

The

Spiritual Portfolio

Imagine presenting to your child on their 18th birthday a notebook that contained a visual and written record of their spiritual growth from childhood through their teenage years! Imagine the impact as they become young adults being able to see the evidence of God's Hand on their life from their earliest days.

Pictures that bring back memories.

Drawings they long forgot – but now remember upon seeing them.

Sunday School papers and doodles from the pew.

Awards they barely remember receiving.

Poems, stories and other things they wrote about God.

Letters from you that detail special days, loving advice,

and reminders of your love through the years.

The Spiritual Portfolio is designed to be easy, flexible, and personal. The ideas presented are only to get you started. In the end, the notebook should be as unique as the child it is given to. You can use the forms provided, or design your own. There is really no wrong way to do this – any time invested in recording your child's spiritual journey will be successful. Whether you enter items once a week, once a month, or a few times a year –

the result will be the same. Your child will have a treasure they will cherish for the rest of their life, and your influence in their life will continue long after you have taken leave and entered your eternal reward. This project is an adventure you can do with your child, or one that you can keep to yourself until the day you present it. It's really up to you. All that matters is that you take some time to do the most important things in life first.

The Spiritual Portfolio Concept

1. Have one notebook per child. You may let them know you are making one – but if so, they should only see the things that *they* submit to the notebook. Many of your writings and submissions should be saved for future reading by your child. The advantage to this is that you may get better cooperation in getting significant items from them, or in getting them to write on topics you request. Do not let them know where the notebook is kept. Just allow them to give you things to consider including. Personally, I think it best to keep the entire project a secret, as then the impact of the gift will be greater. But it is up to you.
2. Have your child design the cover (perhaps of picture of them with Jesus) – or use some of their artwork for the cover. Make a collage of items relating to them and/or pictures of them. As they get older, if you want to make the cover more up-to-date, simply put the new cover in front of the older ones. There will be a history of covers to look through.
3. Determine what the tabs in your notebook will be. You can have them go by year, or grade, or by category. Categories could be: Writings, Pictures, Church Papers, Letters from Mom and/or Dad, Awards, Artwork, Doodles, Stories, Poems, Milestones, etc.
4. Start to keep an 'eye out' for things that would be good to save. See the samples included from my Spiritual Portfolio that my mother put together for my 21st birthday. Items could include the things mentioned under 'categories' above.
5. Use the templates included to write to your child from time to time. Write it in the first person, and write it to them like they would be reading it today, but keep in mind that they will be reading it probably far in the future. Explain things – use a lot of detail. You will bring back many lost memories for them! The next page has samples of things you can write

- about. Many of them can be used again in future years. Whenever you enjoy a day or moment with your child and think, “I never want to forget this,” write about it! Or you WILL forget it! The sad thing is, you will never miss the memory, because we don’t know what we forgot, it is just gone. Save those memories, thoughts and feelings – big and small – by writing them down. Don’t worry about how eloquent you are, remember, it is the thought that counts! Better a plain letter, then no letter at all!
6. Write in your own handwriting, if possible. While typing is faster, your notebook will lose a lot of it’s personal touch. In a day when so little is handwritten any more, it will mean a lot to your child that you took the time to sit down and write.
 7. At significant times, on important days, or whenever growing experiences happen, encourage your child to draw or write about them. Make copies of letters that they write to friends and grandparents. They will enjoy re-reading them later. Some ideas for writing assignments are on the next page as well.

IDEAS for Parent Sheets

Here are some topics you could write about and put into your child's spiritual portfolio.

Some Early Memories of You

When I was a child... (how are things different?)

What it means to me to be your parent...

God Made You Special...

You learned a tough lesson today...

I was proud of you today...

You did something funny today...

I learned from your faith today...

I saw God in you today...

I've tried to teach you...

A Fun Family Memory

The Top Ten Things I hope I've Taught You.

You gave me a wonderful gift today...

The nicest gift you ever gave me...

One of my favorite memories of you...

Today's your birthday! Highlights from this past year...

Today was a 'first' for you...

We discovered a hidden talent today....

My prayer for you today...

My prayer for you this year...

You make our family special because...

Before I forget, I just have to tell you....

You encouraged me today...

Guess what you said today?

My special day with you...

One Saturday Morning...

It was a Dark and Stormy night...

Snow Day!

What a great summer you had...

How you came to Christ...

You asked Jesus into your today...

You are quite the inventor...

I get a kick out of the way you...

You are so creative...

Christmas Reflections

On Thanksgiving: I'm thankful for you because...

IDEAS for Child Sheets

Here are some topics you could ask your child to write about and then put into their spiritual portfolio.

Birthday: Memories of this past year...

Christmas: What I want for Christmas / What Christmas Means to Me

Thanksgiving: I'm Thankful for...

Easter: Easter is Important because...

New Year's Day: My new years Resolutions are...

Once upon a time...

Sunday School Essays, Papers

Notes from Pastors and Teachers at church

Kids Bulletins and Sermon Notes

Sunday School Pictures

Stories, Poems or Writings about spiritual things