

Intentional Faith Path Plan

Child's Name: _____

How will you be intentional this next year?

- Pray daily for my child.
- Consistently spend time in God's Word.
- Bless my child daily.
- Schedule and have regular family times.
- Be prepared to talk with my child about his or her faith decision.
- _____

The next step on the Faith Path is *Prayer*, recommended at age six. We will offer a free *Prayer* kit to guide you. Request the *Prayer* kit at lezah.maitland@fbcallen.org

Recommended Resources

The Faith of a Child by Art Murray

Leading Your Kids to Christ: 30 Days to Prepare Your Heart
by Criswell Freeman

God's Great News for Children by Rick Osborne and Mamie Wooding

Pastor Chad Selph
Senior Pastor

chad.selph@fbcallen.org

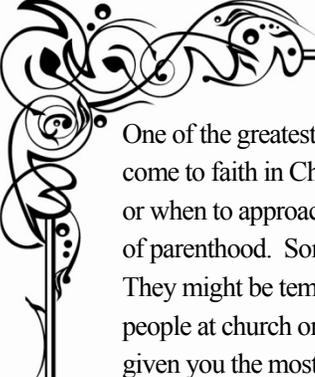
Lezah Maitland
Minister of Children

lezah.maitland@fbcallen.org

972-727-8241

FAITH PATH

Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ



One of the greatest privileges you have as a parent is to help your child come to faith in Christ. Like many parents, you may not quite know how or when to approach one of the most exciting yet intimidating moments of parenthood. Some worry that they won't explain salvation properly. They might be tempted to just "leave it to the professionals" by relying on people at church or ministry events. That's understandable, but God has given you the most important and influential role when it comes to leading your child to Christ. This guide is designed to help you feel more comfortable about the process when that time comes.

Step One: Lay a foundation

Your son or daughter grows in his or her understanding of God by developing a foundation; hearing stories from the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus and so forth. Your child also learns by experiencing life in your home; watching your example, feeling your love and learning right from wrong. We see this in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 that says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Step Two: Discern readiness

Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push for a decision before he or she is ready to truly grasp the gospel. Your child may intellectually understand before being socially or spiritually ready. Young children are usually bonded to their parents in such a way that they want to please and do not have a full sense of a separate self. A child needs to understand that this is a personal decision and not just an opportunity to repeat rote answers.

Step Three: Ask questions

If you feel your child might be ready, ask a few questions to help gauge his or her level of understanding. For example, read Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Then ask questions like, "What is sin?" "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" How they respond can help you sense when your child is ready to understand two important concepts:

- **JESUS AS SAVIOR:** The need for forgiveness and cleansing from sin which was made possible through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross
- **JESUS AS LORD:** The need to submit to God as "the boss" by making Jesus Christ the Lord of one's life

Step Four: Guide your child in prayer for salvation

Romans 10 says, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." If you sense your child has a basic understanding of what sin is as well as what it means to accept God's gift of salvation and His Lordship, then you can guide him or her to pray along those lines. Instead of quoting specific words for your child to repeat, it's best to prompt using his or her own words.

If after reading through this guide and viewing the *Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ* video you would like additional assistance, feel free to request an appointment for you and your child to meet with Pastor Chad or Lezah Maitland. If your child has become a believer, please let us know and we will send them the free *Salvation and Baptism* kit.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

It Starts At Home (by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) helps parents understand the process of faith formation at home and a practical plan for becoming intentional.

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children (by John Trent, Rick Osborne and Kurt Bruner) offers a road map for parents to shape the faith of children under twelve years old.

Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Mentoring of Teens (by Joe White and Jim Weidmann) helps parents coach the faith formation of older children.

Your Heritage (by Kurt Bruner & J. Otis Ledbetter) shows how to give children a strong spiritual legacy – including an assessment of the legacy parents received themselves.

Recommended Websites:

HeritageBuilders.com provides resources to help parents instill faith in their children such as the *Family Night Tool Chest* series.

MoveNightChatblog.blogspot.com recommends films and spiritual discussion ideas for parent/teen movie nights.

Recommended Kits:

Faith Path free age-appropriate kits are available for parents to guide a child's spiritual journey one step at a time.

Faith Path resources are available by request from Lezah Maitland, Minister of Children at lezah.maitland@fbcallen.org.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

If you would like to speak to a minister, please contact the church office at 972.727.8241 to set up an appointment.

First Baptist Church Allen
201 E. McDermott Dr. | Allen, TX 75002

www.fbcallen.org

972.727.8241

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Intentional Parenting



Giving a Strong Spiritual Legacy

Every believing parent hopes his or her child will embrace the faith and grow deep spiritual roots. But studies tell us that over half of those growing up in Christian homes will back away from Christian commitment by the time they leave the teen years. Too often, parents “outsource” the spiritual formation of their children to the church. And while a good church is very important, God designed the family to be the primary place where faith is nurtured. So parents need to understand four principles that can help them become more intentional about their child’s faith.

THE LEGACY PRINCIPLE

The scriptures tell us that what we do today directly influences the multi-generational cycle of family traits, beliefs and actions – for good or bad (Exodus 20:5-6, Psalm 78:5-8). So passing a strong faith to our children begins by having a strong faith ourselves – and modeling the gospel in our marriages and in how we relate to those closest to us. Some of us need to break negative cycles that may have started with our own upbringing in order to launch a new, improved legacy for the next generation.

THE LIKELIHOOD PRINCIPLE

The good news is this: in the context of healthy relationships, children tend to embrace the values of their parents. Proverbs 22:6 tells us that when children learn right from wrong at home under the nurturing, loving training of parents, they tend to adopt mom and dad’s beliefs. While there are no guarantees because every child has a free will, kids are far more likely to embrace their parent’s faith if they enjoy their parent’s company! That’s a big part of the reason parents are warned not to “provoke your children to wrath” but rather “bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Bottom line – a strong relationship with mom and dad is key to a strong Christian faith.

THE LENSES PRINCIPLE

Jesus taught that our enemy’s primary weapon is deception – getting us to believe and live according to lies rather than truth (John 8:44). And when someone is deceived, he or she doesn’t know it! Our children are growing up in a culture that bombards them with lies. An hour or two per week at church is no match for the hundreds of hours spent with media, school, and friends. Nor can it compete with a child’s fallen nature that often wants to rebel against what is good, true and beautiful. It is the job of parents to equip children with the corrective “lenses” of truth so they can better navigate the deceptive roads of life.

THE LEARNING PRINCIPLE

Our children can only learn what we teach them in a manner that will reach them. In other words, we need to vary our approach based upon their unique personality, learning style, and most importantly, stage of development. Children fall into one of three stages that should guide the methods we choose for discussing our faith and values at home.

The Imprint Period: (toddler to about age seven)

Small children are all ears. They will believe it because mom or dad said it, much like a baby gosling that imprints itself onto its mother and follows it wherever she leads. Young children soak in what we tell them – so this is an ideal season for teaching them basic bible stories, memorization, and other building block truths of Christianity.

The Impression Period (about age eight to early teen)

During this season, children no longer accept what we say at face value. They may question us, push back, or even argue. During this season, children do need to know what we believe. But they also need help understanding the rationale behind those beliefs. While more work, this is a positive part of their faith development because it means they have grown past blind acceptance and are ready for deeper understanding.

The Coaching Period (early teen to young adult)

Our job changes when the kids enter the coaching period. We can motivate, encourage, challenge and advise. We can’t force feed. We can help them clearly articulate what they believe, challenge their thinking, remind them of the “basics” learned during the “practices” of the imprint and impression years. We can provide a safe environment to wrestle with, even question, the values they’ve learned. Maintaining strong relationship and frequent dialogue are the key to your influence now.

In light of these realities, parents can become intentional about creating and capturing opportunities to nurture the roots of faith in their children.

GOING FURTHER – Resources

Faith Path: Prepare to Lead Your Child to Christ a training video and other tools to help you gain confidence as you lead your child to faith.

Leading a Child to Christ training pack (by LifeWay Church Resources) provides tools to guide parents, leaders or older children how to share their faith.

Kids' Faith: Faith Conversations for Families (by Tedye Schuehler) an interactive journal designed to guide ten faith conversations with kids.

These resources are available by request from Lezah Maitland, Minister of Children at lezah.maitland@fbcallen.org.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

New Christian Class: A three-hour Sunday morning class that offers children a solid understanding of the basics of the Christian faith. This class is offered several times throughout the year. A postcard and email with details is sent to parents of new Christians.

If you would like to speak to a minister, please contact the church office at 972.727.8241 to set up an appointment.

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Introducing Your Child To Christ



Introducing Your Child To Christ

The fact you're reading this indicates you are concerned about your child's faith. As you care for your child's daily needs and work to prepare him or her for success in life, there's nothing more important than caring for their spiritual needs and helping them prepare for eternity. It's likely that you are reading this because, like many parents, you don't know quite how (or when) to go about introducing your child to Christ. Parents who worry that they don't have the training or understanding to lead their children to salvation may be tempted to just leave it to the "professionals"—to rely on people at church or ministry events. That's understandable, but God has given you the most important and most influential role when it comes to influencing your child's path to salvation. All it takes is a little training for you to feel more comfortable about the when and how of introducing them to Christ.

STEP ONE: Lay a foundation

A child's decision to follow Jesus is rarely a one-stop process. Your son or daughter grows in their understanding of God by developing a foundation (hearing the stories of the Bible, learning scriptures, singing about Jesus, and so forth) as well as experiencing life in your home (watching your example, feeling your love, learning right from wrong). These two ways of learning work best when they are connected in your home and integrated into your family life. We see it in Deuteronomy: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Dt. 6:6-7).

STEP TWO: Discern readiness

Do your best to discern when your child is mature enough to put the pieces together. Avoid the temptation to push him or her too fast, making sure they are ready and can truly understand the

gospel. When you feel they are ready, ask a few questions to help gauge your child's level of understanding. Read Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." Then ask questions like, "What is sin?" "How does your sin affect your relationship to God?" and "How can you be right with God?" How they respond can help you sense whether your child is ready in addition to helping your child apply the gospel to his or her own life.

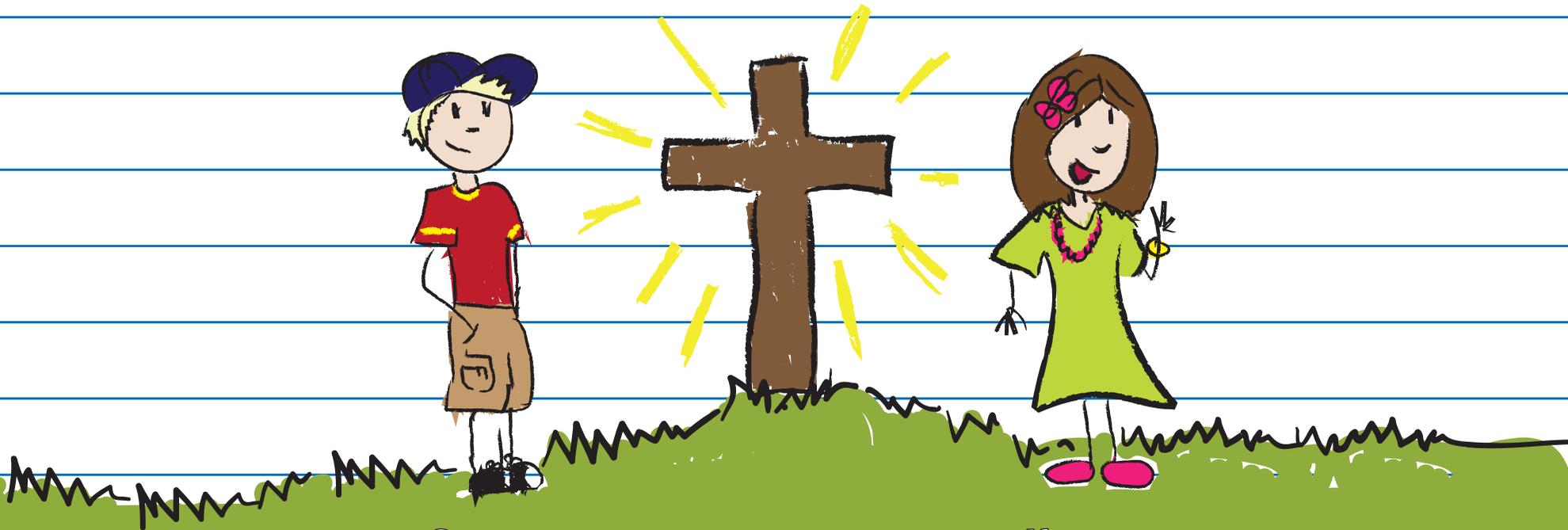
STEP THREE: Guide your child in prayer for salvation

Romans 10 tells us, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10). If you sense your child has a basic understanding of what sin is and what it leads to, as well as what it means to accept God's gift of salvation and His Lordship, then you can guide your child to pray along those lines. Instead of quoting specific words for your child to repeat, it's best to prompt them to use their own words—to tell God they are sorry for their sins, to ask for His forgiveness, and to ask Him to be Lord over the rest of their life.

STEP FOUR: Prepare them for baptism

Once your child has understood and decided to accept God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, it is time to guide them toward following Christ in believer's baptism. Schedule them to attend a New Christian class where they will learn the basics of Christian faith and be prepared to celebrate baptism with their family.

GOD LOVES YOU AND WANTS YOU IN HIS FAMILY!



GOD CREATED US TO WALK AND TALK WITH HIM.

WHEN WE ARE IN HIS FAMILY, GOD PROMISES ...

*He will always be with us. Hebrews 13:5
He will help us do what is right. Hebrews 13:6
He will give us a great life. John 10:10*

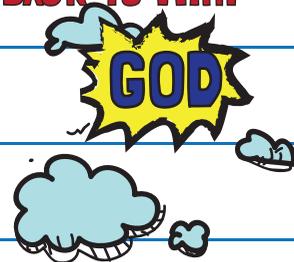
ALL PEOPLE ARE NOT IN GOD'S FAMILY ... WHY? BECAUSE OF SIN.

GOD MADE A WAY FOR US TO COME BACK TO HIM.

Sin separates us from GOD.



Jesus lived, died and rose again
to pay for all the wrong we have done.



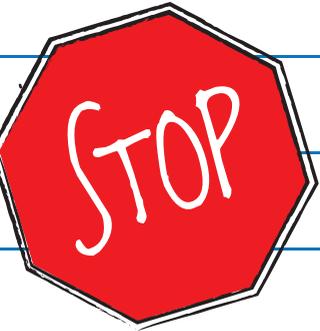
What is sin?

- Disobeying God
- Breaking God's law
- Making bad choices
- Doing something which you know is wrong

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God
is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

HOW CAN YOU JOIN GOD'S FAMILY?



Before you go to the next step, answer these questions:

1. Do you understand what Jesus did for YOU?
2. Why do you NEED Jesus to forgive you?
3. Are you ready to take that step?

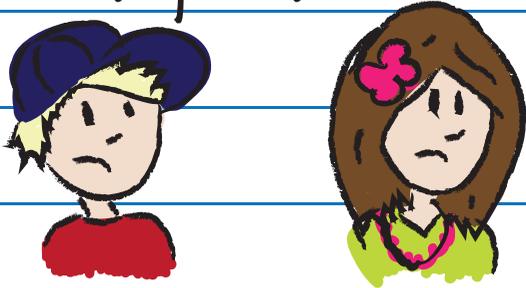
If so, it is just a matter of talking to God.
When you talk to Him, the Bible says you should:

2. Ask Jesus to forgive you.



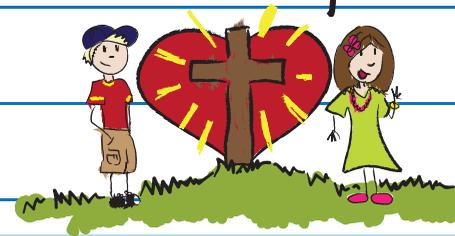
Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out ... Acts 3:19

1. Admit that you're a sinner.



... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

3. Let Jesus take control of your life.



That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

TALK TO GOD ABOUT YOUR DECISION.

Dear God,

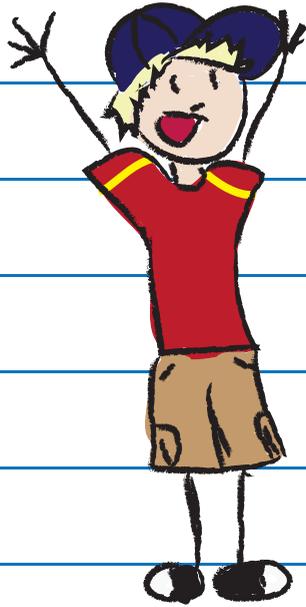
I know that I'm a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe that Jesus died for my sins. I want Jesus to come into my life and be my Savior. I want to follow Him and obey Him. I want Him to be the Lord of my life. In the name of Jesus,

Amen!

NAME _____

DATE _____

NOW THAT YOU ARE IN THE FAMILY, WHAT'S NEXT?



- Tell someone
- Go to church
- Be baptized
- Read the Bible
- Pray regularly



If you love me, you will obey what I command. John 14:15



MY FAITH DECISION

I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and take control of my life.

Name _____

Date of My Decision _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

Special thoughts from my salvation decision day...
