



One of the greatest privileges a parent has is to help a child come to faith in Jesus. Like many parents, there can be uncertainty about how or when to approach one of the most exciting yet intimidating moments of parenthood. Some may worry about explaining salvation properly or feel tempted to leave it to professionals through church or ministry events. While that is understandable, God has given parents the most important and influential role in leading their child to Christ. This guide is designed to help parents feel more comfortable with the process when that time comes.

A child grows in understanding of God by developing a solid foundation through hearing stories from the Bible, learning Scripture, singing about Jesus, and more. This is why consistent involvement in church and regular exposure to biblical teaching is so important.

In addition, a child learns by experiencing life in the home by watching a parent's example, receiving love, and learning right from wrong, all while building on the milestones already established through the Faith Path.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 reflects this, saying: “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.”

The word impress (NIV) in this context can be compared to sharpening a knife on a whetstone, making it sharp and able to leave a lasting mark, like an embossing. In the same way, parents are to use the teachings of Christ to shape their children's hearts and minds. A parent's role is to be intentional and impactful in how they live and teach, leaving a lasting impression.

DISCERN READINESS

Parents are encouraged to discern when a child is mature enough to begin understanding spiritual truth. Often, this begins with questions about faith. A child may show curiosity, and their thoughts may be stirred. At times, they may ask questions that are difficult to answer, and that is okay. This creates an opportunity to seek answers together, which can deepen engagement and interest.

While questions are a good sign, they are not always a clear indication of spiritual conviction. There is a difference between curiosity and conviction by the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said in John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

There will come a time when God draws a child to a deeper awareness of sin and the need for forgiveness. Early questions may be about general topics, but a shift occurs when a child begins asking about personal guilt, sin, or what happens after death. Parents can often discern the difference between simple curiosity and deeper conviction.

Care should be taken not to rush a decision before a child is ready to truly understand and respond to the gospel. A child does not need to be a theologian but should have a basic ability to understand and take ownership of the decision. Children may understand intellectually before they are ready socially or spiritually. They may also be influenced by peers. While this is not always wrong, parents who have been intentional in discipleship are best positioned to discern readiness. A child needs to understand that faith is a personal decision, not simply repeating memorized words.

ASK QUESTIONS

If a child appears ready, parents can ask questions to help gauge understanding. For example, reading Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,” can open the door for discussion. Questions such as “What is sin?” or “How does sin affect a relationship with God?” can help reveal understanding.

Responses can help parents discern whether a child is beginning to understand two key truths:

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

Jesus as Lord: The need to submit to God as Lord by surrendering one's life to Jesus Christ.

A child may not express everything perfectly, but parents can often recognize genuine understanding. Guidance from trusted spiritual leaders can also be helpful. It is important not to pressure a child into a decision, but also not to avoid the moment out of discomfort or uncertainty.

GUIDE YOUR CHILD IN PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Romans 10:9–10 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 a child demonstrates a basic understanding of sin, salvation, and the Lordship of Christ, a parent can guide them in prayer along those lines. Rather than having a child repeat specific words, it is often more meaningful to encourage them to pray in their own words.

Important elements to include are confession of sin and a request for forgiveness, acceptance of and submission to the Lordship of Jesus, belief that Jesus was perfect, died for sin, and rose again, and thankfulness for the Holy Spirit who guides in obedience.

When a child makes this decision, it is a time for joyful celebration. The next step in the conversation is baptism, which marks this new life in Christ.

If additional guidance is needed, families are encouraged to seek support from trusted spiritual leaders. When a child comes to faith, it is an opportunity for the faith community to rejoice together and continue supporting the family in discipleship.

. **FAITH PATH PLAN**

Child’s Name: _____

How will you be intentional about your child’s spiritual growth in the coming year?

- ☐ Pray daily *with* and *for* my child.
- ☐ Spend consistent time in God’s Word.
- ☐ Offer a daily blessing to my child.
- ☐ Schedule and have regular family times.
- ☐ Be prepared to talk with my child about his or her faith decision.
- ☐ Other _____

The next step on the Faith Path is Prayer, recommended for second grade. This fits perfectly in their faith timetable. We pray they will follow Jesus, and once they do, they begin a personal prayer life of communication with Him. These habits are best kept when you start out young!

ADDITIONAL READING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Faith of a Child by Art Murray

Leading Your Kids to Christ: 30 Days to Prepare Your Heart by Criswell Freeman

God's Great News for Children by Rick Osborne and Marnie Wooding

Teach Kids Podcast by CEF

The Wordless Book by CEF

Leading Your Child to Christ: Biblical Direction for Sharing the Gospel by Marty Machowski

Baptism Next Steps booklet by Steve Greenwood

Walking With Jesus Next Steps booklet by Jennifer Barnet



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