

Connecting a child's personality to Jesus

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13

A child's natural bent or personality gives clues on how to approach spiritual training. Gary Smalley used animals to describe the personalities though there are other common terms for them. Each type has strengths and weaknesses.

Playful otter (Popular/sanguine)

This optimistic child loves to make friends, play, and talk.

Nurture strengths

- Teach Jesus as a true friend and build a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Keep devotions fun. Provide a variety of learning experiences.
- Look for fun in lives of Bible people (Esther won a beauty contest, Peter fished, Paul traveled, Noah lived with animals, and Zaccheus climbed a tree).
- Buy a Bible with pictures and activities.
- Talk about Jesus' plans for a heavenly party.
- Find fun church programs for them.

Help them overcome weaknesses

- Encourage setting and follow goals.
- Encourage thinking before speaking.

Lion (Powerful/choleric)

This natural born leader sets goals and likes directing activities.

Nurture strengths

- Explain God's purpose and plan for salvation.
- Read Bible stories about leaders (Paul, King David, and Judge Deborah).
- Let them choose devotion books and Christian videos for family time.
- Let them lead devotions.
- Buy a Bible and matching journal.

Help them overcome weaknesses

- Encourage listening, thanking others, and being considerate.
- Let older children see problems of leaders, such as the kings' terrible consequences of disobeying God.

Beaver (Perfect/melancholy)

This detailed, organized child does things right and completes tasks, but may be pessimistic.

Nurture strengths

- Teach God's truths and sense of justice and right.
- Be consistent with time and devotions.
- Teach Bible stories that show right from wrong (sin in Eden, the flood, and the parable of the talents).
- Explore truths of salvation and Bible facts about Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Help child choose a Bible with built in references or glossary.
- Encourage your child to journal.

Help them overcome weaknesses

- Encourage child to accept others and not be judgmental.
- Promote forgiveness.

Golden retriever (Peacemaker/phlegmatic)

This sensitive peacemaker recalls jokes and helps others relax.

Nurture strengths

- Teach God's love and forgiveness. Examine how Jesus answered divisive questions.
- Share your relationship with Jesus. Let them see Jesus as part of the family.
- Dwell on stories of compassion (Jesus healing others, the Good Samaritan, and Joseph's family reunion).
- Use John 3:16 to show that Jesus saves people because He loves them.
- Help your child serve others.
- Teach about the Holy Spirit.
- Use a concordance to find verses on peace.

Help them overcome weaknesses

- Encourage completing commitments and not procrastinating.
- Understand your child desires harmony. Help them understand they cannot solve everything but they can pray for peace.