

Talking to Children About Salvation

Guiding children to take the first steps toward faith can be the most rewarding opportunity for parents. The journey toward faith is filled with teachable moments where influential adults answer questions, teach biblical truths, model Christian values, and share personal testimonies that further the child's understanding.

When talking to a child about salvation:

- **Ask follow-up questions.** When a child asks a question, often they do not know exactly what to ask. Get clarification before deciding how to answer a question. For example, you might say, "Tell me more about what you are thinking." Or "What made you ask that question? Where did you hear about this?" Remember, many times the question a child asks may not be the actual question for which they are needing an answer. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no."
- **Avoid giving more information than a child needs.** Adults can be tempted to tell all they know on a subject. When a child asks a question, only answer what the child is asking. If a child asks for more information, be more specific with your answers.
- **Don't jump to conclusions.** A child may ask, "Why did Andy get baptized?" This question may be only a request for information, not a request for the gospel presentation.
- **Speak in clear terms.** Avoid symbolic analogies that may distract from discussion and understanding.
- **Use simple wording.** Rather than using the phrase "accepting Jesus into your heart," say the words "believe in Jesus."

Steps in talking about God's plan for salvation with a child:

1. **God loves you. (Psalms 139:13-16)** Talk about these truths: God made people; God made you. God wants to have a relationship with people, and God wants to have a relationship with you. Say, "Tell me one way you know God loves you."
2. **We have all sinned. (Romans 3:23)** Everyone must understand that they are separated from God. Sin is best understood as choosing to do things our way instead of God's way. (Give some examples of sin such as disobedience, ungratefulness, untruthfulness, etc.) Then ask the child, "Have you sinned? What does God think about sin?" Point out that everyone has sinned.
3. **Even though we choose to sin, God still loves us and offers to forgive us. (Romans 5:8)** Ask, "How do you think it makes God feel when you sin?" Focus on the fact that God loves the child even when they sin. Say: "God promised that one day a Savior would come and not sin and would die for all people. Do you know who that Savior is? Did you know that He died for you?"
4. **Jesus died for us. (John 3:16)** Talk about John 3:16 and explain that because sin separates people from God, everyone needs a Savior. Ask, "Do you know why Jesus died?" Say, "Jesus loved you so much. He willingly died for you, so you could be with God forever." If the child is old enough to understand the resurrection, say, "Jesus rose from the dead, so we could live forever in heaven with Him."

5. **Becoming a Follower of Christ.** Explain to the child that a person becomes a Christian by believing in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, by believing that His death on the cross was payment for their sins, and by confessing that Jesus is their Savior and Lord. Ask the child if he believes these things.
6. **Review and Pray. (Romans 10:9-10)** Encourage the child to tell you in their own words what they understand and believe. Ask the child if they want to talk to God about their new faith. A sample prayer might sound like:

“Dear God, I love you. I know you love me. I am a sinner and I need someone to save me. Jesus is the only one who can do this. So, by faith, I believe in Jesus and that His death on the cross paid for my sins and gives me eternal life with Him in heaven. Jesus is my Savior and Lord.”