



THEMATIC OVERVIEW

*A time of learning, discussion, and prayer as we explore how to parent in the unique and not-so-unique challenges of a pandemic.*

*As a Grace Group, we will explore together some of parents' biggest questions and how to navigate them by God's grace. Tune in to gain tools and tips for having new conversations with your children with people who are 'in-process' and not pretending to be experts.*

THE EXAMEN

*A historic practice of prayerful reflection adapted by All Souls staff and to be introduced during Lent.*

RESOURCES

[Faith in an Anxious World](#)

[No Drama Discipline](#)

[Connected Families](#)

## Welcome + Opening Prayer

## Reflective Parenting vs. Reactive Parenting

*See the back side of this page.*

## Discussion

- When do you become aware there is "shark music" playing in your internal headphones, making it more likely that you will parent reactively? Do you notice some consistent triggers? How might you minimize those triggers, or "change the track" when the shark music plays?
- When you think of God, do you imagine Him as the kind of person who asks questions? Why or why not?
- Imagine a recent parenting situation. Practice the three questions— why, how, what. How might this have changed the situation? What obstacles still exist to using this reflective method?

## During Lent: 5 Minutes of Reflection each day in 5 Steps

1. **Ask for light:** a step that will involve a candle centerpiece in the Lent Kit, essentially as a tactile way to help us become aware of God's presence to us and our need for his light to navigate life, to be reoriented in our disorientation.
2. **Give thanks for the day:** in one hand, hold what you are thankful for today, what gave you joy, what was beautiful and good. Did you give someone joy today?
3. **Grieve the ways you've hurt others or been hurt today:** in your other hand, hold what caused you pain, anger, or sadness today-- something you did, left undone, or was done to you...
4. **Pray your Gratitudes and your Grievs to God:** bring your hands together and close to your chest-- what is God's response to you as you bring your gratitudes and your griefs to him?
5. **Look toward tomorrow:** hold your hands open, what from today is God inviting you to hold onto and let go of as you look toward tomorrow? Is there something you are being invited to do tomorrow after reflecting on today?

## The Take-Away

*What is one thing I want to remember? What is one thing I want to do or do differently?*

## Reflective Parenting vs. Reactive Parenting

Discipline (n.): to train or to teach. One who is being trained or being taught is a *disciple*.

- How does God train or teach us? How does God parent us in our discipleship?
- Genesis 3:1–13 “Where are you?” and “Who told you?”
- Jonah 4:1–11 “Do you do well to be angry?”
- Haggai 1:1–15 “Is it a time...?”
- Matthew 6:28 “Why are you anxious...?”
- John 1:38 “What are you looking for?”

What are we trying to teach our children? How can we most effectively communicate what we want to get across? Too often, we respond to misbehavior as if consequences were the goal of discipline. Sometimes natural consequences result from a child’s decision, and the lesson is taught without our needing to do much. But there are usually more effective and loving ways to help our kids understand what we’re trying to communicate than to immediately hand out one-size-fits-all consequences.

By asking ourselves these three questions—why, what, and how—when our children do something we don’t like, we can more easily shift out of autopilot mode. That means we’ll be much more likely to respond in a way that’s effective in stopping the behavior in the short term while also teaching bigger, long-lasting life lessons and skills that build character and prepare kids for making good decisions in the future.

Let’s look more closely at how these three questions might help us respond to the four-year-old who slaps you while you’re emailing. When you hear the smack and feel the tiny, hand-shaped imprint of pain on your back, it may take you a moment to calm down and avoid simply reacting. It’s not always easy, is it? In fact, our brains are programmed to interpret physical pain as a threat, which activates the neural circuitry that can make us more reactive and put us in a “fight” mode. So it takes some effort, sometimes intense effort, to maintain control and practice No-Drama Discipline. We have to override our primitive reactive brain when this happens. Not easy. (By the way, this gets much harder to do if we’re sleep deprived, hungry, overwhelmed, or not prioritizing self-care.) This pause between reactive and reflective is the beginning of choice, intention, and skillfulness as a parent.

So as quickly as possible, you want to try to pause and ask yourself the three questions. Then you can see much more clearly what’s going on in your interaction with your child. Every situation is different and depends on many different factors, but the answers to the questions might look something like this:

1. Why did my child act this way?
2. What lesson do I want to teach in this moment?
3. How can I best teach this lesson?

Examples from No Drama Discipline.

What are common barriers to Reflective Parenting how to address them?

[“Shark Music”](#)

No time for my own healthy practice of reflection