



Conversation Guide: Anxiety

Parents, we want you to be able to have Christ-centered conversations with your kids about navigating anxiety. Feel free to use this *guide* below as you navigate some of the questions your kids might ask you. As always, we are here for you, partnering with you on this journey.

Talk tip: Remember to keep this a conversation. **ASK** questions and pause for their response. Create a safe environment for your child to talk. (Think: on a walk, in the yard playing ball, etc. Not interview style at the kitchen table.) Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words to say! Feel free to let this be a natural conversation that takes place over time. Kids are curious, coping, and might ask these questions over time. This is simply a guide for when your child needs to talk.

It's common for elementary-aged kids to carry anxiety over from preschool. As they grow more self-aware, they worry about different things such as friends, acceptance, the future, and new challenges.

There are three types of fears kids this age experience: separation anxiety, social anxiety, and specific phobia.

Here are a few practical tips to help you navigate this conversation:

- **Give their anxiety a name.**
 - *Asking kids to name the source of their anxiety helps to personalize and externalize their fears.*
- **Practice exposure.**
 - *Avoiding stressful situations may temporarily ease anxiety, but it's not a long-term solution- prove they can survive anxious moments.*
- **Give them tools to fight their fears.**
 - *Practice deep breathing, scripture memory, get active, and help them think about something else.*

- **Make it personal.**
 - *Because kids are watching how we handle stress.*
- **Widen the circle.**
 - *Other caring adults in their life make a big difference.*
- **Keep reminding them of God's presence.**
 - *Talk about how God is there and point out things He's made. Are you driving in the car? Talk about how God knows everything that you're doing and that He's with you. And when those worries come knocking? Assure them of God's presence, love, and care for them. If you create a culture of enjoying Jesus at all times, everywhere, it will be natural for you to point kids to Jesus when they are scared, overwhelmed, worried, or even angry. Jesus is there at those times and we have the privilege of helping kids know He is.*
 - **“So do not be afraid. I am with you.” Isaiah 41:10**
- **Help them learn God's word.**
 - *God's Word can constantly remind us of His presence and help in uncertainty. Helping your kids hide God's word in their heart is so important so they can recall these truths when their heart is anxious.*
- **Take worries to God in prayer.**
 - *This one can follow pretty naturally if you're helping your kids recognize God's presence everywhere. You can thank Jesus for pancakes for dinner, for the frogs in the pond, and the beautiful rainbow after the storm. Just as Jesus wants to hear from children about the fun things, He wants to hear about worries too. Nothing is too small for Jesus to notice. He knows it all anyway! Creating a culture of prayer in your home helps children develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus.*

Some of this information is brought to you by @parent cue. Follow them on social media or sign up online for their weekly emails for more content like this.