



Questions and Answers About Early Childhood Ministry

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Q: At what age can a child accept Jesus as his personal Savior?

A: When a child is able to understand the meaning of sin and that Jesus is the Savior from sin, he can accept Jesus as Savior. So it obviously depends upon the child and his spiritual maturity.

In an early childhood classroom, there will be wide differences of spiritual understanding. Usually the child who responds to salvation at a preschool age will have been exposed to God's Word many times.

Q: Can a young child really understand sin and forgiveness?

A: Yes, one percent of those under age four understand the gospel. I believe that because a young child today is exposed to sin at an earlier age (especially through movies and TV), he also has an earlier understanding of right and wrong.

Q: If the percentage is so small, what should our approach be?

A: The goal for teaching the Bible to a young child

should be to prepare the child for the time when he understands salvation and the Holy Spirit moves him to accept Christ. Spiritual understanding is a learning process. As a child learns about Jesus, he begins to love Jesus and will begin to respond to biblical teaching. It is important that age-appropriate activities are used so the learning process is continual.



Q: Is there a biblical basis for leading a young child to Christ?

A: Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14, NIV). In Matthew 18:3 we read that Jesus also said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and

become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." I'm sure Jesus was referring to the fact that young children accept teaching with few questions. Because of that, we can confidently present the gospel to a young child and expect him to respond.

Q: How do you lead a young child to Christ?

A: Just "keep it simple." Choose the words carefully since a child thinks literally. He has a difficult time understanding how Jesus can fit in his heart! After confessing he is sorry for his sin, have him repeat a simple prayer after you. It will be easier for a young child to admit it is possible to do wrong things than admitting that he has done anything wrong.

Q: A young child wants to please adults. How can we be sure he isn't responding simply because he wants to please?

A: It is best not to give a group invitation. A child will often follow the lead of others or will respond just to please an adult. One-on-one is best. As you get to know a child, you will sense when he is ready to make a commitment.

Q • **What if a child continually wants to ask for forgiveness?**

A • That will frequently happen. It also happens with

an elementary child. I always let a child pray as often as he wants. As a child matures spiritually and developmentally, he will have a better understanding of the process. While a child may

feel guilty for doing something wrong, he may not fully understand the concept of salvation. A child needs to know that Jesus will forgive him when he prays.

Questions for Further Study—

1. What does a child need to understand before he can accept Jesus as Savior?
2. How do you lead a young child to Christ?
3. What steps should you take to keep a child from responding to the gospel message merely out of a desire to please you or others?

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