

Your Four-Year-Old's Growth

Four-year-olds are ready for everything! They soak up the world of knowledge and seem to have boundless energy and drive. To foster your child's spiritual growth, practice several of the suggested activities every day.

Mental (Know)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- enjoys being read to—especially “reading” picture books over and over
- distinguishes between reality and fantasy
- pronounces most sounds and words correctly; recognizes words that rhyme
- tells and recalls stories (both true and fanciful)
- shares his/her thoughts in conversation; speaks in 6-9 word sentences; uses 1500-3000 different words
- follows more complex instructions
- recites the alphabet; counts ten or more objects; knows numerals 0-9; correctly identifies primary colors
- wants to help make decisions and plan some activities
- recognizes that: God created everything—including him/her; God is in charge—and to be obeyed; God gave the Bible; Jesus died to forgive the sins of others; God wants him/her to attend church

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Continue *Daily Blessing Time*: read a Bible story together, sing a simple praise song, pray for family and friends.
- Take note of subjects that really interest your child (music, animals, cars, houses, etc.) and provide opportunities to learn more about them.
- Memorize age-appropriate Bible verses together.
- Endeavor to walk in the Spirit every moment of the day—God's enabling grace, energy, and wisdom will sustain you.
- Take field trips to the zoo, museums, and special events.
- Communicate that the Bible is God's instruction manual that tells how God wants His people to live.
- Encourage your child to always tell the truth.
- Make church-time special. Ensure that your child's church experiences are positive and that he/she learns about God each week.
- Encourage him/her to learn your home address and parents' first and last names.
- As you go about daily routines together, talk about who God is, what He is like, and what He does.
- Pray for your child's spiritual receptivity, mental development, and enjoyment of learning.



Emotional (Feel)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- is usually friendly, gregarious, and very talkative
- senses the difference between right and wrong, good and bad
- begins to enjoy and appreciate friendships outside the family
- likes to please friends and wants to be like them; adopts the interests, values, and opinions of peers
- becomes somewhat demanding, displaying his/her innate selfishness
- swings between emotional highs and lows (from joy and laughter to tantrums)
- shows more independence; wants to be increasingly self-reliant
- expresses sensitivity for the feelings of others
- shows a special fondness for the parent of the opposite gender
- is increasingly aware of his/her place in the family and the world

Spiritual Growth Activities

- As you establish daily routines and maintain a weekly schedule, your child's confidence and responsibility will noticeably increase.
- Carefully monitor your child's exposure to various media—avoid violent, crude, and sensual programs.
- Foster positive relationships by inviting his/her friends into your home for playtime, snacks, etc.
- During challenging moments with your child, maintain a calm spirit. Embrace God's strength and peace as you deal with the situation.
- Encourage your child to talk about his/her feelings and moods—and why they may change.
- Give him/her opportunities to make simple choices—what to wear, what to eat for snacks, etc.
- Teach your child to say “please” and “thank you” whenever appropriate.
- Make meals a time to teach and reinforce: good manners, positive discussions, and family harmony.
- Frequently tell (and demonstrate) how much you love and respect him/her.
- Pray for your child's emotional development, childhood friendships, and family relationships.



Physical (Do)

Four-Year-Old's Abilities

- enjoys physical activity—running, jumping, climbing
- shows the balance and coordination of an adult: can hop, stand on tiptoes, do somersaults
- likes to play simple board and card games
- brushes teeth; gets dressed and undressed without assistance
- takes care of his/her own toilet needs
- draws with more precision and detail; copies simple shapes and patterns
- enjoys singing, dancing, and acting
- uses a fork and spoon
- creates complex, 3-dimensional structures with blocks, etc.
- is aware of gender differences between boys and girls
- takes things apart and puts them back together

Spiritual Growth Activities

- Strive to maintain a Christlike role model in your words, actions, and habits. Identify weak areas and invite a trusted friend to keep you accountable.
- Encourage or assist your child to finish what he/she starts.
- Establish and reinforce the principle of obeying God and parents.
- Expose your child to a broad range of activities that encourage discovery of his/her God-given talents.
- Establish reasonable rules for behavior, apply them consistently, and explain the consequences of obeying and disobeying.
- Acknowledge your child's achievements and milestones; affirm him/her accordingly—especially in front of others.
- Plan for 30 or more minutes of active exercise or play each day.
- Assign appropriate tasks that he/she can perform; give praise when each is completed successfully.
- Act out Bible stories and your child's favorite fairy tales.
- Expect your child to clean up and put things away after play sessions.
- Pray for your child's safety, health, and for his/her continued physical development.



