



How to Have Heart-To-Heart Talks



“Daddy, can we talk?”

Upon hearing this question parents may wonder, *Is this a ploy to avoid bedtime?* Or it could create concern that something awful may be revealed. But having faith conversations and heart-to-heart talks can be as normal as eating every day.

When questions like this are asked, how can parents maximize heart-to-heart talks? First, lay down your phone, make eye contact, and help your child feel as comfortable as possible as she shares the question that is on her mind.

Here are a few tips as we raise and disciple D6 kids regarding heart-to-heart talks:

- 1. Have these talks often.** It is our desire as parents of younger children that they will feel comfortable talking with us now and in the future.
- 2. Don't be anxious.** Most of us have had conversations with family members, friends, and co-workers take a wrong turn, bring negativity, or end up hurting the relationship. If conversations with your kids become normal, no matter the topic, expect the outcome to be good.
- 3. Constantly remind your child that they should come to you when they need to talk about issues of faith and life.** One way to practice this is to talk to them about your faith, prayers, and spiritual growth.
- 4. Ask good questions throughout the week.** Deuteronomy 6 teaches us to impress God's Word on our children as they wake up, walk along the way, and go to sleep. Ask questions every now and then about the topics they are learning in church. It doesn't have to be trivia or an oral exam. As you are driving down the road, you could say something like, “Hey, on Sunday at church we learned about the resurrection of Jesus. What do you think it was like for his friends to see Him again?” The free SPLINK resource (d6family.com/splink) is also a great tool with questions you can ask your kids each week.



5. **Give your child undivided attention.** This can be difficult since we are very busy people, and many times their questions come at a time at which you didn't plan. Turn off anything electronic, close the door, look them in the eyes and listen. Try to give your child the same attention God gives you when you pray.
6. **Finish well.** After you listen to your child, give an appropriate response. This can be a hug, a plan for next time, a prayer, a Bible verse, advice, a story from your childhood, discipline, bringing others into the conversation, and more. However you chose to end the conversation, your goal is to help, but more importantly, to set the stage for future conversations like this as they grow up. We want these heart connections to be strong. That way, when we do have conversations about painful topics, our hearts are connected. Both you and your child know that your mutual love can survive difficult times.
7. **Keep it private.** In order to build trust for your child to have the confidence to ask difficult and potentially embarrassing questions, don't talk about this publicly. It should not be used as an illustration in a sermon or class. And it certainly should not be referenced in a humorous manner to friends or coworkers. It will break trust if your child hears that their private conversation with you has been shared with others.