

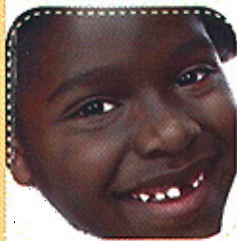
JOINING



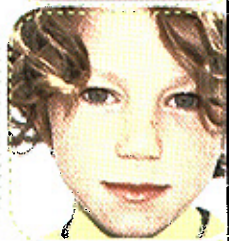
OUR



CHILDREN



ON



THEIR

JOURNEY



This BGC ministry is supported by gifts through the Cooperative Program.

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN MINISTRY STAFF



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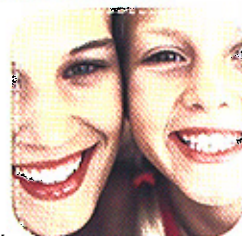
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For more information on this topic, please visit www.bgco.org
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WHAT CHILDREN REALLY DESIRE IS

RELATIONSHIPS NOT THINGS



In our self absorbed world of "own," we find children with their own room, own TV, and own computer. As you, a teacher or parent, share your love and time with children God can use you to share the message of Jesus Christ with them.

Children form concepts about God and Jesus from birth. I am often asked, "How do you know when a child is ready?" Children develop at different rates, so the personal decision to follow Christ varies. A change in behavior may be a clue that the Holy Spirit is drawing a child to a relationship with Jesus. John 16:7-13 tells us the Holy Spirit will convict us of our "sin, righteousness and judgment" and guide us "into all truth."

VBS, Sunday School, and other teachers should always be prepared to share Bible facts as children are involved with Bible activities. Doing so will insure that children have many opportunities to hear Bible truths. Be especially mindful of children who rarely attend church. When you accept and love all children you show that God loves and accepts everyone. Create opportunities "to say, "I'd like to tell you more about God's plan for your life." Each child, the one who attends every Sunday, as well as the one who attends infrequently, will know that you are one who is willing to take the time to talk to them about personal matters.

LEADING CHILDREN IN THEIR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST ACCEPTING HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR



The Bible clearly states what one must do to accept Christ, but it is the Holy Spirit who brings understanding. Use your Bible as you share Bible facts about following Christ in a simple and honest way and then allow the Holy Spirit to draw children to Christ.

THE SIMPLE GOSPEL STORY

- 1. God has a plan for our life.** God made people because He wanted to have a friendship with people. When Adam and Eve (the first people) chose to go their own way rather than God's way (Genesis 1 and 2), they sinned. People still sin today when they disobey God, but He still loves them and wants to forgive them.
- 2. God sent Jesus to be our Savior.** Because God loves people He sent Jesus Christ to show us how much He loves us. God sent Jesus to save people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). The Bible tells us how Jesus did miracles that only God could do, because Jesus was God (John 14:8-9). Some people didn't like it because Jesus was God so they decided He should die on a cross. Jesus could have stopped them, but he chose to die for us. What Jesus did provides forgiveness for our sins (Romans 5:8).
- 3. Everyone sins** (Romans 3:23). The Bible tells us that everyone sins.

the believer. They spent time together, prayed, worshipped, did things that only God could do through them, gave their money to people who needed it, and led others to believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:42-47). Churches today are made up of people who believe in Jesus Christ and have been baptized. They want to do His work by telling others about Jesus, praying for themselves and others, loving, and helping others in need.

To become a member of a church, we are to believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, be baptized, and promise to live the way Jesus wants us to live.

LEADING CHILDREN IN THEIR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: THE LORD'S SUPPER

Help children know that the Lord's Supper is something people at church do to remember what Jesus did for us. Help children know that: The Lord's Supper began with Jesus. Jesus gave His disciples bread to eat and fruit of the vine to drink to remind them of what He did for people (Matthew 26:26-30). When believers (Christians) take the Lord's Supper, we are to: Remember that Jesus gave His life for us. The broken bread is to remind us that Jesus gave His body for us. Drinking red grape juice is to remind us that Jesus bled for us (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Think about Jesus. "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25). Think about ourselves. We need to ask ourselves if we are doing what God wants us to do (1 Corinthians 11:28). Ask Jesus to forgive us of the things we are doing wrong and tell Him we will try to be like Him (1 Corinthians 11:28).

LEADING CHILDREN IN THEIR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: GUIDING CHILDREN TO PRAY

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God promises to hear and answer prayers (Mark 11:24). Explain that people can pray standing, sitting, or kneeling. Some people close their eyes so that they can think about God. To God the way we stand or sit is not as important as the way we feel about Him and others (Mark 11:25).

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- 3. Everyone sins** (Romans 3:23). The Bible tells us that everyone sins.

4. Sin separates us from God (Romans 6:23). Our sin keeps us away from God.

5. Repent or tell God you are sorry for your sins (Acts 3:19). The Bible says if we are very sorry for our sins and turn toward God, He will forgive us. This means we are to pray and tell God: We are very sorry for our sins. We want to stop doing the things that are wrong, and start doing the things God wants us to do. Each person must decide this for himself or herself.

6. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Romans 10:9 says if we confess (say) that Jesus is our leader and believe Jesus ~~came back from the dead~~ He will forgive us (Romans 10:9).

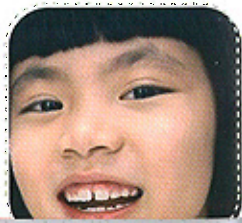
7. Believe in Jesus and tell others. Jesus wants us to tell others that we believe in Him (Matthew 10:32).

8. Following Jesus' way. When we say we are sorry for our sins and believe in Jesus, we should try to do what He wants us to do rather than what we want to do. Praying, reading the Bible, and going to church will help us know what we should do (1 John 2:3-6).

9. Being baptized. We show others that we want to follow Jesus by being baptized. In Acts 8:35 Philip told a man about Jesus. When the man believed in Jesus, Philip baptized him (Acts 8:38). Now that you believe in Jesus, you can be baptized so that others will know you believe.

STEPS IN LEADING A CHILD TO CHRIST

- 1. Lead a child to discover the simple truth** (outlined in steps 1-7 above) as you open your Bible and share what it says. Allow a child time to ask questions, make comments, and process what he is hearing.
- 2. Pray for the child to understand what he has heard.** Pray that God will help him to trust Jesus Christ.
- 3. Invite the child to pray.** Give the child time to pray, asking God to forgive him for his sins and telling God he wants to obey Him for the rest of his life.
- 4. Celebrate with the child.** Tell a child you are happy for her. Read Romans 10:13 together. If the child has a Bible, write by Romans 10:13, "At _____ Baptist Church Vacation Bible School, when I was 10 years old, I prayed and asked Jesus Christ to forgive me of my sins."



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5. Follow-up with the child.

Discuss the child's decision with his/her parents. In front of the parents, explain that God wants us to tell others about our decision to follow Christ (Matthew 10:32) by making the decision public in the next worship service. Help the child and parents understand the importance of baptism and following Jesus. After a child accepts Christ, help him/her understand baptism and church membership. A child needs to know



that baptism and church membership are not essential to accepting Jesus Christ. Baptism is a way to obey God and church membership is a way to learn more about being a Christian. Encourage a child (in front of his parents) to be baptized and learn more about Jesus by praying, reading the Bible and going to church (See 8 and 9 above).

Some parents may say that their child cannot be baptized. Respect the parents' authority but reassure the child that his decision and experience are what God wants and that there will come a time when he can be baptized and join the church. Encourage the child to learn more about Jesus by praying, reading his Bible, memorizing Bible verses, doing what the Bible says, and going to church.

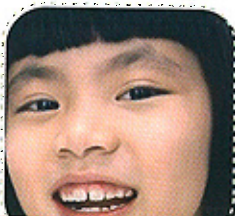
LEADING CHILDREN IN THEIR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

Children need a Christian adult to guide them in understanding baptism and why it is important. Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17). The first church in the New Testament baptized because Jesus was baptized. Today people who choose to follow Jesus are baptized because they want to obey Jesus. Baptism is the way a person lets others know he or she has chosen to follow Jesus (become a Christian). People who are baptized are promising to try to obey the teachings of Jesus Christ.

LEADING CHILDREN IN THEIR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: UNDERSTANDING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Children who feel accepted at church may think they are already a church member. Help them understand what the Bible says about church, and what its members do.

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