

Faith Assessment

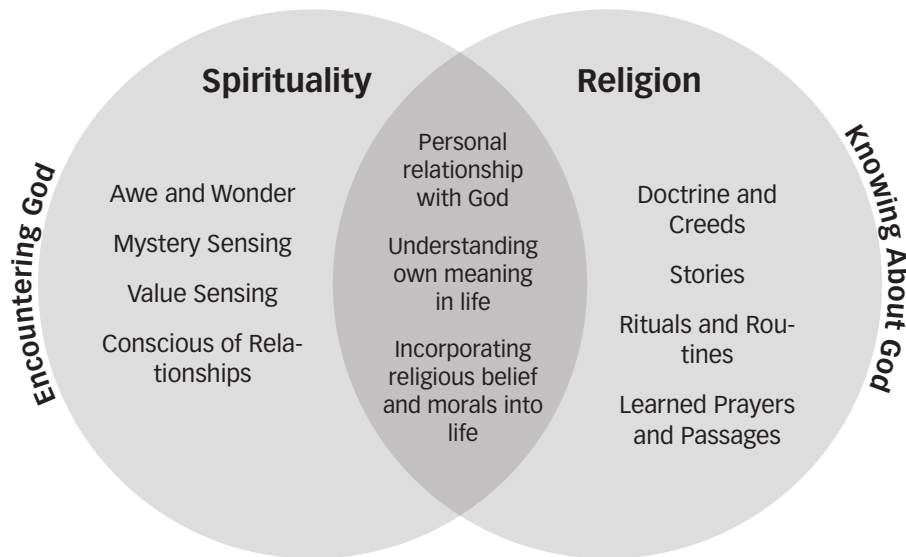
By Debby Carter. Reprinted from *CEE*, December 2009.

Assessing the faith of children may be as simple as listening to what they talk about as they process the information they have heard from you or from Bible stories and documenting their activities to show a God impression, or it may be as complex as separating definitions of *faith*, *religion*, and *spirituality*. Many types of faith assessments have resulted in their own books or research articles as interest in this field of assessing a child's faith continues to grow.

Assessing children's belief in and relationship to the heavenly Father may be as simple as asking those children to express what they know about God, for they are notorious repeaters of what they have been told.

Documenting what children create through pictures or anecdotes may demonstrate their level of awareness of God's role in their lives. (See the diagram by Helm, Berg, and Scranton below.)

Recording how children treat others shows how those children transfer information and whether they have a heart for God and others.



—Venn diagram from Helm, Berg, and Scranton 2008, 217

The chart on the following pages offers a synthesis of preliminary benchmarks in the area of learning/thinking (knowledge), actions/doing (behavior), and valuing/feeling (disposition). Watching, a fourth benchmark, comes out of David Kolb's "Model of Learning" (1984), which includes reflective observation as an adaptation of Urban Holmes's "Phenomenology of Prayer" (1980). Early educators can easily incorporate watching as a type of child assessment during reflection times in the daily classroom schedule or during the time that children are engaging in a godly-play learning center.

Faith Assessment

Who God Is

	WATCHING What I observe and internalize	THINKING What I learn, know, and can tell	DOING What I do and how I behave	FEELING What I choose because I value ...
God is real.	Others talk to God, and I can copy them.	I tell someone that God is in heaven or with me in this room.	God wants me to go to church.	I can pray (talk) to God and with Him.
God and Jesus love me.	Someone tells me a story of Jesus' love, and I listen and think about it.	I will read books that promote feelings of trust, love, and peace.	I will find a place where I can be still and quiet so that I can reflect and imagine.	God wants me to talk with Him so I will spontaneously pray.
Jesus loves me.	I will look at pictures of Jesus in books or on posters.	I will know that Jesus loves me.	I will tell someone that Jesus loves me and them too; I will recite 1 John 3:1.	I will sing "Jesus loves me" from my heart.
God takes care of me.	I will watch a teacher or a friend care for others and will think about God's care.	I will say that God takes care of me when I am asked.	I will listen to a story about God told by the teacher, and I will recite 1 Peter 5:7.	I will pray learned prayers.

What God Has Done

	WATCHING What I observe and internalize	THINKING What I learn, know, and can tell	DOING What I do and how I behave	FEELING What I choose because I value ...
God created everything.	I will take nature walks and acknowledge God as Creator.	I will tell someone that God created everything.	I will recite Genesis 1:1.	I will enjoy creating things from God's world—using rocks, sticks, water, and plants—and will discover the mysteries of nature's properties.
God created me uniquely.	I will look in a mirror and see what God has made in me.	I will know that God has something for me to do for Him.	I will thank God for making me and will recite Psalm 139:1–4.	I will choose to do what God wants me to do for Him.
God gave us the Bible.	I will show intense concentration during Bible story time.	I will know that the Bible is God's whole story from beginning to end.	I will hold God's Word tenderly, read it (look at pictures in it), and retell one of God's stories from it.	I will love special Bible time and love listening to Psalm 119:1–15.

God sent His Son, Jesus.	I will look at and reflect on the manger and the cross to remind me of Jesus.	I will know that Jesus is God's Son.	I will thank God for sending Jesus. I will represent Jesus in my creative-art activities.	I will value spending time playing and imagining Jesus as God's Son and as my friend.
Jesus died for me so that I could be with God forever.	I will sit and think about Jesus.	I will state that Jesus died for me.	I will thank Jesus for dying on the cross. I will reenact the stories of Jesus' love for me.	I will choose to love Jesus by spending time in prayer with Him.
Jesus took away all my sins.	I will thank God for sending Jesus to us to save us.	I will know that God wants me to do right and not the wrong things described by teachers.	I will practice kindness to others and use nice words when I talk with them.	I will learn how to think of others more than I think of myself and will reenact kindnesses.

God's Help to Do What He Wants Me to Do

	WATCHING What I observe and internalize	THINKING What I learn, know, and can tell	DOING What I do and how I behave	FEELING What I choose because I value ...
God wants me to obey my parents.	I will focus on right behavior.	I will become aware of right and wrong.	I will recite Psalm 119:1-3.	I will enjoy obeying my parents and teachers.
God wants me to share my things with others.	I will consider how to share my things.	I will state that it is good to share.	I will share my toys.	I will willingly initiate the sharing of items.

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