



How does a child's faith develop?

In 3 ways ...

1. **Upwardly:** Faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8) – the result of the work of Jesus in the heart and life of a child. It's the conviction that God, though not seen (Hebrews 11:1), is real and true.
2. **Inwardly:** Faith is rooted in the heart. A child must believe in his/her heart that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9) and open the door of his/her heart for Jesus to come in (Ephesians 3:17).
3. **Outwardly:** Faith is active – it grows and develops as a child matures. *Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* James 2:17 (NIV).

There are 4 major primers in a child's faith development:

1. **The Bible** - God's Word is vitally important in helping children know and grow in faith. *Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.* Romans 10:17 (NIV).
2. **The Holy Spirit** – Children can't harness faith by themselves. They need the glorious inner strength of the Holy Spirit to help them grow in faith (Ephesians 3:16).
3. **The Family** – Parents are essential for modelling, training, and sharing what it means to have faith in Jesus (Proverbs 22:6).
4. **The Church** - A child needs to connect with a Jesus-centred, Bible-believing local church to more fully experience and own his/her faith.

There's also a general order to a child's faith development. Like a baby learning to walk, each child develops at their own pace. While we can't tell exactly when or how a child's faith development happens, we can identify ages and stages in their faith development. John Westerhoff, James Fowler, Thomas Groome and others have developed models to help us study faith development.

Finally, faith development is Jesus development. A child's faith is developing when he/she is increasingly connecting with Jesus.

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