the blanket (and being very still) when pretending to be the spies - Feeling a rope and talking about the spies' escape
God's provision of Manna in the desert	- Looking at the pictures of the story - looking at pretend manna (wafer crackers)	- Hearing the story	- Smelling the pretend Manna	- Tasting the pretend Manna	- Touching the pretend Manna
Creation	- Looking at the stars at night - Looking at another person present created in God's image	- Hearing the story - Hearing animals, someone singing	- Smelling food, animals, or things (i.e., grass) that God created	- Tasting sprinkles in star shapes - Tasting food God created	- Touching something God created (i.e., sticks, leaves, grass)

Fig. 1. Sensory Examples with Infants

Biblical Example: Peter's Denial

Mark 14:66-72

With infants and toddlers, your goal is to engage their senses with anything in the story.

For example, in the story of Peter's denial, Figure 2 provides further ideas.

Story or	Eyes (seeing)	Ears (hearing)	Nose	Mouth	Fingers
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Event			(smelling)	(tasting)	(touching)
Peter's Denial Mark 14:66-72	Reading the story from a children's story book or Bible and looking at the pictures with your child(ren) Showing the child a picture of a rooster in a book	Reading the story from a children's story book or Bible out loud with your child(ren) Practicing a rooster crowing with your child	Smelling the early morning air OR Smelling food that Jesus and the disciples tasted at the Last Supper when Peter said he would not deny Jesus	Tasting food that Jesus and the disciples tasted at the Last Supper when Peter said he would not deny Jesus	Practice Peter's 3 denials by shaking your head "no" and putting your child's hands on your face. Say "No, No, No" and then make the rooster's crowing twice as in the story

Fig. 2. Peter's denial as an example with infants

CHAPTER 7

PRESCHOOLERS

Developmentally, preschoolers enjoy symbols, are busy developing language, and enjoy pretend play (Piagetian thought; Fowler 132). We need to encourage their imaginations and pretend play while remembering the child's inability to retell a story in sequence or with much detail. Although they will not be able to understand the connection between these theoretical concepts (because of their limited metacognitive ability), we should encourage them at least to think about their morality in light of God's character. We should present the children with symbols and see if they can apply them in stories. For example, we should ask children what it means that Christ is a shepherd or that Christ is a lamb and begin to explain the symbols in the Bible.

In light of Kohlberg's Stage 1, Heteronomous Morality, moral lessons should focus on obedience and punishment. Preschoolers focus on obeying rules for the rule's sake and avoiding punishment (Kohlbergian thought). Morality is external and handed down from authority (Piagetian and Kohlbergian thought). Preschoolers desire independence while still receiving positive performance feedback from significant others. These children should be challenged to progress to Stage 2, Instrumental Reasoning; moral reasoning focused on individuality, reciprocity, exchange and pleasure motivation. The self-centeredness needs to be challenged and the value in relationships conveyed. We need to celebrate our individuality because we have been created as individuals in the image of God. We celebrate reciprocity and exchange because he has put us in relationship with one another and himself. Finally, we celebrate pleasure motivation because we are pleased when we please Him.

We should remind preschoolers that when we obey God and parents we are rewarded, and when we disobey we are punished. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins because he took all our disobedience on himself on the cross. Jesus' death on the cross was punishment for sins,

including the child's sin. God sometimes shows mercy by not giving us the punishment what we deserve and grace by giving us the blessings we don't deserve. Biblical narratives demonstrate these concepts. Though these concepts may be difficult for some preschoolers, these biblical truths need to be imbedded on their hearts at an early age.

The Characters

Even preschoolers can understand and communicate basic information about the characters in the biblical narratives. Characters to find in biblical narratives include God, human beings, and supernatural beings (i.e., angels or Satan). We need to encourage children to think about the reality of these characters. What are we told about them? What are we not told about them? Are we told what they look like? Are we told what they feel? Encourage children to help you make a list of all the people in the story. Once this list is made, have the child tell you what they remember about each person. What did they do? What did they not do? What does the story tell us about the person? Are we told anything specifically about their character? Christy McKinney found this helpful when interacting with her son, Parker:

My 4 year old son and I worked on Matthew 2:8-20, the story of the Shepherds and Genesis 22:1-18, the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac to the Lord. What was particularly helpful in teaching these stories was helping Parker pick out who were the characters involved. As he named each character we talked about "what they did" in the story. It also helped to "act out" what these characters did. Both of these stories related obedience as being honorable and pleasing to God as well as rewarded by God. Parker saw this in how the Shepherds saw the baby Jesus...that this was a reward in and of itself. Also, how God blessed Abraham as being the father of many nations for obeying God to offer his only son to Him.

Consider another example, in the narrative of Jesus' birth, who was present? We know Mary and Joseph and Jesus and the shepherds are present (this might be a good time to talk about why the "3 Kings" were not present). What do we know about each of them? Why were the shepherds at the manger? If time is available and you are creative, you could draw a picture of each character as a tangible reminder of each of the people. You could also use a manger scene to talk about each of these characters. Answering these basic questions about each character, helps the child focus on the story components combining each of these characters. Even young preschoolers are able to consider the characteristics and emotions of the characters. Christy describes her interaction with Parker, age 4:

Parker is just at the age where he can connect emotions to actions. After asking about what he thought the Shepherds were feeling when they (1) saw the angels, (2) when they saw the baby Jesus, and (3) when they were walking back to the fields Parker seemed to connect a bit to them. He understood that they were probably afraid at the sight of the angels, they were probably a little nervous or amazed at seeing the baby and that they were really happy as they left. In the same way, (1) Abraham must have felt afraid and sad to have to sacrifice or "kill" Isaac and (2) excited and happy when God provided a baby lamb instead.

The Story

Young children will find it very hard developmentally to break a story down into scenes. Thus, further story breakdown will be developed in more advanced developmental sections. Remember, if you believe your preschooler can do more, just try and see what more they can understand about the story and the characters. Don't hesitate just to try things from a more advanced developmental stage.

In Mary Mills consideration of the person in the moral narrative, person is defined as "the individual human being who is capable of independent reflection and action and who is therefore

able to take responsibility for the consequences of his/her acts” (25). Developmentally, preschoolers are capable of comprehending the consequences of one’s actions. Remember this child is focused on the rewards and punishments. She understands that obedience is rewarded and disobedience is punished. Thus, the preschooler is able to make judgments based on the outcome of the action. Based on these consequences, she then can infer character traits of the individual. When the text does not explicitly tell use personality traits, a preschooler can infer them from the consequences. This will require adult help and scaffolding, of course. Christy further illustrates from her use of these exercises with son, Parker:

[The stories of Abraham and the shepherd] related obedience as being honorable and pleasing to God as well as rewarded by God. Parker saw this in how the Shepherds saw the baby Jesus...that this was a reward in and of itself. Also, how God blessed Abraham as being the father of many nations for obeying God to offer his only son to Him. He did have a hard time understanding the “consequence” of their actions. I needed to take some time to add “what would have happened if they didn’t obey” and the same with Abraham. I took some extra time to elaborate on the wording so he could understand that actions do have consequences.

A biblical theme to stress throughout the biblical text is God’s faithfulness despite man’s unfaithfulness. Even though Moses was a murderer, God still used him to lead his people to the Promise Land. Even though Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister and tried to take God’s promise of a son into his own hands, God still blessed him as the Father of Many Nations through Isaac. Even though David was a murderer and adulterer, God still established his kingdom through the lineage of David. Parker saw God’s role in the stories of Abraham and the shepherds:

Parker, when asked about God in both of these passages, saw that God keeps His promises. He said He would send a Savior and He did. He said He would provide another sacrifice for Isaac and He did. We also talked about the great love that God has for us by providing for us personally and for Abraham too.

Though beyond their developmental understanding, this is a great age to begin stressing the mercy of God (not giving us what we deserve) and grace of God (giving us what we don't deserve). Thus, these examples of God not punishing the disobedience will provide some cognitive dissonance for the older preschoolers about to enter the concrete operational stage of development.

At the most basic level, preschoolers are able to understand the following and help to complete the information in Figure 3.

Person	Action	Consequence (reward or punishment)	What this tells us about the person	What this tells us about God
Moses	Struck the rock in anger	God did not let him enter the promise land	Made rash decisions without talking to other people; didn't take counsel very well	God is a holy God
Noah	Built the ark even though it wasn't raining and friends made fun of him	He and his family lived on the ark during the Flood	Noah believed God and listened to God instead of man	God honored Noah's faithfulness and kept him safe through the Flood
Rahab	Hid the spies of the Israelites	She and her family were spared when the walls of Jericho fell	She honored God as the one true God	God brings people into his family and honors our obedience

Fig. 3. Person-Action-Consequence with Preschoolers

The child at Fowler's stage 1 should be asked to role play the different roles in a story. Although they lack the perspective-taking abilities of the Stage 2 child, they enjoy pretend play and will enjoy playing differing roles in a narrative. Kathryn Jackson, mother of Canon, age 2, and Anne, age 9 months, recounts the importance of role-playing with her son:

The first year we celebrated Advent with the children was the Christmas after my second child was born. With a newborn in the house, my two-year old boy definitely understood the concept of having a baby! I committed to tell a portion or all of the Christmas story every day. We used a nativity scene that my little boy could manipulate and a beautifully illustrated storybook.

We had fun during Advent, but I was unsure if anything "stuck." Sometime in January, my little boy surprised me when he donned a blanket over his head and pronounced himself "JOSEPH." Then he looked at me and said, "You're Mary." When the baby woke from her nap, my little boy said, "Baby Jesus is awake!" And so the game began. All day I was corrected if I forgot and called any of us by our real names.

Six months have passed since the Advent season and I bet we role-play the Christmas story once a week. My little boy always initiates it, and we all play along. One day, my husband happened to be home during one of these role-playing times. My little boy (with the blanket on his head) looked at my husband and then asked me, "What is Joseph's daddy's name?" What a wonderful opportunity to reinforce the authority of scripture to my sweet boy!! We looked up the name in Matthew and for the rest of the day, my husband answered to "Jacob!"

Children enjoy playing the different roles in a narrative and need to be further encouraged to consider the thoughts and feelings of each character. For example, in the story

of David and Goliath, different children can play the parts of David, King Saul, Goliath, and the Israelites. They should then be asked follow-up questions:

1. How do you think Goliath felt? (“heart” questions)
2. What was Goliath thinking? (“head” questions)
3. What did Goliath do? (“hands” questions)
4. Why did Goliath do what he did? (“hands” questions)

Young children really enjoy playing different parts. This also requires very little preparation for the parents and can be improvised during the family time. Christy explains:

I think that role-playing and “acting out” these stories along with being intentional about naming characters, their actions, and their feelings makes these stories and the lessons that they teach very real to preschoolers. They are captivated by stories at this age.

Christy further explains why role-playing is so valuable with her sons:

It is my role as a parent to point out the differences between stories they read in other books and the stories that are told in the Bible. It is also my role to point out that these are not just good moral stories and lessons, but that these stories are true and have power to change their little hearts as well as mine. I believe that as these stories are role-played in the telling that they can easily be transferred to everyday life as Parker is faced with choosing obedience or disobedience. In times of discipline, I can think back with him on these stories and remind him of the characters and who God is in them. My intention is for him not to be a well behaved child in public (outwardly motivated), but that his heart would be moved to do what is right in private (inward motivation) and for him to one day in that “moment of decision” think back to these stories himself...without my intervention.

Summary

In conclusion, the preschool-aged child should determine the people in the story and role-play their different roles. Preschoolers should be asked questions about the actions and results of each character. They also can determine God's response to these actions. Was the person obedient or disobedient? Were they punished or rewarded? They can also begin to understand very basic characteristics about God through stories. Though they lack perspective-taking abilities, you might begin to encourage them to think about the story from another character's perspective and role-play the different characters.

Biblical Example: Peter's Denial

Mark 14:66-72

With preschool-aged children, the goal is to begin to have them interact with the characters and the story. In the preschool years, children begin to assign intentionality to moral characters so watch for the emergence of this. Don't get frustrated if your preschooler is more focused on the outcome of an action (i.e., was someone hurt) rather than the intention of the person (i.e., was the harm accidental).

1. Characters
 - a. What did they do?
 - b. What did they not do?
 - c. What does the story tell us about the person?
2. Person-Action-Consequence (see Figure 4)

B. Possible Activities:

3. Role Playing

	Christ three times before the rooster crowed	with Jesus - Christ looked at him after rooster crowed (Luke 22:61) - He went outside and wept; shows remorse so was the action sinful (?)	Jesus Fearful of others Maybe a People-pleaser	will come true - God is faithful even when we are not
Servant girl of the high priest	Said “you also were with that Nazarene”	Peter denies	Neutral person- no character traits revealed	God used her to fulfill Jesus’ words to Peter
Servant girl again	“This fellow is one of them”	Peter denies	Neutral person- no character traits revealed	God used her to fulfill Jesus’ words to Peter
Those standing near Peter	Said, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean”		Neutral person- no character traits revealed	God used her to fulfill Jesus’ words to Peter

Fig. 4. Peter’s denial as an example with preschoolers

CHAPTER 8

YOUNGER SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

School-Aged Children

The school-aged child is transitioning to the Piagetian stage of concrete operations. Logical thought begins (but without abstraction) with organized thoughts and categories. They also are beginning to focus on the intentions of another and not just the consequences of the moral action. They begin to see the motives of another. According to Piaget, morality consists of socially agreed contracts that can be changed by the group. They tend to act morally to gain the approval of others. According to Kohlberg, the Stage 3 child is concerned with pleasing the authority more than avoiding punishment so parents need to emphasize our responsibility in “glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.” To some extent, Gilligan’s self-sacrificing morality at this stage fits with a Christian worldview.

Fowler’s mythical-literal faith of the school years reflects the ability to maintain one’s own story and life narrative. This child will be able to hypothesize about what others think, feel, and might do. They are able to think about what God might look like and what he might do. Essentially, the question for the child becomes, “Can I operate on my environment in a meaningful way and get a positive response?” If a child acts and is made to feel inferior, they are less likely to act in the same way again. Thus, in moral reasoning, when making moral decisions or making moral judgments in a family discussion, children need to be encouraged rather than discouraged. Children should be encouraged to obey authority and discouraged from disobedience. As these children begin to internalize morality, the family needs to be a safe environment for moral discussions and lessons.

The Characters

As children develop, we can encourage them not only to list all the characters in a narrative but also begin to focus on what else the text is telling us about these characters. First,

how is the person “characterized” in the narrative. Sometimes we are told about their physical appearance or the person’s social status. The Old Testament writers tended to focus on the internal characteristics- the motives and attitudes. (Pratt 137) The actions of the person, other people and God also reveal the character. The direct words of the person also communicate their character. We must remember, however, that some statements are true while others might be false. The writer may also make comments about the person revealing the person’s character. “Old Testament writers also made their own descriptive comments on characters’ inward traits. These cues are usually brief, but they are relatively clear and certain.” (Pratt 140) Early school-aged children are able to determine the different characters and what is indirectly and directly revealed about them.

For example, consider the answers that Caleb Martin (age 7 1/2) and Olive Martin (age 6) provided in their family discussion found in Figure 5.

Character	How “Personified”: Physical Char. Social status, etc.	Internal Characteristics (feelings, thoughts, and attitudes)	Character revealed through actions of self, others, and God	What characteristics reflect God (obedient acts)	What characteristics reflect human sinfulness (disobedient acts)
Main Character : Jonah	None given	Scared	Faithful	Warned people of Ninevah	Didn’t listen
Other character: King of Ninevah	None given	Worried	Faithful	Put on black clothes	None
Other character: Sailors	None given	Helpless	Unfaithful	Asked for God’s forgiveness	Prayed to different gods

Fig. 5. Character information provided by Caleb and Olivia Martin

The Story

Children at this age are able to break down a story into a basic sequence. Each story has a beginning, middle, and an end. Though older children can understand a more complicated sequencing (i.e., see next section on Adolescents), school-aged children should be challenged to determine the basic components of the story. “An initial situation is established which leads through unfulfilled desire or incompleteness to conflict. The middle parts of the story highlight the conflict, which reaches a climax only to be resolved in the final scene. This sequence is parallel with human experience in life, though narrative closure may be more complete than the real life ending of a series of related happenings.” (Mills 98)

Before recording the ending of the story or the resolution of the conflict, it might be helpful to generate a list with the child of all possible outcomes. What could God have done? What would have been the consequences of each of these decisions? Since children of this age enjoy narratives and story and are able to speculate about the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others including God, they would enjoy the substitute endings. Then, as a parent, you can have them analyze the biblical ending. What does this tell us about God? Why did he choose to act in this particular way? What a wonderful lesson of the character of God and his dealings with man. The answers in Figure 6 were provided by Caleb Martin, age 7 ½. An alternative chart is found in Figure 7.

Role Playing and Perspective-Taking

Children at this stage of development should also be encouraged to role-play the biblical passage. The value of role-playing was provided in the previous chapter. A child at Fowler’s stage 2 can take the perspective of another. Therefore, after role-playing, these children should be asked to talk about the perspective of another (Campoy 57-58). After role-playing the story of Daniel, the child should take the perspective of the King and discuss the feelings, thoughts, motives, and future actions of the King. You could even interrupt the role-play at different junctions to have

the child discuss how the King’s perspective might have changed over time. For example, his perspective before the lions’ den was very different than his perspective after Daniel

Beginning (initial situation)	Middle (conflict)	End (resolution)	Consequ. of this ending:	What this tells us about the person	What this tells us about God (that he acted in this particular way)
First, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell them, “If you be bad you will get punished!”	2 nd , Jonah went on a ship to somewhere far away. Once Jonah went to sleep then they woke Jonah and told him there’s a storm!	Biblical Ending: Jonah warns people of Niveveh to repent. Other possible ending: He didn’t warn people of Nineveh. Other possible ending: He drowned in the ocean.	Even if you sin and repent you can be forgiven.	Jonah can make bad choices and know that you can be forgiven.	God can forgive you!

Fig. 6. Caleb Martin’s narrative analysis

Initial Event	Unfulfilled Desires (what do they want but don’t have)	Details of the Conflict	Final scene	Resolution
Rahab	Protection for family	Hides spies and gets family in her house before walls fall	Falling Walls and her family’s safety	Grafting into the Lineage of Christ (Matt 1)

Fig. 7. Alternative narrative analysis

survived the night with the lions. In the story of David and Goliath, a child should take the perspective of Goliath or even Saul. In the story of Noah and the Ark, a child should take the

perspective of the town's people or Noah's sons or wife. In the story of Elijah and Jezebel, the child should explain how Jezebel felt. Granowsky argues that a child should withhold judgment until both sides of the story have been heard (77). "Today, when people ask, 'Which of all your stories is your favorite?' my answer is always 'The Unfairest of Them All.' The stepmother's side of the Snow White tale." By seeing the perspective of the other person in the story, she was able to take the side of someone she disliked and learned to respect and admire her (77). For years, I judged Vasti, Esther's predecessor as disrespectful of her husband. Several years ago I realized that it was actually her feminine dignity that prevented her from appearing before the king and his drunken friends as a concubine. She may actually have also been pregnant at the time.

Summary

The young school-aged child can be challenged to take the perspective of another. They can role-play the different characters in the narrative and begin to break the story down into basic components. They can determine the beginning, middle, and end and consider God's reason for this ending. They need to be challenged to consider the motives of the characters and consider how God's actions reveal his character. Because these children focus on social contracts and relationships, they need to be challenged to not only determine but also analyze the human connections between the characters (humans, supernatural beings, and God).

Parents find these exercises valuable. Consider the following two examples.

Katie learned through the story of Joseph and the Angel to care about everyone and to listen and obey God. This exercise was helpful because she could see real life examples of good character and she enjoyed playing a part in the role-playing. Personally, I enjoyed the interaction and the fact that my daughter was engaged in the learning experience. (Mother of Katie, age 5)

Olivia loved the story of the Good Samaritan and was angry about those who passed by not offering help. She enjoyed reading the Bible and thinking about

the questions. I was pleased about the words she chose to use in her descriptions.

(Mother of Olivia, age 8)

Biblical Example: Peter's Denial

Mark 14:66-72

A. Characters (Figure 8)

Character	How "Personified": Physical Char. Social status, etc.	Internal Characteristics (feelings, thoughts, and attitudes)	Character revealed through actions of self, others, and God	What characteristics reflect God (obedient acts)	What characteristics reflect human sinfulness (disobedient acts)
Peter	Cold because initially warming himself (Mark 14:67)	Remorse Shame Denial Confusion	Cowardice Fearful Questioned God	No sign of obedience - remorse after denials do show a heart sensitive to sin	Fear for own safety and God's ability to provide and protect him Weak trust in God Cursing
Girl	Servant Of the high priest	Curiosity Thought Peter might be part of Jesus' followers	Bold enough to ask Peter twice	Unknown	Unknown
The crowd	Nothing specific said	Focused on Peter's inferior race Attitude of superiority over the Galilean	Superiority Judging attitude Pointing the finger at others	None provided – too little information	Shaming another because of race

Fig. 8. Peter's denial as an example with school-aged children: character analysis

B. The Story (Figure 9)

Beginning (initial situation)	Middle (conflict)	End (resolution)	Consequence of this ending:	What this tells us about the person	What this tells us about God (that he acted in this particular way)
1. Peter and servant girl in courtyard (1 st denial)	2. Peter and servant girl in entryway (2 nd denial) 3. Members of crowd address Peter (3 rd denial) 4. Peter calls down curses on himself, and swears to them	Biblical Ending: Rooster crows, Peter remembers Jesus' words, he broke down and wept Other possible ending: Peter acknowledges he was Jesus' friend Other possible ending: He denies once but then admits to knowing Jesus Other possible ending: Peter's relationship with Jesus is never restored	Peter realizes Jesus was right about the denials Peter feels guilty for denying Jesus Peter is left in tears	Weak, emotional character Inconsistent Though sinned, he is remorseful and feels bad about his actions	God is consistent in his dealing with man God is gracious and forgiving even though Peter denies him at a crucial hour when Jesus needed support

Fig. 9. Peter's denial as an example with school-aged children: narrative analysis

C. Possible Activities:

CHAPTER 9

OLDER SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN (Around Age 8 to 12)

As a child progresses through the school years, asking questions becomes increasingly important. Research demonstrates that asking children a lot of questions (i.e., the Socratic method), most advances a child's moral reasoning.

Walker and Taylor found higher moral reasoning in children who were asked "representational" questions. "The representational category includes behaviors such as eliciting the child's opinion, asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing, and checking for understanding-reminiscent of the Socratic style of questioning" (280). Thus, school-aged children can begin to reason about stories and develop themes.

Story and Theme

In the school years, children can begin to retell stories and understand the story's theme. Before analyzing the story, challenge your child to have the child retell the story. Children must be asked to "retell" a story not merely "recite" the same version back to a parent. Retelling involves using the child's own developing language and not just mimicking back the adults' word choice (Buzzelli 384).

After the child demonstrates a working knowledge of the pieces of the story, have him decide on an overall theme of the story. In determining whether young children know the theme of a story, Lehr used several questions. The following questions I consider helpful to parents in moral discussions with their children (343):

1. Is this story similar to any other stories you have read? How?
2. What was the author trying to teach you when they wrote these stories?
3. What are the most important ideas in this story?
4. Why did the story end as it did?
5. Is there anything you would have changed?

6. Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you have changed the ending?

For example, when asked these questions, John Marks, age 11, answered the following after reading the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22:1-19:

1. Is this story similar to any other stories you have read? How?

Yes, this reminded me of Jesus carrying His own cross and Isaac carrying wood to burn for the sacrifice

2. What was the author trying to teach you when they wrote these stories?

To trust in the Lord

3. What are the most important ideas in this story?

To trust in the Lord and do not learn on your own understanding like Prov. 3:5-7

4. Why did the story end like it did?

God showed that He is in control, not Abraham

5. Is there anything you would have changed?

No, I think God meant this to stay like this

6. Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you have changed the ending?

Yes, I liked the ending because it shows how God provides; No, I would not have changed the ending

John's answers clearly show a moral understanding of the story. His other answers further demonstrated moral knowledge through the interaction with the biblical stories.

The Characters

Building on the previous information, in the later school years, children are able to make more judgments about the moral characters. These children need to be encouraged to categorize the characters as protagonists, antagonists, or ambivalent. The protagonist arouses sympathy in the reader. The reader desires for good to come to the protagonist. Although Christians might tend to see God as the protagonist in every story, sometimes God is not in the foreground (Pratt

143). Biblical stories, particularly Old Testament stories, tend to have a human protagonist (Pratt 143). The antagonist stands in opposition to the protagonist. The antagonist “represents the opposite side of dramatic tension in the story” (Pratt 145). Ambivalent characters do not seem to stand with the protagonist or the antagonist in the story. Some times ambivalent characters seem to shift from one side to the other. For example, initially Rahab seems to oppose Joshua’s spies but later becomes their greatest ally.

Elementary-aged children can also determine whether a person is portrayed as a round, flat, or functionary characters. Round characters seem real to us because we know what they think, feel, and do. They are multifaceted and in most cases appear several times in a story. Flat characters appear “flat and colorless” (Pratt 142). They may only demonstrate one characteristic or trait. Some characters might appear round in other texts but flat in others. For example, although the Bible presents Isaac as a round character, in the story of Abraham’s test (Gen. 22:1-19) he only exhibits the characteristic of the submissive son. Functionary characters merely have a role to play in the narrative. We are told very little about the person’s characteristics, personality, or decision making (Pratt 142). Deciding whether a character is round, flat, or functionary, provides important clues in our story interpretation. Why would the writer develop one character more than others? Ask children to generate ideas from each story as to the role each played and why God through the writer would tell us something about each character and not tell us other things.

What response from the reader did the author desire? Does the author want the reader to be sympathetic to the main character? For some characters, the author wants the reader to be sympathetic and approve of the character. “Characters take on the qualities of heroes or models of appropriate attitudes and behavior that the audience was expected to appreciate and admire.” (Pratt 147) Other characters elicit the opposite response. The author wants us to reject the character. “In the account of Naboth’s vineyard (I Kings 21:1-29), the writer of Kings portrayed

Jezebel as a murderous miscreant. He wanted his readers to be repulsed by her character” (Pratt 148). Still other characters elicit a mixed response. Some characters have both positive and negative qualities. Although we are provided many negative traits of King Solomon, we also admire his prayer for wisdom above wealth. Hunter Holliday, age 10, analyzed the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. His answers are provided in Figure 10.

Character's Name	Protagonist? Antagonist? Ambivalent? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech and thought, narrator, actions?)	Similarity/Differences with Characteristics of God	Round? Flat? Functionary? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech, narrator, actions?)	Author's desired response:
Samaritan	Protagonist	He takes care of the man	He was kind, caring, and merciful.	Round (because we see his actions)	He should; his action	To show compassion
The Priest	Ambivalent	He just passed the man by	He was very selfish	Functionary (just shows how kind the Samaritan was)	He did not show action	A lot of people are selfish in this world

Fig. 10. Hunter Holliday's character analysis

Human Connections

Because school-aged children are beginning to see the connections between people in a story and between themselves and their communities, parents should challenge the child to connect the people in the narrative. Mills explains why this is so important: “In the social world of the biblical texts an individual gains his/her personal identity through integration into the family or wider kinship structure. The content of personal morality is thus defined by the values held by that social network or community” (Mills 97). As the child's social environment is becoming increasingly important, our moral discussions need to include more social components.

When analyzing the book of Jonah, Mary Mills offers the following commentary on Jonah's community:

Cosmos and person are in the context of two differing communities- the ship and the city. "The anger of God turns against the rebellious prophet in a move which means that Jonah's disobedience has an immediate effect on one particular community, that of the ship (Mills 147).

Esther and Joseph are two examples of the communal aspects of moral narratives. She went before the King, risking her own life, to save the lives of her people, the Jews. Because of her unique position and bravery, she saved the Jews from destruction at the hand of Haman. "Esther, too, has openly to claim her Jewish kin and, in defining herself, brings safety to her social group of origin. Here community and person are extensions of one another and stand and fall together" (Mills 77-78). Joseph also demonstrates his commitment to his people, the Israelites, while in a foreign land. What his brothers meant for evil, God used for good. Joseph was able to provide for the whole extended family during the famine.

On a piece of paper, write the names of each person or group. Then draw lines between the characters. If the characters have direct contact with each other (i.e., interaction, dialogue, etc.) then draw a solid line connecting the characters. If they have just indirect contact (i.e., message being sent through someone else) then draw a broken line. This will be a visual illustrating to the child of the relationships between the players in the story. Challenge the child to consider the communal nature of the dialogue. What are we told about the interactions between the characters?

John Marks drew the relational connections for the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac. When asked what moral issues arose because of these human connections, he wrote:

Was it right for Abraham to obey God?

Was it right for the servants to obey God?

How did Isaac obey God?

When analyzing the human connections in the story of the Good Samaritan, Suzanna Stapler, age 9, said:

- a. Provide examples of how a human connection can reflect the character's relationship with God

The Levite looks like a hypocrite. His inaction does not show a true relationship.

The Samaritan displays virtuous character, and thus presents potential for a good relationship with God.

- b. Which connections are most central to the narrative?

The Samaritan and the wounded guy. The priest and Levites non-relationship with the wounded guy.

- c. Why do you think the author emphasized these relationships?

To make his point about helping others.

- d. What is the author communicating through these emphasized relationships?

Love your neighbor as yourself and help others when you can.

- e. How do these relationships relate to the theme of the story?

The Samaritan is showing the correct attitude in contrast with the other relationships.

The Cause/Effect/Far-Reaching Effect

Campoy proposes metacognitive strategies for teaching values (56). Since metacognition is our ability to think about our thinking, school-aged children need to be challenged to begin to think about their thinking. For example, a child should consider not only the immediate effect of an action but also the far reaching effect or consequences. The child is asked to create 3 columns for each story. The first column is the event, the second the effect, and the third the far reaching effect (see Figure 11).

Cause	Effect	Far Reaching Effect
Adam and Eve sinning in the Garden	Had to leave Saw their nakedness	Relationship with God forever affected Sin entered the world, one son killed another son

Fig. 11. Cause- Effect- Far Reaching Effect

Perspective Taking

Campoy (61) argues that anticipating other’s perspectives is one of the most important interpersonal skills to teach children. A child needs to be able to determine the underlying motivation driving another person. Older children will be better able to do this. Though younger children are challenged to begin perspective taking, older children can take this skill to a deeper level. Though this is difficult and probably reserved for older children, understanding the driving force in another is very important (Campoy 61). Vashti’s refusal to go before the king in the first chapter of Esther demonstrates her underlying assumption that her role as a wife was dignified and respected and thus, she did not appear before the king and his drunken companions. Her underlying motivation and perspective dictated her actions.

Summary

School-aged children are capable of making even deeper character judgments. They need to be challenged to think about who are appropriate role models. The interpersonal connections between characters (humans, supernatural, and divine) are also important to emphasize our relationship to God.

Furthermore, parents find these exercises helpful:

Hunter learned that we should be kind to all people- regardless of their position in society. He enjoyed seeing the story firsthand as we acted it out. I enjoyed his enjoyment of the exercises and spending time with my children in a meaningful way. (Mother of Hunter Holliday, age 10)

This story reinforced to Suzanna to do good and serve when God presents the opportunity. Suzanna seemed to enjoy drawing the lines of direct and indirect contact. (Mother of Suzanna Stapler, age 9)

John understood that Isaac's obedience was important and that obedience is a "moral issues." These exercises were helpful because they encouraged us to discuss the "moral issues," the questions of right and wrong. I enjoyed defining "moral issues" and looking for other questions in life to determine if there is a "moral issue" at stake. (Mother of John Marks, age 11)

Biblical Example: Peter's Denial

Mark 14:66-72

A. Story and Theme (Buzzelli 384; Lehr 343)

1. Have the child retell (not recite) the story. Check that the story contains all the important components.
2. Is this story similar to any other stories you have read? How?
 - a. There are similarities to the story of Judas' betrayal.
 - i. Judas doesn't admit that he will betray Jesus.
 - ii. There is a long period of tension after the denials.
 - iii. Relationship is not restored with Judas but is with Peter.
3. What was the author trying to teach you when they wrote these stories?
4. What are the most important ideas in this story?
5. Why did the story end like it did?
6. Is there anything you would have changed?
7. Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you have changed the ending?

B. Character Development

Character's Name	Protagonist? Antagonist? Ambivalent? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech and thought, narrator, actions?)	Similarity/ Differences with Characteristics of God	Round? Flat? Functionary? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech, narrator, actions?)	Author's desired response:
Peter	Protagonist	He is an important character in the biblical narrative of Christ's life	God does not act based on fear or emotion	Round because we know what he thinks, feels, and does		Pity for Peter's confusion and sympathy for his remorse and guilt
Girl	Antagonist (because she is not standing with the protag. in the action)	Direct speech	Unknown since merely a functional character	Functional- merely plays a role in the story	Direct speech; action of following him	None
Members of crowd	Antagonist	Direct speech	God is not racial in his judgments	Flat- portray only one characteristic (judging of Peter)	Direct speech	none
Jesus	Protagonist	Action reported in the text				Sad because he was all alone and facing a horrible death

Fig. 12. Peter's denial as an example with older school-aged children: character analysis

C. Human Connections:

1. Write the names of each character in a circle on another piece of paper or the back of this paper (include humans, supernatural beings, and God). See Figure 13.

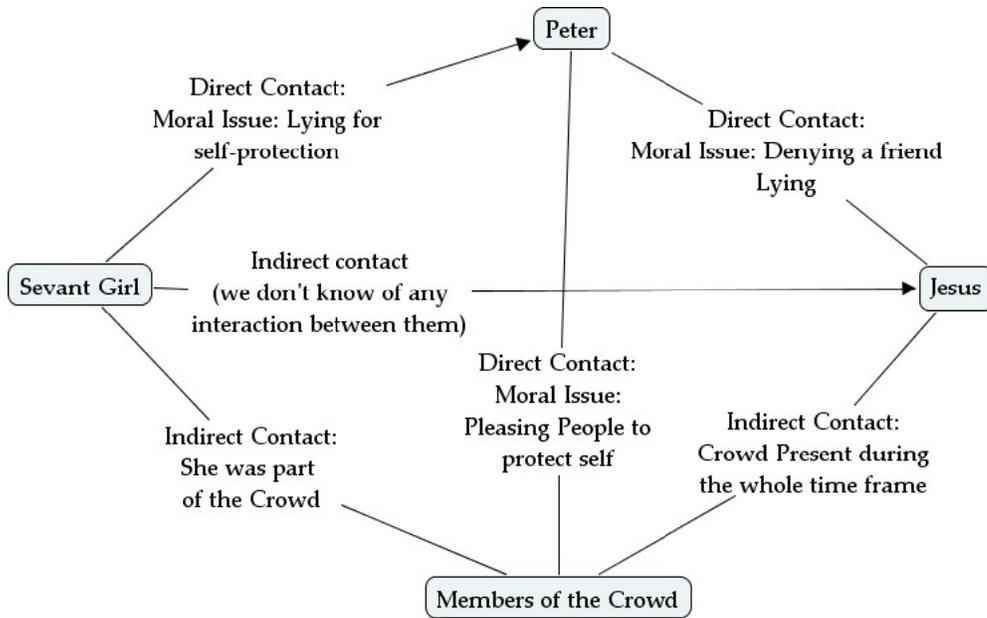


Fig. 13. Example of human connection using Peter's denial

2. Connect those people with direct contact with a solid straight line.
3. Connect those people with indirect contact with a broken or dotted line.
4. Discuss the strengths and nature of these relationships.
5. What moral issues arise because of these human connections?

D. Possible Activities:

1. Role Playing

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Character Name: Peter | Family Member: _____ |
| b. Character Name: Servant Girl | Family Member: _____ |
| c. Character Name: Crowd members | Family Member: _____ |
| d. Character Name: Jesus | Family Member: _____ |

- i. Talk through the narrative and tell each family member the exact words their character spoke in the text. One family member (best an older

sibling or parent) can narrative to fill in the gaps for the lack of direct quotes in the text.

2. Perspective-Taking for each Character (if child is able)

1. How do you think Peter felt? (“heart” questions)
 - a. Very emotional, confused, angry, disillusioned?
2. What was Peter thinking? (“head” questions)
 - a. What would happen if he said he knew Jesus?
 - b. Would his life be in jeopardy too?
3. What did Peter do? (“hands” questions)
 - a. Denied knowing Jesus
 - b. Ran away and wept once he realized what he had done
4. Why did Peter do what he did? (“hands” questions)
 - a. Embarrassment, confusion, concern for his own life?
 - b. Motivation unknown but interesting to think about

3. Human Connection Analysis

- a. Provide examples of how a human connection can reflect the character’s relationship with God

Peter’s connection with these strangers reflected his confusion at the time. His denials are a sign of the condition and confusion in his heart and the human connections merely bring this to light.

- b. Which connections are most central to the narrative?

The connection of Peter with Jesus, the connection of Peter with the servant girl and with the members of the crowd

- c. Why do you think the author emphasized these relationships?

To demonstrate the frailty of the relationships and the major impact people have on other people when making important decisions about sharing and even acknowledging our faith

d. What is the author communicating through these emphasized relationships?

The condition of Peter's heart.

e. How do these relationships relate to the theme of the story?

Peter made emotional decisions to deny Christ which are reflected in Peter's response to strangers in the crowd. Regardless of Peter's motivations, he denies Christ 3 times in a very short time span.

4. Cause/Effect/ Far Reaching Effect (see Figure 14)

Cause	Effect	Far Reaching Effect
Peter's fear and doubt and emotionality	Denial of Christ at an important moment	Disillusionment and doubt Jesus

Fig. 14. Example of Cause- Effect- Far Reaching Effect in Peter's Denial

CHAPTER 10

ADOLESCENTS

In light of the developmental theories in morality, parents must remember that children in our culture are encouraged to be more and more egocentric and individualistic. They possess internally the moral potential. Since these are natural human tendencies, we need to be particularly careful when teaching adolescents. Parental teachings can incorporate elements of Kohlberg's 4th-6th stages, but they are increasingly self-centered. Eventually, the child develops moral principles for the larger good of society, but parents must remember that very few have ever reach this stage of maturity (i.e., Mother Teresa, Ghandi, and Jesus). There is still some value to the Piagetian thought of an internalized morality. Like spirituality, we don't want a child to believe what we believe just because we say so. We want them to have an internalized morality and spirituality based on a self-affirmed Christian worldview.

As children mature, they can understand stories to a deeper level. Parents of adolescents need to challenge them with a lot of "metacognitive bridging." Metacognition is the thinking about our thinking. Adolescents need to be able to step above their thought processes and analyze how they are thinking about moral dilemmas. This questioning and challenging should be in the context of a family environment so parents can provide a biblical and theological foundation for their judgments. Sharon Maclellan, mother of Katherine, age 15, and Ward, age 17, reflects on this thought process:

The reflection carries over into the future situations she will encounter. As she thinks forward, I could already see her reflecting back and forward at the same time as she thinks about future situations. You could see as they were reading the story in light of the moral characteristics and spiritual strengths of the biblical characters, they reflected on their own life in light of these strengths. There was a desire to set those standards and become like those models and become contemporary models for their peers as well.

Adolescents should also be challenged in the “gray” areas of moral reasoning. These children are capable of moral dilemmas with no clear and easy answer and can sort apparent contradictions (Fowler 150). “Cognitive dissonance” is very helpful for challenging this child out of his comfort zone of “Sunday school answers” to moral questions. The family is a wonderful context for such hard questions and discussions. Parents provide the scaffolding and support for this dissonance. As the child gradually becomes better able to answer the moral questions within a biblical worldview, then the scaffolding is gradually removed. This is such an important aspect of the child’s development that it cannot be relegated to a school. Sharon Maclellan explained:

My children like beginning to think morally on their own. Although we share a lot as a family, I could tell they enjoyed really doing the moral thinking on their own without too much input. They loved just having me listen to their moral processing.

Characters

Referencing the previous sections on character descriptions, have your adolescent categorize each character as a protagonist, antagonist, or ambivalent character who is round, flat or functionary. Because the older child will be able to make quicker decisions about the characters, you will have more time to discuss the reasons for their judgments. Discuss how they came to these decisions. What information from the passage lead to these conclusions: explicit actions, thoughts recorded by the narrator, God’s response, etc. Then, the adolescent needs to break the story down into scenes and story units.

Scenes

Scenes are subsections of the narrative that form the basic building blocks of the story (Pratt 151). Although we tend to break down stories into small chunks such as words, phrases, or thoughts, it is helpful to distinguish the large chunks called scenes.

Parents will also differ on how the story is broken down. One family may see large units while another may see more brief scenes (Pratt 153). What clues help us distinguish between different scenes? Time shifts are helpful. A lapse in time, a report of simultaneous events, or antecedent actions (actions completed before the current scene) help us delineate different scenes (Pratt 154). For example, “the next day” would cue the reader that there is a change of scene. A change of setting also demonstrates differing scenes. A different place, a different environment, or a change of characters also distinguishes different scenes. Differing modes of narration also divide scenes. A shift from the narrator to a speech by a character can denote a scene change.

Individual Episodes

Once the child can determine different scenes in a narrative, they can arrange these scenes into episodes. Episodes combine scenes into meaningful units. Although different authors give different names for the episodes, the categories seem consistent for literary analysis. For example, Pratt uses a problem, a rising action, a turning point, a falling action and a resolution. Stein (265) uses the setting, the initiating event, an internal response, an attempt, consequences, and a reaction. Robinson and Hawpe (112) state “a prototypical story identifies a protagonist, a predicament, attempts to resolve the predicament, the outcome of such attempts, and the reactions of the protagonists to the situation. So, essentially, a situation is established, the main character acts on the environment, and then reaps the consequences. Although Pratt’s model is very helpful for story analysis, the elements of Stein’s model encourage direct moral reflection. Thus, the initial story assessment may be based on Pratt’s model and the subsequent analysis, based on Stein.

In Pratt’s model, a report is an episode that merely reports an event. There is no tension or resolution. A report merely tells of an event. The problem includes any issue that merits resolution or a conflict that must be resolved. The conflict and resolution balance each other in

the narrative. Unresolved tension in a story provides a dramatic tension without a resolution.

There is a conflict or expectation that is not met or resolved.

In another type of episode, there is both tension and a resolution. In the resolution, the author provides both a problem and a solution. If the narrative contains a turning point, this will be a part of the story that develops the conflict and anticipates elements of the resolution. Rising action and falling action are further developments of the problem and the turning point.

Sometimes, a specific turning point cannot be determined (Pratt 194).

Stories of resolution possess a level of inner coherence not found in reports, and we can evaluate their meaning more in terms of their own structures. The presentation of a problem and its resolution form an arena of action that requires focused attention. The dramatic arrangement conveys an episode whose inner structure significantly displays its meaning (Pratt 183).

Though stories can be put together and taken apart in many different ways, a moral perspective on the biblical narrative will use a few of Pratt's dramatic resolution. Parents and adolescents can determine how many pieces the story contains using the following information:

Two Steps: A problem and a resolution

Three Steps: A problem, a turning point, and a resolution

Four Steps: A problem, a rising action, a falling action, and a resolution

Five Steps: A problem, a rising action, a turning point, a falling action, and a resolution.

Again, the parent and child must work together to determine which elements are present and which are absent. Why would the author omit certain elements and include others? Does it emphasize a moral message? Does it provide cues to the theme of the story? Does it reveal God's character in a unique way?

Using Stein's story model, the child should find the main character's internal response to the initiating event. They then can see the character's attempt to resolve the moral tension and then the consequences. They can then find the reaction of God or others to this plan of action. By paralleling Pratt's model with Stein's model, moral themes rise to the surface. In one column, record all the scenes, in the second column bracket Pratt's pieces (the problem, the rising action, the turning point, the falling action, and the resolution), and in the third column record Stein's pieces (the setting, the initiating event, an internal response, an attempt, consequences, and a reaction). Then, compare across the columns and discuss with your child. Sharon found that Ward gained insight by seeing smaller pieces of the story:

Breaking the story down enabled us have more thought and discussion by the individual pieces of the story. For example, Joseph's initial thoughts about divorcing Mary quietly but coming to the conclusion that this was God's will for His life. Applying this to his own life, although some choices seem very natural, God's intervention can change your thinking. We can think we are making the right decision and God might choose to show us that He can bring about a moral decision that might change our direction.

The Moral Message

Although Pratt challenges his reader to consider both the factual, moral, and emotional message sent by the biblical writers, this model will focus specifically on the moral message. If they have time, parents can also have their child consider the other messages sent but this discussion will focus on the moral message of the story. Although Pratt focuses on Old Testament stories, his analysis also applies to New Testament stories as well:

Old Testament writers reported historical facts to raise issues of conscience. They designed accounts so that their readers would be faced with moral dimensions of the past. As they read these texts, they were to ask, 'Was that

circumstance good or bad?’ ‘What should those people have done?’ ‘How was the righteous character of God demonstrated in those events?’ (Pratt 258)

All aspects of the story communicate the moral message. The characters, the scenes, and the episodes all work in concert to teach the moral lesson. Biblical writers challenge the audience to consider the events in light of the Mosaic law and prophetic messages for the Old Testament audience and Christ’s new covenant for the New Testament audience (Pratt 260). A family must consider what moral message is being sent. Remember, however, that the story may just be a report. It may just be the telling of a story without a moral dimension. If a story has a conflict, however, look for the moral message.

Modeled after the Character Education approach, the traits present in a moral story need to be considered. For example, William Bennett in his book, *The Book of Virtues*, includes the following virtues: self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, and faith. This list is obviously not exhaustive and could be expanded to include many more.

When reading a biblical story, a parent needs to consider which moral traits need to be discussed with the child. It is probably best to focus on one trait during each family meeting. For example, in the story of David and Jonathan, a major theme is friendship and loyalty. Parents can have the child determine the moral theme and then define the moral crises surrounding this issue in the story. Sharon Maclellan found both Katherine and Ward enjoyed determine moral themes in biblical stories:

She enjoyed reading the Bible story and determining what the moral issues were, what the character chose, and what character needed to make that decision. She was challenged to see how these moral decisions apply in her own life. Specifically, how the fear of man is overridden by the fear of God.

Combining Biblical Stories with Autobiographical Stories

Walker and Taylor found children discussing real-life dilemmas with parents demonstrated greater long-term effects in their moral growth compared with other children discussing hypothetical situations with parents (280). Thus, combining both might produce the best result. A discussion of real-life situations should follow a discussion of the biblical stories (considered more hypothetical to the child). The four columns in Figure 15 will allow your child to identify the moral issues in a story and consider her own response to the same situation. It also requires self-reflection on her solution to the dilemma (Campoy 60).

Dilemma or Crisis	How the Character(s) handle the problem	How <i>you</i> would handle to same problem	What does this say about you?
Example: Rahab	Risked her own life to save the strangers	Probably tell them to find shelter somewhere else	Sacred about getting caught and causing trouble for my family

Fig. 15. Example of dilemma or crisis resolution

To take this even deeper, Walker and colleagues use a research plan for listening to people’s own stories. The following questions are adapted from Walker’s methodology for collecting research on his subjects’ moral reasoning. These questions are helpful because they demonstrate how much deeper you can get with your older child. There are many helpful ideas for parents in listening to their children’s stories (268).

The following questions are built out of Walker’s ideas:

1. Ask you child to recall and discuss the most recent real-life moral dilemma from his or her own experience that dealt with this moral issue. In the example above, what is an example in your own life, like David, when you struggled with being faithful to a friend?
 - a. What moral issues were involved?

- b. How did you consider the relationships involved?
 - c. What role did you play in the conflict?
 - d. What did you think? What did you feel? What motivated you to do one thing and not another?
 - e. What do you think now about your decision or actions?
2. Ask your child to discuss a second real-life dilemma from his or her own experience. Use the same set of questions as in questions 1.
 3. Discuss with your child to similarities and difference in how they handled the two situations. Did they learn anything from the first situation that helped them with the second time the same issue arose?
 4. Have your child name two people he thinks are moral exemplars with this characteristic. For example, in the example of David and Jonathan, have your child think of 2 people who are very faithful friends. These people can be personal friends, historical figures, other biblical figures, etc. They are not restricted to people the child knows personally.
 - a. What makes this person a good example of this moral trait?
 - b. What could you do to be more like this person to demonstrate this moral trait?

Children find it helpful to apply the moral situation and moral decision to their own life. For example, Sharon Maclellan enjoyed hearing Katherine apply Rahab's decisions to her own experience:

Katherine found it easy to focus on the moral issues and apply it to her life. As a mother, I enjoyed the opportunity to take these lessons and reflect on previous moral dilemmas and how she had developed moral character in making these decisions. For example, Katherine chose the story of Rahab and the spies. The

moral issues that Rahab had to choose between moral allegiance to God or to her country, having courage, and protection of her family. Her recent real life moral dilemma was when a religion teacher told the class that the Bible was a group of stories that were not true. She had to defy the king, the authority, the teacher and challenge this in front of the class. She began to defend her faith in a way that was very reflective. Katherine found it challenging to respecting God and her human authority at the same time. She decided she had to have courage and the fear of the Lord to stand up to this teacher. She then found that her actions actually gave other students the courage to also stand up to the teacher in defense of the Bible.

Sharon further explained how her children enjoyed finding similar moral characteristics in current historical figures:

Both Ward and Katherine enjoyed thinking about the moral characteristics, and strengths of the biblical characters we studied and looking for contemporary examples of Christians who exhibited these moral strengths with specific behaviors. Ward focused on Joseph's obedience, righteousness, courage, and faith. When he had to think of other examples of these moral characteristics, he chose Elisabeth Elliot because of her choice to go to the Indian tribe who had killed her husband, and General Breckenridge, the secretary of war for the Confederate Army. In light of Rahab's courage, Katherine considered Mel Gibson a moral exemplar because of his courage in producing the Passion and standing up for the truth.

Moral Exemplars

One biblical story is a great example of how to use stories in fostering moral development. The story of Rahab shows how difficult moral decisions can be when consideration

for family, country and God are in conflict. The following table illustrates the different relationships and people she had to consider in her decision. Think about how the following elements play into her decision about this dilemma. Think about how Rahab’s decision would affect her family, the spies, the soldiers, the people of Jericho, the land, God, and the king (see Figure 16).

Character	The Life of...	Relationships of...	The property of...
Rahab			
her family			
the spies			
the soldiers			
the people of Jericho			
the land			

Fig. 16. Rahab as an example of moral dilemmas

In light of these relationships, students and children need to be challenged to think about how Rahab resolves these dilemmas? Did Rahab consult anyone about the decision she made? Did she have much time to think through her decision? Parents should work through these questions with their children. Ask children what other things they would like to know. What questions would they ask Rahab directly that might help in their decision making about Rahab’s actions?

Katherine Maclellan was challenged by Rahab:

I had to think about would I make the same decision as Rahab. And if I made the same decision, would I make it for the right reason? Is the “right thing” where my heart really is?

These questions can challenge teenagers to consider how their actions or motives could reflect the moral exemplar.

Challenges of Complex Moral Interactions

When you delve into the “gray” areas of moral decision-making and begin to discuss very difficult moral decisions, you will be challenged. Expect to be stretched beyond your comfort zone and be willing to share your moral reasoning with your child. Lead by example as well as word. The moral message and the complexity of the connection of the characters with one another will get very complicated. Remember your extended church family (particularly pastors and elders) will be an excellent resource when questions arise. The following quotes by Mary Mills demonstrate the complexity of the characters and stories. The building blocks in preschool and the school years enable the teenager to engage at this complex level of understanding:

Ruth is the most enterprising and responsive character in meeting life’s challenges with positive enthusiasm for moving into unfamiliar, but eventually rewarding, relationships. Naomi, too, gradually develops more resilience, in response to Ruth’s own daring. Boaz is the stable, enduring strong man of life, secure in his own position and wealth. But he, too, meets a challenge, enters into a new relationship and engages in strategy to secure that relationship. The plot of Ruth thus interacts with the development of the characters to engage with and learn from each other, thus bringing about action to move the story on again.

(Mills 111)

Individual, Community, and Cosmos

The cosmos level is clearly the most difficult to conceptually grasp for children and it is thus reserved for the adolescent child. The cosmos refers to the larger world structure and the larger world perspective that goes beyond the individual and their community. Job is an example of the cosmic level of moral narratives.

The book of Job is concerned with God's cosmic control in allowing human suffering. The final chapters of God's answer to Job demonstrate God's cosmic answers and control over the function of the world (Mills 217). "Even while conducting debates with his friends, Job never loses this belief that it is only the cosmos which can provide a suitable answer to his plan." (Mills 228) Job's worldview changes throughout the book as he changes his moral vision of the cosmos. "This is achieved through the alternative worlds of 'the dung heap and the storm' which collide with his original world." (Mills 233)

When a child is able to understand the cosmic level, they are soon able to understand the interaction between the individual, the community, and the cosmos reflected in the following quotes by Mary Mills:

In the story of Jonah, cosmos and person are dominant. "Cosmos and person are the two most predominant areas dealt with in the text, as witnessed by the contest between the human person, Jonah, and the cosmic force, the Lord of Israel. But the matter debated by this contest is in fact one of community (Mills 139).

Once more all three levels of cosmos, community and person work together. The identity of Ruth, Orpah, Naomi, and Boaz, as persons, turns on their social roles, their contributions to society and so on community values. The complex inter-relationships of these characters, worked out persons in community and shows that community is a rich and subtle reality, constructed of many small pieces. These pieces, or social functions, can and do, shift when events press down on society, in a social crisis such as famine, for example (Mills 116).

Adolescents are capable of deeper connections between characters, scenes, and event stories. Thus, as a child develops into an adolescent, they should be encouraged to find the similarities and differences between narratives. For example, Mary Mills compares the making of man in God's image with the tower of Babel. "This parallelism is emphasized by the fact that

the two sections of the story, the account of the builders and the account of divine response, each begins with: ‘let us... make name/ go and see.’” (Mills 188)

Summary

Children at different stages of development should be engaged at an appropriate level. Parents can uniquely understand what her child can understand. Parents need to remember to push the child to the next level and challenge their cognitive framework using godly principles. Overall, parents find these exercised very helpful for communicating with their children. Sharon Maclellan explained:

These were good questions for developing better discernment about your child’s heart and where they are spiritually. It also lead into discussions about situations I did not know about which was really good. My daughter was telling me about having to make decisions about going into situations [like a party] where others may not be making good choices. My daughter really opened up about somethings that we had not discussed before which was wonderful.

Even without the forms, these types of questions will be very helpful when we are doing bible study in general as a family. It was very enriching and provides a framework for the way we discuss moral situations. My children are better able to think through how the moral dilemmas of the biblical characters apply to their own lives and situations. They gain strength from the examples of these biblical characters.

Biblical Example: Peter’s Denial

Mark 14:66-72

1. Characters (see Figure 17)

Character's Name	Protagonist? Antagonist? Ambivalent? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech and thought, narrator, actions?)	Similarity/ Differences with Characteristics of God	Round? Flat? Functionary? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech, narrator, actions?)	Author's desired response:
Peter	Protagonist	He is an important character in the biblical narrative of Christ's life	God does not act based on fear or emotion	Round because we know what he thinks, feels, and does		Pity for Peter's confusion and sympathy for his remorse and guilt
Girl	Antagonist (because she is not standing with the protag. in the action)	Direct speech	Unknown since merely a functional character	Functional- merely plays a role in the story	Direct speech; action of following him	None
Members of crowd	Antagonist	Direct speech	God is not racial in his judgments	Flat- portray only one characteristic (judging of Peter)	Direct speech	none
Jesus	Protagonist	Action reported in the text				Sad because he was all alone and facing a horrible death

Fig. 17. Peter's denial as an example with adolescents: character analysis

1. How did you come to make these decisions?

Reading and rereading the text and seeing the relationships between the characters.

2. What clues in the text did you use?

Direct speech, Jesus' reaction, what the author did and did not tell us.

3. Did you rely on explicit actions, thoughts recorded by the narrator, God's response, or other textual cues?

Yes.

B. Scenes:

- a. Break the story down into scenes.
- b. List in order.
- c. Then bracket into episodes (problem, a rising action, a turning point, a falling action and a resolution).
- d. Apply Stein's grid to help determine moral messages and themes. (see Figure 18)
- e. Complete moral dilemma chart (see Figure 19)

Scenes (listed in order)	Episodes (a problem, a rising action, a turning point, a falling action and a resolution)	Moral Message Grid (the setting, the initiating event, an internal response, an attempt, consequences, and a reaction)
-----------------------------	--	---

1. Peter approached by servant girl in the courtyard 2. Peter and servant girl in entryway (2 nd denial) 3. Members of crowd address Peter (3 rd denial) 4. Peter calls down curses on himself, and swears to them 5. Rooster crows, Peter remembers the words of Jesus 6. Peter breaks down weeping.	Rising Action: Christ has been arrested and taken from his disciples in the Garden A rising action: 1-3 Denials of Peter Turning Point: Rooster crowing and the realization that Jesus' words were true Falling action: Peter in tears Resolution: The restored relationship between Peter and Jesus	The setting: Jesus has been arrested and is taken from the disciples in the garden and is on trial for his life The initiating event: Peter approached about being one of Jesus' followers An internal response: Fear and panic An attempt: Denial of knowing Jesus Consequence: Jesus' words were fulfilled and Peter denied Jesus 3 times A reaction: remorse and tears and brokenness
--	---	---

Fig. 18. Using Peter's denial as an example of scene and episode divisions

Dilemma or Crisis	How the Character(s) handle the problem	How <i>you</i> would handle to same problem	What does this say about you?
Peter's decision about whether to admit knowing Christ	Not well—he denied Christ	I probably would do the same thing thinking I was saving my own life	I wouldn't have handled the situation any differently than Peter

Fig. 19. Moral dilemma chart with adolescents

Even Deeper (adapted from Walker and Taylor [268])

1. Ask your child to recall and discuss the most recent real-life moral dilemma from his or her own experience that dealt with this moral issue. In the example above, what is an example in your own life, like Peter, when you struggled with admitting knowing Christ to non-believers?
 - a. What moral issues were involved?
 2. Fear of being rejected

3. Fear of being confronted
4. Fear of not pleasing others
- a. How did you consider the relationships involved?
5. Difficulty prioritizing relationship with Christ over relationships with other people
- a. What role did you play in the conflict?
6. Gave in to pressure to please others and downplayed Christianity
- a. What did you think? What did you feel? What motivated you to do one thing and not another?
7. Fear of failure, confrontation, denial of friendships, etc.
- a. What do you think now about your decision or actions?
8. Probably better to learn from the mistake and learn to be more bold about my faith and taking a stand for Christ.
9. Ask your child to discuss a second real-life dilemma from his or her own experience. What is another example in your own life, like __[biblical character]____, when you struggled with _____?
- a. What moral issues were involved?
- b. How did you consider the relationships involved?
- c. What role did you play in the conflict?
- d. What did you think? What did you feel? What motivated you to do one thing and not another?
- e. What do you think now about your decision or actions?
10. Discuss with your child to similarities and difference in how they handled the two situations. Did they learn anything from the first situation that helped them with the second time the same issue arose?

11. Have your child name two people he thinks are moral exemplars with this characteristic. For example, in the example of David and Jonathan, have your child think of 2 people who are very faithful friends. These people can be personal friends, historical figures, other biblical figures, etc. They are not restricted to people the child knows personally.

1. Francis Schaeffer

2.

b. What makes this person a good example of this moral trait?

He entered into relationship with people to enable them to ask the hard questions. He was not afraid to enter into these rough relational waters.

c. What could you do to be more like this person to demonstrate this moral trait?

Be more bold in taking a stand for Christ and letting people know my value structure.

CHAPTER 11

USING THE CHURCH CALENDAR

As a parent of three young children, my husband, Mark, and I find it challenging to have daily family devotions. There are certain times of the year, however, when we make it a priority. For example, during the season of Advent, we teach our children about the true meaning of Christmas as we battle the commercialism and consumerism in our society. During Advent, Mark and I celebrate the coming of Christ through daily Bible readings, story telling, and the lighting of the Advent candles. We also use many advent calendars through the years so that we can open doors or hang ornaments everyday (and sometimes several times a day!).

This chapter will specifically apply the materials in this thesis in the season of Advent. Appendix C is a guide for different daily stories to read and learn with your children. This is not a day-by-day plan. Rather, I provide many suggestions for the different days of the week. Because a child's interests and developmental understanding vary, you as the parent should have more of a role in determining what you discuss. There are extra examples provided focusing on preschool and young children. With younger children, you may choose to read the story in a children's Bible or storybook.

Weekly Recommendations

The first week focuses on the Covenants of God with his people and how each covenant looks to the coming of Christ. These 7 days are foundational and build on one another. For the remaining weeks of Advent, however, I offer suggestions for what you might choose to do with your family. For example, week 2 provides 13 options for 7 days. Thus, as a parent you can review these options and choose 7 to complete with your children.

Individual Family Variations

Although I have provided exercises in Appendix B, the worksheet format should not be rigidly followed. For example, you might decide to use the worksheet with the overall story and spend more time the first day of that week answering the worksheet questions. Then, the other days of the week could be spent with older children cross-referencing the major themes or moral issues of that narrative. Thus, you pick different stories for each day or you can spend additional time developing something discussed earlier in the week.

You may also choose to use the worksheet but use a different exercise each day of the week. For example, with infants and toddlers, you could focus on a different sense each day of the week (eyes on Monday, ears on Tuesday, etc.). For older children, you could complete the information about the characters on Monday, discuss human connections on Tuesday, and role-play on Wednesday.

If you feel daily family devotions is not possible, then you could prioritize family time on Sunday and celebrate Advent once a week during the season. Then, you could decide which activities and discussions would best benefit your children and your family. Just remember to guard your time with your family and try not to over-schedule during the holiday season so you have time with each other as well as others.

The season of Lent is also important to your children as you demonstrate the importance of the death of Christ in the 40 days preceding Easter. You can further apply the exercises provided in this thesis during the season of Lent and other seasons of the church calendar.

Summary

Reading the daily paper and watching the news demonstrate today's moral crisis in our postmodern society. Many theorists have contended that these problems can be solved through moral education in the schools. Unfortunately, these programs based on relativism, secularism, humanism, and individualism do not solve the crisis. The psychological theories of moral

development are based on incorrect presuppositions about human development and thus, are not only incompatible with a Christian worldview, but should not be the sole basis for moral parenting. Although we are created in God's image, the fall had distorted that image and we do not naturally develop morally. Children require instruction and direction to become more like Christ in this fallen state. Therefore, children cannot be left to naturally develop morality.

Although it is helpful to think of moral development in a cognitive and developmental framework, developmental stages must be viewed in light of the biblical commandments to parents to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). Parents have a great responsibility to teach their children (Genesis 18:19; Psalms 78:2-6). Parents are commanded to "talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7). Parents are to walk through life with their children using the moral dilemmas of the child's and the parent's life to foster moral growth.

The narrative and developmental lens presented in this thesis demonstrate how parents are to teach their children moral lessons using the Bible's stories. These skills allow parents to adjust their presentations of the stories for different ages and stages. For example, while parents should use sensory information with toddlers and infants, parents should use moral discussion of real-life moral dilemmas and moral exemplars with adolescents.

In the "Zone of Proximal Development," parents play a central role in a child's development. They provide the scaffolding that is gradually removed as the child grows and matures. Parents use both direct biblical teaching and "teachable moments" for instruction of moral character in the greater sociological context.

Parents rely on the context beyond the nuclear family for training children. The ecological systems surrounding the child are important for moral teaching. Again, parents need to determine if schools, churches, neighbors, and peers are reinforcing the moral messages taught

at home. Even though this thesis focuses on the role of parents, the interactions between the levels of the ecological system all impact the child's moral development.

It is time for parents to rise to the occasion and take back the responsibility given to them in the scriptures. We as Christians are commanded to instruct our children so they may learn and live right from wrong. We can do this through the stories of both our lives, their lives, and literature. As we become more conscious of our responsibility, we will become more conscious of opportunities to morally instruct our children.

Appendix A: Moral Theories Chart

Child's Age	Piaget's Cognitive Development	Piaget's Moral Development	Kohlberg's Moral Development	Gilligan's Stages for Women	Fowler's Stages of Faith
<p>Infancy (0-1)</p> <p>Early Childhood (2-3)</p> <p>Preschool (4-5)</p>	<p>Sensorimotor (0-2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information obtained through 5 senses <p>Preoperational (2-7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preschoolers use symbols, develop language and enjoy pretend play 	<p>Heteronomous Morality (0-7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rules are obeyed because they are handed down from someone in authority - external source of morality - consequences focused 	<p>Preconventional</p> <p>Stage 1: punishment and obedience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - obedience to avoid punishment <p>Stage 2: Instrumental Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meeting your own personal needs is the basis of morality 	<p>Stage 1: Orientation toward individual survival</p>	<p>Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith (infancy)</p> <p>Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith (Early Childhood)</p>
<p>Middle Childhood (6-11)</p> <p>Adolescence (12-18)</p> <p>Young Adulthood (18-35)</p> <p>Middle Adulthood (35-65)</p> <p>Old Age (over 65)</p>	<p>Concrete Operational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - logical appears but without abstraction - organization of thought into classes and hierarchies - beginning of stage marked by conservation <p>Formal Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - abstraction and logic simultaneously - ability to think systematically about numerous outcomes to a problem 	<p>Autonomous Morality (7 on)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the focus is on the intentions of the moral transgressor - rules are socially agreed upon contracts that can be revised by the group if needed 	<p>Stage 3: Good boy/good girl morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - obedience to obtain and maintain the approval of others <p>Stage 4: Social Order Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we obey moral laws because we have a social duty to do so <p>Stage 5: Social Contract Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fair procedures are established to protect individuals because we have to focus on meeting the needs of the majority <p>Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - abstract moral principles that could apply to all people are the moral guide to decision making 	<p>Stage 2: Goodness as self-sacrifice</p> <p>Stage 3: Morality of nonviolence</p>	<p>Stage 2: Mystic-Literal Faith (School Years)</p> <p>Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Adolescence)</p> <p>Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith (Young Adulthood)</p> <p>Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith (Mid-life)</p> <p>Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (Post Mid-Life)</p>

Appendix B:
Mary Lyn Huffman
1786 LaVista Oaks Dr.
Decatur GA 30033
(404)634-7227 (H)
(678) 637-3081 (C)

Parental Consent

June 20, 2005

Dear Parent,

I am currently finishing my thesis for Reformed Theological Seminary and have written a thesis on how parents can use the stories of the Bible to teach moral lessons. I need your help! I need parents to use these exercises with their child(ren) so I can add practical examples and stories from parents to the chapters. I need *your* stories using these tools and exercises. Would you please do this with your child in the next couple of days?

I need brief “sound bites” (1-3 sentences) from you to insert into my thesis as I explain the value of the different exercises. Please help me make it more real and practical for other parents!

By signing below, you are giving written consent to use your examples, answers, and narratives in both my thesis and in future publications I might write. You are also giving me permission to use your name and your children’s names and ages. If you would rather me to use “pseudonyms” please just make a note on this consent form.

Thank you! Please call me if you have any questions or don’t understand the exercises.

In Him,

Mary Lyn Huffman
404-634-7227 (home)
678-637-3081 (cell)

Parent’s Name _____

Signature _____

Child(ren)’s Name(s) and Age(s) _____

Date _____

Infants and Toddlers

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Use one of the stories below, one of your favorites, or one of these possibilities. You probably want to use a child's Bible for the story. Interact with your child using all 5 senses when discussing the story:

- A. Noah and the Ark (Noah's decision to build an ark and obey)
- B. Adam and Eve (decision to eating the forbidden fruit)
- C. Rahab (helping the spies)

Story or Event	Eyes (seeing)	Ears (hearing)	Nose (smelling)	Mouth (tasting)	Fingers (touching)
Example: God's provision of Manna in the desert	- Looking at the pictures of the story - looking at pretend manna (wafer crackers)	- Hearing the story	- Smelling the pretend Manna	- Tasting the pretend Manna	- Touching the pretend Manna
Example: Creation	- Looking at the stars at night - Looking at another person present created in God's image	- Hearing the story - Hearing animals, someone singing	- Smelling food, animals, or things (i.e., grass) that God created	- Tasting sprinkles in star shapes - Tasting food God created	- Touching something God created (i.e., sticks, leaves, grass)
Example: The Good Samaritan	- see a scratch or "booboo" on child or parent	- pretend to cry and hear what it sounds like to be hurt	- find some medicine that has a strong smell (alcohol for cleaning)	- taste medicine or food given to sick people (jello)	- give Band-Aid to the child to put on hurt place - draw picture of sad face and have child put Band-Aids on hurt places
Your choice:					

(OVER)

*****Parent's Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

How did this experience help build your relationship with your child?

How could this exercise benefit your infant or toddler?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Preschoolers

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Parents: Use Moses, Noah, and Rahab to understand the columns. If you prefer to use these with your child that is fine or you can use another biblical story of your choice. Other recommended stories:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| A. Jonah | Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10 |
| B. The Good Samaritan | Luke 10:25-37 |
| C. Joseph and the Angel | Matthew 1:18-24 |

Characters: Think about these questions:

- a. What did they do?
- b. What did they not do?
- c. What does the story tell us about the person?
- d. Are we told anything specifically about their character?

Person	Action	Consequence (reward or punishment)	What this tells us about the person	What this tells us about God
Moses	Struck the rock in anger	God did not let him enter the promise land	Made rash decisions without talking to other people; didn't take counsel very well	God is a holy God
Noah	Built the ark even though it wasn't raining and friends made fun of him	He and his family lived on the ark during the Flood	Noah believed God and listened to God instead of man	God honored Noah's faithfulness and kept him safe through the Flood
Rahab	Hid the spies of the Israelites	She and her family were spared when the walls of Jericho fell	She honored God as the one true God	God brings people into his family and honors our obedience
Other Biblical Character Your choice:				

(OVER)

B. Activities:

A. Role Playing the Story:

- a. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- b. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- c. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- d. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____

B. Perspective Taking for each Character (if child is able)

- C. How do you think _____ felt? (“heart” questions)
- D. What was _____ thinking? (“head” questions)
- E. What did _____ do? (“hands” questions)
- F. Why did _____ do what he did? (“hands” questions)

*****Parent’s Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

What moral insight did your child gain?

What was helpful about this exercise with your child?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Parents: Use *ONE* of the following Biblical stories or you can use one of your choice:

- A. Jonah Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10
- B. The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37
- C. Joseph and the Angel Matthew 1:18-24
- D. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac Gen 22:1-19

CHOOSE TWO of the following activities:

1) Character Development

Character	How "Personified": Physical Char. Social status, etc.	Internal Characteristics (feelings, thoughts, and attitudes)	Characteristics revealed through actions of self, others, and God	What characteristics reflect God (obedient acts)	What characteristics reflect human sinfulness (disobedient acts)
Main Character:					
Other Character:					
Other character:					

2) The Story

Beginning (initial situation)	Middle (conflict)	End (resolution)	Consequence of this ending:	What this tells us about the person	What this tells us about God (that he acted in this particular way)
		Biblical Ending: Other possible ending: Other possible ending:			

(OVER)

3) Role Playing the Story

Role Playing

- a. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- b. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- c. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- d. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____

Perspective Taking for each Character (if child is able)

- B. How do you think _____ felt? (“heart” questions)
- C. What was _____ thinking? (“head” questions)
- D. What did _____ do? (“hands” questions)
- E. Why did _____ do what he did? (“hands” questions)

*****Parent’s Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

What moral insight did your child gain?

What was helpful about this exercise with your child?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Parents: Use *ONE* of the following Biblical stories or you can use one of your choice:

- A. Jonah Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10
- B. The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37
- C. Joseph and the Angel Matthew 1:18-24
- D. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac Gen 22:1-19

A. Story and Theme (Buzzelli 384; Lehr 343)

- A. Have the child retell (not recite) the story. Check that the story contains all the important components.
- B. Is this story similar to any other stories you have read? How?
- C. What was the author trying to teach you when they wrote these stories?
- D. What are the most important ideas in this story?
- E. Why did the story end like it did?
- F. Is there anything you would have changed?
- G. Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you have changed the ending?

CHOOSE TWO of the following activities:

1) Character Development:

Character's Name	Protagonist? Antagonist? Ambivalent? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech and thought, narrator, actions?)	Similarity/ Differences with Characteristics of God	Round Character? Flat? Functionary? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech, narrator, actions?)	Author's desired response:

2) Human Connections

1. Write the names of each character in a circle on another piece of paper or the back of this paper (include humans, supernatural beings, and God)
2. Connect those people with direct contact with a solid straight line.
3. Connect those people with indirect contact with a broken or dotted line.
4. Discuss the strengths and nature of these relationships.
 - a. What moral issues arise because of these human connections?

3) Role Playing

Role Playing the Story:

- a. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- b. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- c. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- d. Character Name _____ Family Member: _____
- e. Perspective Taking for each Character (if child is able)
 - B. How do you think _____ felt? (“heart” questions)
 - C. What was _____ thinking? (“head” questions)
 - D. What did _____ do? (“hands” questions)
 - E. Why did _____ do what he did? (“hands” questions)

4) Human Connection Analysis

- 1. Provide examples of how a human connection can reflect the character’s relationship with God

- B. Which connections are most central to the narrative?

- C. Why do you think the author emphasized these relationships?

- D. What is the author communicating through these emphasized relationships?

- E. How do these relationships relate to the theme of the story?

5) Cause/Effect/ Far Reaching Effect

Cause	Effect	Far Reaching Effect

*****Parent’s Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

What moral insight did your child gain?

What was helpful about this exercise with your child?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Teenagers: Option 1

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Parents: Use *ONE* of the following Biblical stories or you can use one of your choice:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| A. The Last Supper (Jesus washing Judas' feet) | Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10 |
| B. The Good Samaritan | Luke 10:25-37 |
| C. Joseph and the Angel | Matthew 1:18-24 |
| D. Rahab hiding and helping the Spies | Joshua 2: 1-21 |

A. Characters

Character's Name	Protagonist? Antagonist? Ambivalent? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech and thought, narrator, actions?)	Similarity/ Differences with Characteristics of God	Round Character? Flat? Functionary? Why?	What cues in the text point to this? (i.e., direct speech, narrator, actions?)	Author's desired response:

- A. How did you come to make these decisions?

- B. What clues in the text did you use?

- C. Did you rely on explicit actions, thoughts recorded by the narrator, God's response, or other textual cues?

B. Scenes:

- D. Break the story down into scenes.
- E. List in order.
- F. Then bracket into episodes (problem, a rising action, a turning point, a falling action and a resolution).

(OVER)

Scenes (listed in order)	Episodes (a problem, a rising action, a	Moral Message Grid (the setting, the initiating
-----------------------------	--	--

	turning point, a falling action and a resolution)	event, an internal response, an attempt, consequences, and a reaction)

A. Have your child name two people he thinks are moral exemplars with this characteristic. For example, in the example of David and Jonathan, have your child think of 2 people who are very faithful friends. These people can be personal friends, historical figures, other biblical figures, etc. They are not restricted to people the child knows personally.

a. What makes this person a good example of this moral trait?

b. What could you do to be more like this person to demonstrate this moral trait?

*****Parent's Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

What moral insight did your child gain?

What was helpful about this exercise with your child?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Teenagers: Option 2

Child's Name _____ Age: _____

Parents: Use *ONE* of the following Biblical stories or you can use one of your choice:

- B. The Last Supper (Jesus washing Judas' feet) Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10
- C. The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37
- D. Joseph and the Angel Matthew 1:18-24
- E. Rahab hiding and helping the Spies Joshua 2: 1-21

Moral Dilemma Chart

Dilemma or Crisis	How the Character(s) handle the problem	How <i>you</i> would handle to same problem	What does this say about you?

Digging Deeper (adapted from Walker and Taylor [268])

- A. Ask you child to recall and discuss the most recent real-life moral dilemma from his or her own experience that dealt with this moral issue. In the example above, what is an example in your own life, like __[biblical character]____, when you struggled with _____?
 - a. What moral issues were involved?
 - b. How did you consider the relationships involved?
 - c. What role did you play in the conflict?
 - d. What did you think? What did you feel? What motivated you to do one thing and not another?
 - e. What do you think now about your decision or actions?

 - B. Ask your child to discuss a second real-life dilemma from his or her own experience. What is another example in your own life, like __[biblical character]____, when you struggled with _____?
 - a. What moral issues were involved?
 - b. How did you consider the relationships involved?
- (OVER)

- c. What role did you play in the conflict?
 - d. What did you think? What did you feel? What motivated you to do one thing and not another?
 - e. What do you think now about your decision or actions?
- C. Discuss with your child to similarities and difference in how they handled the two situations. Did they learn anything from the first situation that helped them with the second time the same issue arose?
- D. Have your child name two people he thinks are moral exemplars with this characteristic. For example, in the example of David and Jonathan, have your child think of 2 people who are very faithful friends. These people can be personal friends, historical figures, other biblical figures, etc. They are not restricted to people the child knows personally.
- a. What makes this person a good example of this moral trait?
 - b. What could you do to be more like this person to demonstrate this moral trait?

*****Parent's Questions (Answer in 1-3 Sentences)*****

What moral insight did your child gain?

What was helpful about this exercise with your child?

What did your child enjoy?

What did you enjoy?

Other feedback about this exercise:

Appendix C:
Advent

Week 1: The Candle of Expectation and Hope
First Purple Candle: The Candle of Promise

Weekly Hymns:³ Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Away in a Manger
Silent Night

Daily Recommendations:

Day 1: The Covenant of Creation:

- 1) Read Genesis 1 (or excerpts)
- 2) Use worksheet in Appendix B with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Teach/review the basics of a covenant (Bond in blood sovereignly administered)
 - a. Commits people to one another
 - b. All of the OT stories and covenants point to the coming of Christ
 - c. The Christmas story and Christ's life is what it all points to ultimately
- 4) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. What did God create? (everything)
 - b. Name some specific things that God made.
- 5) Tie to advent: God is a God of order. God also knew from the very beginning that man would sin and that Jesus would have to come to earth. God in His wisdom knew everything we would need here on earth. (for younger children: Just like we have to keep our toys and belongings in their places, so God created the world to be a world of order.)

Day 2: Adam: The Covenant of Commencement

- 1) Read: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-17
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. What does it mean that God created man in his own image?
 - b. In what ways can we look like God and do what God would do?
- 4) Tie to Advent: Man is made in God's image. Only by Christ's coming would man be able to completely reflect the image of God. Christ's coming restored man's relationship with God which was affected by the fall in the Garden. The seed of the woman or the descendent of the woman would be Jesus who would restore the relationship with God. We can once again walk with God as Adam walked with God in the Garden. We walk with God by reading our bibles and praying.

Day 3: Noah: The Covenant of Preservation

- 1) Read: Exerts from Gen 6-9 (specifically 9:12-17)
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. Why did God want to destroy the whole earth? (the people were wicked)
 - b. Did God destroy everybody? (no)
 - c. Who did God not destroy? (Noah and his family)

³ I have provided hymn recommendations for each week. Christmas Hymns don't have to be used every day. You may choose to only sing one hymn every day of the week or sing a different one or all of them.

- d. What did God put in the ark? (two of every kind of animal)
 - e. How long were they in the boat? (40 days and nights)
 - f. What did the rainbow mean? (it was a sign of God's promise to Noah)
- 4) Tie to Advent: God showed grace to Noah. The promise of Jesus was continued through Noah. God has control over everything. He could have destroyed the whole world, but he allowed Noah and his family and 2 of each kind of animal to live. God was gracious. God's promise of sending Jesus was continued through Noah. "From the covenant with Noah it becomes quite obvious that God's being "with us" involves not only an outpouring of his grace on his people; it involves also an outpouring of his wrath on the seed of Satan." (from Christ of the Covenants by O. Palmer Robertson, p. 125)

Day 4: Abraham: The Covenant of Promise

- 1) Read: Exerts from Gen 15, 18,22
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. What did God promise Abraham? (he would be the father of many people)
 - b. What did Abraham name his son?
 - c. What did God ask Abraham to do?
 - d. What did God give Abraham? (the lamb)
- 4) Tie to Advent: This may take more time to explain but give it your best with young children. Abraham and Sarah were very old when they had baby Isaac. They loved him so much and they were not able to have any other children. One day, God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to him to show that Abraham loved God more than anything else. Abraham was willing to do this but before the sacrifice, God sent a lamb to be sacrificed instead. God knew that Abraham loved him more than anything else. We, too, need to love God more than anything else. God sent Jesus as the sacrificial lamb for us. We could not pay the price for our sins. So God had to send Jesus in our place. (With older children, the focus could be on the covenant ritual with Abraham where God walks between the cut animals binding himself in blood to the covenant with Abraham.)

Day 5: Moses: The Covenant of the Law

- 1) Read: Exerts from Gen 19-20 (specifically 19:3-6a)
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. What did God give Moses? (the law)
 - b. What happened if the people obeyed the law?
 - c. What happened if the people disobeyed the law?
- 4) Tie to Advent: The wonderful thing about teaching children the story of God's covenant with Moses is that it is so tangible. God tells the people what is right and what is wrong. There are punishments for disobeying and rewards for obeying. Because of their sins, the people had to sacrifice animals to be reconciled to God. This covenant is made complete with the coming of Christ because Christ came to earth to die for our sins. Jesus never sinned. He never did anything wrong or disobeyed. Jesus was born in a manger but he did not stay there. At Easter time we celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ. This is what reconciles us or brings us back to God.

Day 6: David: The Covenant of the Kingdom

- 1) Read: Exerts from I and II Samuel (specifically II Samuel 7:18-29)
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. What was David's job? (He was the king)
 - b. What is a king? What does a King do?
 - c. Do you have a king?
 - d. How is your king related to King David?
- 4) Tie to Advent: Jesus came to be king. The people at the time when Jesus was born were expecting a king to rule over everyone and conquer their enemies, but God sent Jesus to be the king in our hearts. God's covenant with David focuses on the coming of the kingdom. Eventually, Jesus will come back to earth as the last king and he will take all those who belong to him to live with him in heaven.

Day 7: Christ: The Covenant of Consummation

- 1) Read: Exerts from Matt 1:18-23
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Example Questions you could ask younger children:
 - a. Why did Mary and Joseph call the baby Jesus? (because he would save his people from their sins)
 - b. What does it mean to sin? (to disobey or do something wrong)
 - c. Do you sin? (yes, everybody sins)
 - d. What do we need to do when we sin? (pray and ask for forgiveness)
- 4) Tie to Advent: Review all the covenants and how Christ is the fulfillment of each one.

Week 2: The Candle of Mary and Joseph
Second Purple Candle: The Candle of Peace

Weekly Hymns: O Little Town of Bethlehem
Comfort, comfort ye my People
See Amid the Winter Snow
O Come, All Ye Faithful
Once in Royal David's City

Daily Suggestions:

Option 1: The Angel appears to Mary

- 1) Read: Luke 1:26-38
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 2: The Angel appears to Joseph

- 1) Read: Matthew 1:18-25
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 3: Mary Visits Elizabeth

- 1) Read: Luke 1:39-45
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 4: Mary's Song

- 1) Read Luke 1:46-56
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 5: John the Baptist

- 1) Read: Luke 1:57-66
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 6: Zechariah's Song

- 1) Read: Luke 2:67-79
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 7: Isaiah the prophet

- 1) Read: Isaiah 9:6-7
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - a. What is a prophet?
 - b. Why did God send prophets to people?
 - c. What did God tell people through Isaiah?

Option 8: Bethlehem

- 1) Read: Luke 2: 1-7
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - a. Where did Joseph live?
 - b. Why did he travel to Bethlehem?
 - c. Who went with him?
 - d. What happened while they were in Bethlehem?

Option 9: Stars

- 1) Read: Matthew 2:1-2; Gen 1:16
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - a. Take your children into the yard to find the stars at night. Can they find the brightest star?
 - b. Who made the stars? (God)
 - c. What led the Magi to Jesus? (the star in the East)

Option 10: Peace

- 1) Read:

a. Ps. 29:11	Lord bless his people with peace
b. Isa. 9:6	He is the Prince of Peace
c. Lk 2:14	on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests
d. Jn 16:33	in me you may have peace
e. Col3:5	let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts
f. 2 Thess 3:16	the Lord of peace himself give you peace
- 2) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - a. This candle represents the candle of peace. What is peace?
 - b. What does the Bible say about peace?

Option 11: Candy Canes

- 1) Read: Scripture on Christ's life to correspond to the story
- 2) Read: "The Legend of the Candy Cane: The Inspirational Story of Our Favorite Christmas Candy" If you don't have access to the story, the summary of the legend is the following:
- 3) The Candy Cane
It had to be special to be a gift for the King of Kings, thought the humble candy maker from Indiana. Not just any piece of candy would do. It had to be hard candy because the church is built on solid rock and God's promises are a firm foundation. It would be formed in the shape of the Shepherd's staff. A "J" that would also stand for the precious name of Jesus. But it had to say more. White stripes would symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of Christ. Three small red stripes would represent the scourging Jesus suffered on His way to the cross. One large red stripe would remind those with eyes to see and ears to hear of the blood Jesus shed as payment for our sins. It would be a gift of love that would tell His story –the greatest story ever told.
- 4) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - a. What does the candy cane look like?
 - b. What does the white mean?
 - c. What does the red mean?

Option 12: Why Jesus had to come

- 1) Read: Luke 23:33-34,38-49; 24:1-8
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions you can ask younger children:
 - i. Why did Jesus have to come? (to die for our sins)
 - ii. How did Jesus die? (on a cross)
 - iii. Did he stay dead? (no- he was raised from the dead)
 - iv. What did the angels tell the people at the tomb?
 - v. Why is Christmas important in the story of the death of Christ?

Option 13: The Tale of Three Trees

- 1) Read: The Tale of Three Trees
- 2) Discuss with your children each of the three trees and what they became. Why are all three significant?

Week 3: The Candle of the Shepherds
Pink Candle: The Candle of Joy

The shepherds demonstrate joy at the proclamation to them in the fields and the joy as they kneel over the Christ child in the manger

Weekly Hymns: The First Noel

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
I am Jesus Little Lamb
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
What Child is This?
While by the Sheep We Watched at Night
Angels We Have Heard on High
Joy to the World

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
All My Heart This Night Rejoices
Angels from the Realm of Glory

Daily Suggestions:

Option 1: The Birth of Jesus

- 1) Read: Luke 2:1-7
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 2: Christ's Birth

- 1) Read: Luke 2:1-7
- 2) Sing: The First Noel or Away In A Manger
- 3) Discuss the words to the Hymn and how they relate to the story and what they add, if anything, to the meaning of the story.

Option 3: The Angels Appear to the Shepherds

- 1) Read: 2:8-16
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions to ask young children:
 - a. Where were the shepherds?
 - b. What appeared in the sky?
 - c. What did the angels tell the shepherds?
 - d. What was the shepherds' response?

Option 4: The Shepherds at the Manger and Mary's Pondering Heart

- 1) Read: 2:17-20
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 5: Sheep

- 1) Read: Psalm 23
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions to ask young children:
 - a. What does Psalm 23 tell us about the shepherd and the sheep?
 - b. What can we learn about God as our Good Shepherd?

Option 6: Joy

- 1) Sing: *While by the Sheep We Watched at Night*
While by the sheep we watched at night,
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.

Chorus: How great our joy! Great our joy!
Joy, joy, joy! Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!
Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!

There shall be born, so he did say,
In Bethlehem a child today.

- 2) Read:
 - a. Ps. 20:5 Shout for joy

- b. Ps. 132:9, 16 May your saints sing for joy
 - c. Lk 2: 10 News of great joy that will be for all people
 - d. Jn 16:20 No one will take away your joy
 - e. Rom 15:13 The God of all hope will you with joy
- 3) Ask:
- a. What does joy mean?
 - b. Why were the shepherds joyful?
 - c. Who gives us joy?
 - d. Who can take away our joy?
 - e. What did the angels tell the shepherds? (new of *great joy*) Why?

Option 7: A Crippled Lamb

- 1) Watch (or Read): “The Crippled Lamb” (by Max Lucado)
- 2) Questions to ask young children:
 - a. What special job did God give the little lamb?
 - b. How are we like the little lamb?

Week 4: The Candle of the Kings
Third Purple Candle: The Candle of Love

Note: The number of devotionals in the last week of Advent will vary from year to year since the time between the last Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day will vary. For example, if Christmas Day is on Wednesday, then you will only need 3 or 4 devotionals for that week. So, decide which readings or books you most want to use and just borrow concepts from the unused days.

Weekly Hymn: We Three Kings

Daily Recommendations:

Option 1: The Star and the Magi’s response

- 1) Read Matthew 2:1-2
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 2: King Herod’s response

- 1) Read Matthew 2:3-8
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Questions to use with young children:
 - a. What did the Magi call the baby when they asked Herod about him? (the king of the Jews)
 - b. Why did they want to find him? (to worship him)
 - c. Why was Herod upset to learn of Baby Jesus? (another king would take his place)

Option 3: Following the Star and the Magi’s Joy

- 1) Read Matthew 2:9-10
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 4: The Magi's Gifts and their Worship: Part 1

- 1) Read Matthew 2:11
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Discuss: Being like the Wise Men
 - a. What was their initial reaction? (worship)
 - b. What did they do next? (present gifts)
 - c. What gifts do you bring?

Option 5: The Magi's Gifts and their Worship: Part 2

- 1) Read Matthew 2:11
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material
- 3) Discuss: Being like the Wise Men
 - a. Why do we give gifts to others?
 - b. Why do we give gifts to Jesus?
 - c. Are gifts tangible or intangible?
 - d. Do you have an attitude of gratitude when given a gift?

Option 6: The Escape to Egypt

1. Read Matthew 2:13-15
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 7: Herod's Response to the Magi

- 1) Read Matthew 2:16-18
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 8: The Family's Return and Move to Nazareth

- 1) Read Matthew 2:19-23
- 2) Use worksheet with appropriate developmental material

Option 9 (with Young Children): The true meaning of Christmas

- 1) Read: Children's book on the true Saint Nicholas (ex. "Santa Are You for Real?")
- 2) Ask:
 - i. Who was St. Nicholas?
 - ii. What did he do?
 - iii. How should we be more like St. Nicholas?

Option 10 (with Young Children): The true meaning of Christmas

- 3) Read: Children's book on the true Saint Nicholas (ex. "Santa Are You for Real?")
- 4) Ask:
 - i. Who was St. Nicholas?
 - ii. What did he do?
 - iii. How should we be more like St. Nicholas?

Option 11 (with Young Children): The true meaning of Christmas

- 1) Watch: The VeggieTale video, The Toy That Saved Christmas
- 2) Ask:
 - a. What was wrong with the children of Dinkletown? (they wanted more stuff)
 - b. What message did the toy, the Buzzsaw Louise, bring to them?
 - c. What is the true meaning of Christmas?

Option 12 (with Young Children): The true meaning of Christmas

3) Read: The story of the little drummer boy in a children's book

4) Ask:

- a. What did the little drummer boy have to give Jesus?
- b. Think about the talents of your mom and dad. What do they have to give Jesus?
- c. (If applicable) What about your brothers or sisters?
- d. What do you have to give Jesus?

Option 13 (with Young Children): The true meaning of Christmas

5) Read: "The Pine Tree Parable" by Liz Curtis Higgs

Option 14: Summarizing Advent

1) Read: The Christmas story in a child's Bible or book or from Luke 2

2) Ask:

- a. We have been reading a lot of stories and books all about Christmas. What do we celebrate at Christmas?
- b. What do you know about Jesus' birth? (re-iterate details of birth narrative)
- c. What did you enjoy?
- d. What did you understand in a new way this advent season?

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