

START HERE

BEGINNING A CONVERSATION ABOUT FOLLOWING JESUS



START HERE PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

newhope
CHURCH

**WE WANT TO BE PRESENT FOR
THE SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS
IN OUR CHILD'S LIFE.**

**FIRST STEPS
FIRST BALLGAME
FIRST DAY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FIRST TIME DRIVING
FIRST DATE**



**BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN KIDS HAVE
THEIR FIRST QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH?**

**OUR HOPE AND PRAYER IS THAT THIS GUIDE WILL
HELP YOU BEGIN A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR
CHILD ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS.**



ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS **START HERE**

Parents,

One of the greatest joys of being a parent is the opportunity to walk your child through his or her decision to follow Christ; but we understand that this can also be one of the most daunting tasks! The questions you might ask yourself are as practical as they are unnerving. Is my child ready? Will I say the right thing? How will I know my child understands?

We want to help. This guide will help you discover where your child is in their understanding of God's grace and of what Jesus did for us on the cross. For some of you, this experience will lead to your child's decision to place his or her faith in Jesus. Others may discover that your children are not quite ready to make the decision to follow Christ.

No matter which case is true in your family, these conversations can serve as stepping-stones to a greater understanding of faith and will be moments to cherish as you continue to walk in faith, trusting Jesus in the life of your child. It is our prayer that this guide will equip you to have a family experience that will have a lasting impact on your child and your family.

It is our goal that your family will be set up for success in having deep and impactful conversations. We realize though that sometimes no matter how much preparation you put into something, there is no guarantee that everything will go exactly as planned. Be encouraged in knowing that this is okay! Trust in the prompting and working of Jesus throughout the experience.

We're excited to partner with you,

stephanie schleyer

Stephanie Schleyer

Director of Family Ministry

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“God so **loved** the world that he **gave** us a Son who **believes** in him will not die but will live forever.”



JUST FOR PARENTS

This is an exciting time in your child’s life. They’re starting to ask questions about their faith. They’re wondering about God and His love for them. They may be asking a lot of questions about Jesus—questions that you may struggle with yourself, or questions that may not have a simple answer. But that’s ok. This is a starting point for you and your kids to begin a life-long conversation about faith. That’s why we want you to “Start Here” with John 3:16. It lays the foundation for God’s love for us that sent Jesus to be our Savior.

Over the next few pages, we’ll break the verse down, phrase by phrase, with some questions to help you start a conversation with your kids.

Here are some quick things to keep in mind:

- It’s not about being good enough.
- We are not saved by praying a prayer or getting baptized.
- We are saved by putting our faith in Jesus as our Savior.
- Prayer is simply a way of expressing our trust in Jesus for all He has done on our behalf and baptism is a way to show our decision publicly.

So, what are you waiting for? Start Here.



e his one and only Son. Anyone who
ll have **eternal life**.” 📍 John 3:16 (NIRV)



GOD LOVED

God loved you before you were even born. He created you in His image. And He loves you right now. But there is something that separates us from Him, something that keeps us from being with Him forever. It's called sin. It's the stuff we do wrong when we do things our way and not God's way. Sin keeps us from living out the story that God wants for us. And on our own, we can't do anything about this. We need God to step in and help. But because God loves us, He made a way for all of us to live with Him forever.

Ask Your Child:

1. What is sin?
2. Have you ever sinned? When?
3. What is the problem with sin?



GOD GAVE US JESUS

God gave the most important, valuable, and perfect thing He had for us. He knew that our sin would keep us from living with Him forever. We're apart from God and would stay that way, but because God loved us, He gave His son to fix that relationship. Jesus came to make a way for us to be in God's story. And Jesus gave up His life on the cross to pay for our sin. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead! His resurrection defeated death and



makes a relationship with God possible again.

Ask Your Child:

1. What did God give us?
2. Why did God give this gift?
3. What did Jesus do for us?



ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS

When you receive a gift what do you do? You open it. God said you could open His gift by believing. Believing simply means to trust. It's a lot like sitting in a chair. When you sit in a chair, you put all your weight on it. You trust that it will hold you up. That's what it's like to believe in or to trust in this gift. To open the gift that God gave you, you trust in Jesus with your whole life and rest in the fact that He died and rose again for you.

Ask Your Child:

1. What does it mean to trust in something?
2. How do you know God loves you?



LIVES FOREVER

John 3:16 tells us that we receive eternal life. When you believe in Jesus and trust Him to save you, you begin a new relationship with God that starts right away and goes on forever. Someday we will still die, but we get to spend forever and ever with God in a place that He made perfect.





ABC'S OF SALVATION

Another way we teach our kids about salvation is using the ABC's. No, not the alphabet, these ABC's:

A – Admit that you have sin in your life.

- When we do things our own way instead of God's way that is called sin and everybody does it. The punishment for sin is being separated from God forever. (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)

B – Believe that Jesus died to take the punishment for my sin.

- Believe that God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sin so that we could be friends with God forever. God did that because He loves us. (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 5:8)

C – Choose to follow Jesus

- Ask Jesus to be the leader in your life and try to do things His way instead of your own way. (Romans 10:9-10;13)

Spend some time talking to your child about the ABC's of Salvation. Look up the verses in the Bible.



TALK IT OVER

Parents, this is for you to sit down and have a discussion with your child. We suggest you don't just get their answer, but you tell them yours too. Take your time, and do this together...

- What is the Bible? What do you know about it?
- What's your favorite story in the Bible?
- What happened with Adam & Eve? What did they do?
- What's the word for things that make God angry or sad? (Hint: It starts with an S!)
- Has everyone sinned? What about really nice people?
- Can you remember any sins you've done?
- What happens to people who sin? Does God discipline them? Why?
- What did God do to rescue us and forgive us of sin?
- How do we get forgiveness from God? Do we just have to be really good to make God happy?
- When we go to church, we sing... why?
- What questions do you have about the Bible? What is confusing to you?



Hint: Encourage your child to express his or her own ideas and allow time for thinking and responding. It is not unusual for a child to take up to a minute or even longer to answer a question they have not had to think about previously. If some time has passed and you sense they are struggling to put their thoughts into words, rephrase your question and see if that helps.



PRAYER

You can use the following prayer with your child as you lead them to trust Jesus.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I know I am a sinner. I know my sin should separate me from You forever. I believe Your son, Jesus, died for my sins. I accept Your forgiveness for my sin. Thank You for loving me and for giving the gift of Jesus so I could live with You in heaven. Come into my life and be my Savior and Friend.

In Jesus' name, Amen.





NOW WHAT

If you put your trust in Jesus Christ and believe in Him as the One who forgives your sins and makes it possible for you to know God, we are so proud of you! There is no greater single decision that you could make.



WHAT IS BAPTISM

You don't have to be a Bible scholar to teach your kids spiritual things! So here are the basics about baptism.

Jesus told us to baptize his disciples (followers)

"¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.' ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

A symbol of entering into the death/resurrection of Jesus

"² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives."

Romans 6:2-4 (NLT)

It's an outward sign of an inward commitment of faith

"¹² But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized."

Acts 8:12 (NLT)



Candidates for Baptism

Before being baptized, a child should be old enough to understand the gospel of Christ. A candidate for baptism has also repented of his sin and placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. Jesus said,

“²¹ Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me.”

John 14:21a (NLT)

¹⁴ But Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.”

Matthew 19:14

Explaining Baptism to Kids

Many young children think that baptism saves a person. Children see people being baptized, but they can’t see a person’s transformed heart when he or she is saved. Children have a hard time with symbolism because they take everything literally. They automatically think that baptism washes away the person’s sins. We adults must accept the fact that if children are to understand baptism, we must commit to teach them about it.

Baptism Symbolizes Jesus and You

Baptism is an act of obedience that symbolizes or shows two things: the story of Jesus and the story of a person’s salvation. I like to explain baptism to kids by emphasizing that it does not save a person. I drive this point home by briefly telling the story of the thief on the cross. He believed while dying. He could not get off the cross to be baptized, but Jesus told him that he would be with him in Paradise, (heaven) that day.

**AFTER GOING THROUGH THIS GUIDE,
THERE ARE THREE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:**

- 1 YOUR CHILD IS READY!**
- 2 YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAVE QUESTIONS.**
- 3 YOUR CHILD NEEDS MORE TIME.**

**ANY OF THESE OUTCOMES IS EXCITING
BECAUSE NO MATTER WHERE YOUR CHILD
IS IN THEIR SPIRITUAL WALK, GOD IS
WITH THEM; AND YOU!**

**IF YOUR CHILD IS READY OR YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS, AND IS 12 OR UNDER, PLEASE
EMAIL US AT KIDBAPTISM@NEWHOPE.ORG.**

**IF YOUR CHILD IS READY OR YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS, AND IS OVER 13, PLEASE EMAIL
US AT STUDENTBAPTISM@NEWHOPE.ORG.**

**IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS MORE TIME, IT
DOESN'T MEAN HE OR SHE WON'T EVER
MAKE A DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS. STAY
THE COURSE AND CONTINUE TO BE A
SPIRITUAL RESOURCE FOR YOUR CHILD.**