

# **A Guide For Talking With A Child About The Decision To Follow Christ**

- 1. Talk with the child individually.** It is best for one or both parents to talk with only one child at a time about this decision.
- 2. Ask open-ended questions.**
  - ❖ Tell me what you would like us to talk about.
  - ❖ What does it mean to \_\_\_\_\_ ? (fill in the blank with whatever they said such as ask Jesus into my heart or join the church)
  - ❖ When did you first start thinking about this?
  - ❖ What is a Christian?
- 3. Choose your words carefully.** Use simple, everyday language. Avoid “church talk” (ie.. lost, saved, give your heart to Jesus, profession of faith, washed clean, etc).
- 4. Use an easy to understand translation of the Bible (ie... NLT, NIrV, etc.) to point out Scriptures that teach us God’s plan for our salvation.** Avoid storybooks, tracts and other props, which may be a distraction or introduce symbols your child won’t understand. You may be able to use these things later to help clarify or expand your child’s understanding. (See next page for some suggested verses.)
- 5. Discuss the meaning of each verse and answer any questions the child asks.** Stress that God loves them more than anyone else does, that God wants to be involved in all of their life, this isn’t just about receiving a reward (ie...going to heaven), and that this is a life-long commitment to God.
- 6. Assist the child in clarifying what God’s Spirit is leading him or her to do.** Allow whatever questions the child asks and avoid such things as “you shouldn’t say that” or “you might not get another chance to make this decision.” Avoid fear tactics, manipulation, or coaxing. The child must make his or her own decision freely.
- 7. Be sure the child understands that confession of sins, repentance, and belief in God is what will bring them forgiveness- not baptism or joining the church.** Explain the process for being baptized and joining the church and that these things are acts of obedience that demonstrate to others what has already been decided in our minds.
- 8. Ask if the child wants to make a decision now or if he would like to think about it longer.** Ask the child how he wants to pray. It’s best if he puts his prayer in his own words although you might suggest some things to remember to say or pray an example first (as long as he doesn’t just copy what you said). Some children may want to write out their prayer, pray silently, or pray out loud. Some children may want to pray alone, while others may really want a certain person to be present with them. This is a personal decision, so allow your child to personalize it.
- 9. Celebrate the decision.** Encourage the child to share his decision with family members, pastors, friends, etc. Consider commemorating the day with something special such as planting a tree, starting a journal, or painting a tile. However, don’t allow this to overpower the decision itself. Be careful the child (or siblings) don’t associate their decision with earning a gift.
- 10. Follow through.** This is only one step among many your child will take towards God. Continue to help him or her develop spiritually and emphasize the importance of developing spiritual habits like prayer, Bible reading, giving, sharing their story, etc. Encourage your child to participate in a “New Believer’s Class” at church if she hasn’t already done so.

## **Suggested Scriptures To Use For Understanding God's Plan For Salvation**

God loves you and has a great plan for you.

I John 4:10; Psalm 139:13-16

We have all sinned.

Romans 3:23

Sin separates us from God.

Romans 6:23

Even though we have sinned, God still loves us and offers to forgive us.

Romans 5:8

Jesus died for us.

John 3:16

You can become a follower of Christ (Christian) by confessing Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Rom 10:9; I John 1:9

Believe in Jesus.

Acts 16:31; John 3:16

God promises to forgive you and make your relationship with Him right.

Romans 10:13

Tell others about your faith in Jesus.

Matthew 10:32

Follow Jesus' way.

John 15:14