

Leader's Handbook



Welcome to the Parenting for Faith additional session leader's handbook

At Parenting for Faith we are creating some new sessions to follow on from the Parenting for Faith course. These will be released as they are ready. This is the first of those sessions, 'I'm not finished yet'. It is based on part III of *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (BRF, 2018) – 'Parenting children for a life of confidence'. Over the next year, we hope to release more sessions, another one based on part III of the book, and two based on part II – 'Parenting children for a life of purpose'.

This session, and the ones to follow, build on the tools, skills and approaches of the **Parenting for Faith course** and are an excellent way to help course participants continue their journey of parenting for faith. If the parents and carers in your church are new to Parenting for Faith, we recommend that you first run the eight-session original course (parentingforfaith.org/course) or encourage them to read *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (available at brfonline.org.uk), as they will then have the basic skills they need to put the ideas contained in this session into action. If you think your parents and carers could just do with a reminder, you could recap the five Key Tools videos (parentingforfaith.org/tools) with them.

Like the original course, the core content of this session is delivered via video. A session will take between one and two hours, depending on your preferences, and is a mixture of video content, individual reflection time and group discussion. Please feel free to adapt this to your context and how you are running the course. We have made suggestions for questions and reflections to use both during the video content and afterwards, but use what works best for you. For example, you might want to save up the reflective questions for group discussion at the end of the video; or if you are keeping the session to just one hour, you might want to send out the questions during the week. You may also want to add time for refreshments, and many leaders like to have an icebreaker at the beginning of the evening.

If you are running your course online, we have a guide for how to do that, together with a whole host of tips and wisdom from course leaders who've done that – parentingforfaith.org/course-online.

You may also want to take a look at the suggestions in the leader's handbook for the original course, which you can find at parentingforfaith.org/course-downloads. It includes ideas for thinking about your team, how to plan and publicise the session and ideas for helping participants belong.

As a team, we are committed to praying for every course that runs. Please tell us the dates when your course is running at parentingforfaith.org/register-my-course so we can journey with you in prayer.

If you have any questions or if we can support or encourage you in any way, you can contact us via parentingforfaith.org.

May God bless you as you lead this course.

BRF's Parenting for Faith team

Parenting for Faith is part of BRF, a Christian charity that resources individuals and churches. Our vision is to enable people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible and to see more people equipped to exercise their gifts in leadership and ministry. Find out more at brf.org.uk.

I'm not finished yet

We're all on a journey of transformation

We live in a world where perfection is king. We are bombarded with images and ideas of perfection and it can seem as if being less than perfect is failure. This affects us, and it also affects our children, and their confidence can be knocked when they judge themselves against impossible ideals. By helping our children understand that we are all on a journey of transformation to become more and more like the Father, we can help them see themselves as on an exciting journey of transformation with a God who loves them and wants them to partner with him now.

Ideas for planning your session

- **Connection time** – a time to connect over refreshments or chat. You may want to include an icebreaker to help participants get to know each other.
- **Video introduction (2 minutes)** – we can hear the world's message that perfection is what we ought to aim for and see anything less as failure. What our children need to hear is the liberating truth that we are all in the process of being transformed by God and it's okay to be on that journey.
- **Reflection** – allow up to 10 minutes for participants to reflect individually or in small groups on the following:
 - Reflect on this idea of perfection. Where can you see it playing out in:
 - your life?
 - your children's lives?
- **Video main session 1 (5 minutes)** – when a baker makes an amazing cake, it goes through different stages and processes before it's finished, and we are on a similar lifelong journey of transformation with God. And the great joy is that God invites us – and our children – to be active participants in that transformation. God doesn't wait until we are perfect to use us.
- **Reflection** – allow up to 10 minutes for participants to reflect individually or in small groups on one or more of the following:
 - Think about an area of your life where you are different to how you were five years ago – a changed attitude, a new or improved skill or just something you deal differently with.
 - How did the transformation happen? What was the journey like? How has God used you during the transformation?
- **Video main session 2 (3 minutes)** – this introduces the first transformation tool: sharing stories. As we create windows into our experiences, and hear others' stories and explore the Bible, our children learn that we are all being constantly transformed.
- **Reflection** – allow up to 10 minutes for participants to reflect individually or in small groups on one or more of the following:
 - Tell a story of how God has been helping you change – now or in the past
 - Think about how you might frame an apology to your child so that it helps them see that you are on your own journey of transformation
 - Which Bible characters inspire you on your journey of transformation? How could you share Bible stories with your children so that they notice how God helps people transform?

- **Video main session 3 (4 minutes)** – this introduces the second transformation tool: framing what you think is important. We can unwittingly draw children’s attention to appearance and success, but if we comment on the deeper values we want to see in their lives, we show them what we see in them and what God sees in them.
- **Reflection** – allow up to 10 minutes for participants to reflect individually or in small groups on one or more of the following:
 - Thinking about your childhood, what did your parents draw your attention to that still impacts you today?
 - How are you already drawing your children’s attention to people’s character, effort, progress and transformation?
 - Practise debriefing a real or imaginary situation where your child might be disappointed about something that went wrong. How can you help them see the little successes?
- **Video main session 4 (3 minutes)** – this introduces the third transformation tool: foundational phrases. The little things we say over and over again sink in and create a foundation for how our children think, and we can craft phrases that work specifically for our children.
- **Reflection** – allow up to 10 minutes for participants to reflect individually or in small groups on one or more of the following:
 - What foundational phrases did you learn from your parents that you use today?
 - Thinking about your child(ren), what messages do you think they need to hear about transformation?
 - What phrases could you invent to help your child embrace the idea that is OK because we are all on a journey of transformation with God?
- **Video conclusion (2 minutes)**
- **Group discussion** – allow about 30 minutes for this. If you haven’t used the reflection questions, you could use them here. Alternatively, here are some questions you could use, or feel free to write your own.
 - What messages about perfection are your children hearing – for example from school, their peers, social media or advertising?
 - Is this idea of being OK with imperfection new to you?
 - How has your child changed over the last few years? What great things do you see in your child that they might not see in themselves? How could you help them see that?
 - Thinking about your own journey of transformation, are there any stories you might like to share with your child?
 - How do you know when your child feels the pressure of being perfect?
- **Regathering (3 minutes)** – a few minutes to get feedback if you have more than one discussion group

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What next?

We do hope that you have enjoyed running this course and that you are already seeing the fruits of what you have shared with the people who came along.

Tell us how it went

We'd love to hear how you got on. One easy way to let us know how the course went is feeding back to us – you can find out about the feedback options at parentingforfaith.org/course-downloads. If there's more you want to tell us, do get in touch with us via parentingforfaith.org/contact-us.

The website

The Parenting for Faith website is packed with stories and resources for parents and churches to read, listen to and watch, covering a host of different topics – parentingforfaith.org/parents or parentingforfaith.org/church is a good place to start.

We're regularly adding new content, and we're working to develop what we offer over the coming months. Do keep in touch with us and help us shape what we offer.

Books and resources

There are four books in the Parenting for Faith series, available in print and on Kindle:

- *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith – Omnibus Edition* (BRF, 2018; also available as an audiobook), which contains the three original Parenting for Faith books plus some additional material.
- *It Takes a Church to Raise a Parent* (BRF, 2018) explores how churches can intentionally create a culture where parenting for faith can flourish.
- *Parenting as a Church Leader* (BRF, 2020) explores the unique challenges of parenting while also leading a church, and builds a set of simple tools and approaches to help leaders and their families flourish.
- *Babies and Toddlers: Nurturing your child's spiritual life* (BRF, 2021) is for parents and carers of 0–3-year-olds, wherever they are on their faith journey, to help them help their babies and toddlers connect with God. On the website you will find video-based resources for churches to use to accompany the book.

Rachel Turner has also written *Comfort in the Darkness* (BRF, 2016), a collection of retellings of Bible stories exploring God's character and promises that helps parents grow peace, confidence and an understanding of who God is in their children.

You can find these and other useful books and resources at parentingforfaith.org/resources.

Plan a get together

You may want to schedule a regular get together, or an evening after a few months, to catch up and share news of how people are getting on.

Encourage families to link up

You could encourage your parents to link up with a one or two of the other families to intentionally support, encourage and learn from each other as they carry on the journey.

Keep in touch and be part of the Parenting for Faith community

We'd love to stay in touch with you and help you as you work with parents in your church and continue in this journey.

We'd also like to tell you upcoming events and keep you informed about developments within Parenting for Faith, including webinars designed to equip children and youth leaders, online courses and Church Leaders as Parents days, aimed at supporting church leaders as they parent in their unique context. You can see more at parentingforfaith.org/vision.

There's several ways you can keep in touch:

- **join our email newsletter** – sign up at parentingforfaith.org/email
- **follow us on Facebook** – facebook.com/parentingforfaithBRF
- **follow us on Twitter** – twitter.com/godconnected
- **follow us on Instagram** – [@parentingforfaithbrf](https://www.instagram.com/parentingforfaithbrf)
- **follow our podcasts** – parentingforfaith.org/podcast

Parenting for Faith is also committed to equipping children's, youth and church leaders to equip, inspire and support parents and carers who are parenting for faith. There are several ways we do this:

- we host monthly webinars – Facebook Live events – for all those involved in children's, youth or family ministry
- we host annual retreats for children, youth and family leaders called 'The Forge'
- in partnership with Cliff College, we run a Cliff College Certificate in Parenting for Faith, both online and in person.

For more information about any of these, see parentingforfaith.org/events-and-training, or check out the events on our Facebook page.