

EDITORIAL

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A 5 year old knows and needs to know so much. His questions assume that I am an expert in all fields. Yet in reality, despite having a Master's degree, I would hardly consider myself a master of much at all.

In a quest to find out about his world, my son's questions come flooding in.

- The ethics questions: If there was a big fire, are we allowed to drive faster than the signs say, so we can get away?
- The urban planning questions: What if there were so many cars, they couldn't all fit on the road?
- The environmental questions: What if there weren't any rubbish bins to put our rubbish in?
- The physics questions: What if the world stopped turning and the people on the other side didn't get sun anymore?
- Family planning questions: If we wanted a baby, where could we get one?
- The linguistics questions (supposedly my area of expertise): How come some people talk in another language and I don't know what they're saying?

Then there are the religious questions:

- How will God find all the boxes in the ground when He comes?
- Is God magic?
- Could God change into a car or an elephant or a chair?
- How come I can't hear God talking to me?
- What if God gets too busy and can't see me anymore?

Recently, after apparent contemplation, he asked, "How come some people call God different names?" This led to a short discussion of the fact that he gets called different names at different times: Tyson, Ty, monkey, honey, mate etc. It seemed okay then that God would have different names too. He already knew about the names *Jesus* and *God*, so I added *Father* as one who looks after us and *Saviour* as one who can save us. He was happy with that and went on with eating his dinner.

Just a couple of days later, his 3 year old sister said a simple grace before breakfast, "Dear Jesus, thank you for our food, Amen." He thought it was time to educate her regarding God's different names. "God's got lots of names, not just Jesus. He's God and Jesus and Father and Sabre."

It got me thinking about whether I do anything in particular to reveal these different aspects of God to my kids. I then extended this thought to include my work life. Do I do or say anything that helps to reveal the character of God to those around me?

I have a book that I like to refer to from time

to time called *At the name of Jesus*¹. It explores a different name for Jesus for each day of the year. Reading through the pages, a multifaceted picture of God is gradually painted. I suggest that if we have a more complete view of who Jesus is, it becomes even easier to fall in love with Him, to depend on Him, and to share Him with others in a variety of ways.

When we allow it, God uses us to reveal various aspects of Himself to different people at different times. We each have a unique life story and spiritual journey; God wants to match you with someone who needs to hear about your experience of God. We need to be willing to share our spiritual lives with our students and colleagues so that we can encourage others and point them toward God.

In an education setting teachers are supposed to have it all sorted out and know most of the answers. This perception may be overgeneralised to include spiritual matters. At times, especially the difficult times, this hinders us from sharing our real spiritual journey. The expectation for us to have it all together may prevent us from admitting that this is not always the case.

This can lead to serious consequences. Firstly, those in need of support may not feel comfortable admitting the need for help. Equally as serious, perpetuating the myth that Christians have it 'all together' sets people up for disappointment. Young people and even children need to know that it's okay to have questions about God and to struggle with faith issues. When significant adults are willing to share their real experience of God and their spiritual journey, young people have access to a broader understanding of God and how He relates to us, His children.

Young people have questions, they need to know. What are you doing to reveal aspects of God to those you are in contact with today? **TEACH**

Endnotes

¹ Hornsby, S. (1983). *At the name of Jesus*. Michigan: Chosen Books.



“God wants to match you with someone who needs to hear about your experience of God”

[Photography: Ann Stafford]