

PARENTING

INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO JESUS

HOME FIRST

PARENTING POINTER

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The fact you're reading this indicates you are concerned about your child's faith. As you care for your child's daily needs and work to prepare him or her for success in life, there's nothing more important than caring for their spiritual needs and helping them prepare for eternity. It's likely that you are reading this because, like many parents, you don't know quite how (or when) to go about introducing your child to Jesus. Parents who worry that they don't have the training or understanding to lead their children to salvation may be tempted to just leave it to the "professionals"—to rely on people at church or ministry events. That's understandable, but God has given you the most important and most influential role when it comes to influencing your child's path to salvation. God has also perfectly equipped you to be your child's parent and answer their questions about Jesus in a way that makes sense to them. Hopefully what you will find here helps you feel more confident in this specific part of parenting.

LAY A FOUNDATION

A child's decision to follow Jesus is rarely a one-stop process. Your son or daughter grows in their understanding of God by developing a foundation (hearing the stories of the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus, and so forth) as well as experiencing life in your home (watching your example, feeling your love, seeing how you grow spiritually). These two ways of learning work best when they are connected in your home and integrated into your family life. We see it in Deuteronomy: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Dt. 6:6-7). Many conversations and situations can be connected to the gospel!

DISCERN READINESS

One of the beautiful things about God's plans is that His timing is always perfect. There is no set age that accepting Jesus needs to happen, and I (Ivy) would encourage you to neither pressure the decision or put it off. The right time is when God wants it to happen, and begin praying that you would be sensitive to God's movement in your child's life. I have noticed that many kids begin asking questions about heaven, Jesus's death or baptism, and those questions can lead to great conversations about accepting Jesus. As questions are asked, your job is to ask the Holy Spirit to be your help, and answer them the best you know how. Always remember saying "you know I don't know the best way to answer that, we should ask a pastor at church" or "that is a question that I am going to need to research to find the answer to" are perfectly great answers. I've actually said that many times to my son, and I am a pastor!

Prior to accepting Jesus it is important to gauge your child's level of understanding on sin and what they believe about Jesus' death and resurrection. Read Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Then ask questions like, "How would you describe sin?" and "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" How they respond can help you sense whether your child is ready in addition to helping your child apply the gospel to his or her life.

GUIDE YOUR CHILD IN PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Romans 10 tells us, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10). If you sense your child has a basic understanding of what sin is and what it leads to, as well as what it means to accept God's gift of salvation and His Lordship, then you can guide your child to pray along those lines. Instead of quoting specific words for your child to repeat, it's best to prompt them to use their own words—to tell God they are sorry for their sins, to ask for His forgiveness, and to ask Him to be Lord over the rest of their life.

PREPARE THEM FOR BAPTISM

Once your child has understood and decided to accept God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, it is time to guide them toward following Jesus in believer's baptism. Schedule a time to meet with a pastor at our church, and then the baptism can be scheduled.

GOING FURTHER RESOURCES

KidsFaith: Faith Conversations for Families by Tedye Schuehler is an interactive journal designed to guide faith conversations with kids, and can be ordered online at baptistwaypress.org.

Survival for New Christians is a 7-week course offered for those in 3rd - 6th grade. Register for this program when it begins in the fall and/or spring.

Contact our Children's Pastor Ivy Lassiter with any questions on this exciting step in your child's faith journey:
ILassiter@FBRichardson.org

Rightnow Media is an online video resource library our church provides to help you on your pursuit of Jesus. We encourage you to check out the Bible studies listed and look for specific topics using their search tool. To sign up for free visit FBRichardson.org/rightnow today.



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