

Many Christian adults today can look back on their elementary years as the time when they accepted Jesus as their Savior. Children can understand the difference between right and wrong, as well as their own personal need for forgiveness. They are also growing in their ability to understand the meaning behind Jesus' death and resurrection. We fully believe that children are capable of growing in their faith through prayer, worship, and studying God's word. These are habits that we hope they will benefit from for their whole lives!

We also recognize that children can be limited in their understanding and some will lack the maturity to follow through on their commitments. We need to thoughtfully guide them towards the ultimate goal of knowing Christ personally, and accepting the salvation offered through Him. This is a lifelong process of growing in relationship with Him, and we believe there is no age too young to start! Here are some recommendations for how you can help lead a child to knowing Christ:

Pray

Ask God to prepare the heart of the child to receive the good news about Jesus, and to prepare you to effectively communicate with them.

Present the Good News

Use words and phrases that the child can understand. Give them time to think about what you are saying.

- "God wants you to become His child. Do you know why?" *1 John 3:1*
- "You and all of the people in the world have done wrong things. The Bible calls this SIN – what do you think the Bible says we should do when we sin?" *Romans 6:23*
- "God loves you so much, He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for your sin. Because Jesus never sinned, He is the only one who can take the punishment for our sins." *1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 John 4:14*
- "Are you sorry for your sin? Tell God that you are. Do you believe Jesus died for your sin and that He is alive today? If we tell God we are sorry for our sin, and believe in Jesus and accept His death on the cross to take away our sins, God forgives us." *1 John 1:9*
- "The Bible says that when we believe in Jesus as God's Son, you receive God's gift of eternal life, which makes you a child of God. This means God will be with you now and forever." *John 3:16*

Talk Personally With The Child

When we talk to a child one-on-one about salvation, it gives them the opportunity to ask and answer questions. Ask open-ended questions, which can give you a better idea as to how much the child understands, such as:

- "Why do you think it's important to..."
- "What are some things you really like about Jesus?"
- "Why do you think Jesus had to die because we do bad things?"
- "Why do you think it is important that we ask for forgiveness for our sins?"

Accept the Child's Decision

Be aware that children can be easily manipulated by adults. Make sure that you lovingly accept their response, whether or not they are showing interest in the topic of salvation. This is a critical piece of building a relationship of trust that will allow for future conversations between the two of you. These early years are just the beginning of their journey towards a life with Christ.

Give Them Time to Think and Pray

It is important to allow them the time to think and pray about what you are discussing with them before they respond.

Guide The Child In Further Growth

Talk regularly about your own relationship with God. This will allow them to see that it is a journey and it is good to talk about it. **Prepare the child to deal with doubts.** We need to communicate that our salvation is secure because God is good, not because of how we feel or what good things we do. These verses show that salvation is by grace through faith: John 1:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 5:11. **Teach them to confess all sin.** We need to encourage them to come before God and acknowledge when they fail. Confession always results in forgiveness. 1 John 1:9.