

INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO CHRIST

One of the greatest privileges as a parent is to help your child come to faith in Christ. Your goal should be to lead them to understand the Gospel and make their own faith decision when they are ready. Like many parents, you may not quite know how or when to approach this exciting yet intimidating moment of parenthood. Maybe you worry that you won't explain the Gospel properly, or you're tempted to just "leave it to the professionals" by relying on church or ministry events. While that's understandable, God has given **you** the most important and influential role when it comes to leading your child to Christ. This tool is designed to help you feel more comfortable about the process when that time comes.

STEP 1: LAY A FOUNDATION

Your son or daughter grows in his or her understanding of God by developing a foundation- hearing stories from the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus and so forth. Your child also learns by experiencing life in your home, watching your example, feeling your love, and learning right from wrong. We see this in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 where it says, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

STEP 2: DISCERN READINESS

Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push for a decision before he or she is ready to truly grasp the gospel. Your child may intellectually understand before being socially or spiritually ready. Young children are usually bonded to their parents in such a way that they want to please and do not have a fully sense of a separate self. A child needs to understand that this is a personal decision and not just an opportunity to repeat rote answers.

STEP 3: ASK QUESTIONS

If you feel your child might be ready, ask a few questions to help gauge his or her level of understanding. For example, read Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Then ask questions like, "What is sin?" "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" How they respond can help you sense when your child is ready to understand two important concepts:

- Jesus as Savior: The need for forgiveness and cleansing from sin which was made possible through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross

- Jesus as Lord: The need to submit to God as “the boss” by making Jesus Christ the Lord of one’s life

STEP 4: GUIDE YOUR CHILD IN PRAYER

Romans 10:9 says, “...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” If you sense your child has a basic understanding of what sin is as well as what it means to accept God’s gift of salvation and His Lordship, then you can guide him or her 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.

STEP 5: PREPARE THEM FOR THE NEXT STEPS

Once your child has trusted Christ, you can begin the wonderful privilege of guiding their next steps of faith. Topics like Bible reading and prayer, baptism and worship, and even going to church now have new meaning and relevance, and you have the joy of modeling, teaching, and walking alongside them as they learn to trust and obey and follow Jesus.