



LEADING A CHILD TO CHRIST

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Romans 1:16

VBS presents an ideal opportunity to share the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ with all attending. Every leader and team member should be ready to clearly present the gospel and counsel those wanting to learn more. Children are usually soft-hearted toward things of the Lord, and some will be interested in becoming a follower of Christ. Be ready, because eternal matters matter most!

Before

- **Pray.** Salvation is God's work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone. We need to ask God to prepare the children and open their hearts to Him.
- **Be prepared.** Learn more about presenting the gospel and counseling a child about salvation.

During

The gospel will be presented during the lesson time. Opportunities may arise, however, to share with a child one-on-one or with a small group of children. If so, keep the following in mind:

- Becoming a child of God involves repenting of one's sin and having faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Repentance involves understanding what sin is (disobeying God's commands) and desiring to turn from that sin.
- You can use the tract *How Can I Become a Child of God?* to explain the plan of salvation. Along with this, use your Bible. Children need to see and hear God's Word, so have your Bible opened and marked ahead of time with the appropriate Scriptures.
- Avoid abstract phrases like "asking Jesus into your heart." Instead, use terminology like "becoming a child of God." Most children still think in concrete terms and need examples that are easy to understand.
- If a child indicates an interest to know more after hearing the gospel presentation, ask questions (such as one

or more of the following) that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer:

- » What do you want to talk to me about?
- » Do you know what sin is?
- » Can you think of a specific sin (wrong) you have done? Are you bothered by your sin?

These questions are important. A child who cannot verbalize a sin or does not seem to be repentant about being a sinner may not fully understand his need for a Savior. In this situation, you might list a child-oriented example of sin and ask him to discover any time he catches himself sinning over the next few days. Give him *How Can I Become a Child of God?* Pray with him, then send him on his way. Check back a day or two later, if possible. Otherwise, continue with these questions:

- » Why did Jesus come to earth? Why did Jesus need to die? Why did Jesus rise again?
- » Why do you want Jesus to be your Savior?
- » Why should God let you into His family? (Make sure the child understands that salvation is not based on what he does but is a gracious gift of God through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.)
- Pray for discernment while listening to a child's answers.
- When a child seems to have a basic understanding of salvation (belief in Jesus' death and resurrection, admission of and repentance from sin, and a desire to follow the Lord), encourage him to talk to his parents about what it means to become a child of God (if they are followers of Christ). Encourage a child who comes from a non-Christian home to verbalize his understanding to the Lord through prayer. There is no one prayer that should be prayed. Encourage him to ask the Lord to forgive him and help him know he is a child of God.
- Let him see in your words and your face that you are excited that he wants to become a child of God! Read Luke 15:10 to him.

- Some children may not want to make decisions but may want to learn more, to be assured of salvation, or to confess sin. Read Romans 10:9–10 and John 10:28–29 with children who are seeking assurance of their salvation. Encourage them to ask the Lord to help them know they are His children. If a child wants to confess sin, read 1 John 1:9 with him and encourage him to ask the Lord to help him know he is forgiven when he repents.
- Explain that Jesus loves His children and wants to spend time with them. Discuss practical ways to grow as a child of God. Provide him with the tract *Growing Up in God's Family*, and share the following:
 - » Read your Bible, and obey what you read. You can start your Bible reading with the short Bible study you will receive the last day of VBS. (Make sure he has a Bible at home, and if not, provide one. Write his name, the date, and the occasion [VBS] on the presentation page.)
 - » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
 - » Go to a church that believes and teaches the Bible as the Word of God.
 - » Tell others about Jesus. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors how they can become children of God.

After

- Review what it means to be a child of God.
 - » How long does God keep His children? (Hebrews 13:5b; John 10:28–29)
 - » Can anything separate God from His children? (Romans 8:38–39)
 - » What happens when God's children sin? (1 John 1:9)
 - » What do children of God believe? (Romans 10:9)
- Fill out a Decision Card. Turn in to the VBS director.
- Stay in touch with the child through postcards, visits, or phone calls. Invite him to upcoming church events.