

Leading a Child to Jesus

The message never changes! Adults don't do or believe anything different than kids who get saved. The issue is always to clarify the difference
between Grace & Works
between being good & believing in Christ
between earning salvation & receiving it by faith

After a child puts his trust in Jesus as his individual Savior, he should understand the Gospel clearly enough to be able to go home and tell his parents:

1. "God never did anything wrong in His life.
2. God said He would punish our sin.
3. Everybody sins.
4. I can't do anything to earn my place in heaven.
5. Jesus loves us all and died for every bit of our sin.
6. The Bible says since I believe Jesus died for me I have eternal life.

Mom & Dad, will you believe in Jesus the same way, please!

Most kids have been taught that if God were to take a busload of kids to heaven right now, He would certainly take all of the good kids not the bad ones. It doesn't make any difference whether he has been raised in a Catholic home, a Pentecostal home, a Muslim home, Jewish home, and many Protestant homes. As a sales clerk at GoodWill just told me a couple weeks ago, "*Depending on good works gonna sen you straight to hell!*" She was right. Even the ones small enough for Jesus to scoop up in His arms were "these little ones which believe in Me." [Matt 18.6]. If that little fellow was old enough to believe, he was old enough to disbelieve, and old enough to pay for his own sins in hell.

Yes, I've had an elementary girl look me in the eye and tell me, "My mom doesn't believe all this stuff, and I'm not going to either."

So these are the things I always cover when introducing a kid to Jesus. I'm introducing them to my friend, not teaching them to memorize a Christian formula.

First I ask them to tell me their opinion. What does someone have to do or believe to live with God in heaven. Later I can remind him, "*When I asked you before, you said we have to be good. That was a wrong answer, wasn't it?*"

Heaven: [I tell him the good news first]. Heaven is a perfect place. God lives there, nothing ever goes wrong. No one gets sick or grumpy. We would have to be as good as God to deserve to get in.

Sin: [bad news—everybody's guilty] No sin, unkindness, or meanness gets into heaven. No one will fight or disobey—ever. We must believe people, even really good people who have done any bad things, are not good enough to go. I know I have done bad things.

Hell: [don't be scared to say this word aloud, but I don't spend much time on it] It is a real place but it was made for Satan and his bad angels. We must believe that if God punished us fairly for all the things we've done wrong, we would be separated from Him for ever and ever.

Jesus Christ: [he is God] He loves you and me so He died on the Cross to take the punishment for the things we've done wrong. He was punished for us. We must believe that Jesus died because all the good things we do won't hide the bad things we've done from God.

N.B. 3rd grade and below: I try to remember not to use the phrase "Jesus paid." Little kids can't yet process that concept. But they can grasp, "Jesus took the punishment for."

[Kids may already know and believe all the points above—but this [below] is the place most kids are mixed up.]

Good people like you and me aren't good enough to live with God in His perfect heaven. Even nice people have said, thought, and done many things they are ashamed of. No one is as good as God, so no one is good enough.

A gift or a "promise": [this is a simple and accurate way to explain salvation] because Jesus paid for your sin and my sin, He promises to give us eternal life when we believe He died for us. This is His promise,
"Whoever believes in Him, will not perish but have everlasting life."

2 more points

1. Assurance of a child's salvation must not come from praying to Jesus. No child has ever been saved because he prayed. He is saved because he believed something. His assurance must come from a Bible verse not his prayer. Show him a verse in the Bible or in a tract. Use as few verses as you need.

2. Now you tell me. He should be able to explain it to you pretty clearly. What does your mom or dad or friend have to believe to be sure of living with God in heaven forever?

1. God has never sinned in His whole life
2. I know I've done things wrong
3. Being good doesn't take anybody's sin away
4. I believe Jesus died for my own sin
5. The Bible tells me so, and there's a promise that tells me I have eternal life.

6. **Mom & Dad, will you believe in Jesus the same way, please!**

Be careful what you promise a child. Unless you know he grasps all the theology involved, please don't tell him,

"Today is your birthday. Now God is your father."

say something like

"If you believe that Jesus paid for all the bad things you've done, then the Bible says . . ."