

Spiritual and Psychological Development: Introduction and Birth to Age 3



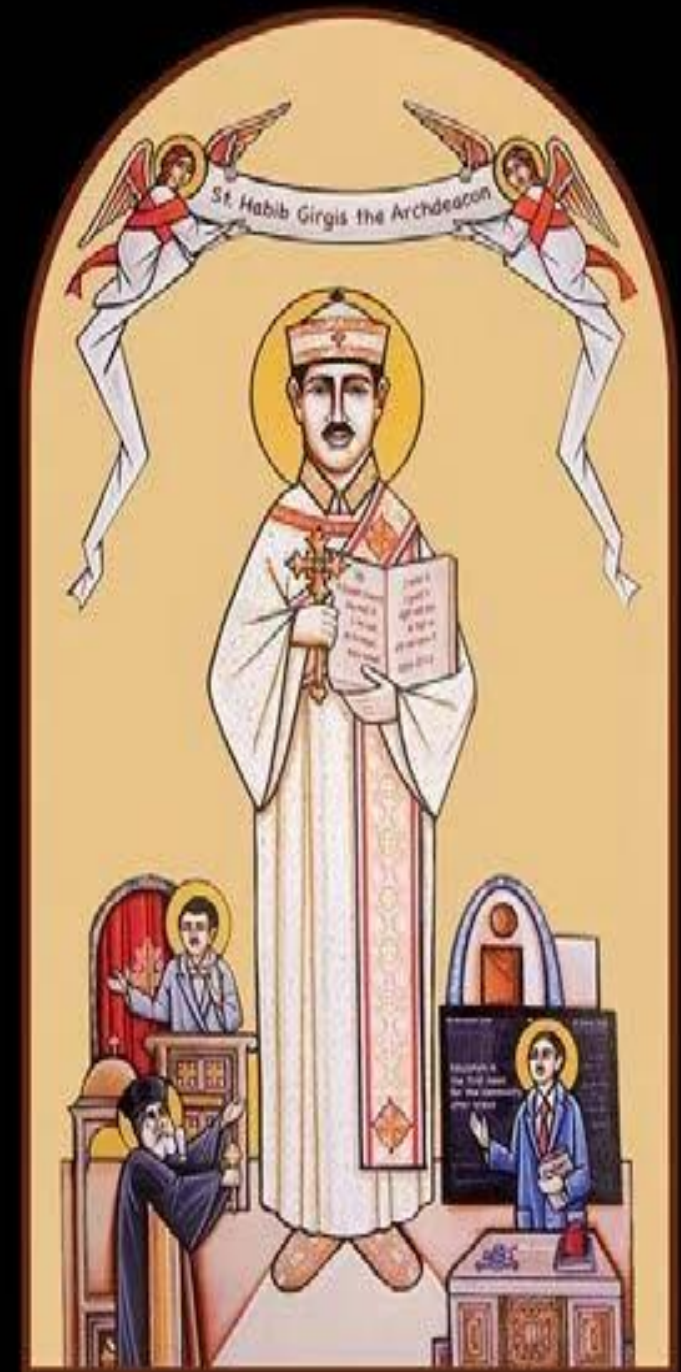
St. Mary and Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church
Servants Meeting

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”-
Proverbs 22:6



“**Education** is the first need for the community after bread”- St. Habib Girgis

“Of **all the holy works** the **most important** the education of **children is the most holy**”- Theophan the Recluse



Modes of Spiritual Learning

- ▶ **Visual/Taste/Smell/Touch:** How did the Early Church utilize visual means to express theological realities?
- ▶ **Listening/Hearing:** “So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.” - Romans 10: 17
- ▶ **Reading:** “Till I come, **give attention to reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine.” - 1 Timothy 4:13
- ▶ **Experiential:** “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**”- Philippians 2:12
- ▶ Everyone Learns Differently (visual vs. listening vs. reading vs. experiential)
- ▶ Liturgy is the Totality of All the Above



Why is healthy spiritual/psychological development important?

- ▶ Seeds of future personality development, interactions with others, and formation of their own families
- ▶ The number one predictor of future behavior is past behavior!
- ▶ Lays foundation for discipline and spiritual practices
- ▶ When does development begin? **Before birth, and role of Parents** (Jeremiah 1:5)
- ▶ Church Synaxarion
- ▶ Everything we do is a result of a defense mechanism that likely had origins from Childhood development
- ▶ Mystery of the Incarnation: **Christ our God blessed development**
- ▶ Goal of the Parent and Servant: To Feed Spiritually According to what they are able to eat
- ▶ Development is Everything! Our Goal is to produce Saints

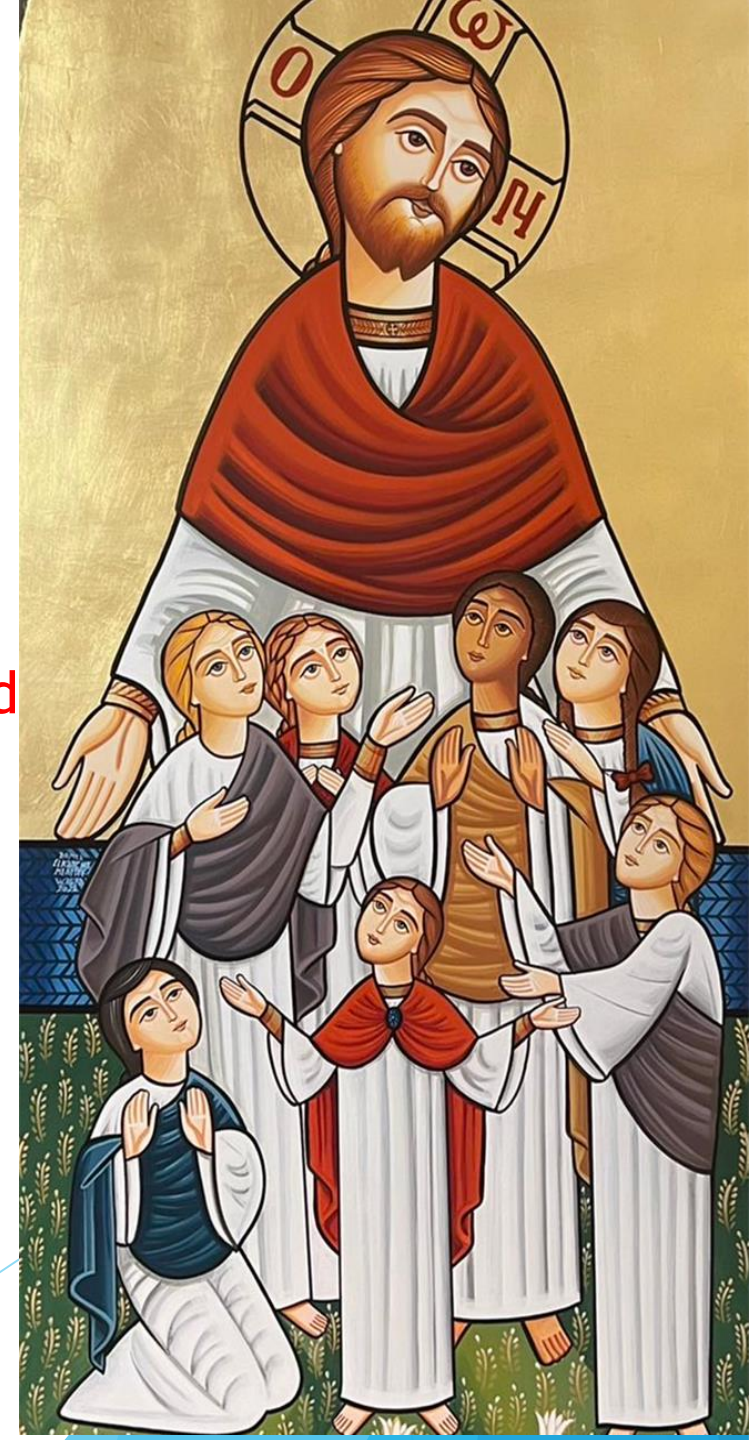
Categories of Development

- ▶ BIOLOGICAL
- ▶ PSYCHOLOGICAL
- ▶ SOCIAL
- ▶ SPIRITUAL

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”- Luke 2:52

“But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”- Matthew 19:14

“And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.”- Mark 10:16



4 Months

- ▶ Social/Emotional: Smiles, Looks at You, Makes Sounds Back When you Talk to Him/Her
- ▶ Early Age Child Looks and Sees Everything we do

6 Months

- ▶ Begins to know familiar people

9 Months

- ▶ Begin to show facial expressions emotions (happy, angry, sad, and surprised)
- ▶ Stranger Anxiety; Reacts when you Leave
- ▶ Smiles or Laughs When You Play



1 Year

- ▶ Plays games, Calls parents “mama” or “baba”
- ▶ Understands “No” at this age, stops and responds when they hear it
- ▶ Begins putting things in containers and playing more and more active

15 Months-18 Months

- ▶ Begins copying other children
- ▶ Shows affection (hugs, kisses)
- ▶ Begins to follow directions
- ▶ Points to Ask for Something when they need help
- ▶ Understanding of Differences in Gender!



2 Year Olds

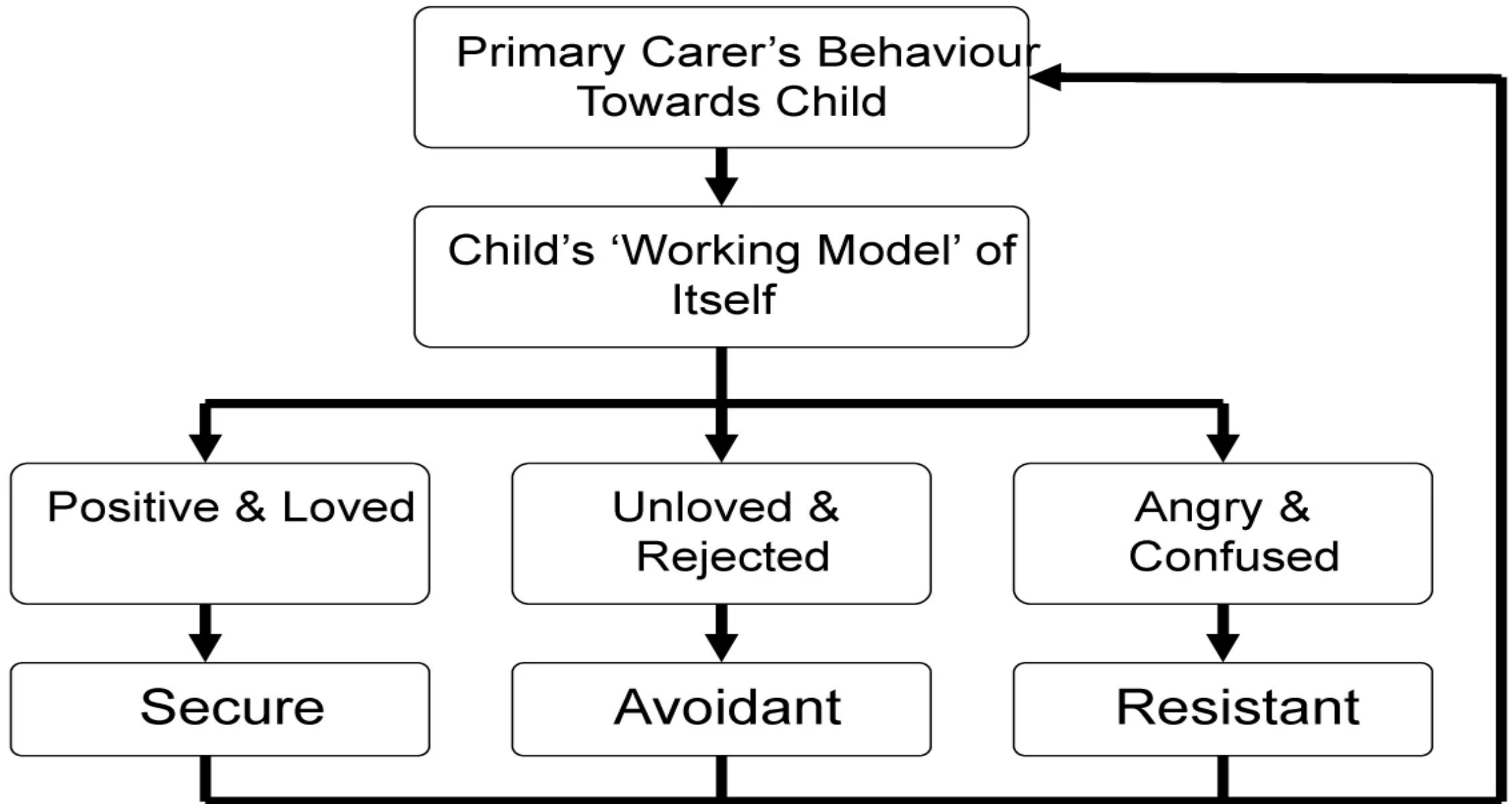
- ▶ Notices when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying
- ▶ Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation

30 Months

- ▶ Plays next to other children and sometimes plays with them
- ▶ Shows you what she can do by saying, “Look at me!”
- ▶ Follows simple routines when told
- ▶ Speaking more, Uses things to pretend, like feeding a block to a doll as if it were food
- ▶ Problem Solving Skills

3 Years

- ▶ Very conversational back and forth frequent consistent exchanges
- ▶ Talks well enough for others to understand
- ▶ Avoids danger when you tell them (hot stove)



Final Thoughts

- ▶ Importance of Development from Very Early On
- ▶ Discipline infused with Love
- ▶ Providing Spiritual Nourishment and Education Early On
- ▶ Do not underestimate the Spiritual capabilities of the developing child
- ▶ Importance of Secure Attachments will lead to Secure Relationship with God, Church and Others

15th of Epep-Martyrdom of St. Cyriacus (Three Years Old)

▶ “The martyr Cyriacus considered to be the youngest martyr to confess the Lord Christ after the children of Bethlehem”

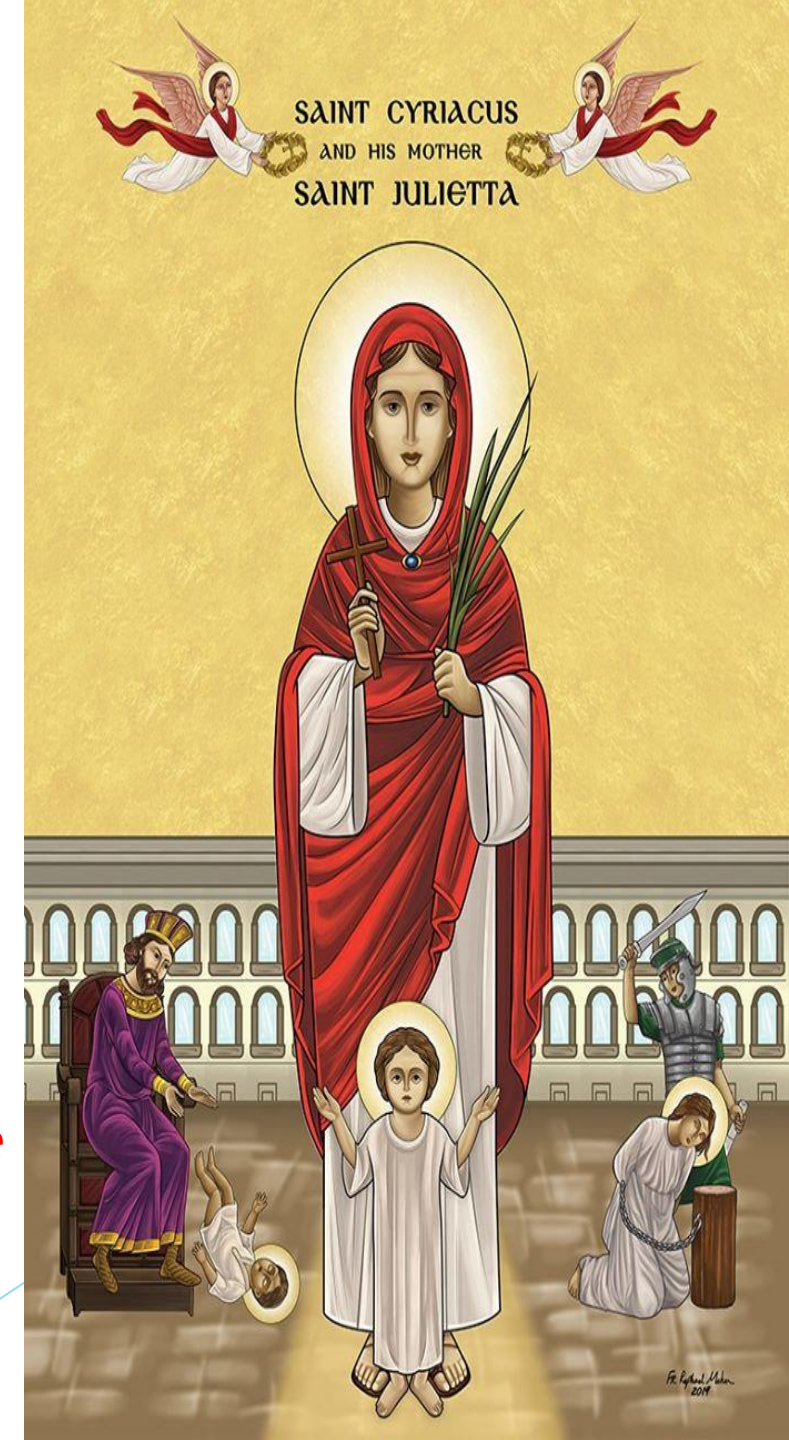
▶ “The first words that she taught him to say were **“I am a Christian!”**”

▶ “What you said cannot be accepted by a three year old child. The governor, said to her ‘We can ask your child’. God made the child Cyriacus talk, who cried out saying, **“Your gods are made of stone and wood by the hands of Men and there is no other God except my Lord Jesus Christ”**”

▶ “Governor tried to embrace him and kiss him, he pushed him away, and hit Him and instead of crying said **“I am a Christian. I am a Christian”**”

▶ St. Cyriacus was martyred first, and **his mother rejoiced and thank the Lord!** Then St. Julitta was martyred.

▶ This is the goal of Holy Orthodox Child Development!



Questions, Comments, Concerns?

References:

- ▶ CDC Developmental Milestone Checklist
- ▶ “Simply Psychology Attachment Theory in Psychology”- McLeod
- ▶ “Ages and Stages”- Schaefer
- ▶ “Raising Them Right, A Saint’s Advice on Raising Children”-Theophan the Recluse