

Do's and Don'ts for Sharing the Gospel

THE GOSPEL TOOLKIT

Awana®



Do



Be prepared. You never know when God will give you the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with a kid. Have a plan ahead of time of how you will share the Gospel.

Use Scripture. We want to affirm to any child that the truth of the Gospel comes straight from God's Word. Use Bible verses such as Romans 3:23 and John 3:16 to help kids know that this is God's plan, not yours.

Share the whole Gospel. Help kids understand the entirety of what God has done for us by walking with them through the whole redemptive arc – creation, fall, redemption, restoration. (Check out the Redemptive Arc video in your Gospel Toolkit folder for a more in-depth walk-through.)

Make it a conversation. If sharing the Gospel turns into a one-sided lecture, kids will tune out. Ask questions such as, "Can you share an example of sin?" or "What do you know about the things Jesus did on Earth?" to engage kids in the conversation. Asking questions also helps you check for their understanding.

Use kid-friendly language. While we never want to water down the Gospel, we also need to be cautious about using overly churchy words without explaining them. Phrases that may be familiar to us such as, "walk down an aisle" or even "give your heart to Jesus" may be confusing to kids. When using terms, make sure to define them clearly. Don't assume kids know what common church language means. For example, "sin" can be explained or defined as, "knowing the right thing and doing the wrong thing instead." Intentionally define the language you use to help kids paint a clear picture of what God has done for them.

Make next steps clear. If the child indicates they are ready to trust in Jesus as their Savior, model for them how to pray and communicate their faith to Jesus. Pray with them or, even better, have their parents pray with them. If a child is unsure or clearly not ready, affirm their walk towards Jesus and pray Jesus would continue to draw them closer to Him.



Don't

Don't put pressure on the child. Salvation must come from the heart and is often a process for kids. We want to avoid putting them on the spot to make an immediate decision they may not be ready for. While you may share the Gospel with a large group, Gospel conversations and calls for response should happen individually.

Don't use language that focuses on fear. Kids need to respond to the love and forgiveness of Jesus, not just a fear of punishment and hell. Fear-based conversation typically doesn't lead to lasting faith.

Don't expect kids to use adult words or express adult understanding. Kids can understand what Jesus has done for them, but they may not be able to express it with perfect clarity.

Don't worry if it feels awkward. Because the attention span of children can range across a spectrum, you might experience a child quickly move on to another topic. That's completely normal! You are sharing news that has an eternal impact on all of us. That's a big deal and can feel challenging. It might feel hard, and that's okay. It is worth it!



WHY SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH KIDS

Did you know a child's worldview is set by the age of 13?¹

Childhood is an amazing life stage of development, creativity and exploration. Kids develop physically, emotionally and academically, as well as spiritually. Each of these milestones are important, and research shows the spiritual foundation laid for a child before the age of 13 will impact the rest of their lives.

As important as our children are to us, they are even more important to God. While some may question if kids are capable of understanding theological concepts of the Gospel, God calls us to make disciples of the next generation.

4 FOUNDATIONAL REASONS WE SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH KIDS:

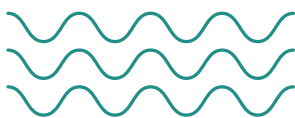


① **Kids can understand the Gospel and believe in Jesus.** The great news is Jesus never said that following Him required a seminary degree or adult-level understanding. In fact, He said the opposite. In Matthew 18:3, Jesus said: *“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Jesus wasn’t kidding. He wasn’t using the example of a child as some abstract illustration. He meant what He said. Saving faith requires child-like faith. Children can understand and respond to the Gospel.

② **Kids are most receptive to the Gospel.** Barna research reveals kids ages 5 to 13 have a 32% probability of accepting Christ.² This percentage drops dramatically with each older age group. Whenever kids are open to hearing what God has done, God gives us a unique opportunity to help those kids fully trust in Him.

③ **We must obey Scripture.** Psalm 78:4 says: *We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done.* The most glorious deed the Lord has done is provide a way for us to be saved from our sins and restored to new life in Jesus. Sharing the Gospel with kids must be the highest priority of anything else we teach or do.

④ **The Gospel leads to a life of discipleship to Jesus.** Too often we treat the salvation decision as the ultimate goal of a child’s faith journey, but it is just the beginning. When kids doubt their salvation in their teen years or walk away from the Lord after they graduate, it is most likely a discipleship issue and not a salvation issue. Sam Luce warns that we too often give kids “a faith they will grow out of rather than a faith they will grow into.”³ Faithful discipleship throughout a child’s lifetime will develop the faith journey they began when they were young.



Romans 10:14 says: *How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of Whom they have never heard?* Let us be faithful to help every kid everywhere hear the good news of Jesus so they can believe in Him.

ENDNOTES

1. “Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age,” Barna online, November 17, 2003, <https://www.barna.com/research/research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age/>.
2. George Barna, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 35.
3. Samuel Luce, “Giving Our Kids a Faith They Can Grow Into,” Gospel At Center, April 5, 2018, <http://gospelatcenter.com/giving-our-kids-a-faith-they-can-grow-into/>.