

GENESIS 1:26-28

EPHESIANS 6:4

Parenting in the Image of God

Reflections for dedicating our children to the Lord

**SUNDAY
JAN 29
9 AM
WEST SIDE
SEARCY**



Parenting is hard but rewarding. It's easy for a parent to feel inadequate; to wonder where to look for help and guidance. Praise God that we have some guidance, as we look to God as our parent. Both fathers and mothers can find what it means to be a parent from the face of God, and we will find traits that we usually see in our fathers and traits that we usually see in our mothers when we look at God. That is because mothers and fathers, working together, image God on the earth.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Introduction:

If you have children, share some of the funniest experiences in trying to manage your children.

If you do not have children, share some of the funniest experiences of when you were a child.

CHILDBIRTH OUGHT TO BE A CHURCH-WELCOMING EVENT. Did you get married in a church? Did your loved ones have funerals in a church? Did you get baptized during a church service? For many, the answer is "yes." Why is this? How is childbirth also a significant and holy event, like a wedding, or a baptism, or a funeral? Discuss why celebrating such events as a church can be important.

DEDICATING CHILDREN TO GOD IS A BIBLICAL PRACTICE. Read **1 Samuel 1**. Why did Hannah dedicate her child to the Lord? There is some Old Testament background for dedicating the firstborn child (see **Ex. 13:1-2**). But what Hannah did was not a requirement of the Law of Moses. It was a beautiful sacrifice from the heart. **Follow up:** Read **Luke 2:22-52**. What can we learn from Luke's whole chapter 2?

OUR CHILDREN BELONG TO GOD. Read **Isa 44:24**; **Psalms 139:13-14**. We are stewards, not owners, of our children. Discuss how this should shape our

GOD IS THE PERFECT PARENT. Read **Genesis 1:26-28**. Why does the text say God created mankind (male *and* female) in his image? What does it mean to "image" God on the earth? Does this verse suggest that God's traits are seen in both parents?

RAISE CHILDREN WITH TENDERNESS AND COMPASSION. Read **Isaiah 42:2-3**; **Jonah 4:2**; **Ephesians 4:32**; **1 Thess 2:7**. Discuss how and when you saw tenderness and compassion in your parents. Why is this an important trait in parenting like God parents us?

RAISE CHILDREN WITH NURTURE. Read **Ephesians 6:4**; **Hosea 11:1-4**; **Matt 6:25-30**. Which parent fed you oatmeal, put your clothes on you, or picked you up after you fell off your bike? How does "nurturing" reflect the parenting style of God?

RAISE CHILDREN IN THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD. Read **Ephesians 6:4**; **1 Cor 11:1**. How do our actions speak even louder than our words? How can we instruct our kids in the way of the Lord?