

When Children Ask Why

By Jolene Roehlkepartain

Children often bombard parents with why-why-why questions. Instead of being exasperated, work with your child's curiosity to bring you closer together.

For

Young Family

Season

Fall

Needed

Bible, plain paper, washable markers, wireless device with Internet access

Prepare in Advance

Mark your Bible at Proverbs 1:5-7 and Proverbs 18:15.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God, guide us as we ask questions to learn more. Amen.

2. Ask someone to read aloud Proverbs 1:5 from your Bible (or see the text below). Then have another person read aloud Proverbs 18:15. Discuss: *Why do you think the Bible says learning is important? What are some good ways to learn about new things?*

Proverbs 1:5

Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,

Proverbs 18:15

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

3. Set out plain paper and washable markers. Ask each person to draw a picture of something they wonder about, such as how big was the largest dinosaur or why the sky is blue.
4. After everyone finishes, ask one person to show his or her drawing. Ask questions to help you find out what he or she wonders about.
5. Use the Internet to find an answer to that person's question. For example, use a search engine to find out how big the largest dinosaur was. Note that sometimes you'll find more than one answer. For example, the U.S. Geological Survey says the largest complete dinosaur was the Brachiosaurus (see [Dinosaur Sizes](#)). Wikipedia lists large dinosaurs according to height and weight and type (see [Dinosaur Size Chart](#)).
6. Once you find an answer to the person's question, have another family member show his or her drawing and ask questions to find out what he or she wonders about. Then research the answer. Repeat this process for each family member.



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7. When children ask Why?, consider these strategies:

- Instead of answering your child's question, turn the question back: "Why do you think that happened?" See what your child has to say. Avoid creating a relationship where your child asks all the questions and you provide all the answers. It's important for everyone to ask questions, to state opinions, and to provide answers.
- Give simple answers. With the Internet, it's easy to overwhelm a child with too much information. Offer one simple answer, leaving the door open for children to ask for more information later.
- Be honest. If you don't know the answer, say so. Tell your child that even when you don't know an answer, there are ways to find it. Work together to find answers on the Internet or at your local library. Tap into other people's expertise as well. For example, one child wanted to know more about how car engines work. The parent knew a neighbor who worked on cars and asked the neighbor to tell her and her daughter about what was under the hood of a car.
- Take time to listen. Sometimes when children ask Why?, they are trying to keep the conversation going. Children love to spend time with their families, and they love to talk with them. Make time to listen and to talk.

8. Variation: Do further research at your local library. For example, if your child is interested in dinosaurs, check out books about dinosaurs to learn more.

