

# The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

## Q&A: Leading children to become followers of Jesus

What are the most important things I can do to help my child become a Christian?

Routines and rituals are essential for child development on many levels — emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, etc. Research indicates that the most influential determining factor on whether a child will become a Christian and an active congregational participant is if he attends worship with his family on a weekly basis as a child. The key factors are that all family household members attend worship together and on a regular basis. Although attending worship as an entire family is sometimes not an option, this should be the goal for all Christian parents. Also, children need spiritual rituals and routines at home such as the following:

- Worshipping together
- Praying at meals and at nighttime
- Reading devotionals and the Bible together as a family
- Celebrating holy days and seasonal emphases such as Advent and Lent

What should preschoolers learn as they begin their faith development?

Young children are concrete thinkers and need to have a growing sense of love and security. For faith development, parents and teachers should focus on concepts and Bible stories that teach children how to:

- Care for self and others
- Understand and love family
- Appreciate and care for the natural world
- Think of church as a special place
- Know that the Bible teaches us about God, Jesus and followers of God
- Associate God with positive feelings
- Hear about Jesus and his love for others

### resources

- When Can I?*  
(Tommy Sanders)
- Read to Me Bible for Kids*  
(Broadman Holman)
- Family: The Forming Center*  
(Marjorie Thompson)
- Revolutionary Parenting*  
(George Barna)
- Right from the Start*  
(Shirley K. Morgenthaler)
- Children and Prayer*  
(Betty Cloud)
- [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org)
- [www.homeward.com](http://www.homeward.com)
- [www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org](http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org)

Preschoolers do not need to be introduced to all Bible stories and lessons. They will not understand — and may be fearful of — many concepts that are central to adult faith development such as the crucifixion and resurrection Jesus and life after death.

What should children be learning and doing for faith development in grades 1-5?

Elementary school students are still primarily concrete thinkers. They need positive Christian role models including parents and non-parents. Learning to love God and neighbor is key, and children benefit greatly from mission and service projects. They also can learn to give offerings and tithe regularly. As children grow older, parents and teachers can begin introducing and teaching more advanced concepts such as:

- Life after death
- Sin and repentance

- Stories about the life of Christ
- Spiritual disciplines
- How to read the Bible daily
- How to pray “without ceasing”

Children begin to be ready to make a commitment to Christ around age 10, although some children may be younger or older before making a faith commitment.

What should I say or do if I think my child is wanting to be baptized, join the church and become a Christ follower?

- Listen.
- Ask open-ended questions — not “yes” or “no” questions about the Christian faith.
- Share your faith story and stories about what following Jesus means to you.
- Introduce key terms such as sin, repentance, belief, faith and salvation.
- Read the Great Commission and Great Commandment passages together and talk about what they mean to you.
- Explain the priority of following Jesus first, and later being baptized and partaking of communion.
- Pray with and for your child, asking God to lead and direct your paths.

