#### HOW TO TALK SO KIDS UNDERSTAND

1. **Understand their world.**

Do more listening than talking. You will better understand their world and grasp how to better communicate to the issues in their lives.

1. **Let them know you care.**

Your non-verbal communication and tone of voice will say much about how you feel towards your children. If you genuinely care for them and pray for them, it will show itself in simple ways. All kids needs significant adults to be attentive to them.

1. **Build expectations.**

If you have something very important to say, don’t hesitate to say, “I want you to listen. What we are going to talk about is very important.” You can also build expectations by giving a teaser such as, “By the end of today’s lesson, you will have the secret for true happiness that can help you the rest of your life.”

1. **Arrange their space.**

Always be aware of the shape of your circle. As much as possible, keep your children in a circle so that no one is left out. The circles will help prevent someone from crowding in for more attention. This will make it easier for everyone to listen and not be distracted.

1. **Remove distractions.**

If a child has a toy or an object in their hands and you need their undivided attention, politely ask them to put it away. When their activity relates to the topic, sometimes objects in their hands *will help* them in conversation and learning. If any one child becomes too domineering and becomes a distraction, remove that child temporarily from the group.

1. **Make eye contact.**

As much as possible, be at the same eye level as your children—even if this means sitting on the floor or kneeling over a table. Direct eye contact helps children feel valued.

1. **Change voice inflection.**

If you have something very important to say, you may pause, change the rhythm, or change the voice tone. Such change and variety pulls children’s attention back to the topic if their minds were wandering.

1. **Don’t talk too long.**

Though it usually comes with good intentions, shepherds can talk too long without giving kids’ responses. They may politely endure it but you may be teaching them to tune out. Be sure to limit your explanations to one to two minutes maximum. Check for feedback.

1. **Don’t ask “yes” and “no” questions.**

Instead, ask “how” and “what about” questions. Let the child talk and tell you what they think.