

# Mind and Soul: The Science of Relational Faith Formation

Welcome!

As you're getting settled,

Please fill out this 3-Question Survey before we begin →

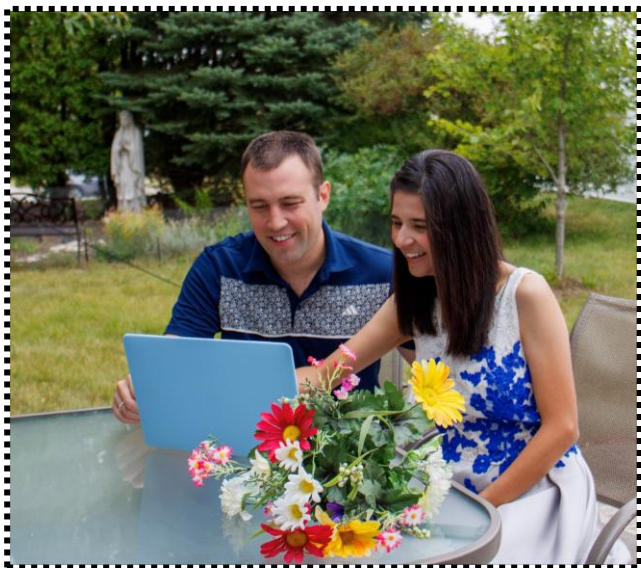




*If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.*

*And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.*

*If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.*



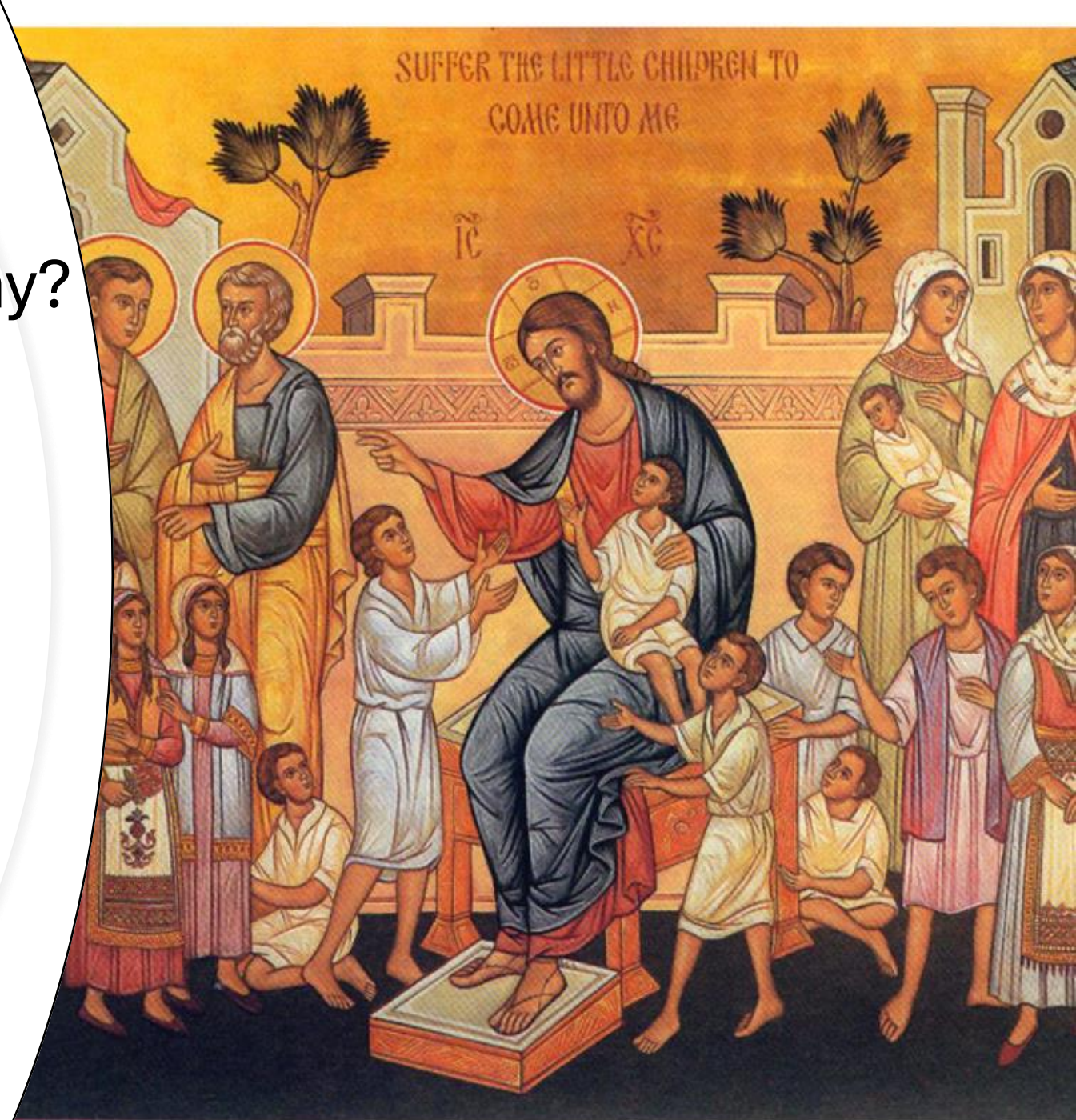


# THE WENDT FAMILY



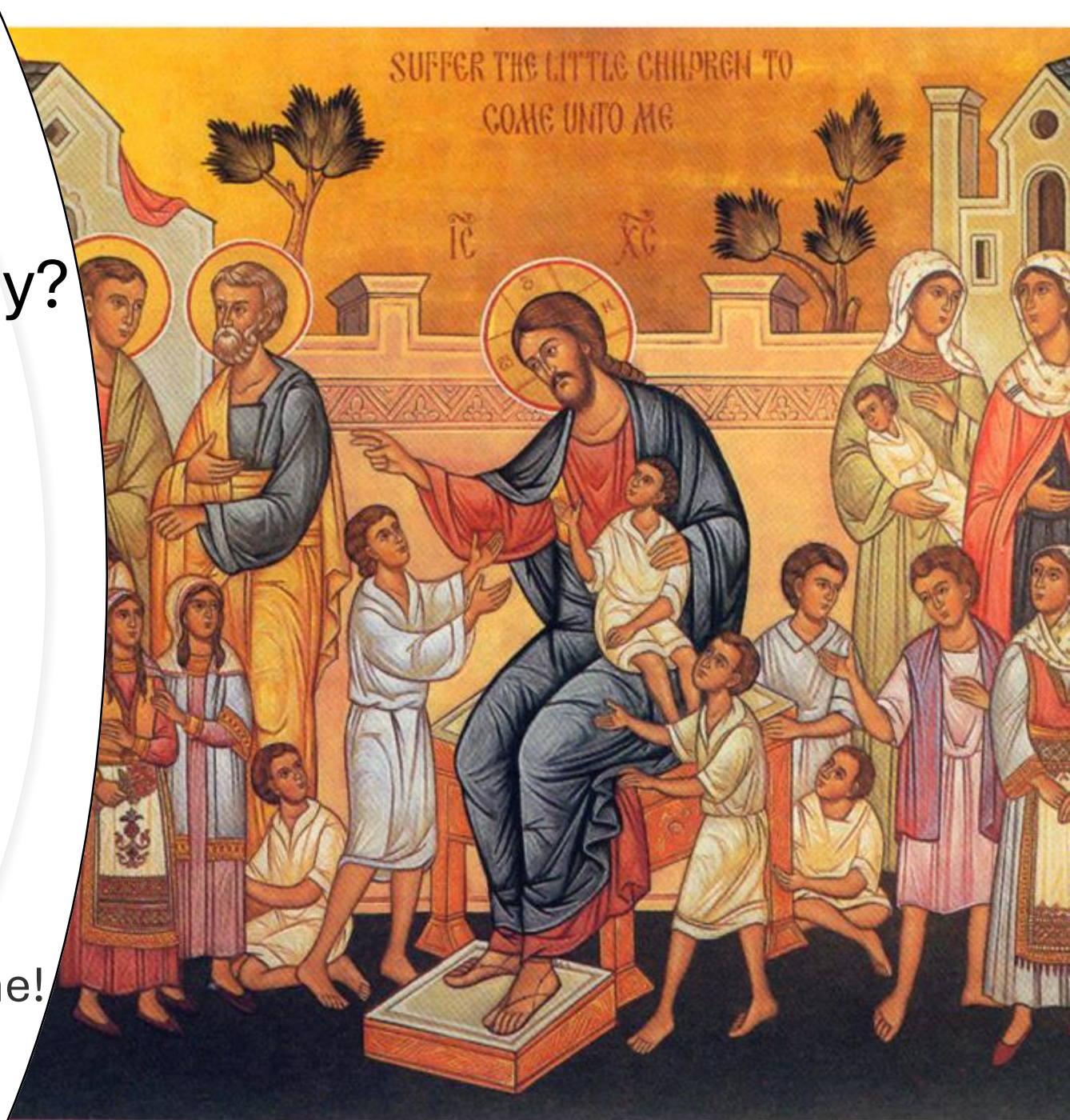
# Relational Faith Formation: What are we talking about today?

- The Power of Relationships in Faith Formation
- 4 Ways Relational Ministry Can Effectively Form People in the Catholic Faith
- Practice Applying Relational Framework to Your Faith Formation Ministry



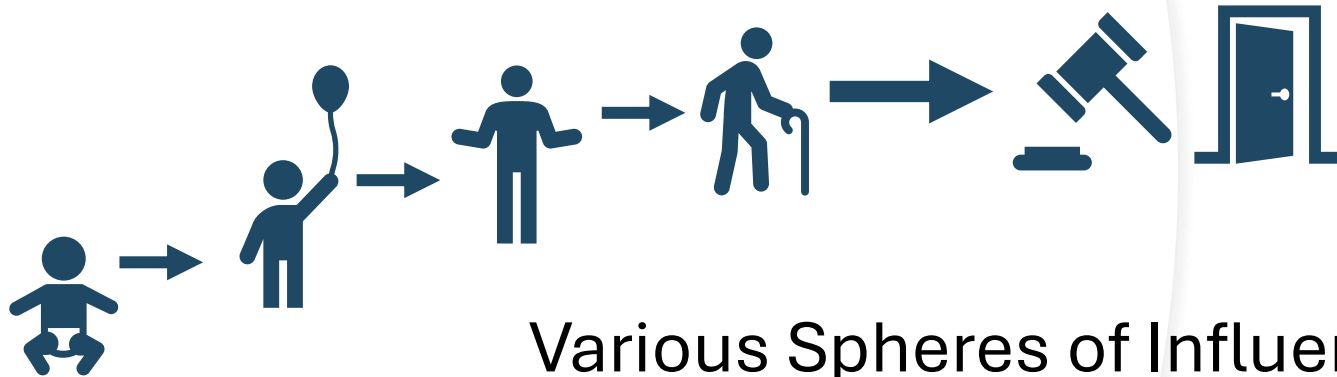
# Relational Faith Formation: What do I want you to take away?

- Exceptional clarity from both neuroscience and theology
- A new paradigm for relationships in your faith formation that deeply connects you with your people
- Increased delight and satisfaction of connecting with your people and landing your message
- Excitement and Skill to bring this home!



# Faith Formation: What's the Scope?

From Conception until the Particular Judgment



## Various Spheres of Influence:

Home & Family Life (Domestic Church)  
Parish Life (Mass, Ministry Settings)  
Larger Community, Schools, Workplace



**WHAT AGES AND SETTINGS ARE MOST RELEVANT TO YOU?  
(SURVEY!)**



# The Ultimate Goal of Faith Formation:

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- Relationships  
→ Proper and Eternal
- (Knowledge of) Proper Identity is Essential for Proper Relationships



# Original Sin

Distortion of  
Proper Identities

Leads to:

Distortion of Relationships

- With God
- With Each Other
- With Created World
- Parts Within Self
  - Soul/Body
  - Reason/Will/ Passions/Desires



# Jesus Restores

- Proper Identity:
  - Who is God?
  - Who am I?
  - Who are they?
  - What is everything else?
- Proper Relationships
- Content of Catholic Faith  
(Bible, Revelation, Liturgy, Tradition, Spirituality)  
aimed at forming or restoring:





**(Faith) Formation is  
Always Relational**



How we Relate  
is *highly* Formative

# Relationships Form Identity



How others relate to me

Forms Identity: I Am LOVED

How can I relate to others?

Discover: I Am ABLE TO LOVE

WHAT IDENTITY MESSAGES DO CHILDREN RECEIVE FROM US WHEN WE ARE AT OUR BEST? AT OUR WORST? CHILD, YOU ARE \_\_\_\_\_ (WRITE DOWN)

# Relationships Form Us

For Covenantal Love  
with God and within the Church

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Nurture Capacity for  
Receiving Love



Grow Capacity for  
Making a Free Gift of Self



WHAT DOES RELATIONAL FORMATION LOOK LIKE? (THINK)

*How we Relate*

**ROLEPLAY!**

*Goals*

*Messages*





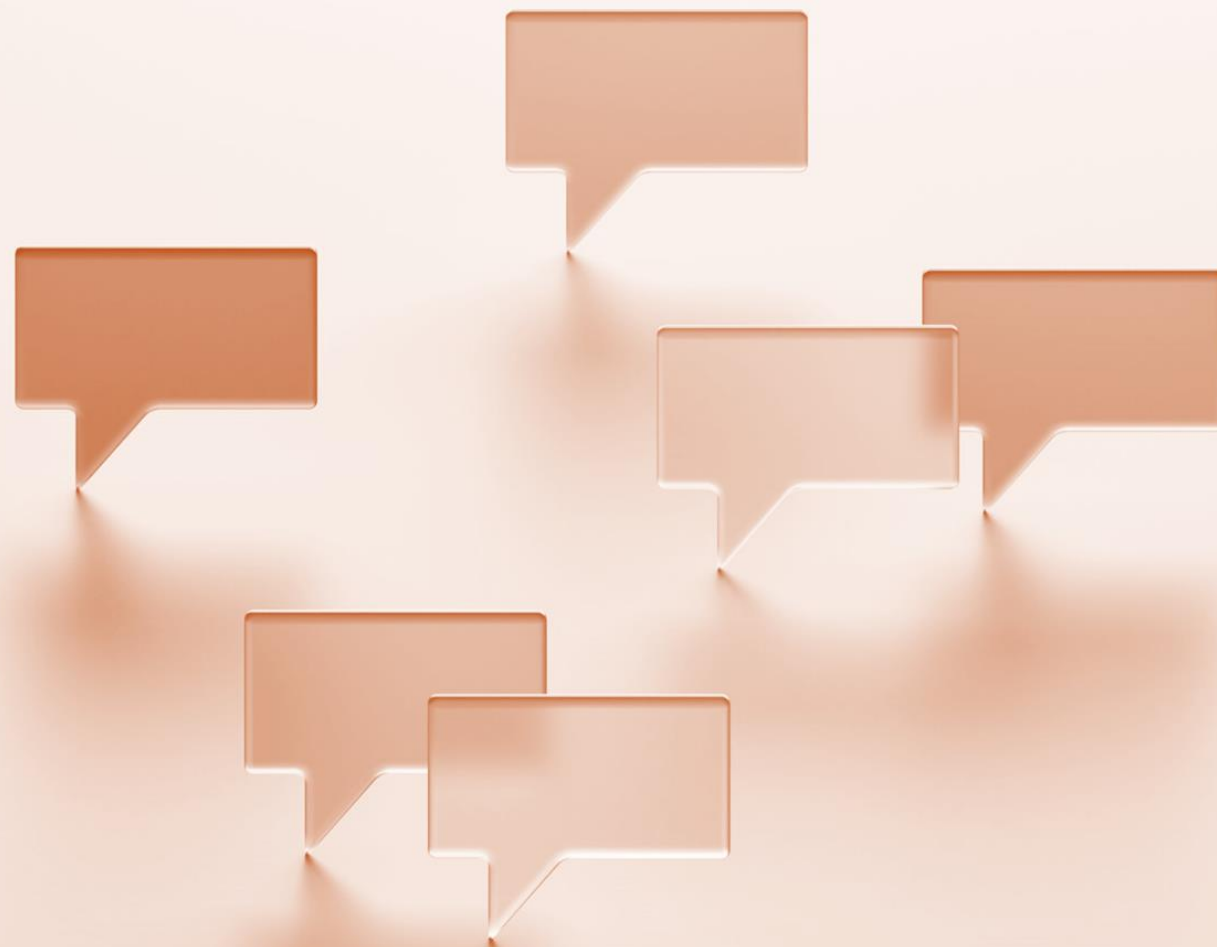
What were my  
Goals in the  
interaction?





What Messages  
did they receive?  
\_\_\_\_\_, you are:

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# *Goals*

- Set Expectations
- Teach
- Manage Classroom
- Guide
- Correct
- Set Boundaries
- Defend and Clarify

# *Messages*

You Are \_\_\_\_\_:

- Not Important
- Frustrating
- A Problem
- Lazy
- Rude
- Wrong
- Not Loved
- In Control of My Emotions

How can we  
Relate with others  
in a way that does  
Faith Formation?

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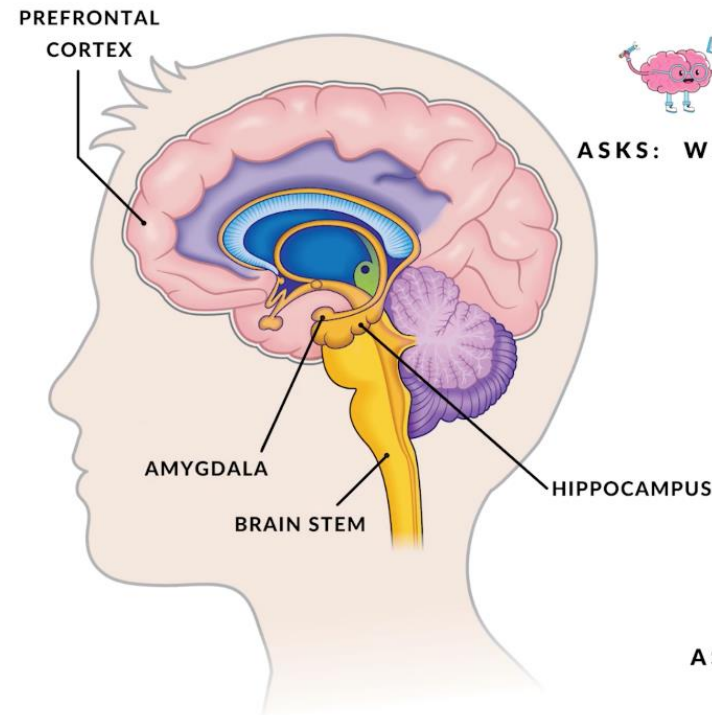
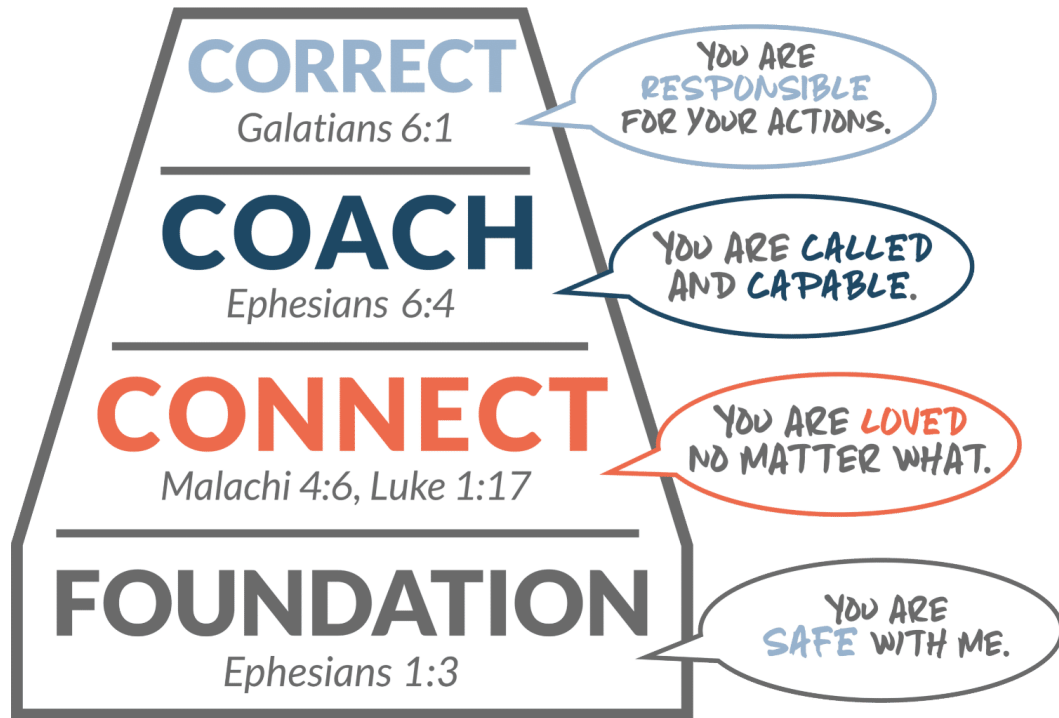
## A Framework for Relationships

- How we Relate to People tells them Who They Are
- 4 Ways of Relating
- 4 Identity Messages
- Gospel Formation



DO YOU HAVE A PROCESS FOR RELATING TO OTHERS?  
WHAT MESSAGES DO YOU WANT TO SEND? (THINK)

# A Framework that Mirrors Neuroscience



**Frontal Lobe**

ASKS: WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS?



**Limbic System**

ASKS: AM I LOVED?



**Brainstem**

ASKS: AM I SAFE?

# A Framework that Mirrors Psychology

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs

# FOUNDATION

You Are **Safe** with me

- Original Unity
- Broken by Original Sin
- Fallen Humanity marked by Fear in all Relationships: “Original Nakedness”
- Grace restores Relational Safety for Intimacy and Restored Unity
- Jesus tells us: “Do not be afraid!”  
(*You are SAFE with me!*)

**Safety – Trust – Intimacy**



**Fear – Distrust – Separation**

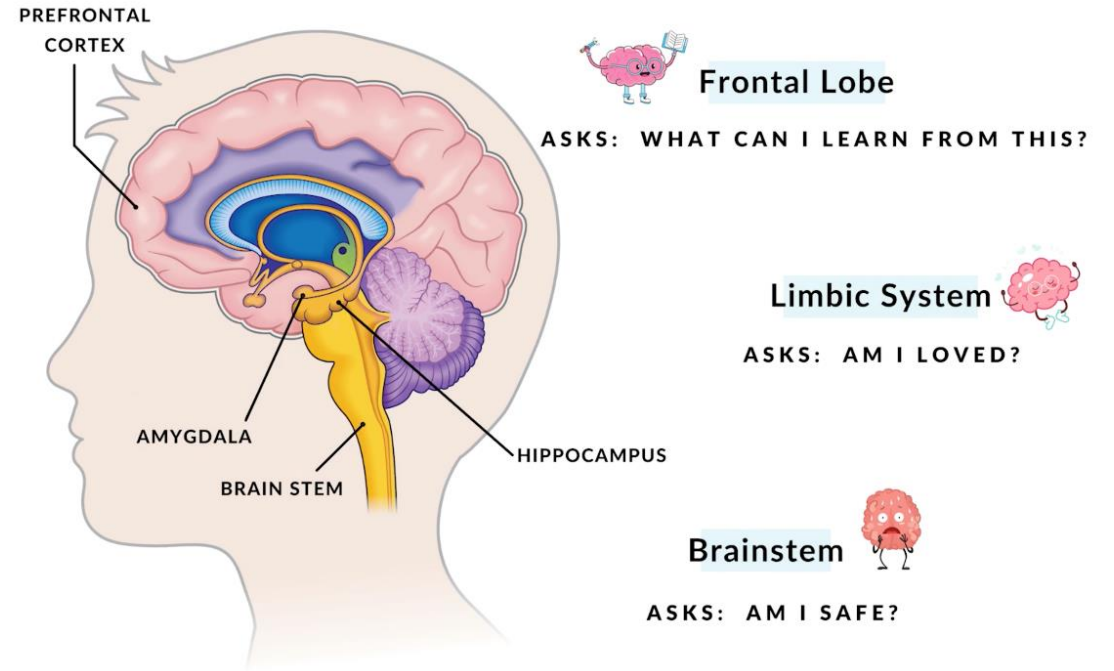
**HOW DOES FEAR AFFECT HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS?  
(WRITE DOWN).**



# FOUNDATION

## You Are **Safe** with me

- Fear changes our brain and body
- Activates Survival Mode
  - Brain Stem
  - Sympathetic Nervous System (Cortisol, Adrenaline)
  - Fight, Flight, Freeze Behaviors
- Inhibits Frontal Lobe:
  - Rational Thinking and Choosing
  - Creativity and Compassion
- Fear is Toxic to Relationships!



HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE “YOU ARE SAFE WITH ME”?

# FOUNDATION

You Are **Safe** with me



## What is going on in me?

What are all the things in me that could hurt or use another person?

What are all the ways I fear that others might hurt or use me?

Anger

Desire

Greed

Lust

Power

Control

Pride

Self Protection

Judgments

Criticisms

Shame

Agendas

Punishment

Resentments

Emotional

Withdrawal

Embarrassment

Anxieties

Fear

Toxic Beliefs

Self Ego Fulfillment

***“For out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.” Matthew 12:34***

# FOUNDATION

You Are **Safe** with me

- Being Relationally Safe begins with Christ
- We first experience Safety, Intimacy, and Healing in Him
- Then we become SAFE for others



## Who I am in Christ

**Safety – Trust – Intimacy**  
**CHRIST**

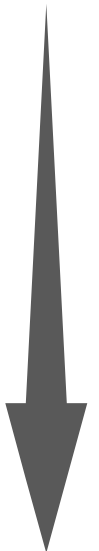


Anger	Self Protection	Emotional
Desire	Judgments	Withdrawal
Greed	Criticisms	Embarrassment
Lust	Shame	Anxieties
Power	Agendas	Fear
Control	Punishment	Toxic Beliefs
Pride	Resentments	



**GRACE**

**SIN**



**Fear – Distrust – Separation**

HOW IS JESUS HELPING ME BE SAFE FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS? (THINK)

# FOUNDATION

You Are **Safe** with me



## What is going on in me?

What Toxic Beliefs do I have about myself?

What Grace-Filled Truths does God speak to me?

Prayer

*“Take every thought captive to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5*

# FOUNDATION

Child, You Are **Safe** with me



## What is going on in me?

What Toxic Beliefs do I  
have about them?

What Grace-Filled Truths  
does God speak to me?

Prayer

*“Take every thought captive to obey Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5*

# FOUNDATION

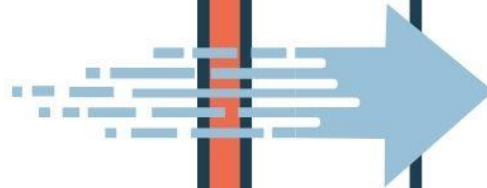
You Are **Safe** with me

## NOT SAFE



- FAST
- LARGE
- LOUD

Intimidation, Control, Power, Compliance



## SAFE



- SLOW
- LOW
- LISTEN

Peace, Respect, Meekness, Freedom

# ROLEPLAY!

*Goals*

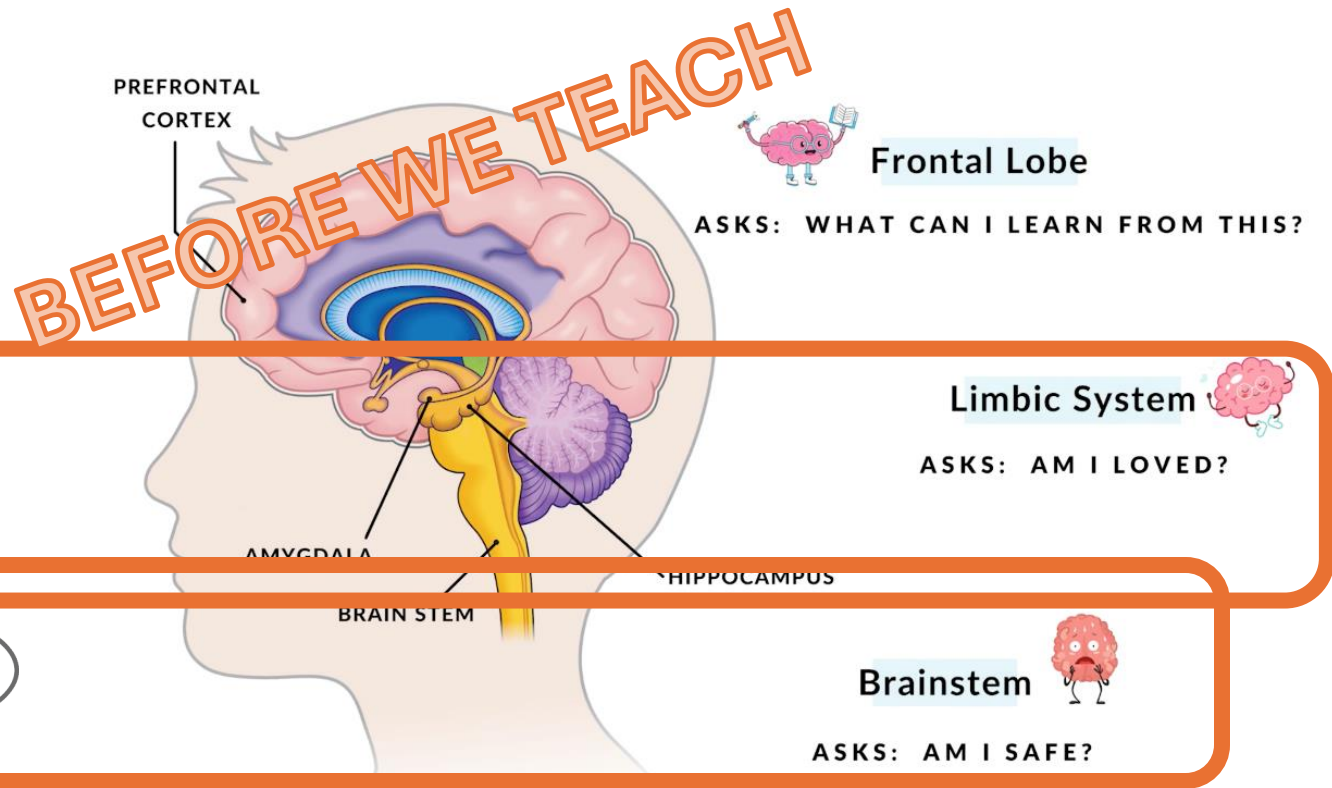
*Messages*

# Relational Faith Formation

Gospel  
Identity Messages



Neuroscience





# CONNECT

You Are **Loved** no matter what



Love is a Dance that  
Connects Persons Together



“Lover” Initiates *any* Self-Gift



In Receiving, “Beloved”  
Gives Self over to be Loved

**Lover** **Beloved**

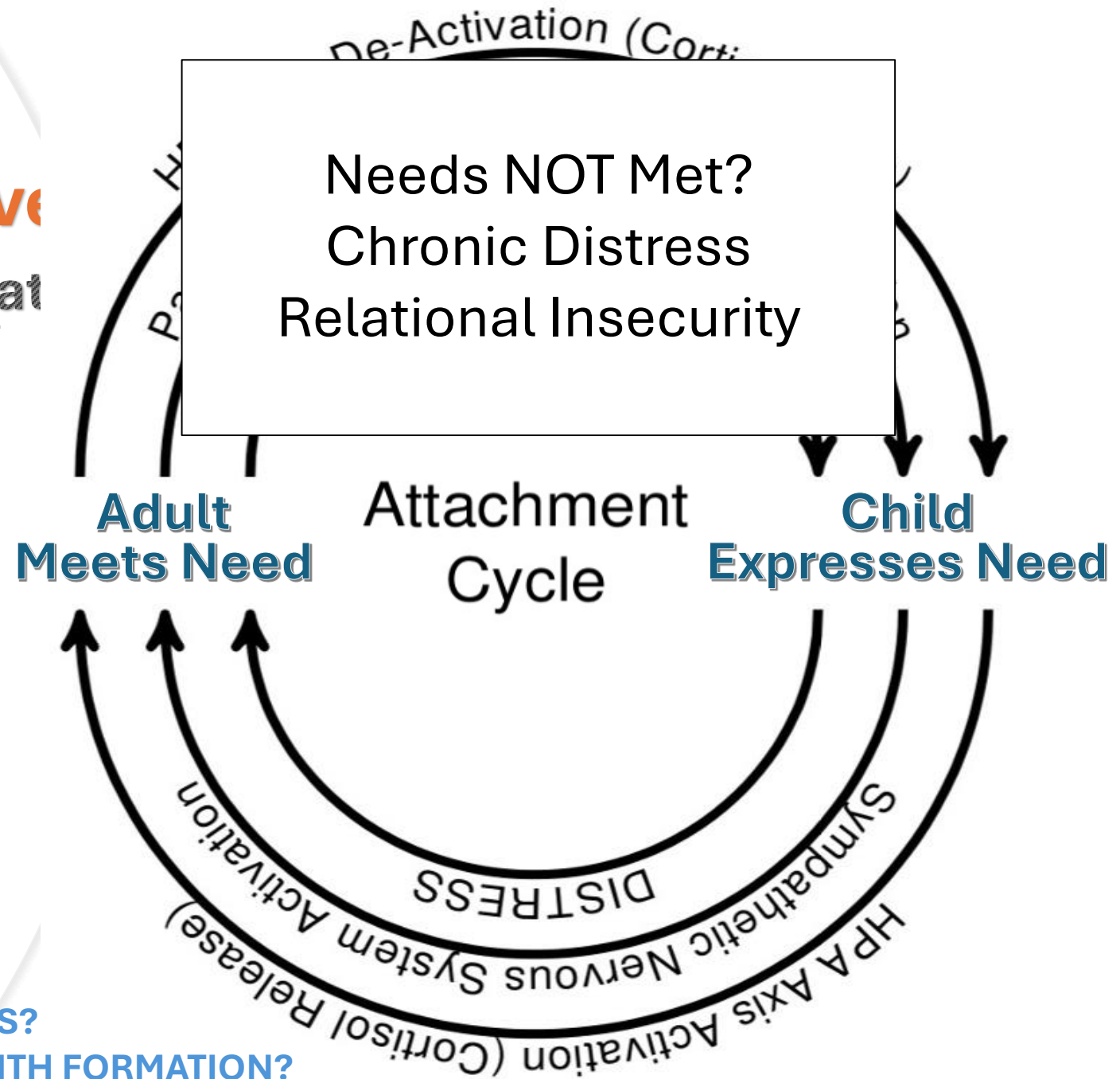


HOW DOES THIS DYNAMIC TAKE SHAPE IN OUR  
EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS?

# CONNECT → Love

You Are **Loved** no matter what

- Dance of Love is learned in Relationships since Birth
- In Attachment Cycle: Child's Need Elicits Adult's Self-Gift
- Adult Responses Form Identity *and* Relational Pattern for Child:
  - Trust (Security) - I Am Loved
  - Self-Soothing – I Am Alone
  - Manipulation – I Am In Control
  - Fear – I Am Not Safe
- Relational Patterns Persist through Adulthood – Adult Attachment



HOW DO I SEEK COMFORT WHEN I AM IN DISTRESS?

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO THE HUMANS IN MY FAITH FORMATION?

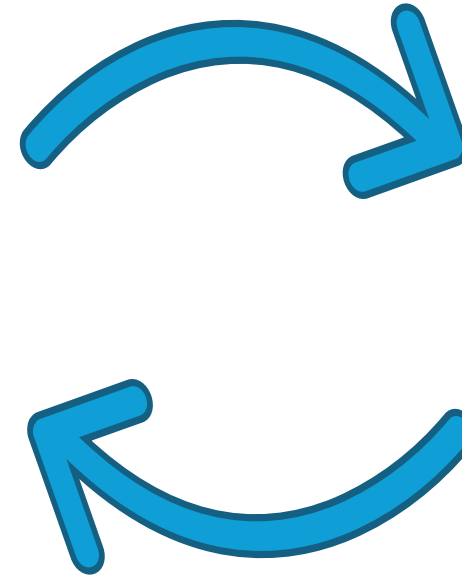
# CONNECT → Love as God Loves

You Are Loved no matter what

- Important Ways to Connect with Children:
  - Response to Needs & Empathy
  - Delight & Play
- Mercy: “In the Good and the Bad”
  - Golden Opportunity for Unconditional Love
- Connection is Formative
- Connection is Enjoyable!

**Adult**

**Child**



**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU SEE FOR INCREASING CONNECTION  
IN YOUR FAITH FORMATION? (FORMATIVE AND ENJOYABLE!)**

# ROLEPLAY



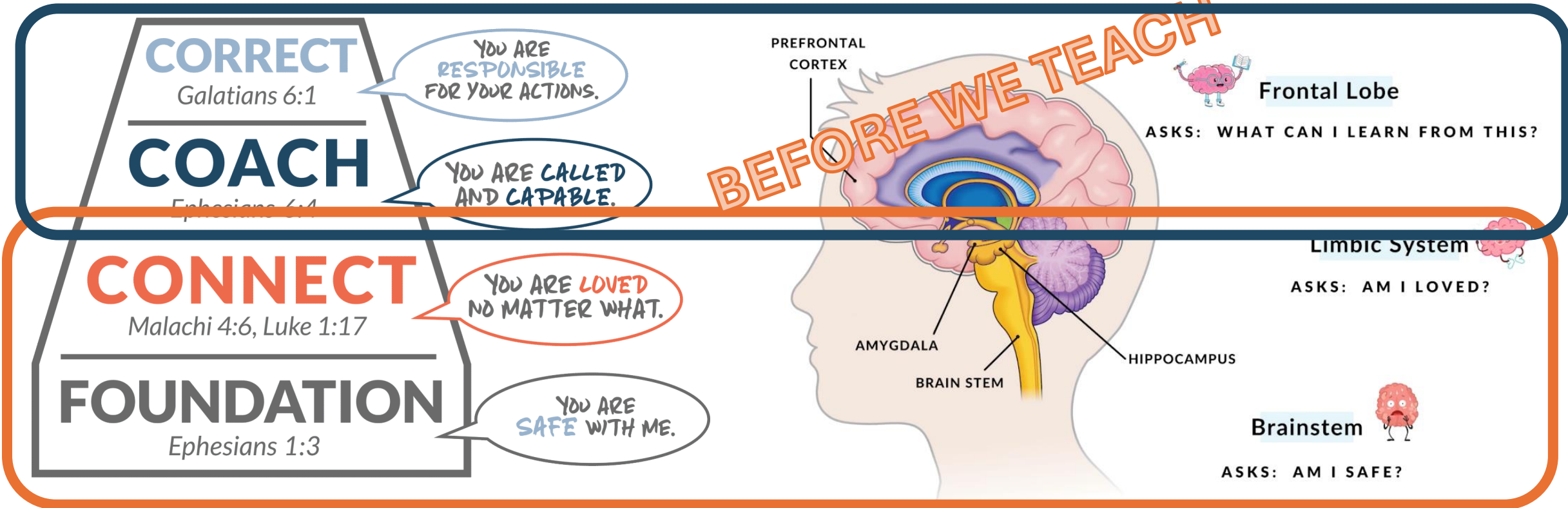
*Built  
on*  
**ROCK**

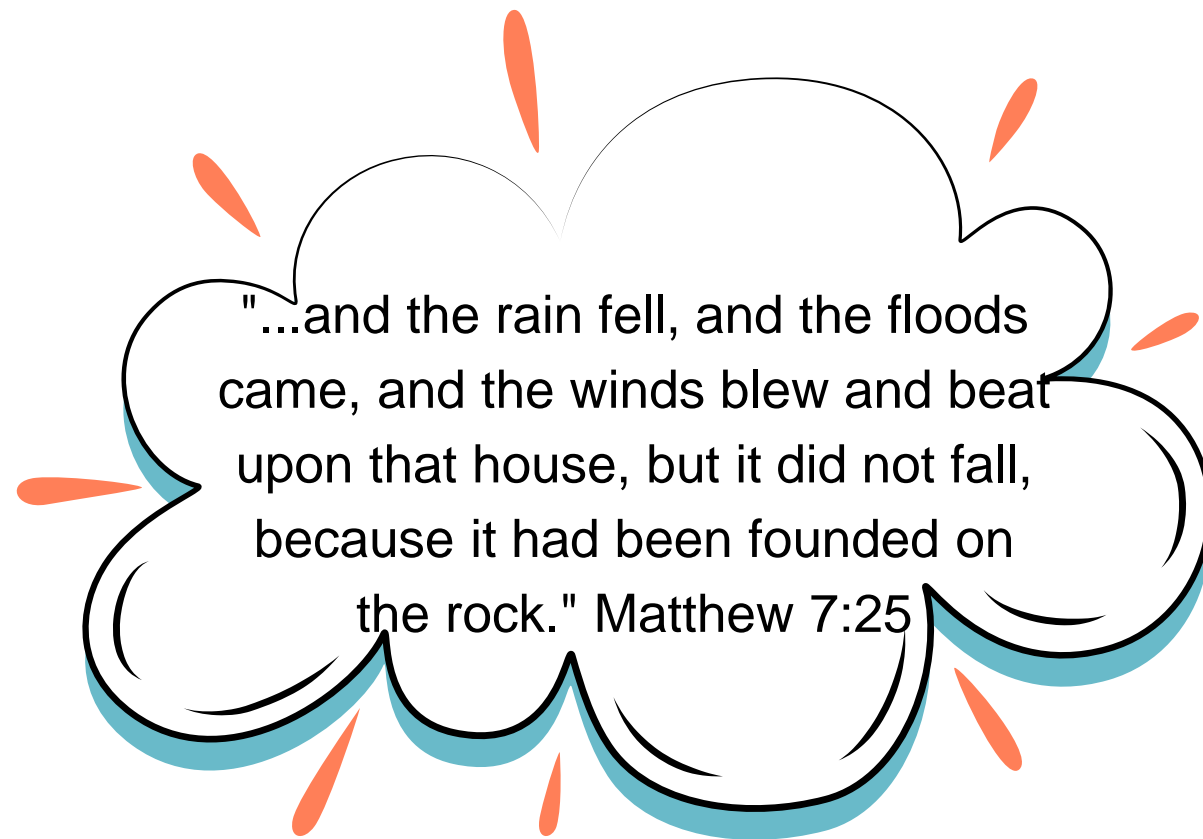
# Relational Faith Formation

Gospel  
Identity Messages



Neuroscience






"...and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." Matthew 7:25

Email us at  
[builtonrockparentcoaching@gmail.com](mailto:builtonrockparentcoaching@gmail.com)  
[www.builtonrockparentcoaching.org](http://www.builtonrockparentcoaching.org)

Topics we can help you navigate,  
*just to name a few...*

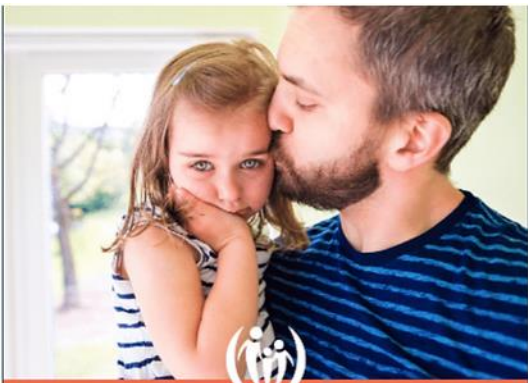
- Discouragement in parenting
- Power Struggles
- Discipline Challenges
- Setting consequences that empower growth
- Sibling Conflict
- Picky Eating
- Bedtime Struggles
- Sensitive and Intense Kids
- Entitlement
- Parents who want to get on the “same page” with each other, and are in need of a plan



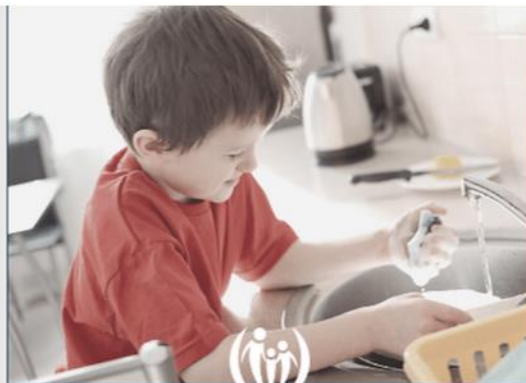
A woman with long dark hair, wearing a light grey sweater, is pointing her right index finger towards a man. The man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and has his arms crossed. Above them is a large, light blue speech bubble with a dark blue outline and three red exclamation marks on each side. The text inside the speech bubble is centered and reads: "Feeling discouraged in your parenting? Looking for fruitful ways to discipline? Let us equip you with skills for success!"

Feeling discouraged in your parenting?  
Looking for fruitful ways to discipline?  
Let us equip you with skills for success!





Discipline That Connects



The Entitlement Fix



The Power of Questions



Grace & Truth for Moms



Sibling Conflict



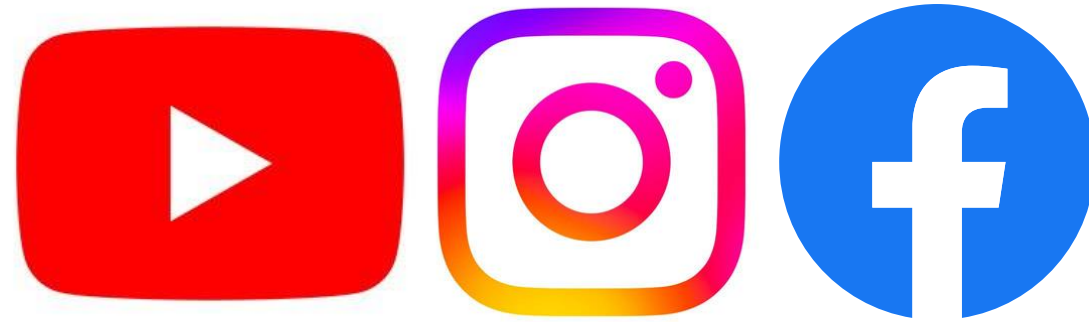
Sensitive & Intense Kids

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on  
ROCK

# COACH → Confidence and Virtue

## You Are Called & Capable

- Identity Messages:
  - Teaching: “You are lacking.”
  - Affirmation: “You are good.”
- Affirmation builds up Identity
  - “God made you for this Dance.”
- Misbehaviors: *Gift Gone Awry!*
  - What gifts did they use to pull off that misbehavior?
  - Saul -> St Paul
- Made for Vocation
- Akin to the Saints



WHAT GIFTS AND VIRTUES CAN WE AFFIRM IN THOSE IN OUR FAITH FORMATION?

**COACH** →

**ABC AFFIRMATIONS**

Child, You Are Called & Capable

Action  
Benefit  
Character

Fertilize Behavior  
Increase Wisdom  
Build Identity

# COACH → Teaching the Dance of Love

## You Are Called & Capable

- Safe, Loved, & Affirmed = Trust  
Doors are open for learning
- Skill-Building:
  - **WHAT SKILLS DO THEY NEED TO LEARN TO RECEIVE & GIVE THEMSELVES IN LOVE?**
  - Practice, Acting, Games, Roleplaying
- Growing in Wisdom:
  - **WHAT WISDOM DO WE WANT THEM TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS?**
  - Cause/Effect, Curious Questions, Reflection on Stories



**HOW CAN OUR FAITH FORMATION FORMAL INSTRUCTION BE PLACED MORE SECURELY IN THIS RELATIONAL CONTEXT?**

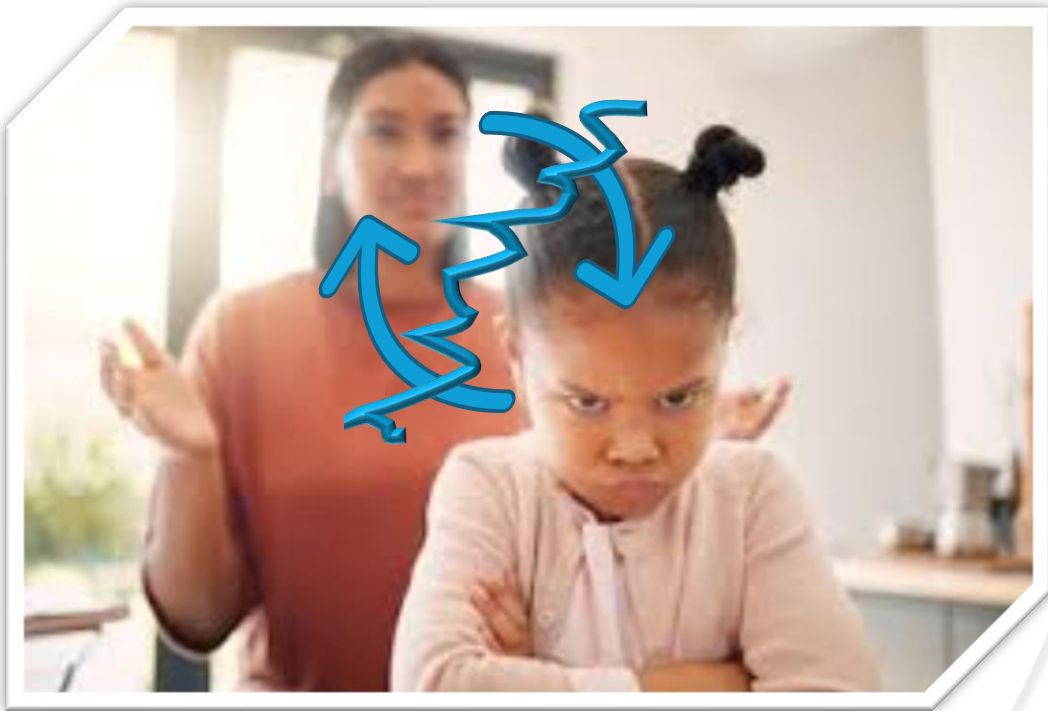
# ROLEPLAY



*Built  
on*  
**ROCK**

# CORRECT → Encountering Freedom

**You Are Responsible for Your Actions**



# CORRECT

## You Are Responsible for Your Actions

- Correction is a dominant theme throughout the Bible
- God continually corrects and calls us back to Justice and Friendship after the Fall
- Prophetic or Fraternal
- Public or Private



**HOW DO WE IMITATE GOD IN OUR CORRECTION OF OTHERS ?**



# CORRECT

## You Are Responsible for Your Actions

### Fallen Correction:

- Criticism
- Manipulation
- Intimidation
- Punishment
- Coercion
- Withdrawal



### Obedience: Freedom & Trust

WHAT IDENTITY MESSAGES DO THESE FORMS OF CORRECTION SAY? “YOU ARE \_\_\_\_\_”

# CORRECT → Encountering Freedom

## You Are Responsible for Your Actions

John Paul II: *Love and Responsibility*

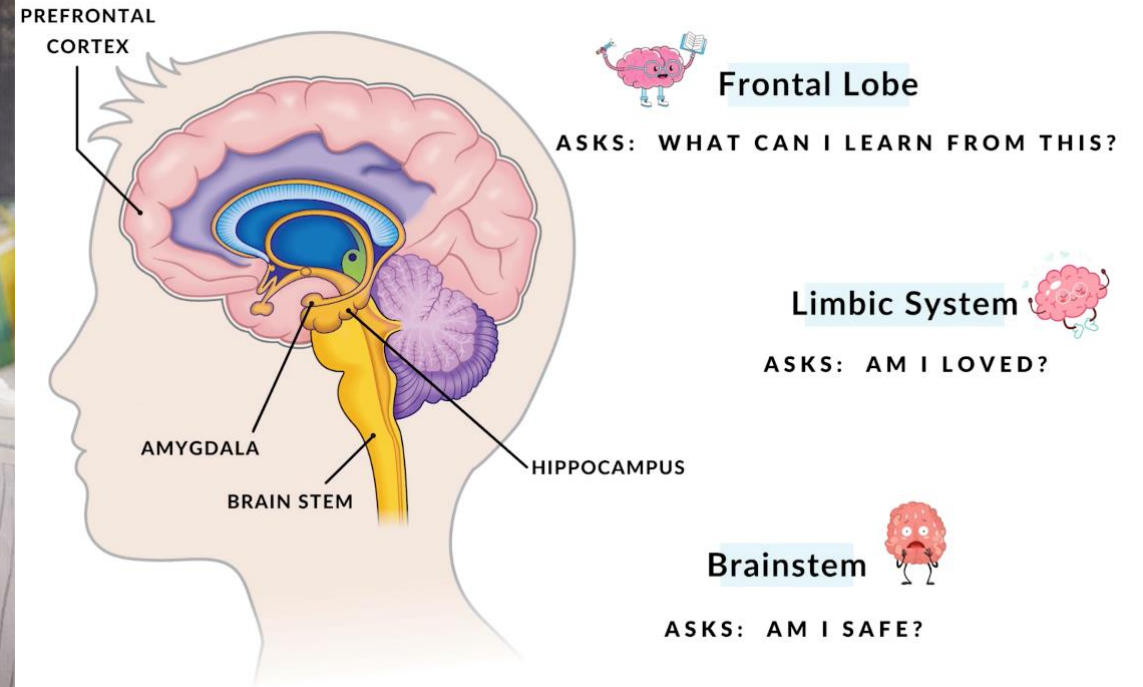
- Persons are not to be used, but loved
- Freedom encounters freedom
- Love: Mutually Pursuing Common Good
  - Relationship itself
  - Mutual Ends



HOW CAN WE ADDRESS CONFLICT IN A WAY THAT RESPECTS A PERSONS FREEDOM AND DIGNITY?

# CORRECT → Choosing Love

You Are Responsible for Your Actions



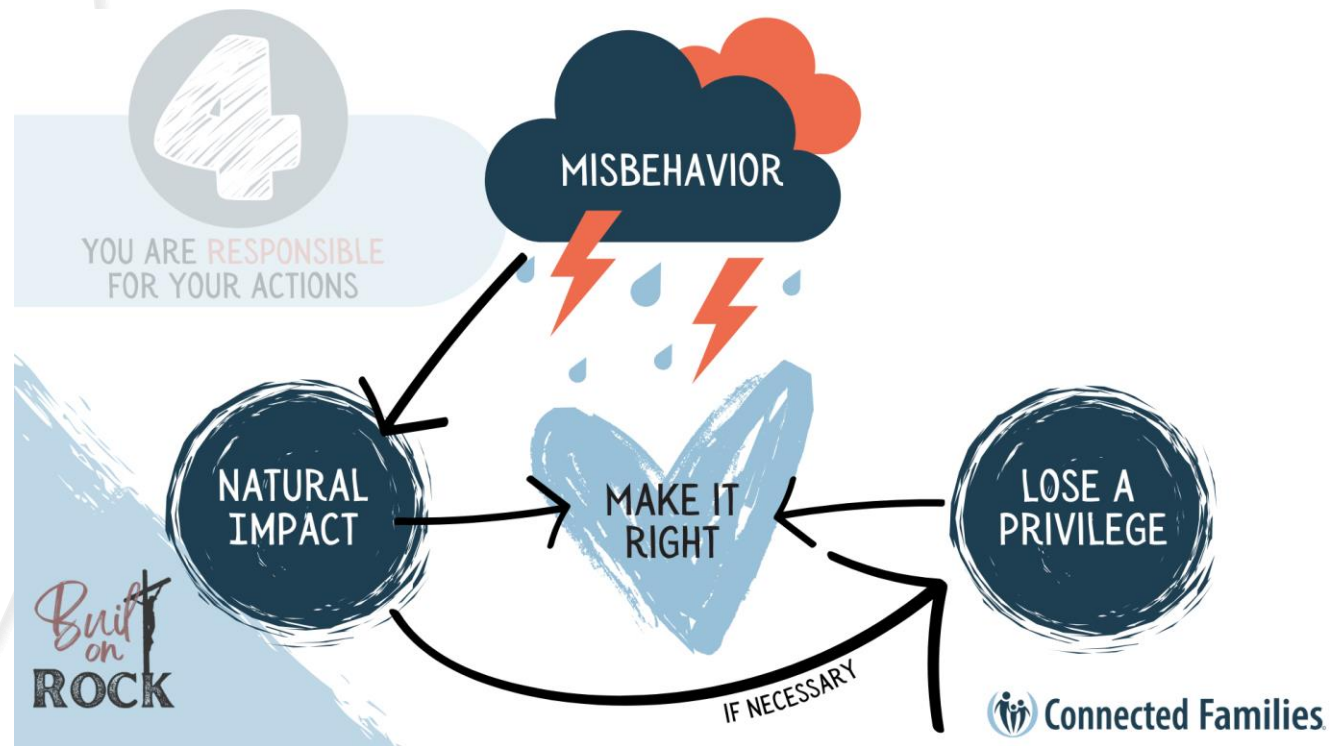
*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Gal 6:1*

# CORRECT → Choosing Love

## You Are Responsible for Your Actions

*Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Gal 6:7*

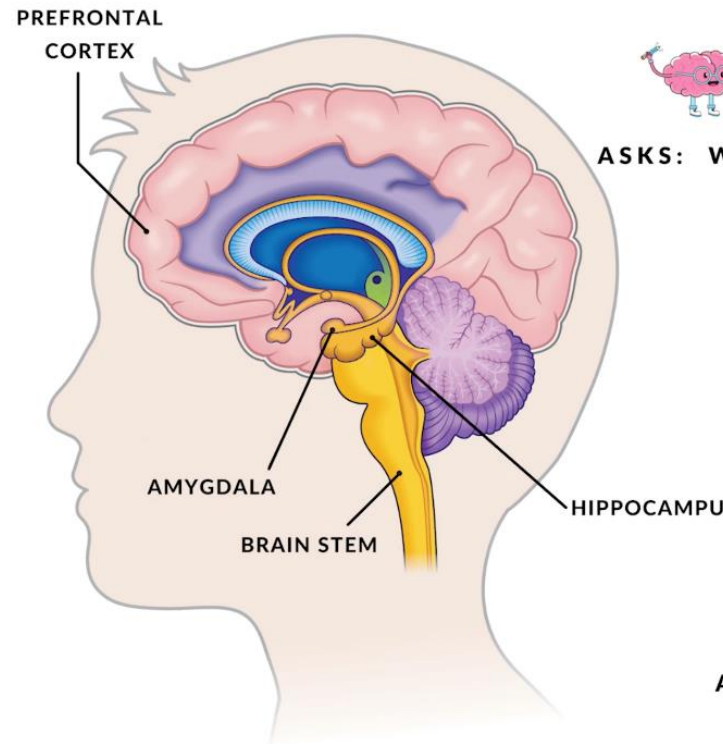
- What are the Natural Impacts?
  - Build awareness and wisdom
- What action(s) could make it right?
  - Move towards restoration
- *If unwilling*, what common goods might I need to withhold until they make it right?
  - Engage free response



# Relational Faith Formation

Gospel  
Identity Messages

●————● Neuroscience



Frontal Lobe

ASKS: WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS?



Limbic System

ASKS: AM I LOVED?



Brainstem

ASKS: AM I SAFE?

# Mnistry Staff & Leadership

Connected Families  
Framework

Pat Lencioni &  
Amazing Parish



The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team™ Model

# Relational Faith Formation: What Did We Talk About Today?

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- Personal Relationships form People's:
  - Identity (I am \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Patterns of Relating (Receiving & Giving Love)
- 4 Effective Ways to Form Faith Relationally
  - Foundation in Christ – *Relational Safety*: “You are **Safe** with me.”
  - Connect – *Dance of Love*: “You are **Loved** no matter what.”
  - Coach – *Teaching the Dance*: “You are **Called** and **Capable**.”
  - Correct – *Choosing Love*: “You are **Responsible** in your Freedom.”

**WHAT THOUGHTS AND IDEAS DOES THIS SPARK  
FOR MY OWN MINISTRY SETTINGS?**

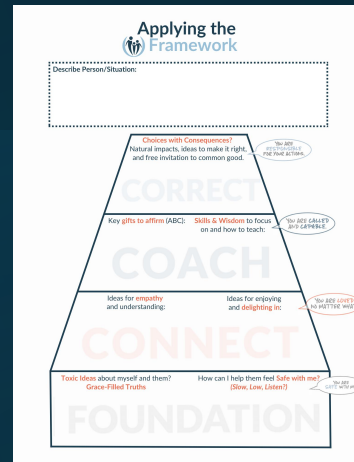


# What did you gain? Exit Survey

Please fill out this 3-Question  
Survey before we conclude →

Plus:

- Receive copy of slideshow and “Applying the Framework” worksheet
- Chance to receive free 30 min follow up call to discuss applying to your own ministry setting

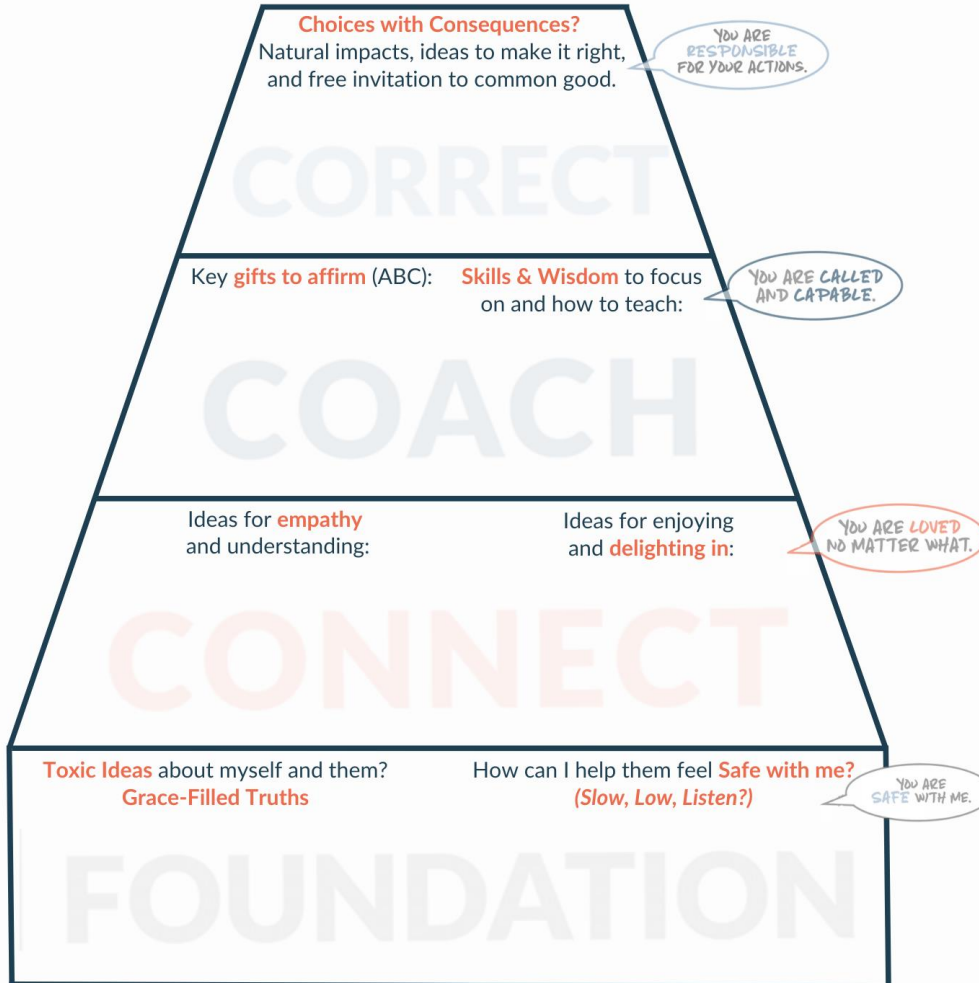




# Applying the Framework



Describe Person/Situation:



# Case Studies

## Issues

- Misbehavior in a group setting or classroom
- Setting Rules & Expectations
- Follow-up on unmet expectations
- Angry complaint
- Interpersonal Conflict

## Settings

Children in  
classroom

Youth  
Ministry

Confirmation

Parent  
Nights

Adult  
Ministry

Staff

*If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.*

*And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.*

*If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

THANK YOU!

*Built  
on*  
ROCK



*Build  
on*  
**ROCK**