Spirituality for Children and Families during COVID-19

How can congregations help families with children explore a home practice for spirituality as well as support intentional connections between families and congregations during this unprecedented time?

Kimberly Baker, manager of The Well at Church Health, offers insights and ideas out of her 20 years of working with children and families in various capacities to support health in mind, body, and spirit.

Spirituality is the relationship we have to God, to the deepest part of our own spirit, to our neighbor, and to God’s creation. Children are innately spiritual, and we have an opportunity to honor, awaken, and acknowledge spirituality in children and families. Some key themes in this particular season include:

• **Hope.** Knowing God is always with us is a powerful lesson to offer children and the adults around them.

• **Connection.** Congregations are working to stay connected and carry the message that church can happen anywhere.

• **Innovation.** Because we can’t do things the way we usually do, congregations are reaching deep into creativity.

Here are a few ways congregations have stayed connected with children and families—and helped them stay connected with their own spirituality.

1. **Special deliveries.** Safely masked delivery people have dropped off groceries and flowers, with the special addition of cards and drawings from children.

2. **Youth group exercise music.** Youth can lead the way by creating choreographed exercise dance to worship music and posting the videos for others to share to stay fit in body and spirit.

3. **Self-care.** This is a spiritual practice. Teach children that rest is something that replenishes our energy, helps us stay healthy, and allows us to have stillness and quiet.

4. **Food.** Cooking nourishes body and spirit. Teach children to eat a variety of colors—to eat the rainbow. Eat sustenance for renewal as a spiritual practice. Children may be more interested in learning about preparing food in this season at home.

5. **Home altars or displays.** Lean into tangible items that remind you of intangible truths, such as writing out a family verse of the week, keeping your Easter lily on the table for a few weeks, or bringing in nature items from the yard.

Younger children may only understand that some people are sick and we’re staying at home. Older children and teens are exposed to more media—perhaps more than we realize—and we need to take our cues from them. Build rapport to be ready for real questions, and then give truthful answers. We don’t know everything about COVID-19, but this time is not going to last forever. We are going to learn things that will make us stronger and wiser. More important than anything else, God is bigger than our fears.

Church Health hosted a webinar called “Spirituality for Children and Families during COVID-19.” It is available for viewing on our website, http://churchhealth.org/fce/.