

Sowing Spiritual Seeds . . .

Can a child grasp the reality of an unseen God?

Can a child understand salvation and the meaning of Christ's death on the cross?

Some people say you should wait to talk with children about faith, salvation, and other spiritual issues until they can think abstractly. Later in the teenage years you can reason with them . . . mind to mind, intellect to intellect. Yet parents who wait are often dismayed as their children grow up with no spiritual roots . . . only because of failure to plant seeds of truth in the earlier years.

*"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."
(Proverbs 22:6)*

Q: Are my children ready to understand the gospel?

- **Myth:** "Young children are intellectually incapable of responding to salvation."

Truth: Young children are more capable of responding to the message of salvation than adults are.

- **Myth:** "Adults shouldn't impose their religious beliefs on children because they are not ready. When children grow into adulthood, they can make up their own minds."

Truth: Children give clues as to when they are open for change and ready to receive the Savior.

*"At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'"
(Matthew 18:1-4)*

Children Have . . . ¹**C**uriosity

- Children ask questions about everything.

Humility

- Children are accustomed to being under authority; therefore, they are teachable.

Imagination

- Children are able to visualize the unseen.

Less distrust

- Children find it easy to believe in the supernatural.

Dependency

- Children are already dependent on adults for protection and provisions.

Retentive memories

- Children can retain what they don't understand more easily than adults.

Eagerness to receive gifts

- Children find it more natural to receive a gift without feeling they have to earn it.

No hardened hearts

- Children do not have deeply embedded sin patterns, addictions, or beliefs that keep them from giving up their "old ways of life."

Children Are Ready to Hear the Gospel When They Are . . .

Reaping consequences from their own negative behavior

- feelings of guilt and shame

Expressing worry about the future

- fear of darkness, separation, storms, death

Asking many questions

- “What happens when people die?”

Drastically changing their behavior

- withdrawal or sensitivity

Yielding to positive authority

- release of a rebellious spirit

“Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”
(1 Peter 3:15–16)

Key Verse to Memorize

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
(Matthew 18:3)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

Psalm 78:2–7

Practical Ps for Preparing a Child’s Heart

Portray the character of Christ. (Titus 2:7–8)

Praise God in the presence of your child for specific blessings. (Psalm 34:1)

Play and sing Christian songs with your child. (Psalm 66:1–2)

Place pictures and plaques with a spiritual emphasis throughout your home. (Deuteronomy 6:5–9)

Provide a regular time to read and talk about Scripture—a daily family devotional time. (2 Timothy 3:14–15)

Prepare Scripture memory verses on cutout forms or cards. (Psalm 119:11)

Pray out loud with and for your child. (Colossians 1:9–10)

Prioritize regular spiritual programs for your child. (Proverbs 22:6)

Play creative games that bring God into focus.

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”
(2 Timothy 1:5)

How to Present the Good News

God (Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 31:3)

Original Sin (Psalm 51:5; James 4:17)

Offering for Sin (John 3:16; 1 John 3:5)

Death and Resurrection
(Isaiah 59:2; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Need (Romans 10:13; John 3:17-18)

Eternal Life
(Romans 8:1; John 11:26; Philippians 1:6)

Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105)

Salvation Prayer
(Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 10:9)

*“These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children.”
(Deuteronomy 6:6–7)*

Related Topics . . .

- Assurance of Salvation:
Safe, Sealed, and Secure
- Atheism & Agnosticism:
The Great Debate
- God: Who is He?
Who Do You Say That He Is?
- Salvation:
Sharing Christ with Confidence
- Unbelieving Mate:
Becoming a Winsome Witness

HOPE FOR THE HEART's *Biblical Counseling Library Quick Reference* provides immediate, concise, biblical truths for today's problems.

For more comprehensive help, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys . . .*

Child Evangelism:
Sharing the Savior with a Child.

If you would like more information, call 1-800-488-HOPE (4673) or visit www.hopefortheheart.org.

For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. For this section see Fred Kraft, and Vickie Kraft, *Can Children Receive Christ?* (Dallas: Titus 2:4 Ministries, 1982).



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