

## THE ABC'S OF SALVATION

**A**

### ADMIT

Admit you are a sinner and have made mistakes.

**B**

### BELIEVE

Believe that Jesus is God's Son, died on the Cross for you, and rose up from the grave on the third day.

**C**

### CONFESS

Confess Jesus as the Lord of your life. And commit yourself to a life of following Jesus, and serving others.

(Romans 3:23; John 1:12; Romans 10:9)

royal priesthood assemblies

# Evangelizing Children:

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Considering the Biblical Doctrine of Conversion in the Light of Developmental Issues.

## What We Will Be Looking At:

- Evangelizing Children—Understanding How Kids Understand
- Being Born Again—Regeneration
- Should We Baptize Young Converts?
  - Wisdom from Church History
  - Wisdom from Biblical History
  - Back to the Bible
  - How should we think about when Christian kids leave the faith as adults?

# Evangelizing Children— Understanding How Kids Understand

- **Developmental Theory (Jean Piaget): A Little Bit Goes a Long Way!**
  - **0-2 Reflexive Thinking:** Learning primarily through sight, sound, & touch. Picture Books are Great!
  - **2-7 Intuitive Thinking:** Able to think symbolically. Pictures like the cross are meaningful.
  - **7-11 Concrete Thinking:** Able to formulate concepts & basic categories. Able to understand logical relationships among concepts but only by generalizing from concrete experiences (like baptism!)
  - **11-15 Abstract Thinking:** Think critically, abstractly, and to solve problems.

# Evangelizing Children— Understanding How Kids Understand

- What things do people need to believe in order to be saved?
- What must happen for them to be saved?
- Perhaps a better question is: what should we look for to discover if someone is born again?

Gospel—its as  
Easy as A-B-C

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Evangelizing  
Children—  
Understanding  
How Kids  
Understand.  
The A-B-C's in  
Kid Talk

**Admit that You Are a Sinner:**

- Romans 3:18 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- What is sin? How would you define it?
- How might a kid understand it?
- “Sin is anything that is bad.” -Carter Kitinoja
- Have you ever sinned?

# Evangelizing Children—Understanding How Kids Understand. The A-B-C's in Kid Talk

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- Rom 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- This is bad news. Everyone is a sinner. We have all earned death—separation from God to spend eternity in a very bad place.
- But the good news is that God made it possible for us to be saved. The way is a person, His Son Jesus Christ.



Evangelizing  
Children—  
Understanding  
How Kids  
Understand.  
The A-B-C's in  
Kid Talk

- Do you know who Jesus is? He is God's Son.
- To be able to answer this question probably requires that some instruction took place.
- Kids understand what it means to be someone's child, so this will not require a lot of explaining.
- Jesus made it possible for us to be saved. Do you want to know how?



# The Gospel of Our Salvation:

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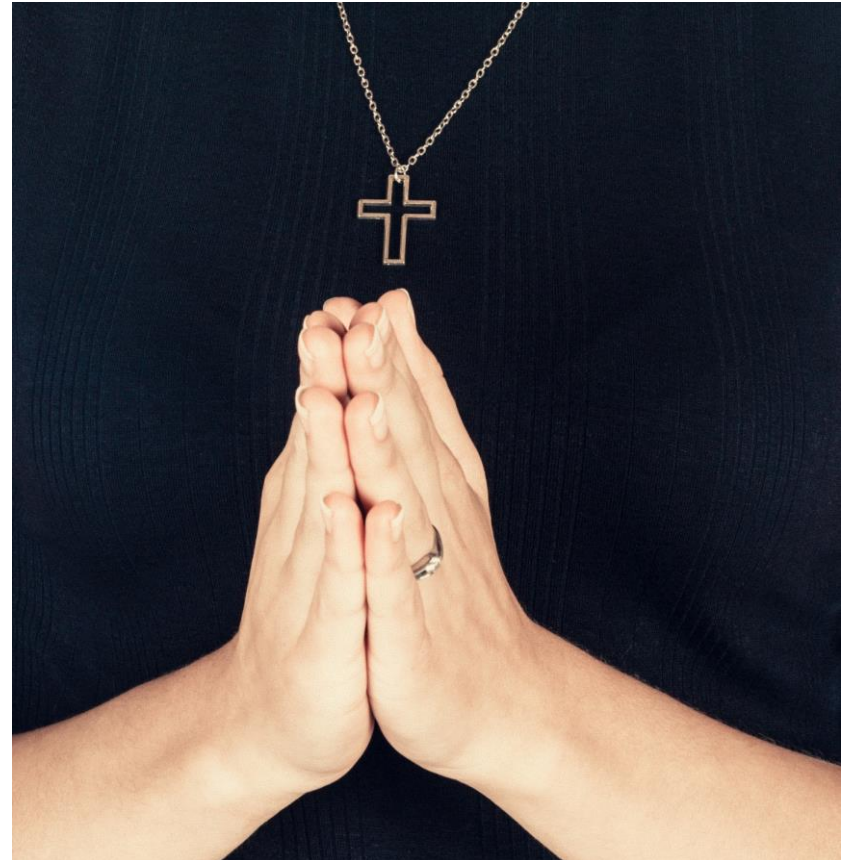
1 Corinthians 15: For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures



# Leading them to Christ: Asking the Right Questions

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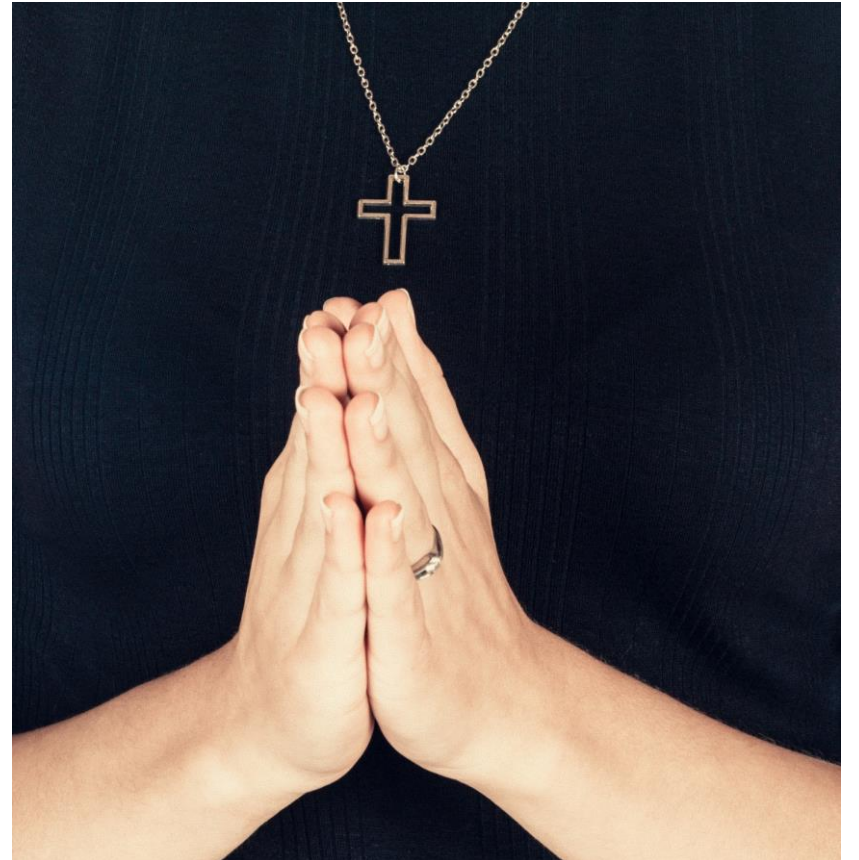
- Do you admit that you are a sinner? That you have done some things that are bad? Have you ever disobeyed mommy or daddy?
- Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Do you believe that He died on the cross for your sins?



# Leading them to Christ: Asking the Right Questions

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- **If the answer to those three questions is yes...then ask one more question.**
  - Romans 10:13 tells us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!
  - Would you like to ask Jesus to save you?
  - If yes, lead them in a sinner's prayer for salvation.



# Logical Theological Questions:

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- Will a kid understand all that there is to understand about God, Jesus, salvation, discipleship, and sin? No.
- Will a kid growing up in a Christian home that takes him to church and teaches them the Bible understand more as time goes on? Most likely.



# Logical Theological Questions:

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- Are there different ways of salvation for those who are 6 years old & for those who are, say, 36 years old? *No. The gospel is the gospel!*
- If you got saved at 6 & then learned more about the Bible for the next 3 decades, are you more saved at 36 than you were at 6? *Well, No.*



# Logical Theological Questions:

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- **Q:** When God says, “whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,” does really mean “whoever?” Or are there some people that this promise not apply to? Does He mean that someone can’t be saved unless they have highly developed cognitive ability?
- **A:** Well of course God means whoever when He says whoever/everyone!



# Logical Theological Questions:

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- **Q:** But what if they do not understand the gospel, does that matter?
- **A:** Well, yes, but understanding that you are a sinner & that someone else (Jesus) took your punishment for you is not very hard to understand. And that is the gospel. *The question is, does the child believe the it?*



# Conclusion:

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- *Kids tend to believe what their parents or a trusted adults tell them—including things about God.*
- *God designed it to work that way.*

*Ephesians 2:8-9 We are saved by grace through faith...so tell your kids and grandkids the gospel!*





# Regeneration:

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- “The act of begetting by God, which imparts eternal life.” –Charles Ryrie
- John 3:3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”



# Regeneration:

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- Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the *washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit*.
  - The **washing** is a work of the Holy Spirit to cleans us of our sins which is pictured in water baptism.
  - The **regeneration**=born again. It is a work of the Holy Spirit not primarily the human intellect, although the intellect is involved.



# Regeneration Precedes Faith:

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**Eph. 2:8** “You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the work of God”

- **The key question is this:** What is the work of God? Is it salvation, is it grace, or is it faith?
- The answer to that question is, yes! Salvation is a work of God, as is grace. But so is saving faith!



# Regeneration Precedes Faith:

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“The fact that regeneration precedes saving faith gives me great hope when I think about the salvation of children, especially those who struggle with developmental disabilities. Our great, loving, and merciful God is the one who births saving faith in us. This means that while God works through parents & teachers to lead children to Christ, saving faith is not ultimately or finally dependent on our ability to teach or on the child’s ability to comprehend. Rather, salvation depends on God!”

-Dr. Dan Kitinoja

# Conclusion:

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Kids can certainly be born again (regenerated), even if they do not have a full, detailed, and multifaceted grasp of the gospel. But the basic facts of the gospel need to be shared with them. So, share the gospel with them repeatedly, until they understand it.



# Should We Baptize Young Children?

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- Bible believing Presbyterians baptize the infants of believing parents because of their belief that Christ's covenant with the believing parents extends to the child.
- Baptists believe that the Biblical example is to only baptize those who make a profession of faith.
- Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist, recommended waiting until someone was 18 before baptizing them.

# Examples from Biblical History:

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- Son's born into Abraham's households were commanded to be circumcised (Genesis 17:10-14).
- Paul was circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (Philippians 3).
- Circumcision was the sign of the covenant relationship between God and Abraham and his descendants in Israel.
- Since the father was in a covenant with God the children were assumed to be so as well.

# Examples from Biblical History:

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Deut. 6:5-7 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart & with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

- This makes even more sense when you understand that the sons bore the mark of covenant membership—circumcision.



# Examples from Biblical History:

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Acts 11:14 And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup> he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

# Examples from Biblical History:

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Acts 16:14-15a One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And after she was baptized, and her household as well

# Examples from Biblical History:

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Acts 16:30-33 Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” <sup>32</sup> And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.



## One More Example from Church History:

- 80 A.D. Bishop Iranaeus wrote a defense of the Christian faith called “Against Heresies.” In it he wrote of the baptism of children & infants.
- Thus, at least some Christians—including the influential Iranaeus believed in baptizing infants.

# Conclusion:

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- All this does not necessarily mean that we should baptize infants, but it does mean that baptizing the young who have made a profession of faith is consistent with biblical examples & church history.
- I think this is especially true when the parents are believers who are raising them to know & follow Christ.



# Paul Treated Christian Children as Disciples:

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Eph 6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father & mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline & instruction of the Lord.

- These children are being spoken to as disciples not kids.
- Christian fathers are commanded to teach their children to follow Jesus. Following Jesus includes being baptized.

# Conclusions:

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- We should share the gospel repeatedly with children because children especially young children learn through repetition.
- We should ask them questions to discover where they are at spiritually.
- When they admit that they are a sinner and report that they believe the gospel we should ask them if they want to call on Jesus for salvation.

# Conclusions:

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- Calling on Jesus for salvation is the beginning of following Jesus (e.g. discipleship).
- Parents & other Christians are to help the child grow.
- Baptism is a part of conversion. Therefore, I do not recommend keeping children from following Christ in believer's baptism.
- I do recommend following up with a child to ensure that they understand the gospel. Reciting the gospel is always helpful.



# In Praise of God—the Grace of Regeneration

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- As Christians we do well to be concerned with making sure that children who make a profession of faith understand it. But it is worth remembering that regeneration precedes saving faith. And while knowledge is a part of that, salvation is a work of the Spirit much more than it is a work of the intellect. Like you, your child will grow in understanding.
- To me, the fact that regeneration is a work of the Spirit is one more reason to praise the God of glory!