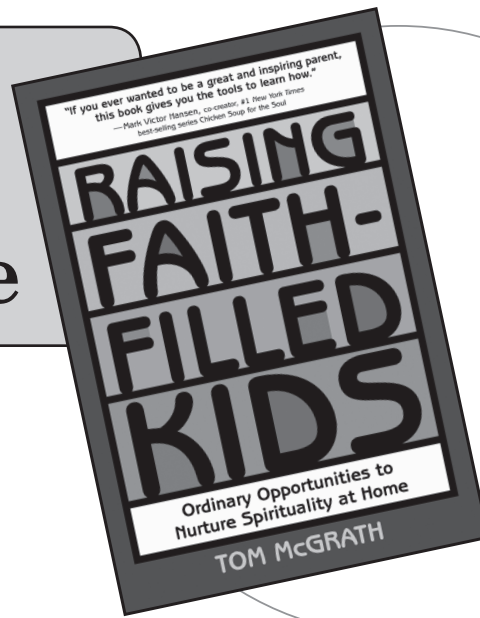


How to Show Your Children What God Is Like



Use a variety of images to point to God. The Bible describes God in many ways: a voice coming from the clouds, one who sits on a mighty throne, a still, small voice in the wind, a mother hen gathering her chicks, a jealous husband, a caring shepherd. None of these images totally captures God, who is beyond nationality, beyond male and female, beyond any idea or image we can conjure up. All are clues, and the broader and more varied the repertoire of images for God we stock our children's heads with, the more they'll know about God.

Familiarize your children with Bible stories. There are excellent renditions of the classic stories that have not been sanitized and "tamed." The stories are rough and wild. That tells us something about God too.

Stop a minute to think about what traits you especially want to convey to your children, and think about what qualities you might be expressing instead. God is surely more than we can ever portray, and our children will go on (we hope) to have their own rich relationship with God, who is beyond all understanding. But never forget that you're the first and foremost person to give them clues to just who this awesome God is.

Use religious art. What images do you have on your walls? Do they present an engaging and challenging vision of God and God's works? To find images that appeal to you and convey the wonder and mystery of God, you may need to expand your search. Don't be locked into standard images; rather, embrace images of God and other religious art that emerge from other cultures.