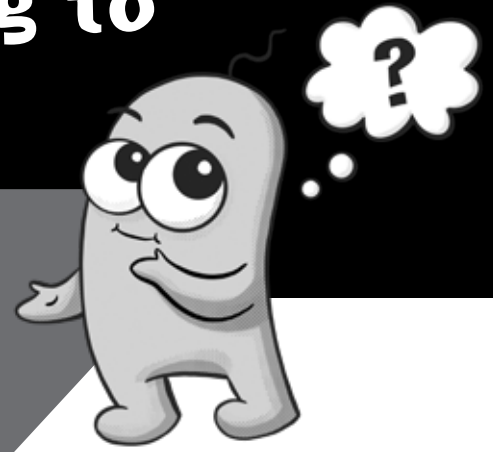


Spotlight on Responding to Children's Questions



Children often have many questions about how things work, and God and faith are topics which spark children's curiosity. Providing a safe space for student's questions, or 'wrestling' with ideas, support student's identity formation and is one of the benefits of SRE to society today.¹

Top Tips

- **Be Brief**
Keep your answer short to maintain interest and the flow of the lesson.
- **Be Biblical**
Where possible, allow children to see where your answer comes from in the Bible.
- **Be Choosy**
Some questions have more learning potential than others. Focus on questions that support student understanding, connections, and the lesson aim.
- **Be Respectful**
Be respectful of other points of view. Ground your statements as personal experiences, or from the Bible - 'I believe', 'Christians believe', 'The Bible says'. Some teachers find it helpful to imagine the parents and school principal present in the classroom.
- **Be Thoughtful**
Give yourself some time to think by acknowledging 'That's a great question.' Clarify the question, and invite the rest of the class into the discussion by asking, 'What do you think?', 'What do others think?'

Capturing Questions

Recording questions to be returned to later, is an effective way to acknowledge student's questions without disrupting the flow of the lesson.

See our **God and Me Box** page for more details.



Questions Without Clear Answers



Consider the nature of the question - is this something that children are curious about, trying to understand conceptually, or is there a real-life struggle behind it?

Some suggestions for responding -

- Provide one or two points for children to think about.
- Encourage children to pray and ask God to help them understand.
- Share a story about how you might respond (keep it brief and age-appropriate.)
- Ask the advice of another teacher, pastor or ministry leader.

¹Gross, Z., & Rutland, S. D. (2021). Special religious education in Australia and its value to contemporary society. Springer International Publishing AG.

Controversial Issues

Some questions may relate to controversial issues and it is important to be careful how a response is given.

Controversial issues may include (but are not limited to) -

Family types, gender, politics, climate change, evolution, immigration, baptism

In certain contexts -

Mining, water management, indigenous sacred sites, vegetarianism

Theological expressions may also differ among your students. Be aware and sensitive when responding. GodSpace lessons stick to core mainstream Christian beliefs.

How to Respond

For these issues, it may not be appropriate to give an answer.

Instead:

- Acknowledge the question or empathise with the student
- State that there may be different views (if relevant)
- Suggest the student discusses the question at home
- Return to the lesson



Don't allow discussion of violence, the devil, hell or evil spirits. Stick to the positive.

Acknowledging Questions

Teachers sometimes express concern that responding to questions will move the lesson too far from the curriculum and lesson aims. Students' questions show where they are at on their faith journey and should be acknowledged. Practise using the strategies above so that you can keep your lesson on track, whilst supporting students' faith development.

See our website for more fantastic resources including:

Answering Questions - Module 2 Skills for Kids' Ministry:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VameF8ewTc0&t=1s>



'Answers to Questions Children Ask' -GodSpace Resources (Website)

: <https://godspace.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Answering-Questions.pdf>

