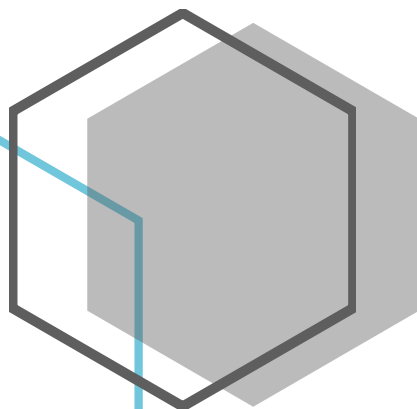




PARENT DISCIPLESHIP

Free resource from: [2-minute Small Group Trainer](#)

“If we don’t teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.”



Introduction

In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.: (NirV)
Sometimes grown-ups underestimate what the Holy Spirit can do in the life of a kid. They’re not just followers-of-Jesus-in-waiting. In fact, not only can kids walk with Jesus, they can run. And you can help them!

- LEADING YOUR CHILD TO CHRIST
- HELPING YOUR CHILD NAVIGATE THE BIBLE
- HOW TO LEAD YOUR CHILD IN PRAYER
- HELPING YOUR CHILD REFLECT AND RESPOND TO GOD

...
“Becoming a follower of Jesus is the greatest decision a kid could ever make and it’s worth celebrating. Let kids know that all of heaven is rejoicing over their decision.”

Leading your child to Christ

There are few things as amazing as praying with a child to become a Christian, but for some people, the thought of it is terrifying. Questions might swirl through your head. How do I do it? What should I avoid? Is it possible I could mess this thing up? It's understandable that some people might feel nervous about walking your child through such a huge spiritual milestone but fear not! By the grace of God, you can do it! Here's a few suggestions to help you along the way:

Avoid coercion. Most kids have the desire to please adults. Avoid language that might pressure a kid into a disingenuous decision to follow Jesus. It's okay to present opportunities by asking questions like, "Do you ever think about asking Jesus to be your Savior?" But allow them to reach a conclusion on their own. In other words, lead them towards a decision; don't push them towards one.

Use the ABC's. If a kid has already heard the Gospel and has expressed a desire to become a Christian, explain to them the ABC's of prayer. "A" – Admit you have sinned and ask God for forgiveness. "B"- Believe that God has sent His son, Jesus, to die for your sins. "C"- Choose to follow Jesus and make Him the leader of your life.

Prompt your child in prayer. It's important that the salvation prayer comes from the heart of your child. Instead of having your child repeat the prayer after you, provide prompts and let them do the praying. For example, begin by opening the prayer, but then prompt your child to "admit" he's sinned and ask God for forgiveness. Pause for your child to say his own prayer and then prompt him through "believe" and "choose".

Celebrate! This is the greatest decision anyone could ever make and it's worth celebrating! Let your child know that all of heaven is rejoicing over their decision. If your child doesn't have a Bible yet, you might consider buying one for them as a celebration gift. Be sure to share the news with the leaders in your church or any other people who are important in the life of your child.



Helping your child navigate the Bible

"The B-I-B-L-E, Yes that's the book for me! *Unless you don't know how to navigate it, in which case it just sits on your shelf collecting dust.*" I like to imagine that these were the original lyrics to the famous Bible song. (Whatever it lacks in sing-ability, it makes up for with raw honesty.) The Bible is the greatest book ever written – it's a book that has the power to not only change our lives, but our eternities as well. But how can God's Word truly plant itself in your child's heart if they don't know how to read it for themselves? Helping your child navigate the Bible is one of the most important things we can do. Here are a few tips to help you do that:

Show them the bones. Teaching your child about the basic "bones" of the Bible will help them get around on their own. Show them how the Bible is broken into 2 sections (Old and New Testament) and 66 books. Show them how each book is broken into chapters (the big numbers) and verses (the little numbers).

Teach them about the Table of Contents. Some kids are Bible whizzes. They can recite the 66 books in order and flip to them like lightning. For the rest of us, though, the Table of Contents can be a valuable tool. Point your kids to the Table of Contents and show them how to find a book quickly.

Let them see you do it. Flip through your own Bible as you explain. Let your kids see you navigate the Bible as you illustrate each step.

Don't be a Bible hog. Instead of just reading to your kids, challenge them to look up the verses for themselves. It will take more time for the kids to find it, but it's worth the investment.

Give space, give hints, give answers. When you give your child a verse to look up, first give them space to find it on their own. After a moment, give them hints on where to find it. "It's in the Old Testament." "It's close to the middle of the Bible." "Look for the big number 28." Finally, when enough time has passed, help your child if they are struggling.



How to lead your child in prayer

If a kid's prayer life consists of shouting, "God's neat, let's eat" before dinner, they might need your help! One of your most fundamental jobs as a parent is to help kids connect with God. And one of the most fundamental ways of connecting with God is through prayer. With a little bit of direction from you, your child can become a pro at prayer. The following suggestions are intended to help you do that:

Consider your own prayer life. Never mind the kids for a minute, if your prayer life consists of shouting, "God's neat, let's eat," you might need to work on yourself first. You can't model what you are not practicing.

Tell them what prayer is. Some kids might have misunderstandings as to what prayer is. They might think it's something mystical or magical. They might think it's repeating rote lines. Let them know that prayer is simply talking to God.

Model it. Instead of just telling your child how to pray, show them. During family prayers, let your child hear how you talk to God. Go beyond the surface – tell God about your feelings and your fears. Praise Him for His goodness. Thank Him for specific blessings in your life. On an appropriate level, tell Him how you've messed up and ask for forgiveness.

Don't be a prayer hog. Kids can say the most amazing, heart-felt prayers – if you give them a chance, that is. Get them started, then get out of the way. Tell your child that you'll start the prayer, then let them own it from there. You'll be amazed by the depth and sincerity with which kids can pray!

Consider using different prayer postures. Bowing your head, closing your eyes and folding your hands works great, but there are some other postures that can create unity within your family while praying. For example: stand in a circle and hold hands or link arms. Stand or kneel in a huddle and put your arms around each other or place your hands in the middle.

Helping your child reflect and respond to God

When ministering to kids, it's easy to spend all of your time on two endeavors: getting the Bible into your child's head and teaching them how to apply it with their hands. That's great, but it's missing a key component. God doesn't want our head and our hands, He wants our heart too! But teaching your child to develop a heart-felt relationship with God can feel kind of squishy – it's not as concrete as teaching Biblical truth or application. That doesn't mean it's impossible, though. There are some tips for helping your child develop a relationship with God through reflection and response:

Ask reflective questions. Instead of asking kids comprehension questions, in other words, what they remember from a story, ask them reflective questions like, "What do you think God is telling you through that verse or story?" or "How does that verse, or story make you feel? Why?"

Tap into their inner artist. Art is a great way for kids to respond to God. Instead of having your child pray verbally, consider having them draw their prayers. Or carve out some time to allow your child to draw praise pictures to God.

Pray on the spot. If your child shares something prayer-worthy, don't just tell them, "I'll be praying for you." Instead, tell them, "Let's pray about that right now." Pray for your child on the spot but encourage them to pray aloud as well.

Get them into God's Word. Often, when kids are at church, they'll have the Bible story told to them. But you can help them take it further by encouraging your child to read the story from the Bible at home too. If they're still learning to read, read it with them. Ask questions like "What did you learn about God from that story?" or "What do you want to say to God after reading that story?"

Letters to God. Some kids love to write. Get them into journaling by telling them to write a letter to God. They could tell God about something they learned from the Bible story that week or they could write out their prayers to God.