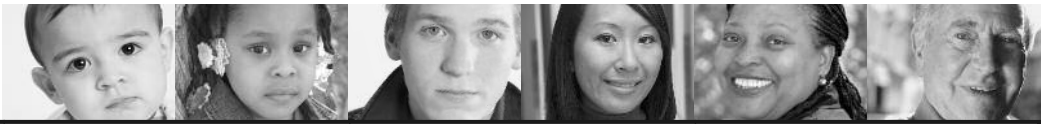


Life Span Development Chart



Age Level	Brain and Intellectual Development	Psycho-Social Development	Faith & Moral Development	Role of Church	Nurturing Discipleship
Zero to Twos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brain cell connections stimulated through sensory experience and interaction with the environment Actions first based on reflexes Developing object constancy (knowledge that objects and persons still exist when not seen), and attention and memory Images and narratives incorporated into their developing worldview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on primary caregivers Infants do not experience selves as separate beings Toddlers developing notion of separate self Parallel play: alongside other children rather than with them Yearn for and actively seek relationship and approval from caregivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Trust</i> from experience of safety makes <i>hope</i> possible <i>Autonomy/awareness</i> of self provides for development of <i>personal will</i> Adults as concrete representations of God No concept of right and wrong Desire to please primary caregivers Testing trustworthiness of world through touch and mouthing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A loving, trustworthy place to build a foundation for trusting God A place to "oversee and overhear" faith and encounter religious symbols and images A place for parenting education and support for primary caregivers A place of advocacy for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently, expediently, and lovingly meet needs. Create safe spaces for exploration through freedom and boundaries. Provide patterns, repetition, and routine. Communicate joy over their presence. Sing, talk, read, and play to/with child. Celebrate independence: "No!" and "Mine!" indicate a developing sense of self.
Preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued formation of brain connections; nerve cells being insulated Developing ability to mentally represent an object that is not present Unrestrained imagination: confuses real and imaginary (This is not lying!) Memory growth and language explosion give ability to mentally organize experiences and tell stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to distinguish own needs from others' (This is not selfishness!) Developing skill of setting personal boundaries Beginning to relate to adults outside the family Beginning to play <i>with</i> others Beginning to take initiative Curious—lots of questions Aware of feelings Developing gender identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Initiative</i> to explore the faith leads to sense of <i>purpose</i> God is powerful, mysterious and potentially frightening—images and stories of angry God have life-long negative effects "Big people" are good and obeyed to avoid punishment or receive reward Developing empathy Imitates and role-plays adult religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A safe place with safe adults A place of belonging A place where I find models of authenticity and integrity A place to experience religious concepts through rhythms, rituals, symbols, and gestures of faith A place of advocacy for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome curiosity and questions that move <i>the</i> faith to <i>my</i> faith. Be vigilant about safety (background checks, two-person rule). Clap, jump, dance, stomp... MOVE! Provide clothing and props for unstructured play around Bible stories. Honor their interpretations. Tell stories in which fear is transformed into hope (e.g. Daniel).
Younger Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brain connections being pruned in response to external experiences Differentiating real from imaginary Know what they know but can't reason why Readily learn facts Can classify, relate, and order items Can form and use mental symbols and images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relational play Relational skills develop through group experiences Increasing empathy Self as separate from family, but family intertwined into self-understanding Sensitive to approval and disapproval of adults Eager to be accepted by peers Enjoy group work Aware of others' feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Industry</i> and success lead to <i>competence</i> God as a superhero Stories and symbols taken literally Beginning to use faith language Beginning to see consequences of actions/understand the significance of intent Highly operative sense of justice/morality Wonder and connectedness with creation and creatures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place to belong and to succeed A place to offer my gifts A place that is just and actively seeks justice for others A place where the Creator is honored and creation is respected A place to learn the language, rituals, symbols and rhythms of faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome contribution and provide opportunities for success within the family and church family. Provide opportunities for service and advocacy for people in need, creation, and animals. Encourage retelling of Bible stories through role play, drama, news reports, or other creative approaches. Offer noncompetitive learning and social activities.
Older Elementary/ Early Adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical reasoning, practical thinkers Can understand abstractions, and space and time Increasing attention span and long-term memory Active/observational learners who learn well through projects, experiments, and games Developing critical/reflective thinking Capable of scientific inquiry—want proof behind information Developing individual ideas, skills, interests, and talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased perspective taking/great empathy for those who suffer Peers becoming more important; friends and independence superseding family, yet still dependent on family—love/hate relationship Cliques/close attachments of same gender Important to belong to a group Self-identity tied to performance—may be anxious, worried, and competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving into <i>identity</i> formation, which makes <i>fidelity</i> possible God at work in systems that shape the world God as creator and friend who cares about me God's works are puzzles to investigate Acts to please others; obeys fixed social and religious rules Personal values not distinguished from group values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place to serve and work with others to change the world A place to hang out with friends A place to find real life heroes/heroines A safe place to investigate and explore faith and life My church where I can profess my faith A place of advocacy for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give opportunities for leadership. Practice choice-making. Engage in service projects. Tell stories of contemporary and historic heroes/heroines of the faith. Provide respite from pressure and competition of school. Introduce Bible maps, history and chronology, and literary genre. Explore themes using Bible concordances and encyclopedias. Make connections between Bible stories and real-life.
Adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hormones, judgment, and body are in flux Raw emotions in overdrive Sense of indestructibility/immortality—prefrontal cortex, which provides judgment, not yet developed Shortened attention span Abstract conceptualization, logical-hypothetical thought/deductive reasoning and critical thinking Experiential and experimental learners Understand the meaning of symbols Aware of multiplicity of perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical changes—tiredness, moodiness, and concerns Adopt heroes and emulate adult role models Seeking independent identity Beginning to differentiate personal values from those of the group Diminishing reliance on family and communities (possible rebellion/conflict) Preoccupation with self ("Everyone's watching me.") and extreme sense uniqueness Want mentor relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Identify formation</i> as foundation for <i>fidelity</i> God as confidante and guide; concerned with personal moral behavior; not always clear where God is at work Grappling with big questions as part of coming to own faith Actions based on values; model heroes/heroines and friends Strong emotional responses to social issues, causes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place where I can find mentors in the faith A place where faith meets real life A place where my parents can find support with other parents of adolescents A place where I learn to listen to God through classic spiritual disciplines A place of advocacy for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in action-reflection learning where actions are reflected on in light of beliefs and beliefs are unpacked in light of experiences. Introduce basic biblical interpretation skills/study tools. Welcome difficult questions and explore various perspectives. Invite participation in traditional rituals. Develop new expressions of beliefs and rituals of faith.
Young Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brain at full maturity at mid-20s or later Pragmatic, systematic thinkers Stress interferes with learning Move from acquiring knowledge to applying knowledge Prefer problem-centered learning and learning that has practical applications to daily life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving family of origin Developing long-term personal commitments Seeking to establish core circle of friends May begin family of generation Loneliness is a concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the capacity for <i>intimacy</i> makes <i>love</i> possible Truth is considered partly an interpersonal, subjective creation Seeking spirituality vs. organized religion Engaging in critical reflection on beliefs and examination of assumptions Often embrace new value system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A family that will walk with me as I seek answers A place that welcomes me into adulthood and celebrates my transitions A place that remains secure and that I can come back to later in life A place to experience fellowship and engage in ministry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat them as adults and allow them to move past former definitions. Honor their gifts by letting them move into leadership roles. Welcome their ideas. Allow for exploration of life. Trust them. Engage in studies that connect faith with the real issues of life.
Middle Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-directed learners Respect for "experts" Learning most effective when it builds on previous knowledge Some decline in long-term memory Transition to midlife and no longer being young—suspended between past and future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social clock—expectations about vocation, marriage and family Relationships change: children come and grow; marriages go through changes; losses often experienced Need to feel significant to others/contribute to the world "Sandwich generation" between care for aging parents and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Generativity</i> leads to a sense of having a legacy Religious affiliation seems to correlate with happiness Prayer and worship provide coping mechanisms and competence to face life's difficulties Personal ethics important; beginning to see nuances vs. "right and wrong" thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place where I find meaning and discern the value of my life A place where I find strength for the journey and hope for the day A place where I am allowed to pursue spiritual growth on my own terms A place where I find support for new directions in life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect together on the meaning of life. Celebrate contributions to church, family, and community. Offer support groups and rituals for key transitions of life. Explore together moral/social issues, considering how views may have changed over the years. Be a community of co-learners and co-teachers.
Older Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some increase in intellectual abilities (reading, writing, verbal skills); Some decline in reasoning, processing and motor skills Use visual images and mental pictures Prefer self-paced and problem-centered learning Frequently engage in life review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At risk of stereotyping by society and experiencing ageism Loss of significant relationships Possible loss emotional and financial support and ability to provide for self Facing physical limitations and mortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on a life lived with <i>integrity</i> leads to <i>wisdom</i> that benefits others May talk about self to answer question "Did I live well?" Commonly spiritual leaders in many cultures Prayer and Scripture reading associated with sense of well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place for friendships, old and new A place where I find advocacy and help for challenges of aging A place to grieve A place to find purpose, be affirmed and valued A place to share my life stories/wisdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect continued growth. Treat them as fully human/fully adult, holding them accountable and providing opportunities to serve. Plan daytime activities. Make things accessible. Provide good lighting and acoustics.