

Introducing Your Child to Christ

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 Christ. 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. All it takes is a little training for you to feel more comfortable about the when and how of introducing them to Christ.

STEP ONE: 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, learning right from wrong). 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).

STEP TWO: Discern readiness

Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push him or her too fast, making sure they are ready and can truly understand the gospel.

When you feel they are ready, ask a few questions to help gauge your child's level of understanding. 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, "What is sin?" "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" "What is the consequence of your sin?" and "How can you be right with God?" How they respond can help you sense whether your child has understanding of truth in addition to helping your child apply the gospel to his or her own life.

STEP THREE: Guide your child to Christ

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). This truth is often expressed through what is commonly called a prayer for salvation. 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 surrender to 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.

STEP FOUR: 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 Christ in believer's baptism. If you would like that to be done at Maranatha, schedule a time to talk with a pastor.

GOING FURTHER – Resources

Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God (by Bruce A. Ware) encourages and enables parents of children 6-14 years of age to teach through the whole of systematic theology at a level their children can understand. Parents can teach their children the great truths of the faith and shape their worldviews early, based on these truths.

The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New (by Mary Machowski) gives kids a beginner's theology book to help them understand who God is and how we, as his children, relate to him. Arranged within a traditional systematic theological framework, each truth is also connected to the larger redemptive story of Scripture. Designed for six-year-olds through preteens, this flexible resource includes built-in adaptations for use with younger or older children, so that entire families can enjoy it together.

The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New (by Sovereign Grace Music) In this memorable, creative, fun, and understandable music, kids learn all about God, people, sin, God's promises, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, adoption, the church, Christ's return, and the Bible.

GOING FURTHER – Maranatha Support

Faith Path: Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ

This kit will be available for download on Maranatha's website or pick-up from the Faith@Home Resource Center starting Fall 2018. It includes a training video and other tools to help you gain confidence as you lead your child to faith.

Check out our Maranatha Kids flyer for more disciple making opportunities.

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