Spiritual Growth and Human Development



What could we say to an infant to help her develop a relationship with God?

- "Fast and pray?"
- "Study your Bible?"
- "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?"

#### Stages of Child Development

- Infancy (birth-2 years)
- Toddlerhood (2-4 years)
- Early school age (4-6 years)
- Middle school age (6-12 years)
- Early adolescence (12-18 years)
- Humans develop in stages
- Each stage is characterized by different learning or development
- Incredible energy is expended to learn what needs to be learned
- Learning occurs according to development

Help children learn to relate to God as they are developmentally ready for it.
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#### Stages of Child Development

- Infancy (birth-2 years)
  - o Developmental crisis = Trust/Mistrust
  - Developmental process = Mutuality

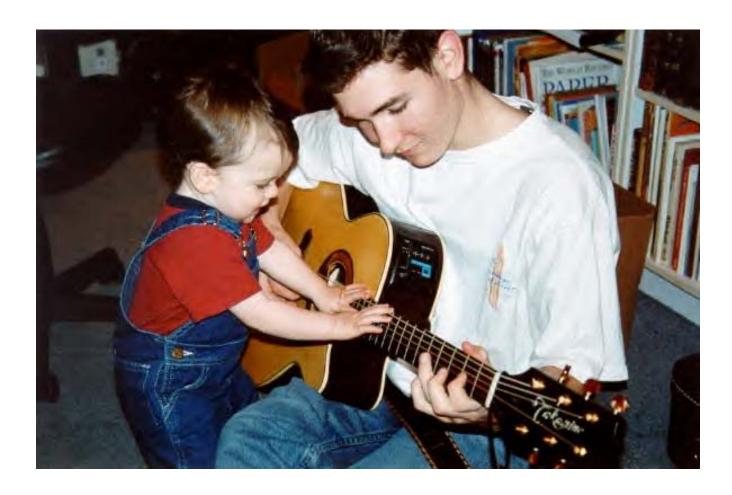


Infancy (birth to 2 years)

- Parental structure, nurturing, and attunement
- Extended family support for parents
- Congregational support for parentsParenting information

Toddlerhood (2 to 4 years)

- Developmental Crisis = Autonomy/Shame and Doubt
- Developmental Process = Imitation



Toddlerhood (2 to 4 years)

- Parents can teach by doing and showing rather than shaming
- Set boundaries for safety and growth rather than convenience

Honor their drive to become autonomous ("I do it myself")

- Acknowledge toddlers to their level of comfort and avoid shaming

Early School Age (4 to 6 years)

- Developmental crisis = initiative/guilt
- Developmental process = identification



Early School Age (4 to 6 years)

- Live a good example for small children
- Build age-appropriate social relationships with them when with their families, baby-sitting, etc.

- Talk to them about right and wrong as appropriate

Middle School Age (6 to 12 years)

Developmental crisis: industry/inferiorityDevelopmental process: education



Middle School Age (6 to 12 years)

- Involve them
- Hall set up
- Song books
- Newsletters
- Bulletin boards

#### **How to study**

#### Teenage is too late



Early Adolescence (12 to 18 years)

- Developmental Crisis = Group Identity/Alienation Developmental Process = Peer Pressure



#### Question:

Does helping young people develop a relationship with the congregation help them develop a relationship with God?



1 Cor 3:6

I planted Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

#### We

- Relate
- Provide (serve)
- Model
- Teach

#### God does the rest

Development Through Life, A Psychosocial Approach; Newman and Newman; Brooks/Cole Publishing Company; 1995