

PARENTING *resources.*

PARENTING MATTERS: SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

SALVATION

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

...in the midst of church, camp, small group, Bible time or family discussion, your child has decided that they want to ask Jesus into their heart. Maybe they've already said a specific prayer, or talked to a pastor or leader, or maybe they want you to lead them through it. It's hard to understand what all of this really means, because it often gets cloaked in church-y language or lost in translation all together. Take a minute to rejoice in this amazing commitment that your child has chosen to make, this milestone is a monumental step in growing closer to God.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SALVATION

WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation what you receive when you choose to believe and trust that Jesus is your Savior. When you make that choice, you commit to a lifelong (and eternally lifelong) journey of sanctification and growing to be more like Christ. We need a savior because we are broken and fallen, and only Jesus can be our Savior because he sacrificed his life for us. We are given salvation through God's abundant grace, and once we have accepted Jesus, we cannot lose him. Through salvation, you are freed from the power of sin and welcomed into eternity with God. Salvation is the acceptance of our triune God and the commitment to love, trust, and honor him.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IT?

Freedom from sin and death comes only because Jesus came to earth, died a brutal death, and rose again. Jesus was sent by God to save the world (John 3:16) by seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10) and giving his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). We were alienated from God because of human choices (Genesis 3), but Jesus gave us the ability to restore a relationship with our creator by sacrificing himself and gifting us the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27). Seeking salvation is acknowledging the reality of all that God has done and continues to do.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT TO US?

Taking hold of our salvation is the first step toward finding a true relationship with God. Then begins the ongoing process of sanctification and growing to be more like Christ. It is not enough to just believe, because faith needs to be put into action (James 2:14-26). Jesus is a perfect model of love, grace, mercy, and compassion, and it is now your role to replicate that to our hurting world. The way that a life is led after salvation is the hallmark of a believer's commitment to Christ.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

WALKING THEM THROUGH THEIR DECISION

- Take their decision seriously. There is no age requirement, but there is an understanding requirement. Your child should understand what Christ did for them and for all of humanity when he died on the cross. Your role is to have open conversations and to lift them up in prayer, but you cannot make this decision for them.
- Take their questions seriously. If you don't know the answer, be willing to dialogue with them. Look to scripture for answers, read theologically sound books or blogs, or talk to a leader at church for more resources.

• If your child wants to make this decision, and you believe that they are ready, walk them through a prayer to help them articulate this commitment and what it means.

There are no magic words, but here's an outline to use as a starting point:

➤ Repent of your sins – “God I know that I am a sinner and that I make mistakes every day. I repent of my sins and the ways that I have let you down.”

Give them time to voice specific sins.

➤ Acknowledge and affirm Christ – “I believe that you are my Savior. I know that you came down to earth, you lived a perfect life, you died on the cross to pay for my sins, and you rose again. I believe that because of your sacrifice, I am saved and I get to spend eternal life with you.” Give them time to acknowledge how they have seen God work and to thank Him.

➤ Commit to Following God – “I commit to following you every day. With your help, I promise to make choices that reflect your love for me and for others. I choose to honor you with my thoughts, words, and actions. I will pursue you and strive to know you better.” Give them time to add any specific ways they commit to following God.

WALKING WITH THEM AFTER THEIR COMMITMENT

- Celebrate their decision! Do a special dinner, give them a sentimental gift, find a way to create a memory around this significant moment.
- If you haven't yet, pick an age appropriate Bible to read together. Dwell on God's words and stories and look for examples of how you can live out this new commitment. With older kids who know the stories, dig in to the New Testament letters and lean in to what Christlikeness really looks like.
- Consider practicing spiritual disciplines together as a way of practically putting this commitment into play.
- Find ways to serve together. One of the best ways to walk in Jesus' footsteps is to serve others. Look for ways to use your child's individual gifting to bless others.
- Get in Community. Plug your child in with local church, small group, and a Christian mentor (other than you) who can help them walk this out. Encourage them to surround themselves with a few solid peers who can help them grow closer to God. Connect with other parents with kids in the same phase so that you have a sounding board as well.

SCRIPTURE

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Dear Lord, help me to lead my child well as they strive to live according to your word and your call on their life. Give them endurance to follow you every day. Help them seek your will as they interact with their friends, their family, and their world. Let them experience your compassion and grace when they fail. Help me to reflect you in moments of disappointment and struggle. Give them a kingdom of Heaven mindset as they go out and follow you with everything they've got. Root them firmly in their identity as your child each and every day. Amen.

RESOURCES

Kids Read Matthew Workbook
by She Reads Truth

This Is Jesus-Matthew Study Book
by She Reads Truth

John-A Gospel of John Scripture Reading Plan
by He Reads Truth

The Bible Project - The Gospel According to Mark

The Bible Project - The Messiah



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