

“HACKING” CONVERSATIONS ON SENSITIVE TOPICS WITH CHILDREN

Approaching conversations about sensitive topics with our children can be challenging. Many fears and questions stir when we think about communicating about polarized or tough topics with kids. Questions like: What is an appropriate age to engage my children? OR How do I explain hard or serious subjects without destroying innocence?

Need some help getting started? Here is a helpful way to “H.A.C.K.” conversations on sensitive topics with your children.

H - HONESTY:

You don't have to talk about things that aren't age-appropriate, but you need to be honest. For example, in speaking about the transgender issue you might say, “God created us to be either boys or girls. Sometimes people get confused and act like they're someone different than how God made them.” You may also say, “some of this is difficult to explain or understand sometimes but you can always ask me questions and we will figure out the truth about this subject together.”

A - ANTICIPATION:

Consider real-life scenarios where they might encounter some of these issues, and talk about them. Discuss how they might respond so that they can be ready to face that challenge. For example, a young junior high boy came home one day from school and shared with his parents that another student was reading a book that had inappropriate sexual content. The other student was explaining with detail what was happening, which of course sparked a lot of questions for the young boy. His parents were able to talk through that scenario and then walk him through other potential scenarios of seeing or hearing about sensitive or complex subjects. Arming him with ways to navigate difficult scenarios helped his confidence and conviction for God's truth.

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C - CONVERSATION:

Don't make it a lecture! Speaking about tough topics becomes less awkward when it's brought up as you're going about life - such as over dinner or while driving. One of the greatest blessings your children will have is an open line of communication to talk to you about anything - big or small - challenging or simple. Keep the conversations going and encourage your children to ask questions about tough topics when they are ready. Give them permission to say anything without fear of you losing your cool or lecturing them. Allow them a safe space to process and work through issues with gentle guidance toward the loving truth found in a relationship with Jesus.

K - KINDNESS:

We want to cultivate both grace and truth in our children. When you speak about people who are involved in something with which you disagree, pray for them with your children. Look for opportunities to demonstrate God's love even while you hold firmly to what the Bible says. The best way to lead your children to kindness and truth is to model it yourself, as they are always watching and processing how you respond and treat others.

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