

Talking To Our Children About

GOD Temple Beth Sholom Religious School

1 TALK! Studies show that almost all children by the age of six have some developed concept of God. There are no right answers, and our tradition doesn't have one fixed idea of what God, "is."

2 TELL STORIES. Stories encourage children to form concepts of character. Tell your own stories and experiences. Use materials we send home from TBS. Talk with us—we can suggest materials to reinforce your child(ren)'s curiosity.

3 RECOGNIZE WONDER AND EXPLORATION! Our world is filled with God's presence—help your child(ren) pause and recognize the specialness of their lives and our world. Prayer is one key way we do this.

4 CELEBRATE CHALLENGES. Challenges are good (most of the time)! Do not be defensive if your child(ren) presents an idea that is different than yours—children test boundaries to determine what they believe. Thinking children—especially once they enter into adolescence—will challenge our religious ideas. Celebrate their challenges—dialogue helps us grow educationally and spiritually.

5 LEARN GOOD ANSWERS / SHY AWAY FROM "CANNED" ANSWERS. There are no definitive answers to difficult questions—in many ways the conversation is the most important piece. What is key is that your child(ren) sees how you are also challenged with these ideas. There are great books to help with talking about God, too:

- Teaching Your Children About God by David J. Wolpe
- God's Paintbrush and In God's Name by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
- When Children Ask About God by Rabbi Harold Kushner
- I Have Some Questions About God edited by Joel Grishaver
- Because Nothing Looks Like God by Rabbi Lawrence & Karen Kushner
- The Soul Bird by Michael Snunit
- Old Turtle, Douglas Wood
- Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, Douglas Wood

God dwells wherever we let God in.. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotsk

Pieces adapted from Rabbi David Wolpe's teachings of ways to talk to children about God.