

For Heaven's Sake!

A Salvation Conversation between Parents and their Kids

Dear Parent:

We hope you'll enjoy using this tool to engage your child(ren) in conversations about what it means to begin and to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! It is a simple four step conversation: There are two things God did for us, and two things we do in response to Him!

The conversation is based on John 3:16, *"For God so LOVED the world the he GAVE his one and only Son, that whoever BELIEVES in Him shall not perish, but have (RECEIVE) everlasting life"*. For some of you, having this conversation will lead your child to a decision to put their trust in Jesus for the very first time! For others, it will help you to discover where your child is at in their thinking and understanding of God's Grace, and what He did for us on the cross. You may discover that your child has questions and is not quite ready to make a decision to follow Jesus yet. Or, you may receive assurance that your child has already accepted Jesus and is ready to be baptized!

No matter what, these are priceless conversations to be cherished and are stepping stones to a greater understanding of their faith! Sometimes, your children will have lots of questions. Remember, if you don't know the answer, it is ok to say so. Children love it when we are authentic and when you tell them "I don't know, but let's find out together." It puts you on the journey together and models for them that is OK not to have all the answers.

When your child makes a decision to follow Jesus, we want to celebrate with you! Please contact me via email to let me know of your child's decision.

At some point, your child will be ready to be baptized. Once they have put their faith in Jesus, this is an appropriate "next step" in their journey of being a follower of Jesus! When your child is ready, you will help your child "tell his/her story" by asking them to answer some questions. We will contact you to set up a time to meet with your child and you to talk about baptism, making sure that they have a good understanding of what it is they are about to do. This is a really fun time that we as staff look forward to! We love to hear the kids tell their story in their own words, and to ask their many questions about baptism...or anything at all!

We wholeheartedly believe in Deuteronomy 6:7 that charges parents with the joy and responsibility of helping their kids along their spiritual journey. And it is our privilege and responsibility as a church to partner with your family in this journey.

I hope you enjoy great spiritual conversations with your child. I would love to hear your stories!!

Happy Parenting!

Jon Ditty
Family Ministry Pastor

Sharon Howat
Children's Pastor

For God so LOVED the world that He GAVE His one and only Son, that whoever BELIEVES in Him shall not perish but will RECEIVE eternal life. ~John 3:16

- Before you get started, take a few minutes to think about where and when you will have this conversation
- You will need: A Bible and some markers
- Set it up: Tell your child...*we are going to talk for a few minutes about something that is very important! Did you know, that there are two things that God did for us? And there are two things God would LOVE for us to do for Him!?*

1. God Loved! Have your child draw a heart.

Ask your child...

1. How do you know God loves you? *The Bible*
2. Can you think of a verse that tells us how much? *John 3:16*
3. Does God love everybody? *Yes!*
4. What is sin? Have you ever sinned? When?
5. Do you know where sin came from? What is the problem with sin?

Parent Talk: God loved you before you were born. He loves you right now. But there is something that separates us from Him. It's called sin. Sin is the stuff we do wrong. Because God is perfect, He cannot tolerate sin. Since we have sin there is no way we can be with God without His help. But because God loves us SO much, He created a rescue plan so we could be free from sin and have a relationship with God. *NOTE: If your child has a hard time with this concept of SIN, and their sin nature, read the story of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis together. This will help kids to understand where sin came from in the first place, how because of their choice to disobey God, Adam and Eve were banished from a perfect relationship with God in the Garden, and sent into a hard cruel world. And ever since then, all people sin, and have been born separated from God. Point them back to the fact that God loves us SO much that he wanted to do something to fix the sin problem and give us a way back to HIM, so he GAVE (move on to next point).*

2. God Gave! Have your child draw a cross.

Ask your child...

1. What/who did God give you?
2. Did Jesus die on the cross for everybody?
3. What are the two things you need to know about God? *God Loved and God Gave*

Parent Talk: God gave the most important, valuable, and perfect thing He had: His Son! He knew that our sin would keep us out of His family forever. We're apart from God and would stay that way, but because God loved, He gave His son to fix that problem. Jesus gave up His life on the cross to pay for our sin. He came to make a way for you to be in God's family. Write the word US on the left side of the cross and write the word GOD on the other side. See how the cross is like a bridge that connects us to God? Without it how there would be a big gap. We cannot DO enough good things to earn our way into God's Heaven. Only God can do that! And all He asks is that we believe.

REVIEW before moving on.

1. What are the two things God did for us? *God LOVED and God GAVE.*
2. Does God MAKE us love him back? *No. He wants us to, but doesn't make us.*

3. Does everyone choose return God's love? *No.*
4. But does God still love them? Does He hope they will someday? *Yes.*

Say: *Now let's talk about the two things God would love for us to do after we understand how He LOVES us and GAVE us Jesus!*

1. We Believe! Have your child draw a chair.

Ask your child...

1. Can you think of a reason why we would use a chair as a symbol for believing?
2. What does it mean to trust in something?
3. When you sat down in the chair you are sitting on did you think about whether or not it would hold you up? Or did you just *trust* that it would?

Parent Talk: Believing simply means to trust. When we trust in something, we believe that it will do what it is supposed to do. Just like sitting in a chair. We don't usually take the time before sitting down to make sure the legs are strong enough to hold us, right? No! You just come in and sit down. You put all your weight on it. You trust that it will hold you up. You believe that the chair will do what it is made to do, right? That's what it's like to believe in, or to trust, in Jesus. You choose to BELIEVE that Jesus really is God's Son, and that God LOVES you so much, that He chose to GIVE you Jesus so that you could be with Him in Heaven someday!

2. We Receive! Have your child draw a gift/present.

Ask your child...

1. When somebody gives you a present that is all wrapped up what do you do with it? *We open it!*
2. Can you imagine ever getting a beautiful present and NOT opening it? Just putting it on the shelf and leaving it there? *No! That would be silly right?*
3. After you open the present, what do you do with it? *We use it, play with it, wear it, read it, etc.*
4. When God GAVE you Jesus what does John 3:16 say that we get? *The gift of eternal life.*
5. When someone gives us a gift we choose to open it, right?
6. Have you chosen to open God's great gift to you? Have you chosen to RECEIVE the gift of Jesus' love? Do you want to?

Parent Talk: John 3:16 tell us that we receive eternal life. That means we get to spend forever and ever with God in a place that He made perfect. And once you receive this gift, it can never be taken away. There is nothing you can do to lose your place in God's family, just like there is never going to be anything that you could do to make me as your parent ever stop loving you! Nothing!

Parents, hopefully at this point, you will have a good understanding of where your child is in their understanding of who God is, how much He loves them and what He has done for them. They will also understand that either they have a choice to make, or they will be more assured of the choice for Jesus they made in the past. If you feel they do not, it's ok! This is a conversation that has planted seeds that will take root and grow. Look for opportunities to continue to ask questions and encourage their growth.

If they are at a point where they realize they want to accept Jesus as their savior...help them to see that accepting Jesus is as easy as ABC!

- **ADMIT** that they are a sinner, but know how much God LOVES them. And that He GAVE them Jesus to take care of their sins!
- **BELIEVE** that Jesus is who He says He is and that he will do what He came to do. He died on the cross for them so they can be with God in Heaven someday!
- **CHOOSE:** They can choose to put their trust in Jesus and open the gift of eternal life that he gave them.

Lead them in a simple prayer such as: *Dear God, thank you for loving me SO much, that you would send your only Son to die for me on the cross so that my sins could be washed away. I believe that Jesus is your Son, and that He did that for me! God I choose you to be my heavenly father. Thank you for your gift of eternal life. And show me how to live life here on earth in a way that will honor you. I love you. Amen.*

Pray a prayer of thanksgiving if your child has already accepted Jesus into their hearts! Pray for their journey with Jesus. That they would grow closer to Him through reading the Bible and going to church, and talking with Him. Ask God to help you as their parents/leader to help lead them toward Jesus!

Congratulations!! If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know! Our whole team is here to support you!

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God Loved

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Draw a gift