PARENT EVENING

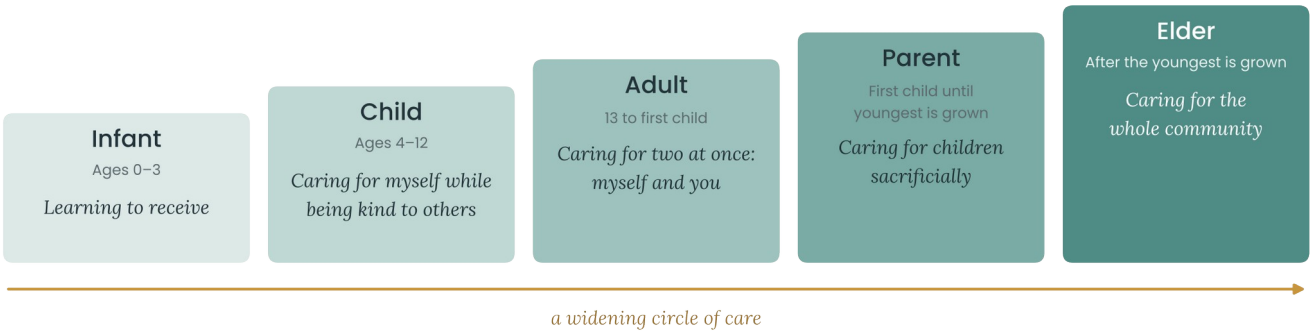
Growing Up Well

Helping our children, and ourselves, grow towards joyful maturity

PART ONE

Five Stages of Maturity

The stages are about skills, not age, and we all move up and down. There is no "adolescence": a 13-year-old is ready to begin adult tasks, if someone expects it and teaches it.



PART TWO

What Our Children Are Learning

Ages 0–3 *learning to receive*

- Build joy bonds and trust with the people who love them
- Calm down, rest, and move from excitement back to peace
- Hear "no" peacefully, and come back to joy
- Grow curious about people and God's world
- Master the body: sit quietly and control impulses

Ages 4–12 *caring for myself while being kind to others*

- Ask for what they need, and find many kinds of deep satisfaction
- Persist with hard things, even when head and hands are tired
- Know what they think and feel, and put it into words
- Build life skills and habits that will carry them for life
- Share and take turns without being told
- Know their place in the big picture: "I am not my own." It's not all about them.

THINK IT OVER

What habit did my parents build into me that I'm grateful for? Which do I want to pass on?

Where am I most tempted to put my child at the centre?

PART THREE

What This Asks of Us as Parents

1. **Care for them sacrificially.** Protect, serve and enjoy them, without expecting them to look after us in return. If we never learned that life isn't all about us, parenting is where it starts to unravel.

> *Like holding an umbrella over a child in pouring rain: they may tug or push it away, but we keep sheltering them. Our duty is not to make sure they like what we do, but that our actions are faithful to their needs.*

2. **Be a joyful tribe.** Around 13, children look for their people. If home feels joyless, they will look elsewhere, however true our beliefs. Our homes need to be places where it's good to be me, here with you.
3. **Invite aunts and uncles in.** Children need other trusted adults who are strong where we are weak. It shows them faith isn't just Mum and Dad's thing.

THINK IT OVER

Where is my child pushing the umbrella away right now?

Who are the "aunts and uncles" in my child's life? Who could I invite in?

Would my children say our home is a place where "it's good to be me, here with you"?

PART FOUR

The Path to Joyful Maturity

1. **Stay connected to a maturing community.** We can't grow up alone. We need people further along the road.
2. **Notice what's happening inside you.** Once we notice, there's a brief window to respond differently. Be a kind observer, not a harsh judge.
3. **Be quick to own it.** "I was wrong, I'm sorry" teaches more than a hundred lectures.
4. **Rest in his presence.** "Abide in me" (John 15:4). We can only give our children a calm we are receiving ourselves.

Pause a few times a day and ask

What am I feeling right now? Am I in a joyful place, or not? What would help me return to joy?

This week I will try

- ☐ **Teach one habit on purpose.** One life skill, built patiently.
- ☐ **Practise "it's not all about me".** Serve someone else together.
- ☐ **Notice, own, and return.** Say sorry, and come back to joy.

None of us has arrived. We're all still growing up, together.

Based on Bill St. Cyr, "Maturity Dynamics of the Human Heart", Ambleside Schools International