

Lesson 2: Spiritual Formation of Children

Objective: You will discover a simple model to understand what spiritual formation is and how it happens in children.

- **Can children grow spiritually?**

Of course they can! We just looked at Scripture, how God used children, and how Jesus said that they are the very example of the type of faith He wants all of us to have.

Of course they can have a faith of their own and grow spiritually!

And if that's true, we need to understand how they grow spiritually.

- **Therefore, let's ask another question: What is spiritual formation?**

In small groups, or on your own, take a moment to discuss or think about the question: *What is spiritual formation?*

Let us look at the definition of spiritual formation we use with the curriculum, and what we will use as we learn today.

Spiritual formation is the process of becoming more like Christ.

That's it! And it comes from Romans 8:29.

Most of us are familiar with Romans 8:28, which reads:

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:28, ESV

Often, however, we misunderstand what “good” means in that verse. We think that if we love God and are called to serve Him, then everything will work out for good. But that's *not* what it means.

The “good” in verse 28 is defined in verse 29. It reads:

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son.

Romans 8:29, ESV

The “good” in verse 28 means to “become like his Son...”

God's goal for you and for me, and for the children we teach, is that we all become more and more like Christ! **And that process—becoming more like Christ—is spiritual formation.**

There are three ways that we can help children become more like Christ.

First, children become more like Christ in their heart.

They learn to love God when they understand the Gospel. We'll talk more about that in a few minutes. If you want to, you can draw a heart in the chest area of our little person in our notes. Then draw a cross in the heart.

The Gospel is where spiritual formation begins. We want children to fall in love with Jesus and so we share the Gospel with them.

Second, children become more like Christ in their head.

It's important that we know and understand God and His Word. We want to give children a knowledge of God and His principles, and that comes from learning the Bible. That's why we base everything we teach on Scripture.

If you would like, draw a little Bible in the head area of our little person in our notes.

Third, children become more like Christ through their hands.

Our faith becomes practical when we serve God and serve others. Ephesians 2:10 says that our salvation is for good works. Studies show that children are far more likely to remain in the faith if they have opportunity to serve as children and youth. As we serve others, God uses that experience to help us become more like Christ.

If you would like, you can draw a tool in the hand of our little person in our notes. I drew a shovel, but you can draw whatever tool you would like to remind you that serving others helps us become more like Christ.

Spiritual formation is simply the process of becoming more like Christ.

We help children grow through their heart, their head and their hands. This represents loving God, knowing God and serving God. And guess what...this is true for you and me and anyone else, as well!

Now, what do these three things add up to?

When a child is loving God with their **heart**, knowing God with their **head**, and serving God with their **hands**, it will be evidenced through walking with God in their daily habits, represented by their **feet**.

This is a simple way of understanding spiritual formation, and it's important that we remember that this is our goal in teaching children. **We want them to become more like Christ, and it is through loving God (in response to the Gospel), knowing God (as we learn God's Word), and serving God and others, that we become more and more like Christ.**