

BEING GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

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This week's devotion talked about the times children intentionally copy those around them. However, as parents we know that children often unintentionally copy people too. To our pride or sometimes horror, we've seen them act just like us.



The one we truly want our children to emulate is God. However, copying God's behaviors can seem difficult for children because they can't see him, which is why it's important for us to focus on living a life filled with "compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" ([Colossians 3:12](#)). There are many different ways to live out these qualities; here are a few suggestions to help you get started:

1. **Create a safe space for them to admit when they make mistakes, and encourage them to do the same when others unintentionally hurt them.** When your children come to you and ask for your forgiveness, give it graciously. Teach them with your words and actions how they should act when someone apologizes to them. And give them the opportunity to practice by owning up to your mistakes and asking for their forgiveness.
2. **Make it a habit to step into their shoes and see things from their perspective.** For example, if your child is having friend issues and starts yelling at you, you could say something like "I know you've been fighting with your friends and you're taking your stress out on me. While it's not fair to get mad at me for this—and you do have to stop treating me this way—I'm not going to be mad at you, and you're not in trouble for yelling at me."
3. **Ask how you can bless them.** At the start of every week ask your child, "How can I bless you this week?" Then, if you are able, do it—even if it's inconvenient. And encourage them to ask the same question of you. The more you do this, the more you'll begin to see ways to bless them even before they ask.
4. **Model compassion for others.** "You must follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). Encourage your children to notice the people around them. Do some of the kids at their school always seem to be left out of recess activities? Perhaps your child can invite that person to join in the fun. Let them help you choose which charities you donate money to. Encourage them to donate some of their allowance to a charity of their choice, or get them to use it to buy a gift for someone.

Finally, remember to be gracious to yourself and your child. Both of you are not yet perfect the way God is perfect ([Matthew 5:48](#)). However, the more you try to think of others before yourself—and the more you act with gentleness, kindness, patience, humility, and compassion—the easier it will get. And the easier it will be for your child to copy behaviors that you're happy to see in them.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article [What It Means to Love One Another](#)

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