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Introducing Your Child to Christ

As Christian parents, our greatest desire is that our children will grow to fall in love with Jesus and commit their lives to follow Him. Yet some can hear the message of the gospel and believe, while others do not. How can we, as the ones God has placed to train, nurture, and mold the hearts of our children, lead them to understand who Jesus is?

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells a parable about a sower and seeds. When the gospel is heard but one doesn't understand it, the enemy will snatch the seed from his heart. When the good news is sown in a heart without roots, persecution will quickly cause it to die. The worries of and desires for the things of this world can choke the Word, so it doesn't produce fruit. But the one who hears the Word and understands it will bear fruit.

Understanding

God's Word must be received with understanding, not just knowledge. Instead of focusing on Bible facts, think about what will help your kids *understand* God's Word and how to live by it. If the goal is to instill knowledge in children, hearing and memorizing the Bible is enough. If the goal is to pass on faith to them, those things aren't the end. Look at the heart.

Experiencing

Jesus, the greatest Teacher, taught and led by example. When He taught His disciples about servanthood, He didn't just tell them about it ... He washed their feet. Help your children experience Biblical Truths. For example, to encourage thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18), have each family member write or draw something they're thankful for and place it in a jar. Also use concrete tools to help children understand abstract Truths. To illustrate the lasting effects of our words (Ephesians 4:29), squeeze toothpaste out of a tube (and show that it can't be put back inside).

Use Every Opportunity

As you seek to help your children experience God's Word, look for everyday opportunities to do so. When your child is afraid, sad, angry, or excited, their hearts are most ready to receive God's Word with understanding. If your child is afraid during a storm, remind them that God is with them. If your child is angry with their sibling, that's the perfect moment to teach about forgiveness. Jesus did this often in Scripture, as He taught His disciples and followers.

If I've Said it Once ...

Continue to repeat God's Truth, and continue to weave it into the fabric of your family. Say it often, and say it in different ways. In his article "Sharing the Gospel With Your Children," Thom Schultz says this, "If you want your kids to understand God as Creator, repeat the message frequently - when you drive through the mountains, when you witness a sunset, when you visit the zoo and when you marvel at the intricacy of the human body." ¹

For a Lifetime

What's our ultimate goal as parents? Is it that a child will recognize that he needs Jesus once, or that he will become a lifelong follower of Him? Focus on teaching your children who God is, so they will want to respond to that. As you do, teach them that we are sinners, and Jesus is Savior.

When your child chooses to pray to commit their life to Jesus for the first time, celebrate! And continue to teach. Remember that it's not about the words of a prayer, but about a heart change! God is the One who changes hearts. The moment a child chooses Christ, He changes his heart from stone to flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

For more tools and tips to answer your kids' tough questions about putting their faith in Jesus, check out the Additional Resources.



Sources

¹Schultz, Thom. "Sharing the Gospel With Your Children." Focus on the Family. (N.d.): n.pag. <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual_growth_for_kids/sharing_the_gospel_with_your_ch>.

Additional Resources

FaithLaunch: A Simple Plan to Ignite Your Child's Love for Jesus

John Trent, Ph.D. and Jane Vogel

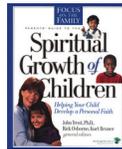
Available at christianbook.com



Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children

John Trent Ph.D. and Rick Osborne

Available at christianbook.com



"Sharing the Gospel With Your Children"

An 8-article series available from Focus on the Family

(http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual_growth_for_kids/sharing_the_gospel_with_your_children.aspx)

"Launching Your Child's Faith: What's the Rush?"

A 9-article series available from Focus on the Family

(http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/spiritual_growth_for_kids/ignite_your_childs_love_for_jesus.aspx)

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Resources for Home

Our greatest desire is to **partner** with you as you lead your kids to follow Jesus. One way we hope to do this is by providing **resources** for you to use at home as you engage in conversations with your children about the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

Be sure to visit communitychurch.com/kidconnection for the monthly Parent Cue, GodTime Cards, and more!