

Zion Baptist Church

Teacher Training:

How to Lead a Child to Christ

Some General Information to Remember:

1. Avoid leading questions (questions that imply the correct answer) because children are eager to please and will often tell you what they think you want to hear.
2. Avoid “Yes” and “No” questions; such questions don’t really tell you anything.
3. Use thought-provoking questions. For example:
 - *Don’t ask*, “Do you sin?” or “Have you sinned?” *Ask*, “What is sin?” “Do you do that?” “What does God think about that?”
4. Avoid confusing terminology
 - 4.1. Some things are confusing for children because they are literal-minded. Some examples of confusing expressions are: “getting Jesus in your heart” (he doesn’t go down your throat, and into your chest to the heart that pumps the blood), “Jesus *shed* his blood” (he didn’t shed like a dog), or “Jesus arose from the dead” (he didn’t come back as a rose).

[NOTE: Lest you wonder, yes, all of these are all real examples from my days in children’s ministry. Maybe one day I’ll tell you about the girl who cried because she was told in a Bible lesson that doctors wouldn’t be in heaven (her daddy was a doctor and she wanted him to go to heaven!).]
 - 4.2. When talking about heaven, be sure to mention that they will go to heaven *someday*. Children want to go to heaven, but not right now (especially if summer vacation is close, or a field trip, or a birthday party... you get the idea).
 - 4.3. Avoid changing your terminology throughout as this may confuse them also. If you talk to them about “believing in Jesus” or “trusting in Jesus,” call it that every time while you teach or counsel them; don’t suddenly change it to “be saved” as this may only confuse them.

[NOTE: In the section on “How to Teach a Bible Lesson,” I will talk about how to choose terminology appropriate for a given lesson.]
5. Avoid clichés and expressions that children may not understand. Say what you mean clearly and simply. Children are very literal-minded so watch what you say. Remember that many things we consider clichés or everyday expressions they don’t understand and they may get confused.
6. Avoid talking “baby-talk” to children. Talk to them in an even, adult tone just as you would an older child or even a grown-up.

How to counsel a child about salvation:

The Meeting

1. At the end of your Bible lesson, after you have told them during the lesson that they need to believe in Jesus, tell them that if they want to speak to you about that they can see you in a place you have designated.
 - 1.1. Pick the place ahead of time and make sure that you have a helper to watch the kids while you counsel.
 - 1.2. If you are in another room, leave the door open so that there is accountability and so that the child doesn't get scared.
2. Your first question should always be: "Why did you want to talk to me?" Let them tell you, don't lead them (e.g., "Do you want to talk to me about believing in Jesus?").
 - 2.1. Often they might say something like, "My dog is sick and I want to pray for them" or something like that. If they say that, pray with them and let them go, do not push them into a decision or even suggest it.
 - 2.2. Be sure to make their choice to talk to you a positive one; they may be testing the waters to see if it's safe (something even grown-ups still do!).

Talking about salvation:

1. When the child says, "I'd like to be saved" [or whatever they call it at that time] your next question should be, "Have you done this before?" using the same terminology they used.
 - 1.1. For example, if they say, "I want to get saved." You should ask, "Have you gotten saved before?"
 - 1.2. If they say yes, simply ask them, "What did you do then?" and let them explain it to you.
 - 1.2.1. If it seems they have understood salvation, don't scold them, explain to them that salvation is so wonderful that they don't need to do it again.
 - 1.2.2. You might have to counsel them about Assurance [see below] or encourage them to make a profession of faith.
 - 1.2.3. Whatever happens, make their coming to speak to you a positive experience.
 - 1.2.4. Even if the child comes forward every week for a month, always make it a positive experience and always deal with them on these two topics.
 - 1.3. If they say no, then you are ready to explain salvation to them:



Everyone Has Sinned (Romans 3:23)

1. Explain to the child that heaven is a wonderful place and there are many wonderful things in heaven. But there is one thing that is not allowed in heaven: SIN.
2. Ask the child to tell you what sin is. If they don't know, explain that sin is anything we do that God has told us not to do. Sin is the bad things we do that God doesn't like.
3. Ask the child to give you an example of sin.
4. Explain that the Bible says that everyone has sinned (Rom. 3:23). Make sure the child understands that even you, as an adult, have sinned.
5. Now you can ask a yes or no question to the child, "Have you ever sinned?"
 - 5.1. If the child says, "No," then thank them child for coming to you and pray with him or her. Ask God to watch over them and to help them understand the wonderful gift of salvation.
 - 5.1.1. If you have explained sin adequately and the child refuses or is unable to realize that they are a sinner, don't try to convince them. Let the Holy Spirit do that!
 - 5.2. If the child says, "Yes," explain that sin has to be punished, or paid for.



Sin Must be Punished (Romans 6:23)

1. Explain that sin has to be paid for. The Bible tells us that the payment for sin is death, which is forever in the place of punishment away from God.
 - 1.1. I am uncomfortable using the word “hell” with children. They need to know the reality of hell, but often the word is either scary or misunderstood. But we have to tell them that there is a penalty for sin. While some will disagree with me, I think it is better to explain what hell is rather than simply to toss the word around.
 - 1.2. Sometimes I will say something like this: When you do something wrong you get punished. That punishment is like a payment for doing something wrong. If you didn’t do wrong, you wouldn’t get punished.
 - 1.3. Romans 6:23 says that the payment or penalty for sin is death, which is eternal separation from God in the place of punishment.
2. Then I say something like, “That’s terrible, we have a big problem! You and I just said that we are sinners and now the Bible tells us that the price we have to pay for our sins is punishment forever...BUT...”



Jesus died for our Sins (Romans 5:8)

1. Explain that Jesus died for our sins.
2. Ask them, “How did Jesus die?” If they don’t know, briefly explain the crucifixion to them pointing out that Jesus lived a perfect life, *He never sinned* (that is important; don’t forget to explain that part), yet He suffered a very painful death. He had to die that way so that He could pay for our sins.
3. Romans 5:8 says “God demonstrated his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The word “demonstrated” (“commendeth” in the KJV) means “showed,” God showed his love to us...”
4. Ask them, “What happened after He died?” If they aren’t sure what to say, help them by saying, “Did He stay dead?”
5. 1 Cor 15:3,4 says, “...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”
6. Now you can ask them another yes or no question: “Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again on the third day?”



Trust Jesus as Your Savior

(Romans 10:9-10)

1. Explain to them something like this: “Jesus died in your place and my place to take the punishment that we were supposed to have for our sin.”
2. “To receive this gift all you have to do is tell God that you are sorry for your sin (if you are really sorry) and ask his to save you.”
3. In fact, receiving Jesus is as easy as “A-B-C”!



ADMIT YOU ARE A SINNER



BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED, WAS BURIED, AND ROSE AGAIN FOR YOU



CALL UPON JESUS TO SAVE YOU

4. You can encourage the child to pray their own prayer to God, but be careful not to push them. Tell them that they need to tell Jesus on their own that they are sorry for their sin, that they believed he died and rose again for them, and that they want him to save them.
5. I will usually say something like this, “You can talk to God right now, just like you are talking to me. Why don’t you pray, right now, to God. Tell Him that you know you’re a sinner, and that you believe He sent Jesus to die for your sins. And then ask Him to save you from your sin so that you can go to be with Him in heaven someday.”
6. Then I say, “If you don’t mind, can you pray out loud so that I can listen in on what you and God talk about?”
7. ***Make sure they understand that the prayer does not save them.*** They are only telling God about what they have already done: they are already sorry for their sin, they already believe that Jesus died and rose again for them, and they are asking him to save them.
8. Some children are just too shy to construct their own prayer. If this is the case, you may carefully help them if you are as sure as you can be that they do really understand.
9. After the child has prayed, you are still not done, now you must deal with them about Assurance.

Talking about Assurance:

1. You can now ask them what they just did. They will usually repeat back to you what they did in the terms you have been using (“I got saved” or “I trusted in Christ”).
2. Ask them how they know that. You want them to understand that they can believe that “Because the Bible is God’s Word and God said so.”
3. A good scripture to use is 1 John 5:12-13: “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”
 - 3.1. The Bible gives us promise and it tells us that if we believe we will have eternal life, which means our sins are forgiven and we will not go to the place of punishment.
4. Another good scripture to use in dealing with children about assurance security is John 10:28-29: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. (KJV)
 - 4.1. With an older child you might ask something like, “Do you know why some of the words in this Bible are red?” and then go on to explain that the words in red are the words that Jesus actually said when he was on earth.
 - 4.2. Jesus says, “I give unto them eternal life.” Remind them of when you talked about Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - 4.3. Then you can ask, “Just a moment ago when you prayed, what did Jesus give you?”

- 4.3.1. If they don't say eternal life, review salvation, and make sure they understand that eternal life is part of salvation.
- 4.4. Then continue, "Jesus says that people who have eternal life will never perish. Explain that perish, means death in hell."
- 4.5. No only that, but Jesus says, "No man can pluck them out of my Fathers hands."
 - 4.5.1. A good way of illustrating this is to take your watch or a ring and put it in your fist and then clench your fist and explain that they would not be able to get it out (only do this if you really think you can hold onto it!).
 - 4.5.2. Or you could say, "If a strong man, like Mr. Brian, had this in his fist, would you be able to get it out of there?" Remind them that God is stronger than anybody.
- 4.6. Then explain, that when they were saved, it was as if God put you in the palm of his hand. There is no one stronger than God, so no one can separate you for God's salvation.
 - 4.6.1. This is why if you sin you don't have to get saved all over again, but you do have to ask forgiveness (1 John 1:9).