



WHAT IS THE

FAMILY RESOURCES

Gospel?

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS

a parent equip resource

*"Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6, ESV*

Parents,

Have you ever felt the weight of Proverbs 22:6 and wondered how exactly you are supposed to "train up a child in the way that he should go?" That can seem like a daunting task, but it's one we believe God can use you to accomplish and that He will equip you to succeed.

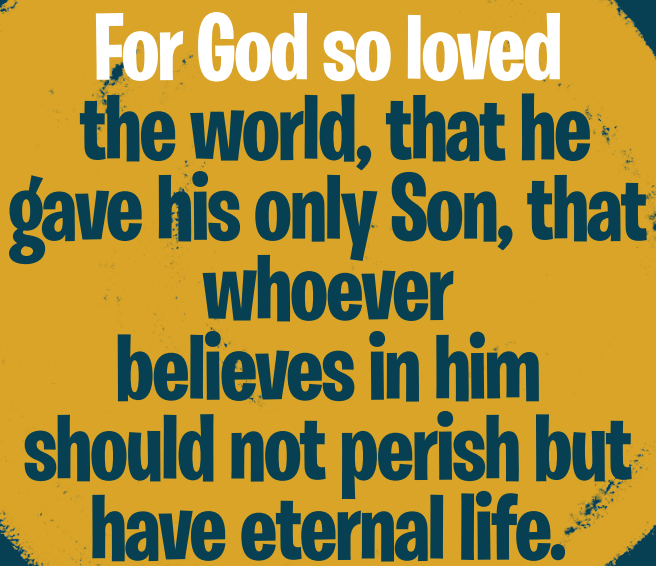
The most important part of this training process is the role you play in gospel conversations with your children. *Are you ready for those?* We know kids have a lot of questions, and sometimes we may not feel like we have the expertise to handle those questions appropriately.

In the next few pages, we want to give you tools to use as you infuse the gospel into everyday life with your family. Our hope is to give you handles - nuggets of truth to add to the rhythms of your everyday life - that will help you lay the best foundation for your children as they seek to know more about God and His plan for their life.

So, how do we do this? Using John 3:16 as our guide, we want to help you *begin* and *continue* conversations with your children about the gospel. We recognize that every child is a unique image-bearer of God, and we want to present the gospel to them in a way that both helps them understand now and provides a foundation they can build on in the future. Therefore, this guide contains sections for both preschoolers and elementary kids.

Our goal is to break down the aspects of the gospel and help you present the timeless truth in a manner that children will not only comprehend but *embrace*. Our prayer is, when your children begin to understand who God is, what sin is, and why Jesus had to die on the cross for them, it will open the door for a seamless salvation conversation that will result in a life changing decision for your child!

Exciting times are ahead as you begin (and continue) these important conversations with your child. We're praying for you and your family in this season, and we are privileged to walk alongside you.



**For God so loved
the world, that he
gave his only Son, that
whoever
believes in him
should not perish but
have eternal life.**

John 3:16

For God so loved . . .

A Preschooler's Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING A PRESCHOOLER'S PERSPECTIVE ON GOD:

- **Creator**

Preschoolers can recognize God as the CREATOR of all things. They enjoy creating things, so they can easily connect to God as the Creator of ALL things (Genesis 1:1).

- **Authority**

Knowing who is in charge is an important concept for preschoolers. Because of this, they can easily identify God as being in a position of authority (Isaiah 45:18).

- **Answers prayers**

The faith of a child makes it easy for them to relate to God as the One who answers prayer (1 John 5:14).

- **Strong and powerful**

Preschoolers are growing and learning to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, so the concept of God as being STRONG is relatable (Exodus 15:2).

> UNDERSTANDING A PRESCHOOLER'S PERSPECTIVE ON LOVE:

- The way they feel about their parents.
- The way their parents feel about them.
- Safety and security.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. DID YOU KNOW GOD CREATED EVERYTHING?

He is so strong and so powerful, but even though He is so important, He still loves us very much! He hears us when we pray, and He provides for us. Can you tell me what else you know about God?

2. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT LOVE?

3. DID YOU KNOW GOD LOVES US SO MUCH, HE DID SOMETHING PRETTY SPECIAL FOR US?

The Bible tells us that God loved us, so He sent His Son for us (1 John 4:10).

For God so loved ...

Elementary Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING AN ELEMENTARY KID'S PERSPECTIVE ON GOD:

- Elementary kids are capable of understanding **God as Creator** of all things. They can understand He made them special and unique.
- Elementary kids can understand **God is perfect and Holy** and that He does not make mistakes.
- Elementary kids are capable of understanding **God cares** for them and knows what is best.

> UNDERSTANDING AN ELEMENTARY KID'S PERSPECTIVE ON LOVE:

- Elementary kids can understand **God loves everyone**. They can understand God loves them unconditionally.
- Elementary kids can understand **love in action**. They know their parents love them because they take care of them; they know grandma loves them because she gives the best hugs. They know God loves them because of all the amazing things He does for them.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF GOD?

Have them help you list things they know about who God is and what He is like. Establish the character of God with your child. Talk about all the amazing qualities that make Him worthy of praise and worthy of trusting.

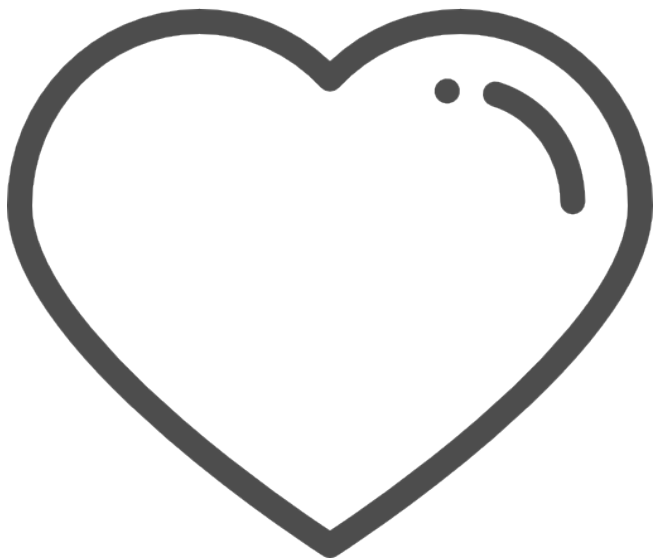
2. HOW DO YOU SHOW LOVE TOWARDS OTHERS?

3. HOW DOES GOD SHOW LOVE TOWARD YOU?

Talk about the ways God loves. Talk to them about the most amazing way God showed His love – by sending His own Son to die in our place so we can have a relationship with God.

Preschool Activity

Color the heart to remind you
that God loves YOU!



Elementary Activity

Beside each heart, name one
characteristic of God.



**For God so loved
the world, that he
gave his only Son, that
whoever
believes in him
should not perish but
have eternal life.**

John 3:16

... He gave His only Son ...

A Preschooler's Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING A PRESCHOOLER'S PERSPECTIVE ON GIFTS:

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

- Gifts are special and make preschoolers happy.
- Preschoolers love to give and receive gifts.

> UNDERSTANDING A PRESCHOOLER'S PERSPECTIVE OF A FATHER (OR A PARENT OR GUARDIAN):

- Preschoolers can understand every child has someone who is in the role of caretaker or authority in their lives.
- At this age, most can relate to or understand parents loving their children because (hopefully) they feel that love from the parental authority in their life.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. CAN YOU THINK OF A FAVORITE GIFT THAT YOU HAVE EVER RECIEVED?

Who gave it to you? Why did they give it to you? Isn't it so great to get a gift from someone who loves us? Gifts remind us that we are special to someone. The Bible tells us that God gave us a special gift. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life."

2. DO YOU KNOW WHAT SIN IS?

Sin is anything we do that we aren't supposed to do or anything we don't do that we are supposed to do. And as sad as this is, sin separates us from God. That makes me so sad to think about. What about you? But the good news is, we don't have to stay separated from God. John 3:16 tells us God gave us His only Son. Jesus came to help us not be separated from God anymore. What a special gift that is to us!

3. DO YOU EVER SIN?

Can you think of a time when you have done something you weren't supposed to do? What happened? (Let them know this is not a trick question!)

... He gave His only Son ...

Elementary Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING AN ELEMENTARY KID'S PERSPECTIVE ON GIFTS:

- Elementary kids can understand **gifts are free** and do not require reciprocity. They understand the excitement of receiving a gift
- Elementary kids can understand the **joy** in giving a gift. They can understand the joy God has in giving us the gift of salvation.

> UNDERSTANDING AN ELEMENTARY KID'S PERSPECTIVE OF A FATHER (OR A PARENT OR GUARDIAN):

- Elementary kids understand family relationships between a parental figure and a child. They can understand that God created parents to be an earthly representation of our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
- Elementary kids understand that parents (or parental figures) make sure their needs are met. They can understand that God is the One who meets their needs and cares for them.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GIFT YOU EVER RECEIVED?

2. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE GIFT THAT YOU GAVE SOMEONE?

How did you feel giving that gift? Talk to them about how God has given the best gift – His son Jesus! We don't have to do anything to earn it. God freely gave us this gift because He loves us, and it brings Him joy when we accept His gift.

3. WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENT WAYS I TAKE CARE OF YOU?

Connect this to how God cares for them and wants the best for them. God wants us to accept His gift of salvation through His Son Jesus. He wants to have a relationship with us. He wants us to trust Him.

Preschool Activity

Color the picture of the gift.
Draw a picture of your favorite gift.



Elementary Activity

Write a letter to God thanking Him
for giving you Jesus!

**For God so loved
the world, that he
gave his only Son, that
whoever
believes in him
should not perish but
have eternal life.**

John 3:16

... whoever believes ...

A Preschooler's Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING HOW A PRESCHOOLER INTERPRETS “WHOEVER”:

- Preschoolers are **INCLUSIVE!**
They like to be with other kids. This age is a perfect time to emphasize that God sent Jesus for everyone (Matthew 28:19).
- Preschoolers are starting to understand there is a world outside of what they see or experience.

> UNDERSTANDING HOW A PRESCHOOLER INTERPRETS “BELIEVES”:

- The faith of a child makes believing easy! Most preschoolers are relatively trusting of authority, and if someone in authority tells them they can believe something to be true, they do (Matthew 18:2-4).

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHO DOES GOD LOVE?

You're right God loves everyone! And because of that, He wants to give the special gift we talked about yesterday to everyone. Let's make a list of who we think "everyone" might be. (Be sure to think outside box with your preschooler with this. Suggest family and friends who live far and near; even suggest people you might not really know. The goal is for them to understand that "whoever" really means everyone.)

2. IF GOD LOVES EVERYONE AND HAS A GIFT FOR THEM ALL, HOW DO THEY GET IT?

When I have a present for you, I just give it to you, but if you never take it out of my hand the gift stays with me. Imagine God is standing in heaven trying to give everyone a gift but there is something they have to do to take it. They have to BELIEVE.

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO BELIEVE?

A great example to use in this conversation with your preschooler is the chair analogy. We trust our chair is going to hold us, so we sit in it without even thinking it might not. We can have the same kind of faith that the gift God is giving us is for us. All we have to do is believe in Him and what He did for us, just like we believe the chair is going to hold us up!

... whoever believes ...

Elementary Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING HOW AN ELEMENTARY KID INTERPRETS "WHOEVER":

- Elementary kids begin to distinguish differences between themselves and others. They begin to group people based on the differences they observe.
- Elementary can kids understand God loves and values ALL people because he created each of them.

> UNDERSTANDING HOW AN ELEMENTARY KID INTERPRETS "BELIEVES":

- Elementary kids understand the Bible is true. They see the faith of their parents, family, and friends as real.
- Elementary kids are trying to decide for themselves what is real. They listen to authority figures they trust about what is true.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THE GOSPEL?

Anyone and everyone! No matter what they look like, talk like, or how they behave.

2. WHO HAS GOD PLACED AROUND YOU AT SCHOOL, IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, OR IN YOUR FAMILY THAT YOU CAN SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH?

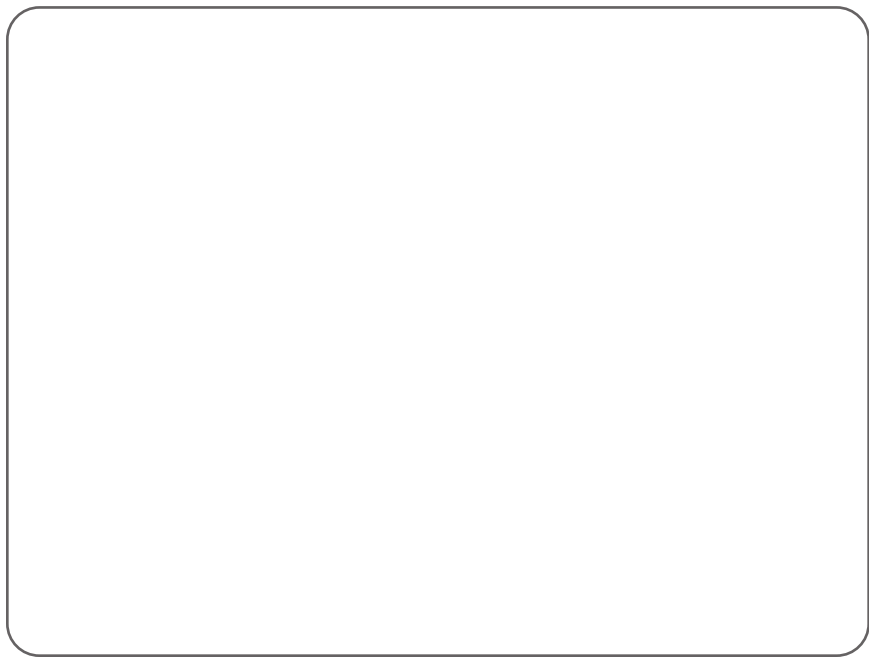
God wants people to love and follow Him, and He has placed specific people in our paths to share the gospel with. Once we put a name down, we can begin praying for the person and looking for opportunities to share the gospel with them!

3. DO YOU BELIEVE THE GOSPEL? HAVE YOU MADE THE DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS? WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

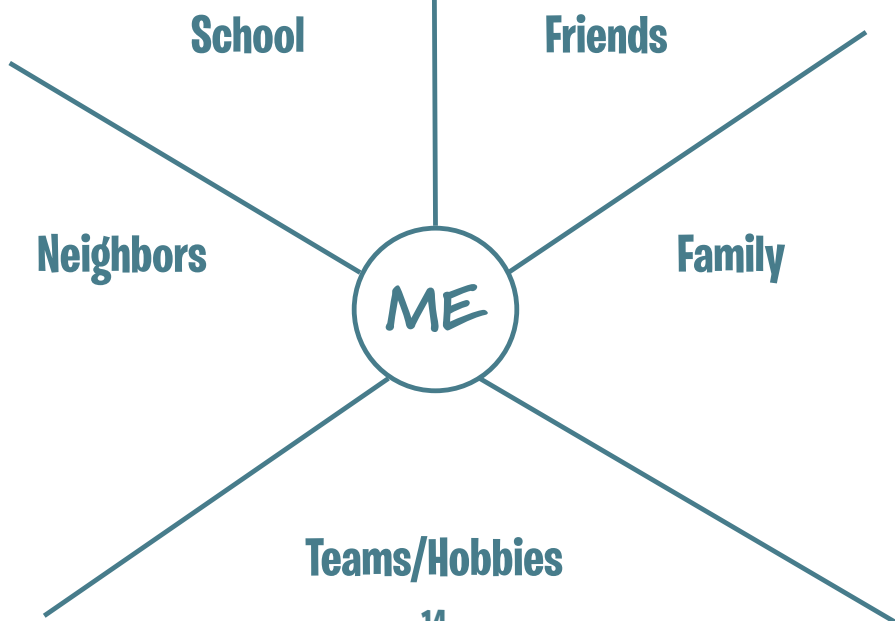
*Please look at the guide to gospel conversations on page 6. Do not be afraid to start this conversation with your child. It's okay if they say no! Do not force a decision. Take the time to answer the questions they have and get a feel for their understanding. Trust the Holy Spirit to be moving in their hearts.

Preschool Activity

Draw a picture of all of the people who can believe in Jesus. (WHOEVER)



Elementary Activity



**For God so loved
the world, that he
gave his only Son, that
whoever
believes in him
should not perish but
have eternal life.**

John 3:16

... eternal life .

A Preschooler's Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING HOW A PRESCHOOLER INTERPRETS “ETERNITY”:

- James Fowler would define a preschooler's stage of faith as “intuitive/projective or fantasy.” Preschoolers use symbols to express thoughts, and their faith is experiential and will develop through stories, images, and the influence of others. Believing in supernatural things comes easily for preschoolers because of this.
- Be sure to emphasize that eternal life is not a fantasy. It is not like stories in the movies they watch or books they read, but it is a factual concept that actually will happen for those who believe.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHAT DOES FOREVER MEAN?

Right, “forever” means something will never end. When we eat an ice cream cone, it comes to an end. When we read a story, it comes to an end. But if something lasts forever, it NEVER comes to an end.

2. WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH WOULD NEVER COME TO AN END?

The Bible tells us how God loves us and gave us the special gift of His Son so that if we believe in Him, we can have eternal life. Our time on earth might come to an end, but if we believe in Jesus, we can live forever in heaven with Him.

3. WHAT DO YOU THINK HEAVEN WILL LOOK LIKE ?

In John 14:2, Jesus tells us He has gone ahead to prepare a place for us. Revelation 21 and 22 describe what heaven will look like. Be sure to use your Bible to answer this question for your child!

... eternal life .

Elementary Perspective

> UNDERSTANDING HOW AN ELEMENTARY KID INTERPRETS "ETERNITY":

- Elementary kids are moving from concrete thinking to abstract thinking. This means they are moving from the tangible to the intangible. Eternity is an abstract concept that cannot be measured.
- Elementary kids can understand that they will live with God forever in heaven. They will have A LOT of questions about heaven and what is going to be there.

3 Questions to Start the Conversation:

1. WHAT DOES ETERNITY MEAN?

Eternity means never ending. This means our relationship with God is forever. It will never stop.

2. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HEAVEN?

This will be a great launching point to see what your child does and does not know about eternity with God. For many of us, heaven is a big question mark. We are not certain of what heaven will be like. Elementary kids are going to want specifics. It's important you remind them of what we do know because of what the Bible tells us. For example, Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more because the previous things have passed away."

3. WHY IS ETERNITY WITH GOD A GIFT?

Explain that our relationship with God is forever, and it will never be broken again! We start our eternity with God the moment we choose to follow him. We still have to experience the brokenness of the world we are in right now, but our hope is in the eternity we get to spend with God where there is no brokenness, sadness, or pain. We get to be in his perfect love forever.

Preschool Activity

Elementary Activity

Draw a picture of what you think heaven will look like.



Gospel Conversation Guides

Gospel Conversations with a Preschooler

Recognize that most preschoolers are not ready to make the decision to commit their life to Jesus, mostly because they still can't decide if they want crust on their peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or not. Presenting the gospel to your preschooler is more about laying the foundation for them so when they are ready to make the decision, they have a clear understanding of what it means.

One of the most important truths that your preschooler needs to understand is that the Bible is **ABSOLUTE TRUTH** and that everything they read in the Bible is **TRUE**. It is different from stories they might read at school or at night before they go to bed. If the Bible says that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish, then indeed, Jonah was swallowed by a big fish!

After establishing that foundational truth, we can capitalize on the truths God's Word reveals from beginning to end. Preschoolers love repetition, and it helps them learn. Any time you are reading the Bible to your preschooler or having your family quiet time, try the resource on the next page.

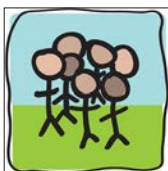
Gospel Conversations with a Preschooler



In the beginng, God created EVERYTHING. And it was GOOD! The people walked with God and talked with God. It was so beautiful! But



The people disobeyed God! They made a choice that separated them from God. They could not be close to him anymore because of SIN. But - good news! God did not stop loving them...instead...



He chose a special people. Those special people were called the Israelites. God wanted to be with them so he gave them a way for them to be together but it wasn't a permanent solution! They needed something more - so God had a plan for that ...



God sent Jesus to help us! God knew there had to be a way for the people not to be separated from Him anymore and He wanted to be with ALL people. So, He sent Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment for our sins so that we would not have to be separated from Him anymore! That truth makes me sad! But I don't have to stay sad because we know that 3 days later Jesus rose from the dead! (Celebrate this!)



After Jesus rose from the dead, he had one more special job to do. He began the church. He told the people that their job was to go and tell other people about Jesus. Because they were obedient and did what Jesus told them to do - we get to know about Him - and we get to go to church! Isn't that so cool? We get to go to a place that was started by JESUS!!!



After Jesus started the church, Jesus went to heaven. That is where He is now - He is preparing a place for us so that one day we can be with Him as well! We won't have to be separated from Him anymore! Isn't that amazing?

Adapted from

<https://sundayschoolzone.com/bible-story/gods-unfolding-story/>

Gospel Conversations Between Preschoolers

Believe it or not, preschoolers can have **GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS!** Our preschoolers can be quite the evangelists. Here's what we know to be true:

Preschoolers love to tell stories and they love to share happy news.

So, if we give them the tools, they can use what they know to plant seeds and point their friends to Jesus.

- **PRESCHOOLERS MODEL WHAT THEY SEE.** The first thing we as parents can do is demonstrate having gospel conversations with people we interact with. Here are some examples:
 - That mom at the park. Instead of sitting quietly beside her or smiling silently across the way from her, engage with her. Say, "Hi." Let the conversation begin and watch how the Lord opens the doors for you to share your faith. Your kids will see that and will easily jump into similar conversations with the kids around them.
 - The waitress or waiter at the restaurant you are eating at. Take time to ask him or her how you can pray for them when you pray for dinner. Your kids will take note of this, and if you forget to do it one time, they will remind you or even do it for you!
- **PRESCHOOLERS LOVE TO TELL STORIES AND MAKE CONNECTIONS.** As you relate to your preschooler during the day, look for teachable moments to point things back to God and His love for them and for the world. Then, sit back and watch as they make those same connections with their friends.
- **PRESCHOOLERS HAVE LOTS OF QUESTIONS.** Look for ways to answer them or to find the answers together. Demonstrate the importance of searching for the truth (Matthew 6:33), and then watch as they take what you've taught them and share it with the friends God puts in their path.
- **PRAYING** for someone is a great first step in a Gospel Conversation. As your preschooler shares about their day with you, be sure to pray for the friends they mention. Then encourage your preschooler to tell their friends they are being prayed for.
- **CARING** for someone in need is also a great step in opening the door for Gospel Conversations. The more your preschooler sees you reach out beyond yourself to help someone in need, the more they will look for opportunities to do the same.

Often, the things we want our preschoolers to do are better **CAUGHT** than **TAUGHT**. Engage them in your day-to-day conversations and model for them ways they can show others the love of Jesus and share the good news of the **GOSPEL**.

Gospel Conversations with an Elementary Student

In order for children to put their faith in Jesus, they need to understand several basic truths:

- Their sin and need for a Savior
- The significance of Jesus's death and resurrection
- God's faithful presence in a believer's life

One powerful way for these truths to be conveyed in the home is for you to talk about them and live them out each day so your kids can learn from both your actions and words.

RECOGNIZING THEIR SIN

For the concept of dealing with sin to become real to children, they need to:

- Understand that they mess up (Romans 3:23).
- Admit to and accept the consequences of their wrong actions (1 John 1:9).
- Realize God loves them whether they succeed or fail (Romans 5:8).
- Accept that only God has the power to change their heart (Ezekiel 36:26).

Daily Rhythms

- *Praying together before and after discipline shows children the seriousness of their infractions and the value of having a clean heart before God.*
- *Demonstrate God's love by offering forgiveness freely and displaying unconditional love and mercy.*

SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

For the truths of the gospel to become real to children, they should first understand that:

- Jesus loves us so much that He came to earth for us (John 3:16).
- He taught us how to live and to know His Father.
- He died on the cross in our place.
- Jesus defeated sin and death through His resurrection — our Savior lives!

Daily Rhythms

- *Make sure to share the basic story of the gospel. Elaborate beyond the simple concepts that Jesus died for you and Jesus loves you; get into the why.*
- *Children can understand the concept of grace — or undeserved favor — through your parenting. When you offer your child grace, relate it to the grace God showed us in sending His Son and forgiving our sin. We can model our own need for a Savior when sin is evident in our lives.*

Gospel Conversations with an Elementary Student

GOD'S FAITHFUL PRESENCE IN A BELIEVER'S LIFE

For God's nearness to become real to children, help them understand that:

- God promises to always be with them (Hebrews 13:5).
- Jesus came to earth, died, and rose again to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).
- God gives believers a helper called the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26).

Daily Rhythms

- > *Showing your kids Christ in your everyday life is essential to them making this decision.*
- > *YOU are their primary example of God's faithful presence in a believer's life. Modeling is a powerful tool of discipleship.*
- > *Keep answering their questions. Don't force the decision.*

Adapted from

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/leading-your-child-to-christ/>

Gospel Conversations between Elementary Students

Your child can share the gospel of Jesus anywhere, at any time, with anyone by using a piece of paper and a pencil! This method of sharing the gospel is called the **“THREE CIRCLES.”**

It’s called the Three Circles method because you use three circles to share the gospel. Help your child practice what to say and how to draw it out so they can easily share the gospel with their friends.

CIRCLE ONE – GOD’S PERFECT DESIGN

- When God created the world and everything in it, He made it perfect, and He was with us.
- He wanted a relationship with us.

CIRCLE TWO – BROKEN WORLD

- We disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that disobeys God.
- Sin has made our world broken, and we now live in a broken world.
- How do we know we live in a broken world?
We see bad things happen all the time. People fight. People get sick. People do bad things.
- We try to escape this brokenness in many ways. We do it through education, money, relationships, entertainment, and other things.
Not all of these things are bad, but when we put our trust in them instead of God, they make us more broken.

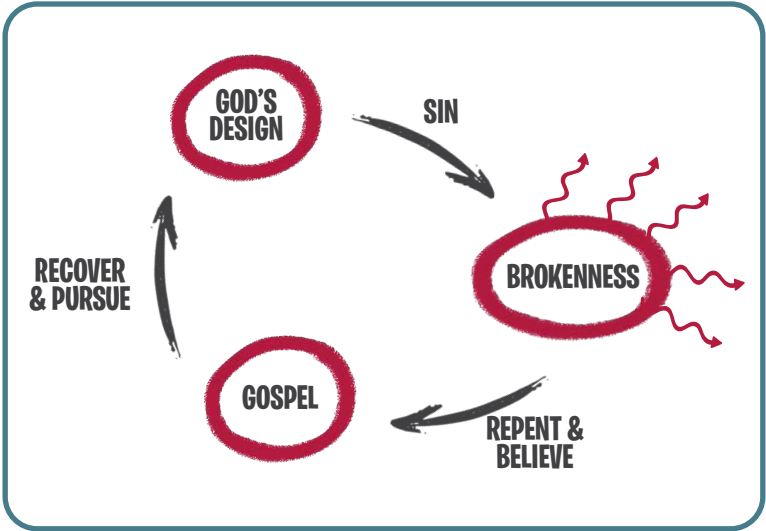
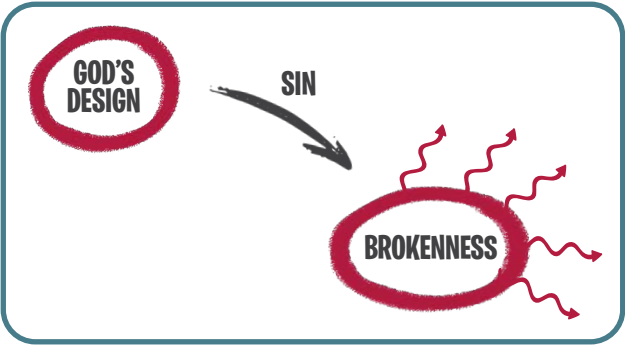
CIRCLE THREE – GOSPEL

- God gave us a way out of the brokenness
- Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life without sin, He died on the cross, and three days later He rose from the grave.
- When you repent and believe in Him you are made new! You are in God’s perfect design.
Repent means to turn away from our sin and turn to God.
- But we’re not done yet! Jesus tells us to go and share this good news with others.

INVITATION – FINISH BY INVITING THEM TO FOLLOW JESUS.

- You can do this by asking them whether they see themselves in brokenness or in God’s perfect design.
- If they say brokenness, you can invite them to repent and follow Jesus. You can pray with them and help them to make the decision to be a Christian.

Gospel Conversations between Elementary Students



(Adapted from Life on Mission- NAMB)

RESOURCES

The Jesus Story Book Bible

SBTC Family@Home App

Life On Mission App - NAMB (Three Circles)

Parenting by Paul David Tripp

The New City Catechism by Kathy Keller

NEXT GEN MINISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

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A monochromatic teal illustration with a fine, cross-hatched texture. It depicts the construction of the cross. In the center, Jesus, with long curly hair and a beard, is shown from the waist up, leaning forward and holding a large wooden beam. To his left, another man with a beard is also working on the structure. To the right, a third man is visible, looking down. In the background, a figure wearing a crown, likely Pontius Pilate, stands observing the scene. The overall composition is dramatic and somber.

BRENTWOOD BAPTIST
families