

Introducing Your Child to Christ

One of the greatest privileges you have as a parent is to help your child come to faith in Christ. As you care for your child's daily needs and work to prepare him or her for success in life, there's nothing more important than caring for their spiritual needs and helping them prepare for eternity. Like many parents, you may not quite know how or when to approach one of the most exciting yet intimidating moments of parenthood.

That's understandable, but God has given you the most important and most influential role when it comes to nurturing your child's faith. All it takes is a little training for you to feel more comfortable about the when and how of introducing them to Christ.

Step One: Lay a Foundation

A child's decision to follow Jesus is rarely a one-stop process. Your son or daughter grows in their understanding of God by developing a foundation: hearing the stories of the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus, and so forth. Your child also learns by experiencing life in your home: watching your example, feeling your love, learning right from wrong. These two ways of learning work best when they are connected in your home and integrated into your family life. We see this in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 that says, "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." Don't worry if your child hasn't grown up in church because your family is new to the faith. It is never too late to start.

Step Two: Discern Readiness

Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push him or her too fast, making sure they are ready in both heart and head and can truly understand the gospel. Your child may intellectually understand before being socially or spiritually mature enough to make a commitment.

Step Three: Ask Questions

When you feel they are ready, ask a few questions to help gauge your child's level of understanding. Read Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Then ask questions like, "What is sin?" "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" and "How can you be right with God?" How they respond can help you sense whether your child is ready to understand two important concepts:

- **JESUS AS SAVIOR:** The need for forgiveness and cleansing from sin which was made possible through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.
- **JESUS AS LORD:** The need to submit to God as "the boss" by making Jesus Christ the Lord of one's life.

If after reading through this information, you would like additional assistance, feel free to request an appointment for you and your child to meet with a pastor or First EPC ministry leader by calling the church office at 765-457-8201.

Step Four: Guide Your Child in Prayer for Salvation

Romans 10 tells us, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10). If you sense your child has a basic understanding of what sin is and what it leads to, as well as what it means to accept God's gift of salvation and His Lordship, then you can guide your child to pray along those lines. Instead of quoting specific words for your child to repeat, it's best to prompt them to use their own words- to tell God they are sorry for their sins, to ask for His forgiveness, and to ask Him to be Lord over the rest of their life.

Step Five: Prepare to Celebrate!

If not previously baptized, please talk to a pastor to make preparations to be baptized. Otherwise, record this date as their spiritual birthday and make plans to celebrate this important step in your child's faith journey.

GOING FURTHER- Books available in First EPC Library

Leading Your Kids to Christ: 30 Days to Prepare Your Heart (by Criswell Freeman) provides parents with a thirty-day guide to leading their child to a personal relationship with Christ.

The Faith of a Child: A Step-by-Step Guide to Salvation for Your Child (by Art Murphy) is designed to teach parents, grandparents, or anyone who works with children how to be equipped and confident in guiding them to a saving faith in Christ.

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GOING FURTHER – First EPC Support

Faith Path: Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ (launches fall 2019) This kit includes a training video and other tools to help you gain confidence as you lead your child to faith.

Faith Path: Salvation and Baptism (launches fall 2019) This kit includes a training video and other tools to help you gain confidence as you lead your child to faith.

First Bible Class (Grades 1-5) This two-week class is offered for children and their parents when they are awarded their first Bible by First EPC.

Communion Class (Grades 1-5) This two-week class is offered for children and their parents to help them understand the sacrament of communion in our tradition and prepare them to participate in receiving communion during our service.

Contact Lynn McClung, Team Leader for Children's Team at lmcclung@firstepc.com for information on these two classes.