

Should You Lead Young Kids to Christ?

Conventional wisdom says you shouldn't introduce your children to faith when they are preschoolers. But I believe that's the perfect time!

My son Johnathan was 3 when he let me know he wanted to be born again. One day we were heading down the interstate highway when Johnathan spoke up from his car seat in the back of our car.

"I'm gonna be born soon."

"What?" I said.

"I'm gonna be born soon."

"You mean born again?" I asked.

"Yeah, I'm gonna be born again soon."

"How do you know that?" I asked cautiously.

"God was talkin' to me," he answered simply.

I was intrigued. "He was? When did He talk to you?"

"Up in heaven. He said I'm gonna be born again soon."

"Praise God, Johnathan. Do you want to be born again?"

"Yup," he answered, nodding his head.

I briefly explained what that meant but not at great length because God's hand was so strong on him. It seemed obvious that the Spirit of God was moving him to salvation. I didn't feel He needed my help or timing in the matter.

Johnathan asked me to read the Easter story to him that night.

He asked me why it thundered and shook when Caiaphas was mean and Jesus died.

A day or so later he asked me, "Is Granddaddy born?"

"You mean born again? Yes, he's born again."

I did the hard thing. I waited for God's Spirit to bring him to the new birth.

I was cooking in the kitchen when he showed up at the doorway and announced: "We gotta obey, and one day we'll go to heaven, and you [Mom] are gonna come with us. God doesn't want sin in heaven, so we gotta obey our mom and dad and pick up our toys."

After he walked away, I cried at the sink. I felt so honored and blessed.

We spent the next three weeks going over the third chapter of John. We talked about Nicodemus and being born again. I talked about Moses and the serpent on the pole and explained that "sin hurts, and our sin hurt Jesus."

One night while he was sitting on my lap he said, "I want to be born again right now."

So we went into his bedroom and knelt on the floor with Daddy. Johnathan admitted he had sinned, and he asked forgiveness and told God he wanted to be born again.

Wow! As a mother, I felt as if I had labored in the birth process with my son all over again. And there he knelt, a brand-new baby in Christ. We all rejoiced!

I had a similar experience with my daughter Eden when she was almost 4. She was sitting on the couch when she suddenly started crying and said, "Mommy, I'm sad because I wanna get married, and now you won't let me."

You can imagine how I laughed! I went into a speech about how she can't get married until she's a big girl.

But she was upset with me for laughing and told me: "It's not funny. You're hurting my feelings."

Hiding my giggles, I quickly apologized and set things right.

Later on, she told me, "I mean I want to be born."

"You mean born again?"

"Yes."

Wanting to be married is a good analogy of salvation, too. I just didn't understand, and Eden probably couldn't think of the right term. Three-year-olds have a hard time communicating what they want to say!

Of course, I let her know that she could ask Jesus into her life and be born again (married) whenever she was ready. I should have caught the meaning of the term "married" because the day before she had spoken to me about it.

She came to me while I was on the phone and said, "Mommy, I have to tell you something."

She nagged until I put my hand over the receiver and said, "Eden, you know it's rude to interrupt while Mommy's on the phone."

"But I want to tell you something!" She was crying by now.

"OK, what is it?"

"When we go to see Jesus [we were attending a passion play the next month], I'm gonna give my life to Jesus."

I felt so small. "Oh, Eden, that is important. Praise God."

When I finally got off the phone, she came up to me again and

said, "I wanna do that because it's real down in my heart."

In some ways, my children's experiences of being born again were similar to my own. When I was 3 and 4 years old, my father would come home in the afternoon, and I would rush over to the door and hug him wildly, pulling him to the couch and saying, "Come on, Daddy, let's talk about important things."

Dad admitted being tired after work, and he wasn't always up to my big discussions. My mother often told me, "Sis, let your father get in the door first."

Yet these times were the delight of his heart, and today he still will ask me over the phone once in a while, "Well, Sis, do you want to come over and talk about important things?" Then he'll laugh warmly.

My parents and Sunday school teachers always talked about getting saved. I remember thinking, If getting saved is so great, and going to hell is so awful, how come nobody's asked me if I'm saved yet?

I honestly began to think that no one cared much about me. I waited and waited and waited for someone to ask me personally if I wanted to get saved. No one ever did.

Finally, I asked my mom if I could get saved. I remember feeling agitated that she wanted me to wait until my dad came home so he could pray with us, too.

I thought, Boy, I'm never going to get saved. (An hour or two seems like a long time to a little child.)

When Mom saw how eager I was, she knelt and prayed with me at the couch. I was a happy girl!

I hope these testimonies help you see how you can train your child in the way of the Lord and then stay out of the way while the Holy Spirit is working to bring him to the Savior. Don't be anxious. It took time to birth your baby into this

world, and it will take time to birth him into the next one!

I believe the first step is to teach your children the Law of Moses and to give them reasonable house rules to follow. Rules are tools! They help us learn right from wrong and expose our weaknesses, proving to us how desperately we need Jesus. The apostle Paul said, "The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3:24, NKJV).

Then allow the Holy Spirit to use the Bible stories, values and boundaries you've taught your child to bring him to Jesus. Bringing people to Christ has been the Holy Spirit's job for 2,000 years! He's more than capable—He's perfect.

The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God that your child has heard and brings him to salvation. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14).

Paul says the same thing. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12). Basically, this means that the Holy Spirit knows what is in the heart of God and reveals the things of God to those who will listen.

Some people think a child needs to come to complete conviction of sin before he or she can truly be born again. This may or may not be true, but one thing is for sure—most preschool children aren't equipped to explain that type of conviction.

After your children commit their lives to Christ, I'm sure you'll agree with the apostle John, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). God is just. What you've sown by patiently training your child, you will richly reap.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old

he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Believe God! And may His hope fill you with all joy and peace as you wait in faith for the rebirth of your child.

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