

# Religious Development of the Child

Age	Fundamental Religious Question	Characteristic Religious Gifts	Further Explanation
<b>Tot</b> Age 3-6 (Pre K – K)	<b>Who is God?</b>	Joy Contemplation/Wonder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural response even to mundane things; fascinated by reality</li> <li>• “It would never occur to tots to ask God to be with them, for it is simply understood that He is...” -<i>Catechesis of the Good Shepherd</i></li> </ul>
<b>Child</b> Age 6-9 (1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	<b>Who are we (as a human community) in relation to God?</b>	Cosmic and Moral Imagination Images/Stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a desire to see the whole and morals in relation to God as lover, not as judge</li> <li>• Images/stories are powerful, but now they love to analyze</li> </ul>
<b>Tween</b> Age 9 - 12	<b>Who am I in relationship with God?</b>	Complex Thinking Images/Stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to apply concepts concretely to their situation</li> <li>• Images/stories still powerful, but now they love to analyze</li> </ul>
<b>Teen</b> Age 13 +	<b>Who am I going to be?</b>	Social Awareness Extremely Loyal and Emotional Puberty complicates Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move from identifying themselves with family to with friends</li> <li>• Stick by friends and are moved by sentiment (parents are dumb!)</li> <li>• Very much influenced by others; religious identity can be decided on</li> </ul>

# Stages of Sexual Development

Stage	Age	Learning Challenges
Attachment	0-2	<i>Developing secure love bonds with mother/father</i> Learning to feel safe with same-sex and opposite-sex caregiver
Identification	3-5	<i>Identifying with same-sex parent</i> and establishing a healthy bond with both parents Exploring opposite-sex attraction with opposite-sex parent
Peer group belonging	6-12	<i>Belonging with same-sex peer group</i> Gender identity affirmed in peer relationships
Sexual integration	13-22	<i>Learning how to develop opposite-sex relationships</i> and channel sexual arousal and attraction Developing an integrated social and personal identity with our sexuality Learning self-master in becoming sexually chaste
Self-giving love	Adult	<i>Sexual fidelity and fruitfulness</i> Living out sexual identity in intimate relationships in family and community as celibate or married persons Being fruitful in that love by procreating and caring for offspring (natural and spiritual children) <i>Helping to shape development of others as parents and parental figures</i>