



FAMILY STUDY

Mature Christianity

The book of James is a practical, straightforward book on maturity. James would say to Christians, “grow up.” Spiritual growth should happen, it is the natural-supernatural result of having a life connected to God. Spiritual maturity has little or nothing to do with age. Spiritual growth is a process, it does not happen instantaneously. James teaches us that mature Christians are patient in trials, they practice the truth, they have power over their tongue, they are poor in spirit, and they persevere in troubles.

James is a tribute to the believers who are always climbing! Let’s play an eating and climbing game to see how we can grow and climb as Children of God.

Growing Up

Objectives:	examine what it means to have Christian maturity Have fun with your family Learn scripture get some climbing exercise
Number of Players:	2 or more
Length:	30 minutes, add or subtract time to fit your family needs; save 10 to 15 minutes at the end for discussion.
Set up:	Location: park with a jungle gym or playground; your home with stairs pick one person to be the mommy/daddy, you can have both if you have enough people (at least 3). set out the baby food and spoons peel and cut up one of the bananas into <i>small bite-size pieces</i> right before you start the game.
Props:	jar of banana baby food or another flavor that everyone in the family would enjoy a bunch of bananas, or fruit that matches whatever flavor of baby food you chose spoons for eating the baby food ball



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Play:

you will play four stages of this Growing Up game. The first stage, you are a BABY; the second stage, you are a TODDLER; the third stage, you are a TEENAGER; and the fourth stage, you are an ADULT. We are playing out a skit about the how we mature physically. Afterwards, we will discuss how we can mature spiritually.

(We will use the example of a jungle gym/playground for the sake of ease in explaining the play. You can modify the game to suit your surroundings.)

First Stage, everyone except one or two people is a BABY. They cannot walk on their own. They cannot eat solid foods. They have to be carried or crawl wherever they are going. The mommy/daddy are responsible for taking care of the babies. All the babies should lay on the floor/ground/blanket and the mommy/daddy will come get each one of them for the snack. Everyone who is acting the part of a baby should act like a baby (no talking, no walking, they can talk baby talk, giggle or cry or sleep). None of the babies can go to the snack alone. Since the mommy/daddy may not be able to carry everyone, they can guide the baby as they crawl to the snack area. Take the babies one at a time. Help them into their “high-chair.” Then, spoon-feed each baby so that they all get at least one bite of the baby food (babies, feel free to act like a baby, you can drool and do whatever you think babies do when they are being fed.)

Mommy/Daddy say “You get mashed bananas because you are a little baby and you don’t have any teeth to chew with yet.” Once the babies are fed, they need some play time. So it’s off to the jungle gym. But babies can’t climb on jungle gyms. The mommy/daddy and babies can play with a ball in the grass.

Mommy/Daddy sing: “Jesus loves me” Babies become calm and happy.

Second Stage, The babies have matured into toddlers. All the toddlers should sit on the floor and the mom/dad will come get each one of them for the snack. You should act like a toddler (2-3 yr old). Mom/Dad should guide, but not carry, the toddlers to their snack area. The toddlers should each climb (with some effort and maybe a little help) into their seat. Mom/Dad should give each toddler some of the small pieces of cut up banana to eat.

Mom/Dad say “now you can eat bigger pieces because you are bigger and you have teeth to chew with.” Once the toddlers are fed, they need some play time. So it’s off to the jungle gym. But toddlers are still learning to balance and they might fall. The Moms/Dads should lead the toddlers to the jungle gym and help them each to climb it. After some play time, Mom/Dad sing: “Jesus loves me” and the Toddlers sing along.

Third Stage, the toddlers are now teenagers. All the teenagers should just kind of hang around. Mom/Dad invite them to snack on a banana. Teenagers choose a banana, peel it and eat it and throw the peel away in the trash. Mom/Dad say “Awe, I remember when you were just a baby and you loved banana baby food. I’m so glad you still love bananas and I’m glad that you can feed yourself now.”

Teenagers say, “Thanks for teaching me. I know that you love me and I know that Jesus loves me. Is it okay if I go to the park with the jungle gym to hang out with some friends?” Mom/Dad say, “sure, have fun and be careful. Come home in time for dinner” Teenagers run to the park, climb the jungle gym with no problem.

Third Stage, the teenagers are now adults and everyone gathers together in a circle to begin the discussion.

Discussion: What were the signs of physical maturity in each stage of the play? How is that a model of spiritual maturity?

Read James 1:2-4 *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”*

Mature Christians are robust--they are patient in trials. Does anyone have an example of a trial that they are going through and how you are being patient in that trial.

Read James 2:8-9 *“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”*

Mature Christians practice the truth--they live out their faith. What are some ways that you are “living out” your faith?

Read James 3:6 *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.”*

Mature Christians are restrained--they have power over the tongue. Give some examples of what you can do to control your tongue.

Read James 4:2-8 *“Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures... But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...”*

Mature Christians are reserved--they are poor in spirit (humble). What is grace? (get some opinions and then look it up in a dictionary and read it out loud.) How has God shown grace to you? Is there someone that you need to be gracious to this week?

Read: James 5:7 -11 *“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand...My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”*

Mature Christians are resigned--they persevere in troubles. Do you know a Christian who, despite a difficult circumstance, continues doing God’s work? In what troubled situation do you need to persevere? How can the Holy Spirit help you? How have you matured today because of this game?



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Close in prayer, requesting wisdom and that God would reveal His purpose for your family.