

The Spiritual Styles of Children by David Csinos

Presentation at CECE conference in 2012 <https://youtu.be/wva1VkFU9BE>

There are four main ways that people express their spirituality. These spiritual styles help us experience God and help us to be spiritually formed.

Healthy spirituality will have some balance between these four styles, even though we will naturally favour one or two. They are like lenses that we put on and see the world through.

As ministry leaders we need to be careful that we don't structure and set up our ministry to only suit our own style. Ideally we want to aim for 'harmonious dissonance'. If we favour our own style, we will only be connecting with some children and for others, they won't feel connected to God at all. For them there will be too much dissonance. Other children, who match our style, may think they have spirituality all figured out and they don't need to grow. For them there is too much harmony. It is in the tension that we grow.

The Four Spiritual Styles:

Word: These people like words, written and spoken.

The Bible is important and so is preaching.

Faith formation is about increasing our knowledge of God.

They feel they know God when they know about God.

Emotion: Emotions and feelings are the way to connect with God.

The arts and music are important.

They are demonstrative and charismatic.

Oral testimonies are important because this connects them to the emotions of others.

Symbol: These people like abstract concepts and God is more sensed than concrete.

Metaphor, images, rituals and symbols are important.

They like meditation, icons, nature and silence.

Action: doing is important.

Prayer is more active than spoken

Passionate about injustice and the needs of the world. They want to make a difference.

Each of these styles is formative and can connect people to God.

Which of these styles do you favour? How do you best connect with God?

